

APPLICATION

Study field "Management, Administration and Management of Real Property"
for assessment

Study field	<i>Management, Administration and Management of Real Property</i>
Title of the higher education institution	<i>Vidzemes Augstskola</i>
Registration code	<i>2543001659</i>
Legal address	<i>CĒSU IELA 4, VALMIERA, LV-4201</i>
Phone number	<i>64207230</i>
E-mail	<i>info@va.lv</i>

Self-evaluation report

Study field "Management, Administration and Management
of Real Property"

Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences

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I - Information on the Higher Education Institution/College

1.1. Basic information on the higher education institution/ college and its strategic development directions, including the following information:

Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (ViA) was established in 1996, and acquired a status of the State higher education institution in 2001. In 2002, ViA was accredited for an indefinite period of time. ViA offers high-quality study programmes and provides the balance between theory and practice. Study programmes are constantly updated and adapted to the current needs of society and changes in the labour market. The quality of studies is assured by experienced and professional teaching staff, advanced forms of study, and integrated research and academic work.

ViA offers college programmes, undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes, in total – 25 programmes. ViA study programmes are implemented in six study directions which are divided into two faculties – the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering.

Research work at ViA is carried out at two scientific institutes – the Institute of Social, Economic and Humanities Research (HESPI), established in 2015, and the Institute of Socio-Technical Systems Engineering (SSII), which was established in July 2006.

The vision of ViA is as follows: “ViA is an internationally recognized regional platform for higher education, science, knowledge transfer and idea leadership, offering versatile opportunities of the digital age ecosystem for acquiring professional higher education and interdisciplinary research, responding proactively to societal challenges.” The mission of ViA is to promote sustainable development of the knowledge society at the regional and national level, providing private and public sectors with high-level professionals, as well as conducting research to solve problems of public interest.

ViA has set three strategic priorities in its development strategy for 2016-2020: 1. Education, 2. Science, and 3. Knowledge transfer and idea leadership. The goal set in the field of education is not only to develop study programmes and directions, but also to offer a wide range of lifelong learning opportunities, as well as additional education for pupils. The goal set in the field of science is to conduct research that is a proactive response to societal challenges in accordance with the study directions and external demand. The goal set in the priority of knowledge transfer and idea leadership is a transfer of knowledge of ViA and its partner institutions to cooperation partners, fulfilling the role of intellectual leader of Vidzeme region in promotion of national and regional growth.

Refer to the annex for the list of ViA study programmes (*see Annex 1*).

Refer to the annex for student number dynamics during the assessment period (*see Annex 2*).

ViA strategy in the Latvian language is available on the ViA website *both in Latvian and English*.

1.2. Description of the management of the higher education institution/ college, the main institutions involved in the decision-making process, their composition (percentage depending on the position, for instance, the academic staff, administrative staff members, students), and the powers of these institutions.

ViA is a derived public person. ViA was founded by the State, and its legal activities are regulated by ViA Constitution. ViA is managed in accordance with the democratic management style and the principle of collegiality. Faculty deans and heads of other academic and administrative structures, as well as representatives of the student board are involved in the decision-making process and the planning and implementation of ViA operational and strategic management. Operational management issues are addressed at weekly management meetings. ViA operational management is organized by the administrative vice-rector. The meetings are open, and information about the meetings is sent electronically to ViA staff. In order to assess the current processes and to successfully organize the study work, *operational seminars of the directors of the study directions and study programmes*, as well as *meetings to deal with development, academic and scientific issues* are held once a month.

[Refer to the annex for ViA structure \(see Annex 3\).](#)

ViA decision-making institutions:

- **Constitutional Assembly** – the highest collegial representative and governing institution and a decision-making body of ViA, elected for 2 years. The Constitutional Assembly consists of 40 persons, of which 24 are elected from academic staff members elected to academic positions, 8 representatives are elected from general staff members, and 8 representatives are elected from full-time students.
- **Academic Arbitration Court** – ViA institution established to examine disputes between ViA officials, management institutions of structural units under subordinate relations, as well as to examine student and academic staff applications regarding restrictions and violations of academic freedom and rights established in ViA Constitution. The Academic Arbitration Court consists of 3 members, two of which are elected by secret ballot from the academic staff elected to academic positions, and one is elected by the student self-government from the full-time students.
- **Senate** – collegial management and decision-making institution, which approves the procedure and regulations that regulate all the areas of ViA activity. The Senate consists of 20 members: 15 representatives of the academic staff, 4 representatives of the students and 1 representative of the general staff. The term of office of the Senate is two years. The Senate meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Any student and ViA employee can participate there. Within the Senate, there are two standing commissions: the Study and Science Commission and the Finance, Budget and Strategy Commission.
- **Academic Ethics Commission** – collegial institution that promotes understanding and consults ViA students and lecturers on the issues of academic and research ethics and examines violations of academic and research ethics committed by ViA students and academic staff.
- **Audit Commission** controls the compliance of ViA financial and economic activities with the decisions of ViA Constitution and institutions, as well as with the laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia. According to ViA Constitution, the Audit Commission consisting of three people is elected for two years.
- **Faculty Councils** are collegiate decision-making institutions for academic, scientific and research activities of the faculties.

[Refer to the annex for the list of the main ViA internal normative documents and regulations \(see Annex 4\).](#)

1.3. Description of the mechanism for the implementation of the quality policy and the procedures for the assurance of the quality of higher education, as well as the stakeholders involved in the development and improvement of the quality assurance system and their role in these processes.

[ViA Study Quality Assurance Policy](#) is a part of ViA quality management system, which promotes ViA's internal quality culture and its continuous improvement. It is developed, reviewed and implemented in accordance with the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#), the *Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia* and other laws and regulations, taking into account the views and needs of ViA internal and external stakeholders. The policy supports the development of a quality culture in which all internal stakeholders assume responsibility for the quality and engage in quality assurance at all levels.

The following is an overview of the different aspects of the quality assurance system.

Quality assurance policy and measures

ViA has developed and approved the Development Strategy for 2016-2020, which envisages striving for excellence and competitiveness in education, striving for excellence and competitiveness in science and research, as well as striving for knowledge transfer and investment in regional development. ViA has a **Strategic Advisory Board** which is established with a goal to encourage creative discussions and generate ideas that will help identify reasonable, attractive and imaginable future visions and strategy of ViA. Strategic control over ViA development is exercised by ViA Senate, while administrative and accounting control is exercised by the Faculty of Social Sciences. The Faculty of Social Sciences regularly (once a month) assesses its activities and decides on current issues at the Faculty Council meetings. ViA has a **Scientific Council** whose task is to promote coherent and focused academic and scientific research activities in accordance with the ViA strategy. The Council consults and, if necessary, prepares proposals for the Senate and the Rector on strategically important issues of ViA scientific research activities, including initiation of new ViA research directions. The qualifications and competencies of the academic staff are assessed on the basis of their professional, academic and scientific achievements. Every year, the development of the study direction is assessed during the preparation and discussion of the self-assessment report both within the framework of the study direction at the faculty level and in ViA Senate. Since 2018, Advisory Boards of the study programmes have been involved in quality management. Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences has approved a number of documents that define the relationships between teaching and research, the strategy of institution's quality and requirements, and the organization of the quality assurance system. There is a framework of responsibilities for quality assurance developed for the faculties, study directions and other structural units and individuals, as well as for student participation in quality assurance, and the ways through which the quality policy is implemented, monitored and adjusted. All normative documents are available to students and academic staff on ViA e-environment. Students are informed on their rights and opportunities to participate in the development and implementation of ViA development policy both in the introductory studies and later during the study process. ViA student self-government which delegates candidates for the election of ViA Senate and the Constitutional Assembly, organizes meetings with ViA Rector and/or directors of the study directions, as necessary. ViA has developed a **Procedure for the Development, Approval and Supervision of the Study Programmes** and other regulations related to the high-quality study process.

The study programmes and their components are developed to meet their goals that are in line

with the **ViA strategy**. The study programmes are developed using external stakeholders' vision in such a way to meet the defined learning outcomes, and these results, in their turn, comply with the *Latvian and European Qualifications Framework*.

Quality assurance and assessment of the work of the academic staff

ViA has measures in place to make sure and verify that the lecturers working with students have required qualifications and competences, i.e.: requirements are laid down in the ViA **Regulations on Elections to Academic Positions**, ViA **Remuneration Regulations** contain the division of academic work, conditions for research work, as well as student surveys on each study course in the respective semester are taken into account. ViA Senate has approved the **content and duties of the lecturers' work**, which determine requirements for academic work, research, academic and scientific qualification improvement and administrative work. In order to ensure the qualification, work quality improvement and professional development of ViA academic staff, the lecturer is given a possibility to improve and expand his/her knowledge and professionalism by acquiring experience abroad or by doing internship in foreign higher education institutions/organizations and by participating in relevant seminars and conferences – Erasmus and other mobility programmes. Once per academic year (in October for the previous academic year), the lecturer has to report to the Dean of the Faculty on the achievements in scientific work, experience gained in projects, seminars and conferences. The information provided is used for the preparation of a scientific report and self-assessment reports of the study directions. In order to allow the lecturers to improve their academic work and monitor its quality, ViA implements various activities, including study course assessment questionnaires and visitation. The academic staff of the Business Administration direction consists of elected lecturers and professionals of the field who deliver not only individual guest lectures but also teach full study courses. This is one of the ways of achieving a balance between the acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge. Based on the decision of the Business Administration direction, the Faculty Council makes the decision on the approval of the elected lecturers (positions of lecturers and assistant professors) and guest lecturers after getting acquainted with the qualification and competence of each applicant. In order to raise their qualification, elected lecturers take part in Erasmus+ and other in-service training mobility programmes, attend courses offered by ViA, engage in the activities organized by professional organizations, etc.

Resources of academic work and research, support for students

ViA material and technical base and infrastructure ensure that the resources available to students for the acquisition of knowledge are appropriate and suitable for each study programme offered. ViA library provides information resources necessary for academic and scientific activities, access to scientific articles and other electronic information data bases from the ViA library portal. Likewise, ViA has an accessible e-learning environment – an interactive student support environment, which includes study materials, electronic document exchange and communication with a lecturer, a possibility to submit test papers.

Two buildings with a total area of 7312 m² which are at the disposal of ViA are used for ensuring ViA study process, scientific, research and administrative activities. 2387 m² are used directly in the study and research process. The current study base consists of 38 lecture rooms (total area of 1445 m²), including 3 computer rooms with 90 workstations and the Internet connection (195 m²) and 12 laboratories: *Data Security Laboratory (Cyber Security Laboratory); Computer Network Laboratory; Virtual Reality Laboratory; material values of the Multimedia Laboratory intended for the study administration and technology research direction; material values of the Multimedia Laboratory intended for the communication ecosystems and technology research direction; Laboratory of Simulation Modelling and RFID Technologies; Mobile Technology Laboratory; Energy Efficiency*

Laboratory; Mechatronics Laboratory; Electrical Engineering Laboratory; Construction Laboratory; Spatial Research Laboratory (total area of 324 m²). All computers are connected in a common network that provides a unified information flow, as well as an access to the Internet and databases. Subscribed full-text databases are accessible through authorization from any place where the Internet is available. A conference room (257 m²) is also used in the study process, and the study blocks have rooms for group work and premises where students can carry out their independent study assignments (350 m²). Besides, booking and reservation system of premises, lecture-rooms and hostels provides for a possibility to follow the lecture schedule.

ViA provides career development services to students and applicants, enabling them to decide on their future education or employment, to find the most appropriate study direction, to choose the most appropriate ways for the development of competences by using both personal and ViA's resources, to prepare for successful professional development, to develop their personalities by achieving their professional goals, to plan further education, to start their own business, and to support other career issues. The main career development activities at ViA are individual or small group career consultations for students (including advice on writing CV, employment search, preparation for job interviews, etc.), as well as consultations for applicants on the most appropriate study direction for starting studies at ViA. A mentoring movement is also being developed, involving ViA graduates. ViA closely cooperates with the companies within the industry and regularly informs students on the current employment and internship offers at the companies, as well as helps students prepare for work and internship. Career development support is also fully integrated into the study courses, raising awareness of employment in the industry, cooperating with industry experts and specialists.

Information management

ViA key performance indicators are assessed and analyzed on an annual basis and reflected in self-assessment reports, annual management reports and other documents, while information on the student progress, academic achievements and drop-out rates, student satisfaction with the study programmes, and graduate career is summarized in a centralized manner using both qualitative and quantitative methods – statistical and financial indicator analysis, document analysis, as well as surveys of applicants, students and graduates.

ViA ensures efficient collection of information necessary for the management of study programmes and other processes through ViA website and social networks, as well as through:

- ViA study administration information system *LAIS*, which provides a possibility to collect data on all aspects of studies and successfully use them in the study process, besides students can keep track of their study assessment progress in their profiles,
- Record Keeping System,
- E-learning environment *Moodle*,
- ViA alumni database,
- Library system *ALISE*,
- Accounting system *Horizon*,
- Study and student loan accounting system.

Information to the public

ViA regularly publishes current, neutral and impartial information on its website on its activities, including information on the college, Bachelor's, Master's, and higher level study programmes offered, the degrees/qualifications to be acquired and selection criteria for admission; expected learning outcomes of the programmes, qualifications to be awarded, teaching, learning and result assessment procedures used, the minimum satisfactory assessments, learning opportunities

available to students and extracurricular activities, and information on career possibilities after graduation and graduate employment.

Each year ViA prepares, approves and publishes self-assessment reports of the study directions, as well as admission rules for the current academic year. ViA lecturers and employees are actively involved in the development of public opinion in the region and Latvia by participating in conferences, seminars, public lectures, NGO activities, by publishing scientific publications; the most up-to-date information is posted on the ViA social media accounts and website, thus promoting higher education and study programmes.

ViA regularly posts up-to-date, neutral and impartial information on its activities, programmes offered and degrees/qualifications to be acquired on social media – *Facebook, Twitter, draugiem.lv, Instagram, YouTube*, as well as distributes printed leaflets and other handouts. Besides, information that is relevant to current and future students, alumni, and other stakeholders and the public is posted on social media in Latvian and English. Information that is relevant to a specific person or group of people, such as lecturers, ViA's administration staff, or students of a particular study programme, is emailed.

A contact with ViA alumni is maintained by help of the *Facebook* group “ViA Alumni”, where ViA posts up-to-date information that is relevant to the graduates, such as employment possibilities at ViA, gatherings, possible participation in events.

Media of the industry and other media at the regional and national level are also informed about ViA's activities and current events, inviting them to distribute information to the general public through print and electronic media and/or on social media accounts. Besides, media representatives are provided with relevant information on current events, developments and news related to ViA, its staff, or students. Media monitoring is carried out on a daily basis, and information about ViA and current events published in the media is collected. Upon assessing the relevance and appropriateness of the information, it is re-posted on the institution's social media accounts.

In order to popularize study directions, lecturers, students and graduates are interviewed both in a written and video format, interviews are published on the ViA website, as well as posted on social media – *Facebook, Twitter, draugiem.lv, Instagram and YouTube*. Besides, to popularize study directions, ViA's website and social media accounts feature information on students' individual work, achievements in the area of science, conferences, competitions, as well as on the study process and possibilities to improve their knowledge in ViA laboratories, during internship at companies, through courses offered by ViA, classes, creative workshops, etc. In order to ensure ViA publicity outside Latvia, information on ViA study programmes and possibilities for joint projects is presented to foreign cooperation partners within the framework of the mobility programmes.

The lecturers of the BA direction also actively contribute to the formation of public opinion in the region, defence of interests of the field in Latvia by participating in conferences, seminars, public lectures and NGO activities, as well as by publishing scientific publications, while promotion at the international level is carried out by engaging in the international mobility programmes and project activities through the options provided by the international business education network Businet. The lecturers of the Business Administration direction are represented in 10 different professional associations, thus popularizing the higher education institution and business administration programmes, presenting activities of the students and academic staff.

Cooperation with students and graduates

Every year ViA conducts student opinion surveys on compliance of the study programmes implemented at the higher education institution with the students' expectations, on the quality of study programmes, informative, material and technical provision, the quality of the academic staff, the quality of international cooperation, as well as on other issues. Results of surveys are analyzed and assessed, and decisions on various changes and improvements are made on the basis of these results. Responses are used for planning development and ViA performance improvement. During the Business Administration direction meeting at the end of each semester, survey results, improvements and problems are analyzed at the study direction level, adjusting the content, teaching methods, and modes of communication accordingly. At the beginning of each academic year, the programme director meets with students from all programmes to discuss the achievements and problems of the previous year, current issues, as well as to listen to students' views and recommendations. A lot of attention is paid to cooperation in internship organization issues – at the beginning of each semester the following is discussed: internship programme, preparation of internship documents, and internship defence procedure. Each student group selects the head of the group who coordinates collaboration and communication between the student group and the director of the study direction to ensure effective exchange of information. ViA has active student self-government – Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences Student Association. The director of the direction cooperates with it in the issues of studies, research and study process organization. Currently, students of the BA direction are actively participating in the student association, which provides significant support in solving organizational issues of the study process. The director of the direction listens to any student because each opinion is important and by solving individual problems student satisfaction is increased and study process improvements are enhanced. The above-mentioned forms of cooperation provide student feedback, allow to plan and make various changes in the course planning, issues of attracting lecturers to the teaching of particular courses, as well as in replenishing library collections and other aspects of study organization and quality assurance.

ViA also conducts a graduate survey on an annual basis. The main purpose is to document satisfaction of the graduates with their education immediately after graduation, as well as to collect data on graduate employment. The survey is conducted a year after graduation. The results of the surveys show that graduates of the Bachelor's and Master's programmes successfully integrate into the labour market, work in the field in accordance with the qualification acquired in the private, State and municipal sector. Inclusion and success in career are ensured by the comprehensive professional training, which allows to adapt to the labour market, to develop entrepreneurship. Within the framework of the study direction, as far as possible, lecturers maintain contacts with graduates in social media, meeting in public events, involving them as guest lecturers, internship providers, members of the State examination commission, as well as cooperating in the field's advisory councils and in the working group which prepared self-assessment.

Refer to the annex for the Study Quality Assurance Policy of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (see Annex 5).

ViA study quality assurance policy is also available on the ViA website: <https://va.lv/en/about-us/documents>

1.4. Fill in the table on the compliance of the internal quality assurance system of the higher education institution/ college with the provisions of Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education by providing a justification for the given statement. In addition, it is also possible to refer to the respective chapter of the Self-Assessment Report, where the provided information serves as evidence for the full

compliance, partial compliance or non-compliance.

1.	The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.	Complies
		see 1.3. (Part I)
2.	A mechanism for the creation 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.	Complies
		see 1.3. (Part I)
3.	The criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, have been developed and made public.	Complies
		see 1.6. (Part II)
4.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.	Complies
		see 1.3. (Part I)
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.	Complies
		see 1.3. (Part I)
6.	The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.	Complies
		see 1.3. (Part I)

II - Description of the Study Direction (1. Management of the Study Direction)

1.1. Economic and/or social grounds for the creation of the study direction and the relevant study programmes, the assessment of the interrelation among the study programmes, as well as the analysis of the significance (singularity) of the study programmes in comparison with other similar study programmes in Latvia and abroad.

There are three study programmes in the study direction “Management, Administration and Real Estate Management” (Business Administration). During the last accreditation period, there was considerable growth of the study direction – in addition to the previously implemented professional Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes, a joint Doctoral programme has been developed and licensed. The professional Master’s program “Business Environment Administration” (BEA) is implemented in English, and the new doctoral programme “Economics and Entrepreneurship” – in English and Latvian. Both programmes are aimed at domestic and international students; the following is integrated in their content: the latest concepts in economics and business, information technologies, courses with interdisciplinary content and links to current developments of the field and practice.

The professional Bachelor’s programme “Business Administration” (BA) has been implemented since the establishment of ViA in 1996, and has always had good reputation. Graduates are in demand in the labour market, thus demonstrating their good professional qualification. The implementation of the Master’s programme “Business Environment Administration” was started in 2009, providing an opportunity for graduates and residents of the region to obtain a Master’s degree in Vidzeme. The logical continuation was the development of a doctoral programme to provide full-cycle higher education in business in the region. Doctoral programme “Economics and Entrepreneurship” is a joint programme developed by a consortium of higher education institutions of Latvia (Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, Rēzekne Academy of Technologies), which will allow to develop Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences into the centre of Vidzeme economic and business research. The programmes implemented in the Business Administration direction are based on the principle of additionality and continuity both within the study direction and ViA as an institution. At the undergraduate level, students are prepared for further studies at the postgraduate level. At the postgraduate level, professional business administration competencies and research skills are developed and further improved at the doctoral level.

Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes in accordance with the international accreditation assessment received in 2013, are characterized by high quality of studies, professionally and academically strong and motivated team of lecturers, wide involvement in research and approbation of research results in the study process. In general, students and graduates of both study programmes easily and successfully enter the labour market, as they establish good contacts in the field already during their studies and internship.

The socio-economic substantiation for the development of the study direction can be found in the government’s economic policy documents:

The **“Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030”** [1] (approved by the Saeima on 10.06.2010) defines the long-term development priorities of Latvia and recommends solutions for the effective and sustainable use of our cultural, natural, economic and social capital,

highlighting in particular Latvia's core value – human capital. As the number of people decreases and the population ages, it is important not to lower the base value of human capital and to increase its productivity. Investing in human capital is a long-term priority, and a paradigm shift in education is necessary to ensure that all potential human resources participate in the labour market, improve the services and efficiency of health, social care, social security and lifelong learning systems. High-quality, lifelong education focused on creativity is a necessity of the 21st century, enabling to respond to the challenges of global competition and demographics, and is one of the prerequisites for changing the economic model. Initiative and environment supporting entrepreneurship have to be at the heart of the innovative, eco-efficient and competitive economy. Support for the generation and commercialization of new ideas, knowledge transfer and user-driven research, world-class science, innovation and the transition to low-carbon and energy-intensive goods and services, renewable energy and technology development, healthy food and the commercialization of ecosystem services are only a part of the perspective directions of economic development. Upon implementing the polycentric development model of the country's territory, the potential of the development centres of national and regional importance and the role of cities have to be increased.

The necessity of the business administration direction programmes in the regions is also determined by the **“Guidelines on National Industrial Policy (NIP) for 2014-2020”** [2] (approved by the Cabinet on 28.06.2013), which emphasize the availability of labour force and the necessity for the education offer that corresponds to the development needs of the national economy, as well as the necessity to increase the capacity for innovation. Master-level business professionals are needed for the process of creation innovations and knowledge commercialization.

The content of the Bachelor's programme “Business Administration” and the Master's programme “Business Environment Administration” of the Business Administration direction is subordinate to and helps meet the implementation of the priorities “Growth of the National Economy” and “Territories Supporting Growth” of the National Development Plan for 2014-2020 [approved by the Saeima on 20.12.2012]. Competent and professional business managers are necessary to achieve the planned goals of the lines of action “Advanced Research, Innovation and Higher Education” and “Highly Productive and Exportable Manufacturing and Internationally Competitive Services” of the National Development Plan.

The **“National Reform Programme of Latvia for the Implementation of the “EU 2020 Strategy”**” [4] (NRP of Latvia) sets qualitatively new requirements for higher education, including business. The main idea of the “EU 2020” strategy is to create sustainable social market economy, where the welfare level is promoted through innovation and resource efficiency, with the main emphasis on knowledge. One of the key priorities of the “EU 2020” strategy is smart growth, which has to be based on the value creation by help of knowledge (education and research, innovation and creativity), besides, sustainable and inclusive growth cannot be achieved without training and involvement of business professionals, entrepreneurs and self-employed persons suitable for the labour market.

The NRP of Latvia supplements the **“Guidelines for the Development of Science, Technology and Innovation for 2014-2020”** [5] (approved by the Cabinet on 28.12.2013), which emphasize the insufficient cooperation and coordination between the institutions of science, technology development and innovation, higher education and industry within the context of smart economics, defining interconnection of science, technology and innovation with the needs of society and the national economy as one of the main lines of action. The study direction “Business Administration”

ensures a solution for one of the priorities – provision of knowledge base and human capital for smart specialization areas (including bioeconomy).

The “**Business Environment Improvement Action Plan for 2019-2022**” [6] (approved by the Cabinet on 22.05.2019) is based on the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS), which performs a comparative analysis of innovation performance indicators among the European Member States, regions and other countries. Latvia, compared to the average indicators of Lithuania, Estonia and the EU, performs poorer in the areas of “*Attractive Research System*”, it has poor performance in “*Enterprise Investments*”, “*Enterprise Innovation Capacity*”. The Action Plan for the Improvement of Business Environment emphasizes the necessity to increase competitiveness of the science, technology and innovation sector, to promote cooperation between science and industry, and to commercialize research results, which substantiates the current relevance of training high-level business specialists – masters and doctorates.

The **Sustainable Development Strategy of Vidzeme Planning Region until 2030** [7] defines the region’s priority goals in economics: to promote production of higher value-added products (including niche products) in the traditional sectors of the region; to diversify the region’s economy by developing entrepreneurship in areas related to existing specialization; development of new business areas in the area of knowledge economy. The programmes implemented within the business administration direction contribute to the achieving of the above goals, as well as correspond to the areas of smart specialization of Vidzeme region.

National planning documents foresee a new approach to the development of science and innovation policy as the key factor for economic growth and sustainable development – science, technology development and innovation system in synergy with the organizations involved in knowledge and technology transfer – public authorities of political and administration level, research and knowledge transfer institutions, businesses – and infrastructure support tools. One of the lines of action is advanced research, innovation, higher education. Education should be of high-quality throughout life, and it should promote creativity.

The programmes of the Business Administration direction meet the prior long-term objective, which involves reforms and improvements in the education system, providing high-quality opportunities of acquiring higher and vocational education, and significantly increasing the supply of highly qualified professionals to the labour market.

The latest EU policies on higher education are reflected in the documents of Ministerial Conference in Paris (2018) (http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/77/1/EHEAParis2018_Communique_final_952771.pdf), where it is concluded that, in a globalized world, higher education is the key to the future welfare, peace and progress of the EU. Higher education strategies need to promote **innovation, internationalization and digitalisation** in order to enable citizens to develop in an increasingly competitive and knowledge-based economy. The European Commission will take initiatives to create a single European education area by 2025. The Rome Ministerial Conference (2020) (http://www.ehea.info/Upload/Rome_Ministerial_Communique.pdf) puts socially inclusive, innovative and the creation of an interconnected European Higher Education Area. The content and implementation of business management study programs are based on the higher education priorities indicated in the mentioned strategic documents.

The necessity of the study direction implementation is determined by the economic development and integration of the country and region in the European Union (EU) and the global market. The changing business environment places new demands on entrepreneurs and managers, and changes in the knowledge economy require appropriate knowledge, skills and competencies in the area of business administration.

The professional Bachelor's study programme is compared with the study programmes of the Latvian higher education institutions – "Entrepreneurship" of Rēzekne Academy of Technologies and "Business Administration" of the BA School of Business and Finance – as well as with two study programmes of the European higher education institutions which are accredited in accordance with the EQUIS and EPAS requirements, i.e., the study programme "Economics and Business" of the University of Amsterdam and the study programme "Betriebswirtschaftslehre" of the University of Mannheim.

Comparing the study programme of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences with the study programmes of the University of Amsterdam (UA) and the University of Mannheim (UM) the following common aspects and differences are found:

Common aspects

- All of the above study programmes prepare specialists in the field of entrepreneurship, enabling them to continue studies in the Master's programme;
- All study programmes include compulsory courses, semi-elective courses and elective courses; the main groups of the study courses are similar in all study programmes;
- There are courses that develop students' abilities to operate in an entrepreneurial environment;
- Both study programmes use similar study methods – study papers, reports, presentations, examinations;
- There are study courses which provide for a possibility to acquire research and analytical skills;
- Bachelor's thesis is the main research paper.

Different aspects

- Duration of the study programmes is different: ViA – 4 years, UA – 3 years and UM – 3 years; the amount of the study programmes in CP is different: ViA – 240 ECTS, while UA and UM – 180 ECTS;
- UA and UM study programme graduates receive an academic Bachelor's degree in business, while ViA graduates receive a Bachelor's degree and a professional qualification;
- Professional internship is not compulsory in the UA study programme, it is optional; internship is not planned in the UM study programme; ViA students are required to do internship of 20 weeks;
- The UA study programme places significant emphasis on academic-research work, while the ViA study programme focuses on applied research;
- ViA study courses are mostly of a narrow specialization, while UA and UM study courses are broader, thus there are less study courses in UA and UM.

Comparing the study programme "Entrepreneurship" of Rēzekne Academy of Technologies and the study programme "Business Administration" of the BA School of Business and Finance, it can be concluded that they are very similar: some study courses have different CP amount due to different goals and tasks of the study programmes. Both higher education institutions are ViA partners.

Common aspects

- Duration of full-time studies (4 years/8 semesters)
- Degree and qualification to be awarded
- Division of study programme content into Parts A, B, C

- Similar general and basic theoretical courses of the field
- Elective courses offer students an opportunity to take courses from other faculties
- Internship is broken down by semesters
- All study programmes include methodology of scientific research

Different aspects

- Duration of the programme (4-5 years) depending on the type of studies; implementation form of studies – RAT has full-time and part-time studies, the BA School of Business and Finance – day and evening form of full-time studies
- The professional study programme of RAT provides the following specializations: tourism and hotel business administration, marketing sector administration, administration of commercial services; the BA School of Business and Finance and ViA programmes have no specialization modules
- Differences in the courses are due to programme specialization and professional orientation
- The BA School of Business and Finance has a broader range of entrepreneurship courses than ViA, which, in turn, has a number of entrepreneurship-related courses within the professional specialization courses of the programme which the BA School of Business and Finance does not have. The content of the BA School of Business and Finance courses focuses on international business and law. The following courses have larger amount in CP: English, banking finances and social entrepreneurship. RAT has developed 4 modules of specialization courses, including Latvian language courses, while ViA has different modules of Part B elective courses which focus on creating innovation, retail and wholesale management, as well as courses which integrate digital skills
- BA School of Business and Finance and RAT provide for longer internship in amount of 26 CP; ViA – 20 CP

International comparison

The Master's programme in Business Environment Administration was compared with the Master's programme *Marketing* (Master of Science in Marketing) of Aarhus School of Business of Aarhus University (Denmark) and with the Master's programme *International Business Administration* (Master of Arts in Social Sciences) of Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia), the Master's programme *Management* (Master of Business Administration) of Westminster Business School of University of Westminster (UK), as well as with the Master's programme *Business Administration* (Professional Master's Degree in Business and Organization Administration) of the BA School of Business and Finance. International comparison of BEA was essential to meet the highest standards of business education.

Common aspects

- The content and name of the programmes follow the standard of the International Master's Degree in Business Administration
- The programmes focus on acquiring business research methods

Different aspects

- Duration of studies; Westminster Business School – 1 year, Aarhus Business School – 1.5 years, Tallinn University of Technology – 2 years.
- Different degree – Master of Science in Marketing (Aarhus University), Master of Business Administration (University of Westminster), Master of Arts in Social Sciences (Tallinn University of Technology), Professional Master's Degree in Business (BEA)

- No internship in foreign universities, the programme of Westminster University offers an additional opportunity to do internship (6-12 ECTS), while it is compulsory in the BEA programme
- BEA content in terms of courses is similar to the programme of Tallinn University of Technology; the programme of University of Westminster emphasizes strategic management of the organization, while the Master's programme of Aarhus University has specialization in marketing. Foreign programmes have courses with higher CP amount, while BEA has smaller courses in terms of CP, but with a greater variety of courses and current trends.

The greatest similarity of the BEA study programme is with the study programme Business Administration of the BA School of Business and Finance, which is largely determined by the regulatory framework.

A common aspect is the duration of studies (1.5 and 2 years) depending on previous education, courses have similar content, duration of internship, final paper – Master's thesis.

Differences:

- The BA School of Business and Finance awards professional Master's degree and academic Master's degree in the programme, while ViA awards a professional Master's degree in the BEA programme
- The BA School of Business and Finance graduates receive a qualification Company and Organization Manager, while BEA programme graduates receive a qualification Company Manager
- The BA School of Business and Finance integrates international aspects in business, finance, project management, law courses of the programme, emphasizing business sustainability and competitiveness, while ViA offers Part B courses to enhance business export and business cooperation (Export Marketing, Business Networking and B2B modules).

The BEA Master's programme corresponds to the international Master's degree – *Master of Business Administration* – in terms of its content, as evidenced by the comparison with the programmes of Estonian, Danish and UK universities, two of which are ViA partner universities (Tallinn University of Technology and Aarhus University). The programme of the BA School of Business and Finance focuses more on international business aspects in comparison to the BEA programme, however, differences in content are minimal.

The international comparison confirms that the study programme content of the Business Administration direction corresponds to the internationally recognized Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (BBA) and Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA).

Advantages and uniqueness of the programmes of Business Administration direction

- It is the only set of the full-cycle professional higher education programmes in business administration offered by the State higher education institution in Vidzeme region. Launching a doctoral programme will provide research support to entrepreneurs and local governments in the region regarding solving entrepreneurship issues, achieving synergy between science and practice.
- Names and content of the study programmes of the direction (Business Administration, Business Environment Administration) and the degrees to be awarded ensure compliance with the globally recognized standard of business administration education, making them internationally recognizable.
- The Master's programme Business Environment Administration is the only one in the country

that prepares company managers with a broader, global view on business environment processes, and is one of the few Master's programmes that is continually taught in English.

- Study programmes offer balanced proportions of theoretical knowledge and practice, interdisciplinary content – business content integrates information and communication skills and incorporates digital solutions provided by collaboration between the study directions represented at ViA.
- Students of the Business Administration direction are provided with opportunities to gain wide range of international experience: studies are implemented in an international environment (exchange students participate in the classes, guest lectures and courses delivered by the guest professors on a regular basis), extensive study and internship opportunities at the higher education institutions and companies of the European Union and partner countries, participation in research projects.
- Students as full-fledged members are involved in business projects and research (BizLab, Nobanet, State Research Programmes, etc.)
- During studies, business establishing is stimulated and supported – within the framework of the direction (in cooperation with Valmiera Business Incubator) a pre-incubation platform is set up and developed (joining Valmiera Business Incubator, participating in business, innovation, internship laboratories, business plan and business idea competitions, etc.)
- A carefully developed internship programme and successful cooperation with employers ensure acquisition of diverse aspects of entrepreneurship and integration into the labour market (internship at JSC “Valmieras stikla šķiedra”, JSC “Valpro”, LLC “Metāla alliance”, JSC “Swedbank”, JSC “Valmieras piens”, LLC “Liepkalni”, State Revenue Service, JSC “Latvenergo”, LLC “Cēsu alus”, local governments of Cēsis, Limbaži, Valmiera etc.
- Students of the Business Administration study programme obtain a certificate of accounting and business management system Tildes Jumis, which is a significant advantage in the labour market and upon starting business
- The planned development direction for 2021-2025 and the niche of specialization is bioeconomy and eco-entrepreneurship – within the research project, study courses are developed and approbated together with the partners from the Nordic countries (Sweden, Finland), methodology of entrepreneur training is developed. The project results will be integrated into the Bachelor's and Master's programmes as individual courses, parts of the courses, as well as included in the preincubation platform activities.
- Specialization in bioeconomy is evidenced by the participation and involvement in the Latvian food bioeconomy cluster, which unites entrepreneurs of Vidzeme region.
- The Business Administration direction is represented in and is a member of BUSINET – a global business education network – that provides ample opportunities for lecturers to improve their qualifications and build international partnerships, and for students to engage in global activities for business students. Students can receive BUSINET Certificates of International Business Practice (CIBP) for their achievements in international cooperation promotion.

The programmes of the Business Administration direction correspond to the prior long-term task of reforming and improving the education system, providing high-quality higher and professional education possibilities, and increasing the supply of highly qualified professionals to the labour market

[1] <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/3323> (only in latvian)

[2] <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/4391> (only in latvian)

[3] <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/4247> (only in latvian)

[4] <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/4294> (only in latvian)

[5] <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/4608> (only in latvian)

[6] <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/6463> (only in latvian)

[7] Sustainable Development Strategy of Vidzeme Planning Region until 2030. Resource is available at: https://issuu.com/vidzemesplanosanasregions/docs/03_vidzeme_eng

1.2. Aims of the study direction and their compliance with the scope of activities of the higher education institution/ college, the strategic development directions, as well as the needs and the development trends of the society and the national economy.

The Business Administration study direction plays a special role in the development of Vidzeme region by providing business administration specialists to the companies of the region, State and municipal institutions, thus facilitating setting-up and development of the private business in the region. The development of the study direction fits into the overall ViA strategy (Strategy of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences for 2016-2020^[1]) on the development of the study process, science and research, as well as in the development vision of the region (Sustainable Development Strategy of Vidzeme Planning Region until 2030.^[2]) The Business Administration direction represents the only set of professional higher education programmes in the region that is implemented by the State higher education institution.

Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences has three strategic priorities: education, science and knowledge transfer and idea leadership.

The Business Administration direction, first of all, is under the priority "Education", which aims at providing a modern and high quality research-based education offer that meets the demand and forecasts of the labour market and complies with good international practice. The main task of the study direction is to achieve this goal. It is also important to implement the goal of the priority "Science" – to provide research environment and research results in compliance with international criteria, which are used for solutions of specific problems (innovations), high-quality scientific publications and transfer of research results into educational programmes and the national economy, as it is not possible to reach the educational goal without research. This goal mostly refers to the implementation of the doctoral programme. The priority "Knowledge Transfer and Idea Leadership" aims to ensure the knowledge transfer from ViA and its partner institutions to the collaboration partners, promotion of ViA values and ideas, as well as the Business Administration study direction of Vidzeme region plays a special role in the development of Vidzeme region by providing business administration specialists to the companies, State and municipal institutions of the region, thus facilitating setting-up and development of the private business in the region.

The development of the study direction fits into the overall ViA strategy (Strategy of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences for 2016-2020^[3]) on the development of the study process, science and research, as well as in the development vision of the region (Sustainable Development Strategy of Vidzeme Planning Region for 2030^[4]). The Business Administration direction represents the only set of professional higher education programmes in the region that is implemented by the State higher education institution.

Vidzeme University College has three strategic priorities: education, science and knowledge transfer and idea leadership.

The Business Administration direction, first of all, is under the priority “Education”, which aims at providing a modern and high quality research-based education offer that meets the demand and forecasts of the labour market and complies with good international practice. The main task of the study direction is to achieve this goal. It is also important to implement the goal of the priority “Science” – to provide research environment and research results in compliance with international criteria, which are used for solutions of specific problems (innovations), high-quality scientific publications and transfer of research results into educational programmes and the national economy, as it is not possible to reach the educational goal without research. This goal mostly refers to the implementation of the doctoral programme. The priority “Knowledge Transfer and Idea Leadership” aims to ensure the knowledge transfer from ViA and its partner institutions to the collaboration partners, promotion of ViA values and ideas, as well as the assuming the role of the intellectual leader of Vidzeme region in promoting the growth of the country and the region – reaching the common needs of the subordinate entrepreneurs, the region and the whole economy within the study direction.

Implementation of the study programmes of the study direction ensures implementation of ViA mission: to promote sustainable development of the knowledge society at the regional and national level, providing a private and public sector with high-level professionals, as well as conducting research to solve related public problems. These study programmes support also achievement of other strategic goals, such as providing high-quality lifelong learning opportunities for all, contributing to the personal and professional development of each individual.

In accordance with ViA Development Strategy for 2016-2020, there are three priorities defined for the development of the Business Administration study direction, specifying the strategic goal and directions of activity for each priority.

Priority 1: studies

Strategic goal –

- to provide internationally competitive higher education in the area of business administration in the State
- to become a center of entrepreneur training, business promotion and support in Vidzeme region
- export of business administration study programmes and business services

Priority 1 action lines:

- improvement of the study programmes and creation of new ones
- definition and positioning of the study direction niche in the higher education market
- attraction of international students to the BA programmes
- development of a cooperation platform with general and vocational education institutions in the region

Priority 2: research

Strategic goal –

- Direction as a research center for sustainable development of regional economy
- A platform for engaging postgraduate and doctoral students in research

Priority 2 - lines of action:

- increasing research capacity by attracting lecturers with a doctoral degree and increasing the number of those who have earned a doctoral degree
- research activities emphasizing the priority directions of regional development and the

interests of entrepreneurs

- developing student research skills through collaboration with lecturers in research projects

Priority 3: knowledge transfer

Strategic goal –

- Direction as a platform for business idea generation, business establishing and approbation of innovative solutions
- Networking with higher education institutions, other educational institutions, entrepreneurs and public sector for knowledge transfer and commercialization

Priority 3 - lines of action:

1. Deepening cooperation with the region's entrepreneurs and the public sector regarding development of the study content, assessment of students' professional competencies and implementation of innovative solutions in the field
2. Provision and development of a pre-incubation platform within the framework of the Knowledge and Technology Center projects, development of cooperation with Valmiera Business Incubator.

The study programme is highly competitive in Latvia, therefore the focus in future will be on improving the programme, finding its niche, and developing research, with special emphasis on the priority directions of regional development.

Recent labour market studies and forecasts of the Ministry of Economics on labour market development up to 2030 indicate that the supply of specialists with social and humanitarian education is currently exceeding the demand in the labour market, emphasizing that this tendency will remain in the future.

The latest “**Informative Report on Medium and Long-term Labour Market Forecasts**” [5] (2020) by the Ministry of Economy indicates that demand for the labour force will remain almost stable in the long term and will even decline in some sectors, as growth should be based mainly on productivity growth. This is particularly the case for marketable sectors and mainly manufacturing industries, with overall economic demand for labour in 2027 below the level of 2019 by 0.5%. In 2040, compared to 2019, labour demand will fall by 1.6%, which is due to a reduction in the number of employees between 2031 and 2040. Demand for digital skills will grow: by 2027, 85% of all jobs will need at least basic digital skills. Three sectors – commercial services, construction and manufacturing industries – will benefit from the increase in labour demand by 2027. The fastest increase in the number of employees is expected in commercial services. In the medium and long term, demand will grow mainly for high-skilled professionals, including managers: in 2027, demand for drivers will grow by 10.5% and by 11% in 2040. The demand in the labour market will result in an ageing population (32% of the employed in the top tier are currently under age 50). The situation and forecasts on the labour market are also greatly affected by the unpredictable COVID-19 pandemic.

The current situation in the labour market in Latvia shows that demand for business professionals is stable and will remain in the future. The European Commission's labour market portal EURES stresses that professional and not general secondary or academic education will be more demanding: 46% of all new vacancies plan to attract staff with vocational/vocational secondary education, while 14% of the total number of registered vacancies constitute high-skilled occupations (senior expert, client/sales consultant, project manager, senior rapporteur), sales specialist, tax specialist), which is in line

with the business leadership profile. [6] There will be a more rapid increase in demand for commercial services in the EU by 2030 (an expected increase of 11.6%), which will ensure future entry into the EU labour market. Demand for work force with digital skills and analytical thinking will grow.

The study programme has a special role in the development of Vidzeme region, as it prepares necessary business administration specialists for the companies of the region, State and municipal institutions, as well as facilitates setting up and development of private business. Provision of higher education in the region is related with lower costs, thus enabling more people in the region to study and obtain education; at the same time it prevents brain drain from the region and enhances intellectual capital.

Research ***“Compliance of Education Offered in Valmiera and Vidzeme Region with the Entrepreneurs’ Demand and Employment Prospects”*** ^[7] carried out by Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences in 2016 shows that development plans of the entrepreneurs in the region are related to modernization, brand strengthening and marketing improvement. There will be a need for people who promote collaboration among entrepreneurs, between entrepreneurs and research institutions, universities, such as business psychologists, mediators, customer experience creators, business engineers, intermediaries, the workforce agency or “headhunters”. Increasing numbers of micro-entrepreneurs and self-employed persons will create demand for the services of agents and intermediaries. There will be a growing demand for occupations that require the use of technology but also require the presence of human work/intellect. In the next 5-7 years, there will be a demand, most of all, for senior specialists and professionals of occupation groups, qualified workers, but the most demanded occupation group will be managers, who account for 15% of all new employees. Within the group of managers the most demanded will be sales, marketing and development managers, information and communication technology managers, managing directors and company managers, as well as managers in the area of manufacturing and mining, construction and logistics. Together, these four occupational subgroups account for 59% of all new managers. As for the sectors of the national economy, managers will be demanded most of all in manufacturing, wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, agriculture, forestry and fishery.

Since 2018 ViA study programmes are repeatedly included in the Top educational institutions and studies (TOP of schools and studies) recommended by the employers of the Employers' Confederation of Latvia (LDDK) and career portal *Prakse.lv*, where 2,654 companies from all sectors of the national economy were surveyed, confirming the need for specialists prepared by higher education institutions in all sectors. Demand for students of the Business Administration direction in the labour market is evidenced by the fact that occupations related to marketing, catering, customer service and manufacturing are among the most demanded after programmers and construction professionals^[8].

Research ***“Possibilities and preconditions for attracting human resources (including talents) to Valmiera city. Development of Citizen Attraction Strategy for Valmiera City”***^[9] carried out by ViA Institute of Social, Economic and Humanities (HESPI) in 2018 indicates the need for highly qualified specialists for the growth of Valmiera as the economic center of Vidzeme region.

The situation of sustainable development of the Business Administration direction and possible risks are analysed on a regular basis, future processes are forecasted and study programmes assessed, involving in these activities management, academic staff, researchers, students, graduates and business representatives in Latvia and abroad. Business experts from Vidzeme and other regions highlight the professional preparedness of graduates of the Business Administration direction as a particularly significant achievement, which is evidenced by the data of employment surveys of

graduates: from 2012 to 2018 the employment rate of the graduates of the Business Administration direction ranged from 86% to 100%, while the employment rate of the graduates of the Business Environment Administration direction ranged from 90% to 100%.

The Business Administration direction has established good cooperation with the largest employers in the region such as JSC "Valpro", JSC "Valmieras stikla šķiedra", LLC "Metal Alliance", JSC "Swedbank", LLC "Rozalinde", Trade Center "Valleta", Valmiera Business Incubator, State Revenue Service, local governments of Vidzeme Planning Region, etc., as evidenced by the offer of internships, interest in study programme implementation and material support.

Highly qualified lecturers are involved in the implementation of the Business Administration direction, which increase the intellectual capacity of Valmiera and the entire Vidzeme region and make it an attractive environment for active business and further investments, including for Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences. During the reporting period, lecturers of the Business Administration direction were involved in the activities of SAM 8.2.2. project *"Improvement and Development of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences Academic Staff"*, of which internship in amount of 200 hours in companies will be an invaluable benefit to the lecturers' professional development allowing to integrate business topicalities in the study process, as well as to provide closer links with entrepreneurs. Employers positively assess cooperation between lecturers and students in the field of applied research, project development, particularly emphasizing preparedness in financial and business administration, an emphasis is placed on research skills, as well as the ability to publicly present and defend research results.

According to the last survey of employers of the region, the following was indicated as the main advantages in the labour market: good theoretical and practical preparedness of the graduates, ability to orientate in the topicalities of the field, ability to apply theoretical knowledge in solving practical business situations. Entrepreneurs particularly appreciate graduates' experience gained abroad and good knowledge of foreign languages.

[1] Strategy of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences for 2016-2020. Resource is available at: https://va.lv/sites/default/files/Strategy_2016-2020.pdf

[2] Sustainable Development Strategy of Vidzeme Planning Region until 2030. Resource is available at: https://issuu.com/vidzemesplanosanasregions/docs/03_vidzeme_eng

[3] Strategy of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences for 2016-2020. Resource is available at: https://va.lv/sites/default/files/Strategy_2016-2020.pdf

[4] Sustainable Development Strategy of Vidzeme Planning Region until 2030. Resource is available at: <http://www.va.lv/lv/lapa/vidzemes-augstskolas-strategija>

[5] <https://www.em.gov.lv/en/informative-report-medium-and-long-term-labour-market-forecasts-0>

[6] European Commission. EURES. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?catId=2776&countryId=LV&acro=Imi&lang=lv®ionId=LV0&nuts2Code=%20&nuts3Code=®ionName=Valsts%20LC%ABmenis>

[7] Compliance of Education Offered in Valmiera and Vidzeme Region with the Entrepreneurs' Demand and Employment Prospects. Available at: https://www.valmiera.lv/images/userfiles/cits/Petijums_Darba_tirgus_01_02.pdf

[8] <https://www.prakse.lv/top>

[9] http://www.hespi.lv/sites/default/files/Nosleguma_zinojums_28_02_2019_compressed.pdf

1.3. SWOT analysis of the study direction with regard to the set aims by providing explanations on how the higher education institution/ college expects to eliminate/ improve weaknesses, prevent threats, and avail themselves of the given opportunities, etc. The assessment of the plan for the development of the study direction for the next six years and the procedure of the elaboration thereof. In case there is no development plan elaborated or the aims/ objectives are set for a shorter period of time, information on the elaboration of the plan for the development of the study direction for the next assessment period shall be provided.

In order to ensure successful implementation of the study direction programmes, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the Business Administration direction are assessed and the main development lines are outlined.

Strengths:

- Professional study programmes, the content of which ensures balanced academic and professional education, interdisciplinarity, contains current tendencies of the development of the national economy, region and sectors.
- Synergy of academic and research work, implementation of an interdisciplinary approach, emphasizing the variety of forms of independent work, engaging in research and solving of problems relevant to the sector and region.
- A vision of the development of the higher education institution, as well as principles of implementation of the study courses are based on environmentally friendly thinking.
- Internationalization and international study environment: mobility of lecturers and students, internship opportunities in foreign companies, participation in projects, conferences, student inclusion in an international study module that ensures interdisciplinarity and develops cooperation skills.
- Inclusion of the direction in the Businet – the Global Business Education Network – and a possibility for students to obtain European diplomas in business (Higher European Diploma Regulations – HED).
- Implementation of the Master’s and doctoral programme in English, increase of courses in English in the Bachelor’s programme open up opportunities for attracting international students, as well as ensure the intensity and practice of language use by students and lecturers.
- Modern study methods, use of IT tools and a student-centred approach in the study process.
- Highly loyal students and graduates, graduates return to ViA to continue acquiring and exchanging knowledge, both formally and informally, as employers and lecturers.
- Knowledge and professional competence of graduates ensure competitiveness in the labour market, besides, financial literacy is certified by LLC Tilde “Tildes Jumis” and SIA “Briox” international certificate.
- Education and professional qualification are highly prestige in the region, and there are good career possibilities.
- Support provided by local governments and entrepreneurs, and cooperation for the purposes of implementing study programmes in Vidzeme regional planning region.
- Favourable internal microclimate within the direction, faculty and ViA based on correct and businesslike relationships and mutual communication among the lecturers, as well as between lecturers and students.
- Appropriate conditions (infrastructure, staff support) for a creative and successful study process.

Weaknesses:

- There is a support system under development aimed at levelling applicants' knowledge and providing career support.
- Limited time and resource capacity, as well as heavy schedule of elected lecturers, problems to balance academic and scientific work and participation in projects.
- Insufficient involvement of lecturers in the preparation of teaching methodological materials for study courses and life-long education needs (high input in terms of labour, low financial return).
- Insufficient use of cooperation opportunities with Vidzeme planning region, business organizations and employers.
- Untapped opportunities to gain international experience within Erasmus+ mobility for lecturers and students.
- There is no inter-university cooperation and funding model for attracting high-level international academic staff.

Opportunities:

- Implementation of the Master's study programmes in English opens up opportunities for developing an export offer of studies (Eastern Europe, Central Asia).
- Development of a lifelong learning offer and involvement in projects implemented by the Knowledge and Technology Centre as a tool for collaboration with the field.
- Usage of the network of foreign partner universities to attract international students and lecturers.
- Improvement of the study programme content by integrating IT tools, increasing the number of English courses, and creating new modules for professional study courses.
- Involvement of lecturers in SAM 8.2.2. project which provides training in the following areas: digital skills, English language and leadership, while internship in commercial companies provides for an opportunity of professional development and collaboration with the field.
- Wider involvement of graduates in the implementation of the study programme and in the work of ViA consultative institutions.
- Expanding cooperation with businessmen in the region within the framework of advisory councils to ensure improvement of the study content and internship organization.
- Use of Valmiera Business Incubator services to ensure professional development of lecturers and to involve students in practical business activities, as well as to provide pre-incubation platform.
- the inter-university joint doctoral study programme – an incentive for research within the field and full use of lecturers' capacity, a support tool for entrepreneurs in the region.

Threats

- Lack of the State long-term education policy and inconsistency in implementation of short-term policy decisions, which contributes to the strengthening of stereotypes regarding the low quality of Latvian higher education in society, as well as creates uncertainty in the higher education space in Latvia and problems in attracting international students.
- Decrease of budget-financed places in social sciences, including Business Administration direction
- Relatively low solvency of the population in the region, which limits the number of potential students who have to pay tuition fee and increases a drop out rate due to financial considerations.
- Demographic situation making it difficult to form student groups.
- Decrease in the level of knowledge of secondary school graduates, poor psychological

preparation for studies and independent living.

- Limited financial possibilities for involving international lecturers and local highly qualified specialists of the field in the provision of the study process.

The identified strengths include conditions for further development of the field of study, which together with the use of skilled and purposeful opportunities allows to develop competitive professional study programs both at the national and international level.

Weaknesses include challenges that can be overcome by cooperating both in the fields of study and administration within the University, and by using university cooperation networks at the national and international level, as well as more fully involved in the work of business organizations and entrepreneurs in the study process. It is planned to eliminate the threat posed by the demographic situation by trying to update the study content and improve the qualification of lecturers by attracting foreign students, but alternative sources of funding (projects, business orders, municipal grants, attraction of foreign students) are sought.

The development plan of the study field is attached in the *annex 5.1.*, which is developed on the basis of SWOT analysis. The development plan is reviewed every year when a self-assessment report is prepared. The director of the study field in cooperation with the self-assessment development working group performs an analysis of the implementation of the development plan.

The Strategic Advisory Board of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences in cooperation with the Convention of Advisers is working on the development of a new higher education institution's strategy for 2021-2025, in the process of which a new development plan of the study direction will be elaborated in 2020 in accordance with the newly defined goals for strategic priorities.

The Business Administration study programmes follow the goals of the EU higher education and can successfully integrate into the EU higher education space by cooperating with entrepreneurs of the field and other cooperation partners, implementing effective HR policy and internationalization of the study process.

1.4. The structure of the management of the study direction and the relevant study programmes, and the analysis and assessment of the efficiency thereof, including the assessment of the role of the director of the study direction and the heads of the study programmes, their responsibilities, and the cooperation with other heads of the study programmes, as well as the assessment of the support by the administrative and technical staff of the higher education institution/ college provided within the study direction.

The direction of Business Administration is within the Faculty of Social Sciences and is under the administrative supervision of the Dean. The Faculty Council makes decisions on changes to the programmes, elects lecturers, approves visiting lecturers and the State Examination Commissions. Students' representatives from the study programmes implemented in the Faculty of Social Sciences actively participate in the Council.

[Refer to the annex for the management scheme of the Business Administration study direction \(see Annex 6\).](#)

Management of the Business Administration direction is carried out by the Study Council (the Council). The Council is the highest collegial decision-making body of the Business Administration direction and consists of elected representatives of the academic staff of the Faculty of Social

Sciences who work for the direction in accordance with the field and area of their professional activity.

The Council complies with the external laws and regulations, ViA Constitution, decisions of the Senate and other ViA internal regulations, orders and instructions of ViA Rector and Vice-Rectors, decisions of the General Meeting of the Faculty of Social Sciences, decisions of the Council of the Faculty of Social Sciences. The study direction council is chaired and convened by the head of the study direction, who acts in accordance with the Council Regulations.

The Council has a quorum if more than a half of the total number of the Council members is present in person or online. The Council adopts a decision if more than a half of the members present votes for it. Meetings of the Council are public and are held at least once in every two months. An extraordinary meeting of the study direction may be convened at the request of the head of the study direction, dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences or 1/3 of the Council members.

The Council reviews strategic changes to the study programmes, deals with internal quality assessment issues (self-assessment reports, questionnaires, etc.) and preparation for external assessment (licensing, accreditation). Reorganization or closure of the Council can only take place if all study programmes of the study direction are closed; closure may be initiated by the Council of the Faculty of Social Sciences or jointly by at least two thirds of the Council members. The decision to reorganize or close the Council is made by the Council of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The management structure ensures effective and democratic decision-making with the participation of students. Directors of the study directions regularly exchange information, they have meetings once a month, and they maintain regular communication with the dean of the faculty. Once a month, there are meetings of the BA study direction council which is attended by the elected lecturers of the study direction in accordance with the Council Regulations. The meetings are recorded in the minutes, and the director of the study direction ensures the exchange of information regarding decisions made within the study direction with the relevant structural units. Issues related to strategic changes to the study programmes, internal quality assessment and preparation for external assessment in accordance with the decision of the study direction council are referred by the director of the study direction to the faculty council and, if necessary, to ViA Senate. Direct supervision and operational management of the direction is carried out by the director of the study direction. The director of the study direction is supported by a study specialist.

Several structural units of ViA support implementation of the study programmes of the study direction. Below is a detailed description of each structural unit and its tasks in the implementation of the study programme.

Institute of Social, Economic and Humanities Research

The Institute of Social, Economic and Humanities Research (hereinafter – HESPI) is a structural unit of ViA established by the decision of ViA Senate on 25 September 2013. HESPI is registered with the Register of Scientific Institutes of the Republic of Latvia on 28 November 2013. The main research directions of the Institute are as follows:

- Sustainable development of the national economy,
- Sustainable tourism, micro-niches in tourism,
- Development of protected nature and cultural territories,
- Cultural space and development of cultural identity sites,
- Latvian social security system,
- Social investment,
- Innovation management,
- Science communication,

- Online communication and online media,
- Regional development (interaction between rural and urban environments).

Socio-Technical Systems Engineering Institute

ViA Socio-Technical Systems Engineering Institute was founded in July 2006. Research directions:

- Logistics information systems and RFID technologies;
- Business process modelling;
- Modelling of hybrid imitation systems;
- Use of virtual and augmented reality in training.

ViA study process is supported by the **Administrative Department**. There are seven main functions and tasks of the department: study administration, international cooperation administration, IT infrastructure coordination, ViA operational management, financial management and accounting, marketing and public relations, as well as document management and circulation, and internal communication. A detailed description of each function is given below.

Study administration:

- to plan, organize and administer study processes: student admission, planning of the academic year, planning of study places funded by the State budget, student registration, rotation, scholarships, reports to external cooperation partners;
- to ensure maintenance and development of the study information system;
- to manage and organize study record keeping and to ensure circulation, registration and archiving of study records;
- to maintain a database of graduates and conduct graduate surveys;

International Cooperation Administration:

- to organize ViA international activities in cooperation with academic and scientific prorectors and faculties;
- to ensure international mobility of ViA students, international students and staff;
- to establish and maintain ViA international cooperation partner network;

IT infrastructure coordination - systems, servers, computer networks, computers:

- to install and configure new hardware, including servers;
- to repair and maintain computer hardware;
- to equip ViA lecture-rooms with the equipment necessary for the study process;
- to ensure independent and qualitative operation of ViA computer network and to establish new connections of the existing computer network;
- to promote professional development of ViA staff in IT issues;
- to ensure protection of ViA information systems against third party intrusion;

ViA operational management and maintenance of the material and technical base:

- to maintain and repair electric power system, heating system, water and sewerage systems, ventilation and air conditioning systems, fire safety, alarm and notification systems;
- to ensure purchase and production of household goods, equipment and furniture for ViA needs;
- to provide record keeping, installation and maintenance of inventory and furniture;
- to ensure cleaning and improvement of ViA buildings, their premises and plots of land,

including preparation of study premises for lectures;

- to run a hostel;
- to ensure compliance with the requirements of the regulations of establishment, labour protection and ViA internal regulations in ViA buildings;

Financial management and accounting:

- to develop ViA draft budget and submit it to ViA Senate for approval;
- to control rational use of ViA's financial resources;
- to analyze ViA financial indicators;
- to keep record of the use of ViA funds in accordance with the approved estimates, as well as of liabilities and claims according to the laws and other regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia;
- to control the acquisition, use and management of material resources;
- to ensure organization and documentation of procurement procedures.

Marketing and public relations:

- to implement internal and external communication;
- to develop and implement ViA brand, marketing and PR strategy and operational plan;
- to coordinate ViA marketing activities by cooperating with various ViA structural units, other public and municipal entities and private entrepreneurs;
- to organize and participate in ViA marketing events in Latvia and abroad;

Organizing ViA documentation management and circulation and ensuring internal communication:

- to organize and manage circulation of documents at ViA, ensuring record keeping, registration of documents, preparation of orders, powers of attorney, statements, drafts of outgoing documents;
- to provide support to ViA management and staff in record keeping matters;
- to archive documents.

Library

Main functions and tasks of the library:

- to conduct planning for the development of the Library stock;
- to provide the ViA academic and scientific research process with media from the Library Collection and through an Interlibrary subscription from libraries in Latvia and abroad;
- to store and systemise information on ViA history.
- to cooperate with headquarters and teaching staff;
- to coordinate the provision of the academic process with library resources;
- to build the Library's stock according to the directions of ViA's studies and scientific work, the requirements of the study directions, by co-operating and coordinating resources in cooperation with the Valmiera Library;
- to stockpile, systematise, catalogue, librarise and preserve printed publications, electronic publications, handwritings and other documents;
- to provide the library collection, including the availability of electronic databases for the implementation of independent studies and research;
- to make and develop a database of the original papers of ViA academic staff and students;
- to advise ViA academic staff and students regarding the use of informative resources.

Rectorate – Rector, Academic and Science Pro-Rector, Administrative Pro-Rector, Assistant Rector – Scientific Secretary, Lawyer – Personnel Specialist. Main functions and tasks of the rectorate:

- strategic management of ViA;
- ViA personnel management;
- legal aid;
- science management;
- development, management and monitoring of projects.

Knowledge and Technology Centre (KTC)

Main functions and tasks of the KTC:

- to promote knowledge transfer, applied research and the development of ViA infrastructure through the funding of projects at regional, national and international level;
- to cooperate with education service providers in Vidzeme region to ensure that education is accessible and offered to all target groups, by bringing together the legal and natural persons involved in adult education, promoting their activities and cooperation to achieve the goal of KTC;
- to develop and maintain cooperation with other educational and scientific institutions in Vidzeme region by offering their services in the field of knowledge and technology transfer;
- to establish and maintain contacts with partners in the private, public and non-governmental sector and to promote feedback with ViA;
- to operate within the networks of the lifelong learning partners: universities, scientific institutions, entrepreneurs, associations, adult education centres and Alumni.

1.5. Description and assessment of the requirements and the system for the admission of students by specifying, inter alia, the regulatory framework of the admission procedures and requirements. The assessment of the study period, professional experience, and the options for the students to have their previously acquired formal and non-formal education recognised within the study direction by providing specific examples of the application of these procedures.

Admission criteria to ViA study programmes are approved by ViA Senate, which, in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia, approves admission requirements to ViA undergraduate and postgraduate programmes by November 1. Upon applying for admission to the undergraduate programmes, the applicant or his/her authorized representative should complete an application and present a passport or ID card, a certificate of secondary education, certificates of centralized examinations specified in the admission regulations, documents permitting admission beyond competition if a specific criterion is specified in the regulations ([see Annex 7](#)).

Upon applying for postgraduate programmes, the applicant or his/her authorized representative should fill in an application and present a passport or ID card, a document of higher education, as well as documents stated in the programme requirements ([see Annex 7](#)).

International applicants should additionally present a certificate of English proficiency in internationally recognized examinations *TOEFL* (minimum 500 points for the test taken on-the-spot and 70 points for the online test), *IELTS* (minimum 6.0 points) or other evidence of English language proficiency. If previous education is acquired in English, evidence of English language proficiency is not required. In addition, a statement from the Latvian Academic Information Centre on the compliance of the education obtained abroad with the requirements of the admission regulations

should be submitted.

It is possible to apply for the first-year undergraduate studies at ViA electronically in the Information System of Single Admission to Undergraduate Programmes (*VUPP IS*) through the e-service on the portal www.latvija.lv. It is possible to apply for the postgraduate study programmes, using ViA electronic questionnaire magistri.va.lv, while applications for the doctoral programme are accepted in person.

In accordance with the Cabinet Regulations No. 932, it is possible to start studies at ViA at a later study stages, subject to the requirements of the regulations regarding the mandatory amount of credit points, which is equalized to the content of ViA study programmes. Recognition of study results obtained in previous education is a regular procedure for any student who has started studies at a later stage and who, in accordance with international cooperation agreements, has studied for a period of studies (one to two semesters) at a foreign university. In this case, the comparison of study results is performed by the director of the study program, when the student has submitted the supporting documents (academic certificate or diploma with a diploma supplement for previously obtained higher education). The equivalence of study results with the study results obtained within the framework of the international exchange program is performed on the basis of the university cooperation agreement, the tripartite study agreement (Erasmus learning agreement) and the certificate on the acquired study courses.

In accordance with the Cabinet Regulations No.505, every person has the right to submit an application to ViA for recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired in previous education or professional experience in the study programme implemented by the higher education institution or part thereof. Information on recognition of non-formal education or professional experience is also available on the ViA website (information on the website is available in Latvian, the regulations in English are available in *Annex 9*). The study results achieved by a person while studying (the student has been matriculated) in the study program are recognized in accordance with the Cabinet Regulation No. 932 of 16 November 2004 "Procedure for Starting Studies in Later Study Stages".

The decision on the recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education or acquired in professional experience, as well as on the recognition of study results achieved in previous education is made by the Study Results Recognition Commission established by ViA. In accordance with the Regulations on the Recognition of Competences Acquired Outside Formal Education or Professional Experience and Learning Outcomes Achieved in Previous Education (see *Annex 8*), a person must submit an application for recognition of knowledge, skills and competences. The procedure for recognition of study results is described in the above-mentioned regulations.

Information about ViA study directions and study programmes is published on ViA website www.va.lv. ViA Administrative Department (Marketing Group and Study Administration Group) is responsible for publishing the information.

[Refer to the annex for ViA admission rules \(see Annex 7\).](#)

[Refer to the annex for ViA regulations on the recognition of competences acquired outside formal education or through professional experience and on the recognition of learning outcomes achieved in previous education \(see Annex 8\).](#)

1.6. Assessment of the methods and procedures for the evaluation of students' achievements, as well as the principles of their selection and the analysis of the compliance of the evaluation methods and procedures with the aims of the study programmes and the needs of the students.

ViA has the **Study Regulations** approved by the Senate, which define the procedure for the implementation of study programmes, the rights and obligations of students, the procedure for financing studies and the general procedure for organizing state examinations. ViA Study Regulations define the criteria, forms and terms of students' knowledge assessment, conditions for academic debts, etc. requirements for achieving study results. Descriptions of the study courses and other programme components define requirements for the commencement of studies, goals and planned learning outcomes, outline the content necessary for achieving learning outcomes, a study calendar, compulsory and additional literature, and other sources of information, describe organization and tasks of students' independent work, define criteria for evaluation of learning outcomes and performance evaluation. The criteria, conditions and methods published in the course descriptions are used to assess the results achieved by the students, and they are applied consistently. To provide guidelines for the procedure of writing and defending student annual projects and State examination papers **Methodological Guidelines** for the development, formatting and defence of annual projects, Bachelor's and Master's theses or Qualification papers are developed and approved. The composition of the State Examination Commission is approved by the Faculty Council; specialists/experts of the field are included in the commission and they act in accordance with the study programme methodological guidelines for the development of the State examination papers. Internship, in its turn, is governed by the **Internship Regulations**, which determine the process of internship, conditions for preparation and defence of reports.

The diversity of student needs is respected during the study process at ViA by choosing appropriate learning approaches. ViA uses innovative teaching methods and implements an individual approach. Study programme directors make sure that the lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme are familiar with the methods of assessing learning outcomes and receive support for the development of their skills in this area; assessment criteria and methods, as well as evaluation criteria are made public in advance; an assessment provides for a possibility to show the extent to which students have achieved learning outcomes; students receive feedback from the lecturers who provide advice on the study and research process, if necessary; assessing is consistent, fair to all students and is carried out in accordance with the approved course descriptions. Appropriate procedures – ViA **Study Regulations** and the **Ethics Regulations** – are in place for resolving student complaints.

Students can get acquainted with the documentation on the criteria, conditions and binding procedures for the assessment of student progress on learning environment *moodle.va.lv*: <https://moodle.va.lv/course/index.php?categoryid=49> (only in latvian)

Refer to the annex for ViA Study Regulations (see Annex 9).

Refer to the annex for ViA Regulations of Ethics and the Ethics Violation Scheme (see Annex 10).

Refer to the annex for the course descriptions of ViA study programmes, internship regulations and methodological guidelines for writing academic papers can be viewed in the report next to the description of each study program.

1.7. Description and assessment of the academic integrity principles, the mechanisms for the compliance with these principles, and the way in which the stakeholders are informed. Specify the plagiarism detection tools used by providing examples of the use of these tools and mechanisms.

In 2017, ViA revised and approved the new Regulations of Ethics, which emphasize the importance of ViA's ethical values and the environment that promotes morally responsible behaviour. The Regulations contain the basic ethical principles and norms that ViA personnel (students, academic and general staff) must observe in their attitude towards ViA, in their work, in their relations with other ViA representatives and society. One of the basic principles is respect for academic and research ethics. In this regard, ViA staff is determined to treat the study and research process and those involved therein with integrity. In academic and scientific research, the staff respects copyright, intellectual property, work results of others, and guarantees the truthfulness of the data used and analysis performed in research. Independence from sponsors is an important principle, and it is necessary to recognize the contribution of all persons involved in research. In accordance with ViA Regulations of Academic Ethics, an Academic Ethics Commission is established, consisting of two representatives of the academic staff nominated by each Faculty Council and one student representative. The composition of the Council is approved by ViA Senate for a term of two years. In general, ViA has a strategically chosen approach to prevent violations of academic integrity. Lecturers are introduced to the principles of academic integrity upon commencing employment relationships with ViA. Students are introduced to the principles of academic integrity and other aspects mentioned in the Code of Ethics during the introductory studies, as well as the principles of academic integrity are acquired and potential risk cases are analyzed within the framework of the courses "Research Methodology" and "Business Ethics". The students also get acquainted with international practice in "Business Ethics" as the lecturer is from Slovakia. Each study course description contains a reference to the principles of academic ethics, and they are updated at the beginning of the course, scientific supervisors of the annual projects and the State examination papers emphasize and follow the basic principles of ethics during the process of developing the research papers.

At the end of the study year, within the BA direction, a situation is analyzed regarding compliance with the academic and research ethics during the development of annual projects, Bachelor's and Master's theses. Any unclear situation or detected violation is first discussed with the lecturer and the head of the direction is informed thereof. If an ethics violation is found, it is considered at the meeting of the direction council and the Ethics Commission, which makes the final decision.

Starting from 2017, ViA has entered into the agreement with the University of Latvia on the use of the *Unified Computerized Plagiarism Control System*, one of ViA's essential anti-plagiarism tools. According to the order issued every semester regarding submission of the final papers, students have to upload their papers to the study information system LAIS, which is synchronized with the plagiarism control system. In situations where a lecturer has suspects regarding student's paper, the plagiarism control system is also used to check course papers or annual projects.

[Refer to the annex for ViA Regulations of Ethics and the Ethics Violation Scheme \(see Annex 10\).](#)

1.8. Specify the websites (e.g. the homepage) on which the information on the study direction and the relevant study programmes is published (in all languages in which the study programmes are implemented) by indicating the persons responsible for the

compliance of the information available on the website with the information published in the official registers.

Information about ViA study directions and study programmes is published on ViA website www.va.lv. ViA Administrative Department (Marketing Group and Study Administration Group) is responsible for publishing information.

II - Description of the Study Direction (2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System)

2.1. Assessment of the efficiency of the internal quality assurance system within the study direction by specifying the measures undertaken to achieve the aims and outcomes of the study programmes and to ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction and the relevant study programmes.

The internal quality system of ViA and thus of the study programmes implemented within the BA study field is based on the European and national legislation, which defines the basic principles of higher education development. The following text provides an overview of the various aspects of the quality assurance system specifically in the BA study field.

ViA has developed and approved the Development Strategy for 2016-2020, which envisages striving for excellence and competitiveness in education, striving for excellence and competitiveness in science and research, as well as striving for knowledge transfer and investment in regional development. The strategy provides for a number of measures to ensure the quality and standards of the study programmes and degrees to be awarded; the above standards are also complied with within the BA study field. Administrative and accounting control over the study programmes implemented in the study field is exercised by the Faculty of Social Sciences. The Faculty of Social Sciences regularly (once a month) decides on topical issues of the study field at the meetings of the Faculty Council. The Faculty Council approves self-assessment reports of study programmes, changes to the study programme, makes decisions on announcing vacancies for academic staff, and assesses candidates. The development of the study field is assessed every year during the development and discussion of the self-assessment report both within the study field at the faculty level and also in the ViA Senate. ViA has approved a number of documents that determine the relationships between teaching and research, institution's quality and requirement strategy, as well as the organization of the quality assurance system. A regulation has been developed on the quality assurance responsibility of faculties, study fields and other structural units and persons, as well as on students' participation in quality assurance, and on the ways of implementing, monitoring and adjusting the quality policy. These documents are binding on the operation of the BA study field and are to be observed in daily work. Students are informed about the internal normative regulations binding on the BA study field in the introductory studies and also later during the study process. Students receive information on their rights and possibilities to participate in the development and implementation of the ViA development policy. Students participate in the work of the Faculty Council and the Senate. Every semester the director of the study field meets with the students, ViA students' self-government also implements its activities,

delegates its candidates to the elections of the ViA Senate and Constitutional Assembly, organizes a meeting with ViA rector and/or study field directors, if necessary. Every year, ViA conducts a survey to find out student opinion on the following: compliance of the study programmes implemented at ViA with the student's views, the quality of study programmes, provision of information and availability of the material and technical base, the quality of academic staff, the quality of international cooperation, etc. Survey results are analyzed and assessed, as well as decisions on various changes and improvements are made on the basis of them. Answers received are used for planning development and improvement of ViA operation. Within the study field, the director of the field meets with the students of all programmes twice an academic year and discusses and talks over various topical issues, listens to the student opinion and recommendations. Each group of students also selects annually the head of the group who coordinates cooperation and communication between the group of students and the director of the BA study field. All of the above activities are ways to get in-depth feedback from students, to plan and make various changes regarding course planning by semesters, involvement of lecturers in teaching specific courses, enlarging library collections, and other aspects related to the organization of studies and quality assurance.

ViA also conducts a graduate survey on an annual basis. The main purpose is to document satisfaction of graduates with the education acquired immediately after graduation, as well as to collect data on graduate employment. The survey is conducted a year after graduation. In general, it must be said that there is a tendency for graduates of Bachelor's programmes implemented in the BA study field to integrate successfully into the labour market and to practice their professions. Surveys on graduate employment should also be conducted after a longer interval of time in order to analyze graduate career dynamics, professional development in the chosen field over a longer period of time. However, this would require additional investments from the part of ViA, therefore, data collection takes place at the level of study fields as far as possible through maintaining contacts between lecturers, study field directors and graduates on social media, meeting them at public events, etc. One of the factors that could be assessed as graduate professional growth (and to a large extent also satisfaction with the education acquired) is the active involvement of graduates in the study process after graduation, which can take various forms – conducting guest lectures, offering research topics and internship possibilities, and other forms of involvement. It should be noted that graduates are lecturers of the BA study field, they participate in the work of the Advisory Council of the BA study field, they are active entrepreneurs and are involved in providing internship.

Refer to Part I, Section 1.3.

2.2. Analysis and assessment of the system and the procedures for the development and review of the study programmes by providing specific examples of the procedures for the development of new study programmes within the study direction (including the approval of study programmes), the review of the study programmes, the aims, and regularity, as well as the stakeholders and their responsibilities. Description of the mechanism for obtaining and providing a feedback, including with regard to the work with the students, graduates, and employers.

Development, approval and updating of ViA study programmes and components thereof take place in accordance with the established procedures for development, approval, monitoring and updating of study programmes, lifelong learning courses, and other educational programmes and

components thereof. The programmes and their components are developed to meet the objectives, which, in their turn, are in line with the ViA strategy. Programmes are developed using the vision of external stakeholders and in such a way as to meet the defined study results and their learning outcomes in accordance with the Latvian and European Qualifications Framework, and to promote achieving of higher education goals – personal growth and employment, building of civil society and an expanded knowledge base. ViA has in place the Study Regulations approved by the Senate, which determine the procedure for the implementation of study programmes, the rights and obligations of students, the procedure for financing studies, and the general procedure for organizing State examinations. Descriptions of the study courses and other programme components define the requirements for starting the studies, set the implementation goals and planned study results, outline the content, calendar, compulsory literature, additional literature and other sources of information for achieving study results, describe student independent work organization and tasks, and determine criteria for assessment of study results. All the above documents and procedures are complied with in the BA study field. During the last accreditation period, a new study programme was developed in the BA study field – a joint doctoral programme of three Latvian higher education institutions, in the establishment of which ViA's internal and external regulatory enactments were observed. In the beginning of 2020, the doctoral programme received a license allowing starting studies.

During the development of the doctoral study programme “Economics and Business” under the leadership of Prof. A. Līviņa, the work of the academic staff of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Ventspils University of Applied Sciences and Rēzekne Academy of Technologies was coordinated, and representatives of Vidzeme, Latgale and Kurzeme planning regions, Rēzekne economic area, business organizations of municipalities and entrepreneurs were involved. Consultations and cooperation with entrepreneurs ensured the integration of industry novelties into the new programme, identified a range of research topics important for entrepreneurs, as well as positioned the programme as a support platform for the commercialization of scientific achievements.

Throughout the reporting period, the content of the existing study programmes is improved and quality assurance is monitored.

Every year, ViA conducts a survey to find out student opinion on the following: compliance of the study programmes implemented at ViA with the student's views, the quality of study programmes, provision of information and availability of the material and technical base, the quality of academic staff, the quality of international cooperation, etc. Survey results are analyzed and assessed, as well as decisions on various changes and improvements are made on the basis of them. Answers received are used for planning development and improvement of ViA operation.

At the level of the study field, one of the main monitoring tools is student surveys after the end of each study course; results serve as a basis for study content adjustment, improvement of applied teaching methods, and choice of topics for lecturer training in the field of improving teaching methodology and pedagogical skills. For example, at present, a lot of attention is paid to the development of an assessment system and a unified evaluation of course results; a survey showed that this aspect should be improved. In the beginning of the academic year, the director of the study field meets with the students of all programmes and discusses and talks over various topical issues, listens to the student opinions and suggestions. Each group of students also selects annually the head of the group who coordinates cooperation and communication between the group of students and the director of the BA study field. All of the above activities are ways to get in-depth feedback from students, to plan and make various changes regarding course planning by semesters, involvement of lecturers in teaching specific courses, enlarging library collections, and other aspects related to the organization of studies and quality assurance.

ViA also conducts a graduate survey on an annual basis. The main purpose is to document satisfaction of graduates with the education acquired immediately after graduation, as well as to collect data on graduate employment. The survey is conducted a year after graduation. Graduates of the Bachelor's programmes implemented in the BA study field integrate successfully into the labour market and practice their professions. Surveys on graduate employment should also be conducted after a longer interval of time in order to analyze graduate career dynamics, professional development in the chosen field over a longer period of time. This requires additional investments from the part of ViA, therefore, at the level of study fields, data collection takes place as far as possible through maintaining contacts between lecturers, study field directors and graduates on social media, meeting them at public events. One of the factors that could be assessed as graduate professional growth and also satisfaction with the education acquired is the involvement of graduates in the study process after graduation, which can take various forms – conducting guest lectures, offering research topics, internship possibilities, participation in the ALUMNI movement and financial support for ViA. Graduates participate in the work of the study field's Advisory Board, and in the working group of self-assessment report development.

In order to ensure the exploration of the views of entrepreneurs-employers, a forum was organized during the reporting period. Within the framework of the forum, there was a “brain storm” and a discussion on the development of the BA study field with wide participation of entrepreneurs and local government representatives. The conclusions of the forum served as a basis for finding out the topicalities of the field, improving the content of study programmes of the field, and introducing new innovative methods. Meetings with business associations, participation in Vidzeme Region Business Days, Latvian Economic Forums, and other business events take place on a regular basis. Significant feedback is provided by gathering and analysing opinions and feedback of the State Examination Commission members, which allow to make improvements in the programme content and process of their implementation.

2.3. Description of the procedures and/or systems according to which the students are expected to submit complaints and proposals (except for the surveys to be conducted among the students). Specify whether and how the students have access to the information on the possibilities to submit complaints and proposals and how the outcomes of the examination of the complaints and proposals and the improvements of the study direction and the relevant study programmes are communicated by providing the respective examples.

In addition to student surveys in the study field, there is a regular exchange of information with students at the level of study field management, lecturers and senior specialists. Students can submit proposals and complaints orally, by e-mail, or in the form of a written application. Each group of students elects annually the head of the group, who provides daily communication with the director of the study programme. Particularly important communication with students and proactive action from the part of the study field director was necessary, taking into account changes in the study process caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the director of the study field and lecturers proactively communicate with the students during and outside the online classes, they listen to the student comments about the study process. Once a month at the meeting of the BA study field council, issues are discussed regarding the study process, including student suggestions. Based on the student suggestions, the director of the study field has asked the lecturers to align the submission of the course final papers with the deadlines of other final course

papers, as well as to assess the necessity of group work, taking into account students' difficulties to perform independent work in groups due to geographic distance. Students are also informed about these activities by e-mail and orally, thus receiving feedback. In general, in the previous accreditation period, the cooperation between students and the management of the study field and lecturers should be assessed positively – students' proposals have been taken into account and appropriate changes have been made to the study programmes. Special mention should be made of students' contribution to the improvement of the Bachelor's study programme "Business Administration" – the director of the study field met with the students of all courses at the end of each semester to hear students' experience and suggestions for changes to the study programme. Students' recommendations resulted in the development of new elective study course modules, including there digital, innovation and creativity aspects. For example, the content of the course "Business Process Simulation Modelling" of the Master's study programme "Business Environment Administration" was revised, emphasizing practical applicability in business administration.

2.4. Provide information on the mechanism for collecting the statistical data, as developed by the higher education institution/ college. Specify the type of the data to be collected, the collection frequency, and the way the information is used to improve the study direction.

Various student profile data and student number statistics are used to make decisions about development and improvement of the study programmes included in the study direction. Statistical reports are compiled as necessary, distinguishing between mandatory (in accordance with the Cabinet Regulations) and optional statistics (as needed), while the information to be collected is considered according to the purpose stated in the decision.

Surveys of applicants, students and graduates are an important source of information for the improvement of study programmes in the BA study field. Based on the applicant surveys, it is decided to improve marketing activities, for example, by introducing separate activities for post-graduate students in 2019-2020, because the overall direction of ViA's marketing campaigns is focused on attracting undergraduate students. Student surveys after each study course allow a lecturer to assess the course and achieved results, as well as student satisfaction, and they allow the director of the study field to control the course and to make changes if necessary (for example, to change the course lecturer, to specify the course content, to change the amount of credit points, to change the course time in the study programme plan, etc.). Graduate surveys allow assessing the contribution of study programmes to the preparation of qualified labour force for the labour market. One of the study courses, which was introduced at the Bachelor's level thanks to the recommendations of graduates, is "Regional Economics".

Statistical data on applicants, student numbers and graduates are regularly compiled (see Table 1).

Table 1. Types of statistical data reports compiled by ViA

Type of statistics	Regularity	Profile (upon request)	Necessity	Statistics are compiled by
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Applicants	After each admission and upon request	Number of applicants Place of residence Educational institution Number of applications Admission competition Funding etc.	Admission analysis Admission planning Planning of marketing activities Improvement of the study programme Planning of budget places Self-assessment reports, etc.	Study administration group
Students	Each month and upon request	Number of students Funding Average and weighted grades Drop-out etc.	Improvement of the study programme Planning of budget places Self-assessment reports Rotation Scholarships, etc.	Study administration group
Graduates	After graduation and upon request	Number of graduates Funding Average and weighted grades Topics of graduation theses	Improvement of the study programme Planning of budget places Self-assessment evaluation reports, etc.	Study administration group

2.5. Description and assessment of the integration of the standards set forth in Part 1 of the ESG. Specify which of the standards are considered a challenge and which require special attention.

Table 2. *Description and assessment of ESG Part 1 standard integration.*

Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) - Part 1	How will be ESG complied with within the study programme
1.1. Quality assurance policy	ViA Development Strategy for 2016-2020 envisages the pursuit of excellence and competitiveness in education, the pursuit of excellence and competitiveness in science and research, as well as the transfer of knowledge and contribution to regional development. The strategy contains a number of measures to ensure the quality and standards of the study programmes and degrees to be awarded. Strategic control over ViA development is exercised by ViA Senate, while administrative and accounting control is exercised by the Faculty of Social Sciences. Every year, the development of the direction is assessed during the preparation and discussion of the self-assessment report both within the study direction at the faculty level and also in ViA Senate. ViA has approved a number of documents that define relationships between teaching and research, the quality and requirements strategy of the institution, and the organization of the quality assurance system. There is a framework of responsibilities for quality assurance developed for the faculties, study directions and other structural units and individuals, as well as for student participation in quality assurance, and the ways through which the quality policy is implemented, monitored and adjusted. Assessment criteria of the study courses are defined in the course descriptions. Assessment criteria of annual projects, Bachelor's theses and Master's theses are defined in the Regulations for the development and defence of annual projects, Bachelor's theses and Master's theses.
1.2. Development and approval of the programmes	ViA has developed and approved a procedure for the development, approval and supervision of the study programmes and their components "Approval, supervision and control of ViA study programmes and degrees to be awarded". In 2018, an order "Regarding establishing advisory councils of the study programmes and self-assessment report work groups" was issued, as well as these Regulations were approved by the Faculty Councils; composition of the Councils are reviewed on an annual basis. Study programmes are developed together with the industry representatives and in accordance with ViA development strategy, promoting achievement of the priorities of the study direction development plans, and promoting higher education tasks - to promote personal growth and employability, the development of civil society and an expanded base of knowledge.

1.3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ViA ensures the implementation of programmes to encourage students to become actively involved in the development of the study process. ● ViA Study Regulations set forth criteria, forms and terms for the assessment of students' knowledge, conditions for academic debts, etc. requirements for achievement of learning outcomes. ● The criteria, conditions and methods published in the course descriptions are used to assess the results achieved by the students, and they are applied consistently. ● The Methodological Guidelines for the development, formatting and defence of annual projects and Bachelor's, Master's or Qualification theses are developed and approved for students' annual projects and State examination papers. ● The composition of the State Examination Commission is approved by the Faculty Council, which includes specialists/experts of the field who act in accordance with the methodological guidelines of the study programme for the development of the State examination papers. ● The Internship Regulations determine the course of internships, conditions for preparation and defence of reports. ● The diversity of student needs is respected during the study process at ViA by choosing appropriate learning approaches. ViA uses innovative teaching methods and implements an individual approach. <p>Study programme directors make sure that the lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme are familiar with the methods of assessing learning outcomes and receive support for the development of their skills in this area; assessment criteria and methods, as well as evaluation criteria are made public in advance; an assessment provides for a possibility to show the extent to which students have achieved learning outcomes; students receive feedback from the lecturers who provide advice on the study and research process, if necessary; assessing is consistent, fair to all students and is carried out in accordance with the approved course descriptions. Appropriate procedures – ViA Study Regulations and the Regulations of Ethics – are in place for resolving student complaints.</p>
1.4. Matriculation of students, study process, recognition of qualifications and certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Admission requirements are defined in ViA Admission Rules which are available on ViA website. ● ViA has a procedure in place for the recognition of formal learning outcomes achieved through prior education, as well as for the <i>recognition of learning outcomes</i> acquired through professional experience and outside formal education. ● ViA uses the <i>Study Administration System (LAIS)*</i> which contains all study information on each student and his/her study process, including information of those students who have dropped out. ● Upon successful completion of the study programme, a student receives a diploma which complies with the requirements of the regulatory enactments and contains information on learning outcomes and the qualification acquired, as well as on the context, level, content and status of the studies acquired.
1.5. Teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ViA has measures in place to make sure and verify that the lecturers working with students have required qualifications and competences, i.e.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requirements are laid down in the ViA Regulations on Elections to Academic Positions; • ViA Remuneration Regulations contain the division of academic work, conditions for research work; • student surveys on each study course in the respective semester. ● ViA Senate has approved the content and duties of the lecturers' work, which determine requirements for academic work, research, academic and scientific qualification improvement and administrative work. ● In accordance with the Cabinet Regulations of the Republic of Latvia <i>On Education Required for Teachers and Procedures for Improvement of Professional Qualifications and Teacher Professional Competence</i>, professional improvement may include international mobility in accordance with the goals of professional development, participation in projects, conferences and seminars as evidenced by the documents issued. ● In order to ensure the qualification, work quality improvement and professional development of ViA academic staff, the lecturer is given a possibility to improve and expand his/her knowledge and professionalism by acquiring experience abroad or by doing internship in foreign higher education institutions/organizations and by participating in relevant seminars and conferences – Erasmus and other mobility programmes. ● Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences implements the following activities in order to enable the lecturers to improve their academic work and to monitor the quality of their academic work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at the end of each study course a student survey is conducted, a summary of the results is sent to the lecturer and the head of the study direction; • once per academic year, lecturer's lectures are visited by a colleague, who afterwards provides feedback. Once per academic year, a lecturer visits a lecture of another colleague; • at the end of the academic year, the lecturer summarizes conclusions resulting from the study course evaluations and the experience of the visited lecturers and writes a summary of his/her academic performance, which is discussed with the head of the study direction. If the lecturers wish so, academic performance is discussed at the meeting of the study council; • if the head of the study direction identifies persistent or serious problems in the academic performance of the lecturer, the required professional improvement measures are discussed with the lecturer, including the necessity for a mentor or a consultant at the choice of the lecturer. If the professional improvement does not give a positive result, the head of the study direction will contact the dean to jointly address the issue. ● Once per academic year (in October for the previous academic year), the lecturer has to report to the Dean of the Faculty on the achievements in scientific work, experience gained in projects, seminars and conferences. The information provided is used for the preparation of a scientific report and self-assessment reports of the study directions.

1.6. Learning resources and student support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ViA material and technical base and infrastructure ensure that the resources available to students for the acquisition of knowledge are appropriate and suitable for each study programme offered. ● ViA library provides information resources necessary for academic and scientific activities, access to scientific articles and other electronic information data bases from the ViA library portal. ● ViA has an accessible e-learning environment – an interactive student support environment, which includes study materials, electronic document exchange and communication with a lecturer, a possibility to submit test papers. ● Two buildings with a total area of 7312 m² which are at the disposal of ViA are used for ensuring ViA study process, scientific, research and administrative activities. 2387 m² are used directly in the study and research process. The current study base consists of 38 lecture rooms (total area of 1445 m²), including 3 computer rooms with 90 workstations and the Internet connection (195 m²) and 12 laboratories: <i>Data Security Laboratory (Cyber Security Laboratory); Computer Network Laboratory; Virtual Reality Laboratory; material values of the Multimedia Laboratory intended for the study administration and technology research direction; material values of the Multimedia Laboratory intended for the communication ecosystems and technology research direction; Laboratory of Simulation Modelling and RFID Technologies; Mobile Technology Laboratory; Energy Efficiency Laboratory; Mechatronics Laboratory; Electrical Engineering Laboratory; Construction Laboratory; Spatial Research Laboratory</i> (total area of 324 m²). All computers are connected in a common network that provides a unified information flow, as well as an access to the Internet and databases. Subscribed full-text databases are accessible through authorization from any place where the Internet is available. A conference room (257 m²) is also used in the study process, and the study blocks have rooms for group work and premises where students can carry out their independent study assignments (350 m²). ● Booking and reservation system of premises, lecture-rooms and hostels provides for a possibility to follow the lecture schedule. ● ViA provides career development services to students and applicants, enabling them to decide on their future education or employment, to find the most appropriate study direction, to choose the most appropriate ways for the development of competences by using both personal and ViA's resources, to prepare for successful professional development, to develop their personalities by achieving their professional goals, to plan further education, to start their own business, and to support other career issues. The main career development activities at ViA are individual or small group career consultations for students (including advice on writing CV, employment search, preparation for job interviews, etc.), as well as consultations for applicants on the most appropriate study direction for starting studies at ViA. A mentoring movement is also being developed, involving ViA graduates. ViA closely cooperates with the companies within the industry and regularly informs students on the current employment and internship offers at the companies, as well as helps students prepare for work and internship. Career development support is also fully integrated into the study courses, raising awareness of employment in the industry, cooperating with industry experts and specialists.
1.7. Information management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ViA key performance indicators are assessed and analyzed on an annual basis and reflected in self-assessment reports, annual management reports and other documents. ● Information on the student progress, academic achievements and drop-out rates, student satisfaction with the study programmes, and graduate career is summarized in a centralized manner. ● Gathering of information is a continuous process, both qualitative and quantitative methods are used – statistical and financial analysis, document analysis, as well as surveys of applicants, students and graduates. ● ViA ensures efficient collection of information necessary for the management of study programmes and other processes through ViA website and social networks, as well as through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ViA study administration information system (www.lais.lv)*, which provides a possibility to collect data on all aspects of studies and successfully use them in the study process, • Record Keeping System (https://lietvediba.va.lv)*, • E-learning environment Moodle (https://moodle.va.lv/)*, • ViA alumni database*, • Library system <i>ALISE</i>, • Accounting system <i>Horizon</i>*, • Study and student loan accounting system*. <p>* - closed systems (latvian only), available only to ViA registered users.</p>

1.8. Public information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ViA regularly publishes current, neutral and impartial information on its website on its activities, including information on the college, Bachelor's, Master's, and higher level study programmes offered, the degrees/qualifications to be acquired and selection criteria for admission; expected learning outcomes of the programmes, qualifications to be awarded, teaching, learning and result assessment procedures used, the minimum satisfactory assessments, learning opportunities available to students and extracurricular activities, and information on career possibilities after graduation and graduate employment. ● Each year ViA prepares, approves and publishes self-assessment reports of the study directions, as well as admission rules for the current academic year. ViA lecturers and employees are actively involved in the development of public opinion in the region and Latvia by participating in conferences, seminars, public lectures, NGO activities, by publishing scientific publications; the most up-to-date information is posted on the ViA social media accounts and website, thus promoting higher education and study programmes. ● ViA regularly posts up-to-date, neutral and impartial information on its activities, programmes offered and degrees/qualifications to be acquired on social media – <i>Facebook, Twitter, draugiem.lv, Instagram, YouTube</i>, as well as distributes printed leaflets and other handouts. Besides, information that is relevant to current and future students, alumni, and other stakeholders and the public is posted on social media in Latvian and English. Information that is relevant to a specific person or group of people, such as lecturers, ViA's administration staff, or students of a particular study programme, is emailed. ● A contact with ViA alumni is maintained by help of the <i>Facebook</i> group "ViA Alumni", where ViA posts up-to-date information that is relevant to the graduates, such as employment possibilities at ViA, gatherings, possible participation in events. ● Media of the industry and other media at the regional and national level are also informed about ViA's activities and current events, inviting them to distribute information to the general public through print and electronic media and/or on social media accounts. Besides, media representatives are provided with relevant information on current events, developments and news related to ViA, its staff, or students. Media monitoring is carried out on a daily basis, and information about ViA and current events published in the media is collected. Upon assessing the relevance and appropriateness of the information, it is re-posted on the institution's social media accounts. ● In order to popularize study directions, lecturers, students and graduates are interviewed both in a written and video format; interviews are published on the ViA website, as well as posted on social media – <i>Facebook, Twitter, draugiem.lv, Instagram</i> and <i>YouTube</i>. Besides, to popularize study directions, ViA's website and social media accounts feature information on students' individual work, achievements in the area of science, conferences, competitions, as well as on the study process and possibilities to improve their knowledge in ViA laboratories, during internship at companies, through courses offered by ViA, classes, creative workshops, etc. ● In order to ensure ViA publicity outside Latvia, information on ViA study programmes and possibilities for joint projects is presented to foreign cooperation partners within the framework of the mobility programmes.
1.9. Programme monitoring and regular review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Study programmes are assessed continuously throughout the year, while the final evaluation is the annual self-assessment report for a particular academic year. ● At the end of each study course, the course is assessed providing for a possibility to improve its content and/or structure. ● Since ViA is focused on the implementation of vocational education, close cooperation is maintained with employers during students' internship, as well as by involving employers in the work of the State Examination Commission. ● Current issues of the industry (including the final self-assessment report) are discussed on a regular basis in the study programme councils, faculty general meetings and councils and, if necessary, proposals are also made for changes in the content of the study programme. ● Advisory boards are formed for the purpose of involving external parties and reviewing study programmes.

During the previous accreditation period, particular attention was paid to standard 1.5 "Teaching staff", ensuring professional development of the teaching staff. The most significant support since 2018 is the ESF project "Development of Academic Staff and Human Resources of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences" (SAM 8.2.2) within the framework of which training has been provided in the following areas: English language, digital technologies, academic leadership, as well as internship opportunities in commercial companies, thus furthering connection with the field. Increased activity in the Erasmus+ mobility programme is required for gaining international experience. The obstacle to improving lecturers' work is the fact that students avoid completing course surveys, thus preventing a lecturer from getting full feedback. The director of the direction and the study specialist work individually with students to ensure representation of surveys.

Serious challenges are related to Standard 1.6 "Study resources and student support" – both students and lecturers do not have sufficient access to the necessary databases of academic scientific publications due to limited ViA budget.

Challenges of the standard 1.3 "Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment" are related to the assessment of student performance – lecturers adhere to the assessment criteria and are

familiar with the methods of assessment of learning outcomes, however, different interpretations in assessment are allowed. Assessment seminars are held within the Business Administration direction, but at the moment this issue is considered within the framework of the academic leadership group of the EFS project "Development of Academic Staff and Human Resources of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences" (SAM 8.2.2).

During the reporting period, within the context of the standard 1.9 "Programme monitoring and regular testing", special attention was paid to the involvement of external parties in the development and assessment of the programme content. The establishment of advisory boards of the programmes representing employers, graduates and students was of particular importance, thus providing additional support tools for programme improvement.

II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)

3.1. Provide information on the system developed by the higher education institution/ college for determining the financial resources required for the implementation of the study direction and the relevant study programmes. Provide data on the available funding for the relevant study programmes, as well as the sources of the funding for the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities and their use for the development of the study direction. Provide information on the costs per one student (for each relevant study programme of the study direction) by specifying the headings indicated in the calculation of costs and the percentage of the funding among the indicated headings.

Refer to the annex for the information on the financial provision of the study direction "Business Administration" (see Annex 11).

3.2. Provide information on the infrastructure and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study direction and the relevant study programmes. Specify whether the required provision is available to the higher education institution/ college, availability to the students, and the teaching staff (the specific equipment required for the relevant study programme shall be indicated in Part III, Chapter 3 below the respective study programme).

ViA does not distribute the infrastructure and material and technical support necessary for the study process, science, research and administrative activities between the study fields, because ViA is a small university with small resources, which are coordinated and used for the implementation of all study fields.

ViA has two buildings in Valmiera, at Cēsu Street 4 and Tērbatas Street 10 for the study process, scientific, research and administrative activities, with the total area of 71312 m², of which 2387 m² are used directly for the study and research process. The current study base consists of 38 lecture-rooms (total area of 1445 m²), including 3 computer classrooms with 90 workstations and the Internet connection (195 m²) and 12 laboratories: *Data Security Laboratory (Cyber Security Laboratory); Computer Network Laboratory; Virtual Reality Laboratory; material values of the Multimedia Laboratory intended for the study administration and technology research direction; material values of the Multimedia Laboratory intended for the communication ecosystems and technology research direction; Laboratory of Simulation Modelling and RFID Technologies; Mobile Technology Laboratory; Energy Efficiency Laboratory; Mechatronics Laboratory; Electrical Engineering Laboratory; Construction Laboratory; Spatial Research Laboratory* (total area of 324 m²). The most important for the BA study direction are the Simulation Modeling and RFID Technology Laboratory, the Mobile Technology Laboratory, as well as the Multimedia laboratory, which includes the technologies necessary for the studies and research. All computers are connected to the common network ensuring a unified circulation of information, as well as there is an access to the Internet and databases. A conference room (257 m²) is also used in the study process. There are also rooms for group work and individual studies (350 m²) in the study blocks. Taking into account that Master's classes are held on Fridays and Saturdays, Master's students are offered a possibility to book a room in ViA hostels in advance through the electronic system.

All lecture-rooms are equipped with a stationary computer, a projector, and loudspeakers; one lecture-room is equipped with a remote control for presentations, a timer and a laser pointer. All computers have an access to the Internet and full-text databases subscribed. Students can also use full-text databases in the hostel and, upon signing in, from any place with the Internet access. Wireless Internet access is available for students in all lecture-rooms.

The number of available computers: for students – 160 pcs., for academic staff – 45 pcs., for administrative staff – 60 pcs., the number of stationary computers in the lecture-rooms – 30 (excluding computer classrooms), portable computers – 60 pcs., multimedia projectors – 45 pcs.

3.3. Provide information on the system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of the methodological and informative provision. Description and assessment of the availability of the library and the databases to the students (including in digital environment) and their compliance with the needs of the study direction by specifying whether the opening times of the library are appropriate for the students, as well as the number/ area of the premises, their suitability for individual studies and research work, the services provided by the library, the available literature for the implementation of the study direction, the databases available for the students in the respective field, the statistical data on their use, the procedures for the replenishment of the library stock, as well as the procedures and options for the subscription to the databases.

ViA methodological base ensures availability of resources to students for the acquisition of knowledge and is appropriate and suitable for each study programme. Students have access to ViA e-learning environment, which is interactive student support environment providing study materials, electronic document exchange and communication with a lecturer, and which can be used for taking and assessing tests. In autumn 2017, ViA started a gradual transition to the Moodle learning environment for the purpose of the study process, as well as a license to use the WebEX

study platform was acquired offering far wider possibilities for the implementation of distance learning forms and development of a so-called blender learning approach. In the Moodle environment, methodological and other materials related to the study process (e.g., regulations on the development of study papers, regulations of internship, methodological guidelines for the development of study papers, etc.) are also available in English, taking into account the fact that it is planned to implement the study programme also in English. To enable ViA teaching staff to take full advantage of the new technological opportunities, ViA since 2018 has been implementing the ESF project “Development of Academic Staff and Human Resources of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences” (No.8.2.2.0/18/A/012) training the staff to use various technological tools in the study process. Besides, video equipment, for example, for recording lectures is purchased, there is support available for teaching staff to record and edit video lectures. This is a direction that needs to be further developed within the framework of ViA, taking into account the rapid development of technologies. Students have also access to a booking and reservation system of premises, lecture-rooms and hostel rooms, which provides for a possibility to follow the lecture schedule remotely, as well as to announce changes promptly. There is an electronic system for booking computer and multimedia equipment set up which provides students with a possibility to use ViA equipment (photo and video cameras, dictophones, etc.) for creating multimedia content. Students can also book some time in the multimedia laboratory.

Library resources

The library is open to readers 51 hours per week. ViA students and lecturers have remote access to databases and electronic catalogue 24/7. The library is also accessible for people with physical disabilities. The library provides all the traditional library services. Information about resources and services available at the library can be found on Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences website under the section library: <https://va.lv/en/students-and-employees/library/about-library>

On the 1st floor reading room (455.10m²) students have access to 130 units of periodicals in Latvian, Russian, English and German of which 35 units are subscribed by ViA library. Fiction and archive of selected periodicals are also available. On the 2nd floor, there is a computerized reading room (67.80 m²) with 18 work stations, 4 more work stations are in the main room. The computers have also PSPP data processing programme. Furthermore, there are two reading rooms (14.50 m² each) for group work, four individual reading rooms (5.20 m² each) and a quiet reading room (79.20 m²) on the second floor. The area of the second floor library is 776.00 m². There one can find specialised literature, a collection of local history of Valmiera city and surrounding municipalities, as well as the European Commission information centre Europe Direct that provides information on the European Union, as well as the archive of the best scientific papers by ViA students.

All processes of ViA library are automated by means of the library information system ALISE. Since January 2006, there is an i-library available providing for a possibility to order books from the electronic catalogue of Valmiera Integrated Library, to reserve books already lent, to extend the lending period for books, to view data on the books lent/not returned on time/booked. Since spring 2015, the mobile version of the library information system Alise is available. Thus, the electronic catalogue is also easily accessible from the mobile devices.

To provide high quality support to ViA education and scientific process, ViA library offers individual consultations, excursions and group training to students, academic staff and other interested parties. Educational activities are organized by the specialists of both ViA Library and Valmiera Library. The goal of training is to introduce new students to Valmiera Integrated Library, services offered, to show how to work with the library's electronic catalogue and subscribed online full-text electronic databases. It is possible to apply for a training session also electronically. In the academic year 2019/2020, the first year students had 15 introductory lectures on the library and its

services, students got acquainted with the electronic catalogues and information search in the databases available in Valmiera Integrated Library and remotely accessible resources of the National Library of Latvia. The library offers interlibrary loan service (ILS) free of charge as it is provided in cooperation with Valmiera Library.

The total number of library documents (physical units) at the beginning of the academic year 2020/2021 was 29047. Its distribution is shown in *Table No. 3*.

Table No.3. *The number of documents (physical units) available at ViA library.*

Materiāla veids	Skaits
Grāmatas	21772
Elektroniskie dokumenti	352
Audiovizuālie dokumenti	475
Kartogrāfiskie dokumenti	99
Seriālizdevumi	3500
Nepublicētie dokumenti	2849

Subscribed databases

Full-text databases: EBSCO, ScienceDirect, Scopus, Web of Science. Travelnews.lv Lursoft, i-finances and i-rights are still available. Databases are available in collaboration with Valmiera Library readers: Britannica Online Library Edition, EBSCO eBook Public Library Collection, LETA Archive, nozare.lv, Letonica, Lursoft newspaper archive, and DVD collection. The databases are mainly available from all computers working on the Vidzeme Heights network. Individual databases can only be accessed by working in a library on-site and obtaining a special permit (Lursoft, i-Finances, i-Rights)

The Library shall participate actively in the testing of electronic resources or full-text databases offered by the State Agency "Cultural Information Systems Centre". In the 2018/2019 academic year, they were 7 databases, but in 2019/2020 in the academic year - 3 databases.

During the spring semester of the covid-19 pandemic, some academic publishing houses gave access to their electronic resources – SAGE, Proquest, Cambridge Core, ACM Digital library, etc.

Current list <https://www.myloft.xyz/free-resources-for-covid-19/>

Since March 2020, remote access has also been opened to some of the Latvian National Library's digital collections.

Available statistics on the use of databases 2019./2020. acad.y.

IN THE EBSCO database, 22938 sessions, 83205 searches, 7810 full texts open.

Science Direct - 10130 full text views

WEB of Science -703 sessions

Scopus - 1868 searches

LURSOFT – 1643 requests

Procedure for developing library collection

The library collection corresponds to ViA study programmes and directions, and books published in Latvia are purchased, in cooperation with Valmiera Library, in small quantities each month. The library also accepts donations from individuals and legal entities to develop library collection with missing printed materials or those having insufficient number of copies, and other documents.

Funding for the acquisition of ViA library collections is not divided by study fields, because often the library resources in the study process are used by students of several study fields. The most important literature within each course has a cyclical update, but the most relevant additional literature items are updated regularly.

Books published outside Latvia are purchased at the request of the academic staff in accordance with ViA Library book ordering and usage procedure. If it is an open access resource available on the web or in the databases subscribed by the library, a printed copy is rarely purchased. In cases where the necessary books are not available in the library, a lecturer fills in a book ordering form for developing ViA Library collection and harmonizes it with the director of the study direction. Upon receiving a request, the library checks whether the book has not been pre-ordered and conducts a price survey. The book order should be placed before the beginning of the course. The staff of the library compiles “denied” information requests, analyzes them, and advises the lecturer a possible solution (a newer book, another book, etc.). Being aware of research interests of the lecturer, the library sends information about newly published books or other resources.

Database subscription procedure

Full-text databases are subscribed in cooperation with the State agency “Culture Information Systems Centre” within the programme “Electronic Publications for Latvian Libraries”, as well as in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science within the project “Academic Network”. A decision to subscribe or unsubscribe a database is made in the meeting where development, academic and scientific issues are discussed, upon agreement between the directors of the study programmes and scientific institutes.

Collection digitization level

The library does not digitalize its collections; it collects students’ diploma papers (Master’s theses, Qualification papers) that are already in a digital form. It is possible to access papers through library’s electronic catalogue under the section “ViA Student Papers”. One can have access to 610 full text student papers out of 2849 entries. A database of lecturers’ publications is being compiled in the library’s electronic main catalogue under the section “Publications by ViA lecturers”. The database contains 387 analytical descriptions of lecturers’ publications (monographs, edited and compiled books, studies, conference materials, etc.). If these materials are available on the Internet, links to their full text are provided in the descriptions.

Possibilities to renew and improve informative provision

It can be done by using funds from the planned ViA Library budget, also within the framework of various projects (SAM, ERDF), as well as in cooperation with Valmiera Library. The library also accepts donations to replace damaged, worn-out copies.

During the academic year of 2019/2020, 53 books (72 copies) were purchased for the Business

Administration direction (worth 2789.29 euros). Books purchased within the direction are not listed and allocated to specific programs.

Purchase of books for Business Administration direction (2014-2020):

Year	Number of Titles	Copies	Amount, EUR
2014	22	35	707.37
2015	35	113	1806.76
2016	15	31	794.05
2017	16	34	800.51
2018	66	151	5000.56
2019	62	103	3474.53
2020	21	41	1133.27

In order to popularize research carried out by ViA students, the full texts of the best works are available under the section “ViA student papers” of the library’s electronic joint catalog. For the purpose of transparency and more convenient usage of the collection, a section 005 (Governance. Management) is created. There are already the following subdivisions: 005 Governance. Management and 005.94 Knowledge management.

3.4. Provide information on the procedures for attracting and/or employing the teaching staff (including the call for vacancies, employment, election procedure, etc.), and the assessment of their transparency.

ViA has developed the Regulations “On Elections to Academic and Scientific Positions at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences”, which define the procedure for announcing vacancies, assessing candidates and deciding on approval for academic or scientific positions. Vacancies are advertised by announcing a competition on the official website of “Latvijas Vēstnesis”, as well as by publishing information on the ViA website. The principles of openness and access to information are complied with throughout the entire recruitment process. Persons are elected for academic positions following the open competition. Scientific, pedagogical and organizational qualifications of the candidate for the position of a professor or an associate professor are assessed by the Council of Professors in accordance with the procedures specified by the Cabinet of Ministers. The scientific and pedagogical qualifications of the candidate for the position of an assistant professor, lecturer or assistant are evaluated by the Council of the study direction referring the matter to the relevant Faculty Council.

[Refer to the annex for the Regulations “On Elections to Academic and Scientific Positions at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences” \(see Annex 12\).](#)

[Refer to the annex for ViA Remuneration Regulations \(see Annex 13\).](#)

[Refer to the annex for content and duties of the lecturers’ work \(see Annex 14\).](#)

3.5. Specify whether there are common procedures for ensuring the qualification of the academic staff members and the work quality in place and provide the respective assessment thereof. Specify the options for all teaching staff members to improve their qualification (including the information on the involvement of the teaching staff in different activities, the incentives for their involvement, etc.). Provide the respective examples and specify the way the added value of the possibilities used for the implementation of the study process and the improvement of the study quality is evaluated.

ViA has established a unified procedure for ensuring the qualification and quality of work of the academic staff.

To ensure qualification and work quality of ViA academic staff, the **Study Quality Assurance Policy** is approved promoting ViA's internal quality culture and its continuous improvement; according to the policy all internal stakeholders assume responsibility for the quality and engage in quality assurance at all levels. ViA has measures in place to make sure and verify that the lecturers working with students have required qualifications and competences, i.e.: requirements are laid down in the ViA **Regulations on Elections to Academic Positions**, ViA **Remuneration Regulations** contain the division of academic work, conditions for research work. ViA Senate has approved the **content and duties of the lecturers' work**, which determine requirements for academic work, research, academic and scientific qualification improvement and administrative work.

In order to ensure the qualification, work quality improvement and professional development of ViA academic staff, the lecturer is given a possibility to improve and expand his/her knowledge and professionalism by acquiring experience abroad or by doing internship in foreign higher education institutions/organizations and by participating in relevant seminars and conferences – Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes.

Training needs of the lecturers are discussed at the level of study directions, funding is sought within the framework of faculty and various projects; besides, opportunities are offered to the lecturers to participate in Erasmus+ mobility to improve their qualification, as well as to use other financial resources for qualification improvement visits and participation in academic and professional conferences. Since 2018, ESF project "Development of Academic Staff and Human Resources of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences" (SAM 8.2.2) is being implemented for the professional development of lecturers providing training in the following areas: English language, digital technology, academic leadership, while internship opportunities in commercial companies contribute to closer cooperation with the field. Within the framework of ViA long-term development, it is planned to elect at least one foreign lecturer and all doctoral students involved in the project to each study direction.

Teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme of the study field is selected based on the following criteria: direction of scientific activity and research interests, academic work experience and competence, knowledge in the fields related to the study programme content, scientific degree and qualification. A prerequisite for involvement in the implementation of the study programmes is a Master's or Doctor's degree, or a status of a doctoral candidate, studies in the later stages of the doctoral programme, as well as knowledge of English which corresponds to at least B2 level, because the Master's programme is implemented in English and the doctoral programme is implemented in both English and Latvian. Criteria for visiting lecturers are as follows: a Master's degree, as well as significant practical work experience in one of the fields of business,

knowledge of foreign languages and experience in scientific work. The BA study field provides academic staff with growth possibilities – staff members who are holders of a doctoral degree may be elected to the positions of an assistant professor, associate professor and professor. It is planned to elect one associate professor in 2021. During the previous accreditation period, the circle of academic staff of the study field has been enlarged; visiting lecturers who are excellent business practitioners have been attracted from various fields of business, which is important because several lecturers have left their offices during the reporting period due to career growth possibilities or retirement. The added value of the possibilities used in terms of both the implementation of the study process and the quality of studies is proved by the fact that lecturers of the study field meet the requirements for the implementation of the professional Master's study programme in English and the requirements for the implementation of the doctoral programme, as well as lecturers participate in the implementation of international projects and preparation of new projects with international partners, with whom cooperation is developed as a result of Erasmus+ mobility and exchange of lecturers.

3.6. Provide information on the number of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study direction, as well as the analysis and assessment of the academic and research workload. Provide the assessment of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff over the reporting period, the mobility dynamics, and the issues which the higher education institution/ college must tackle with regard to the mobility of the teaching staff.

There are 66 lecturers involved in the implementing of the Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral programmes of the Business Administration direction, 35 of them have a doctoral degree. Five lecturers are studying in the doctoral programme: A.Andersons and M.Prata are studying in the doctoral programme "Modelling of Sociotechnical Systems" (ViA), I.Zaumane - doctoral program "Economics and Business" (ViA), K.Krūmiņš is studying in the doctoral programme "Management and Economics" (RTU), J.Kapustāns is studying in the doctoral programme "Politics" (RSU). There is a large number of lecturers because a part of the lecturers has only a part-time academic work, but guest lecturers teach only one study course. Guest lecturers who are professionals in the field or outstanding specialists in their field provide the link between the programmes and the practice that is objectively necessary for the acquisition of professional competencies. Because of the above, 8 lecturers combine academic work with research at the Institute of Social, Economic and Humanities Research (HESPI) and the Socio-Technical Systems Engineering Institute (SSII). In the bachelor's and master's study program, 58% of all lecturers are elected, but with a joint direction, including the joint doctoral program -51%.

R.Jurkovic, a lecturer from a Croatian company, teaches the course "Business Ethics" of the Business Administration study field on a regular basis. In 2019, the course "Innovation Management" was taught by G.Cardia, professor from Malta, within the framework of the European Social Fund project "Development of Academic Staff and Human Resources of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences" (SAM 8.2.2.).

In the academic year of 2020/2021, the course "Creative Management" of the Bachelor's study programme and the course "Business and Economic Trends" of the doctoral programme will be taught by a visiting professor D. Ismailova (Kazakhstan), while the course "International Economics"

will be taught by a visiting professor O. Maksimchuka (Belarus).

In 2020, a license was obtained to start a doctoral programme “Economics and Business” jointly developed and implemented by ViA, Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (VeA), and Rēzekne Academy of Technologies (RAT). The implementation of the joint doctoral programme was started in 2020/2021. The programme is implemented by 21 lecturers, 8 of them are from ViA, one is a visiting professor, and others are from VeA and RAT.

The Erasmus+ programme is the most important source of funding for long-term mobility of lecturers. Since 2013, ViA's academic staff has implemented more than 160 mobilities in 45 countries, a large part of them was teaching mobilities. Since 2017, ViA has been actively cooperating and attracting funding for the organization of mobility outside the European Union. Mobility within the framework of Erasmus+ is regulated by the internal normative act “Procedure for organizing teaching visits at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences”. In general, ViA lecturers have no significant barriers to participation in Erasmus+ mobility, funding is sufficient, lecturers' language skills are adequate, and ViA international cooperation specialists provide assistance in planning and organizing visits, if needed. Mobility of lecturers also takes place through other financial sources – the Nordplus programme and various international projects.

Elected lecturers of the study direction have benefited from Erasmus+ funding during the accreditation period and made a total of 16 visits, of which 6 were teaching and 10 were teaching and staff training visits. Lecturers went to the higher education institutions and companies in 7 EU countries and to 5 universities outside the EU. The highest activity was observed in 2014/2015 (4 visits) and 2016/2017 (5 visits), the tendency of recent years – 2 visits per year. ViA provides sufficient Erasmus+ funding, however, not all lecturers are involved due to family circumstances and a lack of confidence in their English skills. Within the framework of the ESF project “Development of Academic Staff and Human Resources of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences” (SAM 8.2.2) English language training sessions are organized which could facilitate the increase of mobility of the teaching staff.

ViA collects general incoming mobility statistics, there are no incoming mobility statistics separately by study directions. Foreign lecturers come for teaching and staff training visits, as well as for research work. Guest professors teach courses for students of several study programmes and exchange programmes. During the reporting period, 33 professors visited ViA, of which 25 were on teaching visits or taught courses, while 8 were on staff training visits, and 2 were conducting research. Incoming mobility has increased in recent years, the interest is shown from the lecturers who are working for the universities outside the EU (Moldova, Albania, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan).

Refer to the annex for Teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction, their degrees/qualifications, election status at the higher education institution/college, study programmes and courses they are involved in, and proof of knowledge of the official language and foreign language (if applicable) (see Annex 15).

Refer to the annex for the biographies of the academic staff (Europass CV format) (see Annex 16).

Refer to the annex for the statistics of incoming and outgoing mobility of ViA academic staff (see Annex 17).

Refer to the annex for ViA Remuneration Regulations (see Annex 13).

3.7. Assessment of the support available for the students, including the support provided

during the study process, as well as career and psychological support by specifying the support to be provided to specific student groups (for instance, students from abroad, part-time students, distance-learning students, students with special needs, etc.).

During the study process, support for students is provided by the directors of the study directions, study methodologists, employees of the Administrative Department. As for career guidance, from the autumn semester of 2019, ViA offers a new service – career consultations and career planning guidance. This service is offered to students of all study programmes, not singling out international students, taking into account the fact that currently there is a few international students at ViA. Support for students with special needs is planned depending on the specific health situation and needs of each student. If necessary, a possibility to study according to the individual plan is offered. Those interested in taking ViA courses but who can not participate in full-time studies can take advantage of the Open University opportunities.

During the reporting period, part-time students of the BA direction who resumed their studies had an opportunity to study in accordance with the individual plan and consult with lecturers individually.

The Master's programme and the doctoral programme are implemented in English in the BV direction, therefore international students can take a Latvian language course in amount of 4 CP. Additional support for international students and coordination of the study process are provided by the Head of the international study module.

Psychological support is especially important for 1st year students who have difficulties in integrating into the study process of the university, as well as starting an independent life away from home and family. ViA students also have access to psychological support consultations on various problems and issues related to study and personal life. Psychological counseling is a collaborative process that helps an individual to more successfully solve the difficulties of the current life, to gain support in solving various issues, to help see different alternatives to a certain problem. In accordance with the Code of Ethics for Psychologists, the psychologist guarantees the client's complete confidentiality, unless it is revealed that something that may be harmful to the client or the people around him. Psychological counseling usually lasts 45-60 minutes, is free for students, possible in person or remotely (Webex platform).

Questions that can be consulted with a psychologist:

- Adaptation to studies in the first year of studies - difficulties in meeting studies or entering a course;
- Study-related stress or anxiety;
- Time planning issues;
- Lack of motivation and difficulty concentrating on work;
- Relationship problems;
- Support for various crisis situations;
- Uncertainty or doubts about the right choice of studies or further development of your career.

II - Description of the Study Direction (4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation)

4.1. Description and assessment of the directions of scientific research and/or artistic creation in the study direction, their compliance with the aims of the higher education institution/ college and the study direction, and the development level of scientific research and artistic creation (provide a separate description of the role of the doctoral study programmes, if applicable).

ViA acquired the status of a scientific institution in 2015. Since then, the number of staff elected to scientific positions has increased from seven to 25, while funding for research projects has increased five times over this period. ViA scientific activities are planned in accordance with the “mission” principle, defining issues of importance to society that cannot be solved within a single scientific discipline. In this way, interdisciplinarity is promoted in ViA research. ViA is strategically focused on attracting new talents within the post-doctoral programme. In 2018, ViA employed six post-doctoral researchers, including foreign researchers.

Since 2018, ViA has been also implementing the project “Support for Effective Involvement of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences in International Science Circulation (ViA-Int)”, which aims to encourage ViA research staff to engage in international research projects, thus strengthening the capacity of researchers in international project development, enhancing an international circle of researchers’ contacts and networking opportunities, and developing research work in ViA research sub-directions. It is expected that as a result of the project, ViA will contribute to the preparation of at least seven ERDF-supported and above the quality threshold assessed project applications of “Horizon 2020” and the European Union’s 9th Framework Programme.

Research topics of the lecturers of the BA study direction fit under the research topic “Sustainable National Economy and Knowledge Society” of the Institute of Humanities, Economics and Social Research (HESPI), as well as under the following sub-topics: development of the national economy and regional governance; circular economy and environment; HR development and inclusive policies; exploring of the natural and cultural heritage. Research interests of the lecturers:

- Usage of RFID technologies in events
- Sustainable development of rural areas
- Economy and innovation
- Sustainable national economy
- Economic, environmental and social aspects of sustainable rural development
- Development of organic agriculture in Latvia
- Social entrepreneurship
- Sustainable business
- Corporate finance and investments
- Human capital development and management in the regions
- Marketing communication

Six lecturers of the Business Administration direction are experts of the Latvian Council of Science: Prof. M.Leščevica (economics and business), Prof. S.Rozentāle (economics and business), Assoc. Prof. L.Melece (economics and business), Prof. S.Cakula (information technologies), Prof. A.Līviņa (economics and management science), A.Šmitiņa (economics and business).

Prof. M.Leščevica, Prof. S. Rozentāle, Prof. S.Cakula, and Prof. A.Līviņa are accreditation and licensing experts of the study directions and programmes at the Quality Agency for Higher Education.

Assoc. Prof. L.Mece is a member of the Promotion Council of sub-discipline of Agrarian and Regional Economics of the sector of economy of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Prof. S.Cakula is a member of the Information Technologies Promotion Council of RAT, Prof. S.Rozentāle is a Vice-Chair of the joint Council of Professors of Economics, Business and Science of Rēzekne Academy of Technologies (RAT), Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (ViA) and Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (VeA).

Assoc. Prof. L.Mece is a true member of the Latvian Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences, Chair of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Agricultural Resources and Economics.

Most of the lecturers working for the programmes of the Business Administration direction are elected researchers or research associates at the Institute of Social, Economic and Humanities Research (HESPI): M.Leščevica – a researcher, L.Veliverronena – a researcher and a member of the HESPI Scientific Council, S.Rozentāle and A.Līviņa are senior researchers and members of the HESPI Scientific Council, A.Andersons – a scientific assistant. S.Cakula is a leading researcher at the Institute of Sociotechnical Systems (SSII) and is a member of the SSII Scientific Council.

During the reporting period, 7 elected lecturers are involved in the following sub-projects of the State Research Programme EKOSOC_EN: 5.2.3. sub-project Rural and Regional Development Processes and Opportunities in Latvia in the Context of the Knowledge Economy (M.Leščevica), 5.2.2. sub-project Development of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Latvia Supporting the Smart Specialization Strategy (S.Rozentāle, V.Melbārde, M.Ore, A.Andersons), 5.2.8. sub-project Processes of cultural environment development, preserving environmental diversity and urbanization within the context of balanced development of Latvia (A. Līviņa, L.Veliverronena). Students of the Master's programmes were involved in the research process within the framework of sub-projects.

Prof. S.Rozentāle and A.Līviņa are researchers in the international project MAMBA of the Baltic Sea Region Interreg programme, which studies economic feasibility solutions for population mobility in rural areas with low population density. The involvement of lecturers in the grant projects of Valmiera local government is important, as they participate in solving economic and business problems of the region. During the last academic year Prof. S.Rozentāle participated in the study "Possibilities and Prerequisites of Attracting Human Resources (incl. Talents) for the City of Valmiera. Development of the Population Attraction Strategy for Valmiera City".

Within the framework of "Postdoctoral Research Aid" of the EU Structural Funds ERDF, a postdoctoral project "Leveraging ICT Product Innovations by Enhancing Codes of Modern Art" (I.Gintere) is being implemented.

Prof. S. Rozentāle participated in the preparation and result presenting of the annual survey "Latvia. Overview of the Nation's Development in 2017/2018. Creating of Public Benefit and Safeguarding of Collective Resources in Latvia".

During the reporting period, work is started on the project "The Importance of Documentary Heritage Investigation in Creating Synergies between Research and Society" (2018-2021) of the State Research Programme with the participation of the lecturer A.Andersons, Prof. A.Līviņa.

Work is continued within the international scientific projects: NOBANET (M.Leščevica), Social Empowerment in the Regions (SEMPRE) with the participation of M.Leščevica, S.Cakula, A.Andersons. Research has been launched in the international project "Student innovation labs – a

way to sustainable and socially responsible growth (INNOLABS)" of the project "Nature-biz" (M.Leščevica, A.Andersons). L.Melece supervises projects in Horizon 2020 project "Future Oriented Collaborative Policy Development for Rural Areas and People – PoliRural" and the project "Challenges and Solutions of the Latvian State and Society in an International Context (INTERFRAME-LV)" of the State Research Programme "Latvian Heritage and Future Challenges for the Country's Sustainability", as well as participates in the EU Horizon 2020 project "CORE Organic Cofund". In 2020, the lecturers of the field got involved in the research work "Life with COVID-19: Assessment of overcoming the crisis caused by the coronavirus in Latvia and proposals for the future sustainability of society" (No. VPP-COVID-2020 / 1-0013).

The establishment and implementation of the joint doctoral programme "Economics and Business" is in line with the goals of research within the direction. The programme will promote the transfer of economic knowledge to the practical business environment, promoting unified development of the Latvian national economy. In addition, leading research staff from all three higher education institutions will be involved in the implementation of the programme, thus ensuring a unified transfer of knowledge within the academic environment. The structure of the programme and the content of the study courses, their implementation methods and forms are innovative in the Latvian academic environment, ensuring the increase of the scientific staff capacity and promoting socio-economic aspects in the academic environment, as well as contributing to the overall economic growth of Latvia.

The involvement of BA lecturers in scientific research is subordinated to the priorities set in the ViA Development Strategy for 2016-2020: to develop study programmes and study fields in the area of education, while in the area of science – to develop research that would be a proactive response to societal challenges in accordance with the study fields and external demand; to implement knowledge transfer to cooperation partners, to fulfil the role of the intellectual leader of Vidzeme region in promoting the growth of the State and the region in the field of knowledge transfer and leadership of ideas. Research work performed by the lecturers of the BA study field corresponds also to the specific strategic goals of the BA study field – it ensures the content of internationally competitive higher education in the field of business, promotes through research the BA study field as a centre for acquiring business education, promotion and support of business in Vidzeme. Scientific and research activities of the lecturers of the BA study field correspond to the research goals – to create the study field as a research centre in the field of sustainable regional economic development, to promote the involvement of Master's and doctoral students in research. The thematic direction and practical implementation of scientific research work position the study field as a place for business idea generation, starting a business and approbation of innovative solutions, develop cooperation networks with higher education institutions, other educational institutions, entrepreneurs and public sector for knowledge transfer and commercialization, thus ensuring compliance with the strategic priority – promoting knowledge transfer and leadership of ideas in the region.

Refer to the annex for the summary of scientific publications, conferences and projects, see Annex 18.

4.2. The relation between scientific research and/or artistic creation and the study process, including the description and assessment of the use of the outcomes in the study process.

Research activities within the BA study direction are mainly organized through research and projects implemented at the HESPI Institute. Most of the lecturers involved in the BA study programmes have teamed up in the research direction “Sustainable National Economy and Knowledge Society” by carrying out research in sub-directions. Research and development are closely linked to ViA's strategic goals as defined in ViA's “Strategy for 2016-2020”. Research activities are mainly carried out within the priority “Education”: to provide a modern and high quality research-based education offer that responds to the labour market demand and forecasts, as well as to good international practice. Scientific research in the study direction during the current accreditation period has been carried out thanks to very active work of the teaching staff in the framework of scientific research grants, international projects, State Research Programme, doctoral studies (A.Andersons – Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, V.Silkāne and V.Melbārde – University of Latvia).

Scientific activity and preparation of publications for both academic editions and in popular science format are related to the content, goals and tasks of the study programme. This includes joint research projects of lecturers and students within the framework of Bachelor's and Master's theses. An example is the collective monograph “Knowledge Economy for the Viability of Latvian Rural and Regional Areas” published in 2018, where R.Eglītis, an undergraduate student, is a co-author with the BA direction lecturers (more details in Part II, Section 4.5). Project results are integrated into the content of the lectures of the study courses both at the undergraduate and postgraduate level, publications prepared within the framework of the lecturers' projects are included in the list of compulsory or additional literature of the study courses. An example is the involvement of several lecturers in the State Research Programme ECOSOC LV, where, based on the results of research, a new study course “Regional Economics” was developed for the Bachelor's programme, while research carried out by Assoc. Prof. G. Krūmiņš is included in the study course “History of Economics”. By regularly attending and speaking at both local and international scientific conferences, lecturers keep abreast of the latest developments in the field and current research directions. In this way, the content of the study courses is improved ensuring that they are based on the latest scientific knowledge and research results.

During the accreditation period, the BA direction has made a qualitative and quantitative leap in scientific research, which ensured the integration of the latest theoretical knowledge and examples of business practice into the study content, thus updating and improving the study content according to current developments in the national economy and the field.

Information on the involvement of academic staff in scientific research, both nationally and internationally, is available in Part II, Sections 4.1 of the Report.

4.3. Description and assessment of the international cooperation in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation by specifying any joint projects, researches, etc. Specify those study programmes, which benefit from this cooperation. Specify the future plans for the development of international cooperation in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation.

Limited funding for science in higher education requires focusing on project-based research which is also done in the BA direction. All elected lecturers are involved in national or international science

projects.

A stage of the Nordplus higher education project “Nordic-Baltic Network for SME Internationalization” (NOBANET) (2013-2016) was completed during the accreditation period, the goal of which was to create a network and share knowledge that will help European and Nordic small and medium-sized enterprises start and implement the internationalization process (Prof. M.Lešceviča, A.Andersons)

Lecturer A.Andersons carried out an expertise in the area of E-commerce (E-NOBANET project) E-business models for international SMEs (2016-2018).

With the participation of the BA lecturers, an important project “EDU-SMEs: Curriculum alignment and cross-border cooperation with SMEs”, Interreg, Central Baltic (2015-2017) for the promotion of cross-border cooperation between small and medium-sized enterprises was implemented; A.Andersons, and I.Grīnfelde participated from the part of Latvia, and ViA project manager was M. Lešceviča.

M.Lešceviča participated in the Nordplus project “Practical Approach for Teaching Circular Economy” (2017-2018).

Lecturers were also involved in the tourism projects: Interreg BOOSTED (2016-2019), INTERREG CENTRAL BALTIC programme’s project “Boosting Tourism Business Growth through Higher Professional Education” (A.Andersons, I.Grīnfelde, L.Veliverronena); “Riverways” (Development of water tourism as nature and active tourism component in Latvia and Estonia), Latvia-Estonia cross border programme (2007-2013) (I.Grīnfelde). L.Veliverronena as a researcher participated in the project CHRISTA, INTERREG (2017-2018) and the project Cult-RingG, INTERREG (2018), where a study of tourism development in the context of strategic planning was carried out.

A.Andersons headed the Nordplus programme project “Building Educational Cooperation in Smart City” (2018-2019).

A.Līviņa participated in the Nordplus programme networking “Network Circular Economy Future” (2017-2018) and “Baltic-Nordic Network for Creating New Earning Logistics in Rural Areas”.

The project “SEMPRE – Social Empowerment in Rural Areas” (2016-2019) focused on social entrepreneurship and development of support mechanisms for social enterprises (M.Lešceviča, S.Cakula, A.Andersons).

Within the project “Student Innovation Labs - A Way to Sustainable and Socially Responsible Growth” (INNOLABS) (2014-2016) experience in setting up and managing innovation laboratories was gained from the universities in the Netherlands and Denmark, and multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary innovation laboratories were set up at ViA (A.Šmitiņa, S.Cakula, A.Andersons). S.Cakula, from 2012 to 2015, participated in the Cost project (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) activity CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION: KNOWLEDGE, LAW AND POLICY, AND THEORY (EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020), as well as in the project EDTECH Foundry educational development project (Norway), 2016-2017.

The further plans for international cooperation in scientific research are related to the completion of ongoing projects, as they are quite a few taking into account relatively limited resources of the BA lecturers. The work is going on within the framework of the international research projects: Nordic-Baltic Network for SME Internationalization (NOBANET), (Prof. M.Lešceviča.). **Andersons A. is involved in the Interreg Central Baltic project “Business and Wellness from Green Economy Growth” (2018 - 2020).**

Implementation of the NatureBizz project “Promoting Entrepreneurship in the Framework of Green

Economy Growth" (2018-2020) (M.Leščevica, A.Andersons, I.Grīnfelde) is going on, the project is aimed at improving entrepreneurial skills and developing the competitiveness of green entrepreneurship in the central Baltic Sea. It is planned to continue cooperation with the partners from Finland, Sweden and Estonia and to submit a new project application for continuation of activities.

L.Melece leads projects in bioeconomy: Horizon 2020 project No. 818496 "Future Oriented Collaborative Policy Development for Rural Areas and People – PoliRural" (2019-2022).

The EU Horizon 2020 project "CORE Organic Cofund" (2016-2021).

Research project "Increased mobility and accessibility of services in regions affected by demographic changes" (MAMBA) (2017-2020) is being implemented within the framework of the Interreg Baltic Sea region programme (A.Līviņa, S.Rozentāle), where mobility solutions are researched and implemented to develop accessibility of services in the regions affected by demographic changes, including Vidzeme region. Projects of the BA direction are the basis for research, and all projects have resulted in significant scientific publications. Lecturers have integrated results of their research into the content of their courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, e.g., "International Economics", "E-Commerce", "Business Environment", "Quality Management Systems", "Regional Economics", "Proactivity and Creativity", etc.

In general, international cooperation in research is one of the directions that should be further developed, as there is a good level in the area of studies and academic work achieved (BA lecturers regularly go to foreign teaching visits, guest lecturers from foreign universities are attracted each year), however, cooperation intensity in science could be higher. At the end of 2019, the development of ViA's Strategy of Scientific Activity for the next 10 years was started, and one of the priorities to be achieved is the development of international cooperation in science. This can be done by pinpointing and communicating with potential partners the "niche" science of ViA, as well as by activating a partner network, working purposefully on fundraising, shifting the focus from competing for nationally available funding to financial sources of the European Commission, etc.

The goal of the project "Support for Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences Effective Involvement in International Science Circulation (ViA-Int)" aims to facilitate the involvement of ViA research staff in international research projects, thus strengthening the capacity of researchers in international project development, enhancing an international circle of researchers' contacts and networking opportunities, and developing research work in ViA research sub-directions, as a result of which ViA will contribute to the preparation of at least seven ERDF-supported and above the quality threshold assessed project applications of "Horizon 2020" and the European Union's 9th Framework Programme.

4.4. Specify the way how the higher education institution/ college promotes the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research and/or artistic creation. Provide the description and assessment of the activities carried out by the academic staff in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation relevant to the study direction by providing examples and the summary of the quantitative data on the activities in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation relevant to the study direction over the reporting period, for instance, the publications, participation in conferences, activities in the field of artistic creation, participation in projects by the academic staff members, etc., by listing the aforementioned according to the relevance.

Research activities within the BA study direction are mainly organized through HESPI institute, where several lecturers are elected: Prof. M.Rozentāle, Prof. M.Lešceviča, Prof. A.Līviņa, Assistant Professor V.Silkāne, Assistant Professor L.Veliverronena, lecturer Aigars Andersons, lecturer I. Grīnfelde. The lecturers of the direction work under the HESPI research direction “Sustainable National Economy and Knowledge Society”, engaging in research in one of four sub-directions. Research interests of the BA direction are mainly related to the sub-directions Development of the National Economy and Regional Governance, Circular Economy and Environment, HR Development and Inclusive Policy. Scientific topics cover aspects of the national and regional economy, environment and governance. A.Andersons acquired a Master’s degree in Social Systems Modelling and therefore represents another direction of research – Socio-technical Systems Modelling Technologies, one of the research directions at SSII Scientific Institute.

Funding is attracted within the framework of HESPI also from a number of projects funded by the grant programme of Valmiera city local government, which allows attracting researchers. The most significant research projects of Valmiera grant are as follows: “Possibilities and preconditions for attracting human resources (including talents) to the city of Valmiera. Development of Population Attraction Strategy to Valmiera City” (2018-2019) and “Demand of the study programmes offered by Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences and their compliance with future labour market” (2016-2017). The above studies make a significant contribution to the study of the socio-economic situation in the region, the labour market and the planning of ViA development.

Since 2018, funding for the scientific base of HESPI has been gradually increasing, which is an additional opportunity to pay for lecturers’ scientific activities. ViA’s basic budget will also be used to pay for publications if the preparation of publications is not already funded by another project.

The BA study direction is actively working to attract new researchers, including doctoral students, to develop new initiatives, for example, in autumn of 2019, M. Prata, a doctoral student who focuses on organizational management and digital marketing, started working as a guest lecturer.

As for the academic environment of ViA, doctoral studies are a logical way of engaging in scientific research. During the previous accreditation period, several lecturers obtained a Doctoral degree in the fields that are represented in the BA content and in accordance with the courses taught. The topics of the doctoral thesis reflect extensive expertise of the lecturers in the field of business research. The topics of the theses and information of the year of the defence are given in the table below (*see Table 4*), as well as information on the topics of doctoral theses of the doctoral students elected as lecturers and involved in the implementation of the study programmes of the study direction.

Table No.4. Defended and planned Doctoral thesis of the lecturers involved in the BA direction

Lecturer name	Scientific degree and academic position	Topic of the Doctoral thesis	Year of defence
Renāte Cāne	Dr.sc.comm, assistant professor	Transformation of communicative functions of Latvian documentary cinema (1944-1990) (Turība University)	2014
Linda Veliverronena	PhD, assistant professor	Conceptualizing Engagement Modes: Understanding Museum-Audience Relationships in Latvian Museums (University of Tartu)	2016

Vineta Silkāne	Dr.psych, Mg.math. assistant professor	Relationship between procrastination, discounting and personality traits in health behaviour (University of Latvia)	2018
Madara Prata (PRATT)	Doctoral programme "Sociotechnical System Modelling", lecturer	The impact of information and communication technologies on employee's motivation	<i>Planned in 2021</i>
Aigars Andersons	Doctoral programme "Sociotechnical System Modelling", lecturer	Integrated Service Oriented Business Model in Digitally Transforming Ecosystems	<i>Planned in 2021</i>
Vija Melbārde	Doctoral programme "Management", lecturer	Improvement of Human Resource Development Management in the Region	<i>Planned in 2021</i>
Jānis Kapustāns	Lecturer of the doctoral programme "Politics"	Cooperation and competition factors in the foreign policy of the three Baltic States from 1991 to nowadays	<i>Planned in 2022</i>

Three lecturers have already professional education or Master's degree in economics and business administration, while others teach the courses of their fields in the BA direction programmes. Integration of knowledge of communication and engineering, psychology and political science will promote interdisciplinarity and integration of current tendencies of the field in the content of studies.

Some lecturers took an academic leave offered by ViA for writing their Doctoral theses; it is a significant support for their studies, freeing up time for research and preparation of the Doctoral thesis.

It should be emphasized that lecturers engage also in various non-scientific activities (teaching courses, seminars, business consultations, development of strategic planning documents for entrepreneurs and local governments, and other practical involvement and support to the business area) which are very important support to entrepreneurship and public sector in terms of raising public awareness.

During the previous accreditation period, lecturers of the Business Administration direction were actively involved in Vidzeme region pupils' research activities (SZPD) by advising, organizing the conference, reviewing and evaluating their papers.

Within ViA, BA lecturers facilitate a circulation of information and quality assurance of scientific work, for example, by informing colleagues on experience gained in conferences regarding current issues in economics and business.

Involvement in research is also stimulated by attracting HESPI Institute funding and commissioned research. Lecturers of the BA direction have conducted the following research studies commissioned by Vidzeme Planning Region (Future cooperation model for tourism route Via Hanseatica, 2014), Madona Municipality Foundation (Research on the results of the local development strategy "Madona Municipal Fund Operational Strategy for 2009-2013" – situation caused by the LEADER project and its results, 2014), the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (Report on the challenges of small and medium-sized towns, economic development potential, impact on the total territorial development on a scale of Latvia and the European Union, and future development directions, 2014) Association "Cēsis District Rural Partnership" (Progress of the implementation of the local development strategy and contribution to the development of the area of operation of the association "Cēsis District Rural Partnership", 2015), State Regional Development Agency (preparation of content of VASAB Review "Development of the Baltic Sea region cities" (2015-2016)). Several BA lecturers – V.Valenbergs, L.Veliverronena,

A.Līviņa, a postgraduate student of BEA – participated in HESPI research “Possibilities of local government to influence the development of local economy” (2016).

The most significant activity for the BA lecturers was participation in three sub-projects of the State Research Project ECOSOC LV: 5.2.2. “Development of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Latvia Supporting the Smart Specialization Strategy” (M.Leščevica and a postgraduate student of BEA); 5.2.3. “Latvian Rural and Regional Development Processes and Opportunities in the Context of Knowledge Economics” (S.Rozentāle, G.Krūmiņš, M.Ore, V.Melbārde, undergraduate and postgraduate students); 5.2.8. “Processes of Cultural Environment Development, Preservation of Environmental Diversity and Urbanization in the Context of Balanced Development of Latvia (A.Līviņa, L.Veliverronena, I.Grīnfelde and postgraduate students).

Currently, lecturers of HESPI Institute are working on *two projects within the State Research Programme “Latvian Heritage and Future Challenges for National Sustainability (2018-2021)”*, implementing the project “*Values in Action: Promotion of Responsible, Secure and Educated Civil Society through Research and Development of Action Models*” (Assistant Professor V.Silkāne) and implementing the project “*Exploring Documentary Heritage for Building Synergies between Research and Society*” (A.Līviņa).

M.Leščevica, in cooperation with the *Institute of Agricultural Resources and Economics*, is involved in the project “*Challenges and Solutions of the Latvian State and Society in an International Framework (INTERFRAME-LV) (2018-2021)*” of the State Research Programme “*Latvian Heritage and Future Challenges for National Sustainability*”.

The research project “*Elaboration of Latgale Business Development Strategy in the field of “Development of Enterprise Tourism Services”*” (2019-2021) is being implemented within the framework of the Latvian Rural Development Programme of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), commissioned by the Association “*Partnership of Ludza Region*”.

Lecturer I.Gintere, within “*Postdoctoral Research Aid*” (ERDF), is implementing the project “*Leveraging ICT Product Innovations by Enhancing Codes of Modern Art*”, the scientific goal of which is research in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and in the field of modern art in Latvia to find new ideas for the promotion of ICT based on contemporary cultural traditions.

A very significant project for Valmiera and the region is “*Next Generation Micro Cities of Europe*” (2018-2021), which is exploring Valmiera and Ventspils as regional economic centers in order to meet common challenges of implementing urban development innovations. Information on the international scientific research projects is available in Part II, Section 4.3.

During the reporting period, lecturers involved in BA direction programmes have 231 scientific publications, the highest number (68) was in 2017, which can be explained by the large number of lecturers involved in the National Research Program ECOSOC LV (2014-2018). Lecturers have been involved in 95 different projects, 45 of which have been international projects. During the reporting period, lecturers have participated in 155 conferences, 141 of which were international.

Analyzing the research situation in the BA study direction, it can be concluded that research topics are wide-ranging, however, research is mainly related to the economic and business sector, regional development, a small part is related to tourism aspects, which is also an area of business.

Refer to the Annex for the list of scientific publications of the elected research staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes in the BA direction (see Annex 18).

4.5. Specify how the involvement of the students in scientific research and/or artistic creation activities is promoted. Provide the assessment and description of the involvement of the students of all-level study programmes in the relevant study direction in scientific research and/or artistic creation activities by giving examples of the opportunities offered to and used by the students.

Since 2007, ViA student research conference has played an important role in the formation and development of student research skills. The goal of the conference is to promote student involvement in science and research, to promote the development of creative abilities and professional development of students by improving their knowledge, as well as to identify the best and most successful authors of the research papers in various disciplines of science. Students from other higher education institutions also take part in the conference. The conference is organized in sections, and one section each year is held by the BA direction and covers current economic and business topics. The best Bachelor's theses of the BA direction are recommended by the State Examination Commission for the conference, the BA study direction council promotes the best annual projects, and the students involved in the projects present research results.

Involvement of students in scientific research has a significant role in the organization of ViA research work. Basic research skills are developed within the Bachelor's programme and further improved within the Master's programme. Upon launching the Doctoral programme in the BA direction, it is planned to base the study process on research, involving doctoral students as scientific assistants and researchers in the implementation of HESPI projects. During the reporting period, postgraduate students are mainly involved in research, although undergraduate students have also shown outstanding achievements in research. Involvement of the postgraduate students is purposefully directed towards preparation of capable students for doctoral studies.

From 2014 to 2018, ViA lecturers participated in the State Research Programme EKOSOC-LV 5.2.2. sub-project *Development of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Latvia Supporting the Smart Specialization Strategy*; Rolands Eglītis, an undergraduate student of the BA direction, was involved in this sub-project as an assistant; he also participated as a co-author in the development of a collective monograph: Krūmiņš G., Rozentāle S., Melbārde V., Ore M., Andersons A., **Eglītis R.**, (2018) authors of the chapter "Vidzeme Region" in the monograph "Knowledge Economy for Latvia's Rural and Regional Viability", editor-in-chief B. Rivža. Riga: LLA, 2018, pp. 160-228, ISBN 978-9934-8744-1-3,

https://lufb.llu.lv/LLUgramatas/Monografija_Zinasanu_ekonomika_Latvijas_lauku_rejonu_dzivotspejai.pdf (latvian only).

Within the BA study direction, students of the BEA Master's program are mainly involved in scientific research in state and regional level projects, but lecturers also involve students of other programs. The cooperation of lecturers at the master's level is shown by the examples discussed in the text below.

Significant contribution to research of the common direction has been made by Prof. Rozentāle's cooperation with Ieva Kreituze, a postgraduate student of BEA, and Aigars Andrersons, a postgraduate student of master's study programme Sociotechnical Systems Modelling.

I.Kreituze participated in Valmiera local government's grant research of 2016 as an assistant, was a co-author of the Final Report for the Valmiera city local government's grant project (commissioned by Valmiera City local government):

Rozentāle S., Liviņa A., Andersons A., Brigsa S., **Kreituze I.** (2016) Valmierā un Vidzemes

reģionā piedāvātās izglītības atbilstība uzņēmēju pieprasījumam un nodarbinātības prognozēm. (Compliance of education offered in Valmiera and Vidzeme region with the demand of entrepreneurs and employment forecasts).

https://www.valmiera.lv/images/userfiles/cits/Petijums_Darba_tirgus_01_02.pdf

I.Kreituze is a co-author of two publications indexed in the WEB of Science databases:

1. Rozentale S., Livina A., Brigsa S., Andersons A., **Kreituze I.** (2016) Future Labour Market Demand in Vidzeme Region, Latvia. In 9th International Scientific Conference – Business and Management, Book Series: Business and Management, Ind. **Web of Science** <http://www.bm.vgtu.lt/index.php/verslas/2016/paper/viewFile/19/19>
2. Livina A., Rozentale S., Brigsa S., Andersons A., **Kreituze I.** (2016) Personal Competencies for the Future Labour Market in Vidzeme Region, Latvia. In Proceeding Economic Science for Rural Development: Integrated and Sustainable Regional Development, Production and Co-operation, pp. 107-113. Ind. **Web of Sciences.**

Under the guidance of Professor Rozentāle, A.Andersons carried out an important research within the framework of his Master's thesis: A. Andersons Dynamic simulation model for sustainable municipality development in VIDZEME REGION (2017). Master's thesis and participation in VPP EKOSOC-LV research resulted in joint publications:

1. Rozentāle S., Andersons A. (2017) – “Indicators Affecting Vidzeme Region Smart Development”, Conference Proceeding Environment, Technology, Resources. Publisher: Rēzekne Higher Education Institution, Pages 240-245, Ind. SCOPUS;
2. Andersons A., Rozentāle S. (2017) – “Dynamic Simulation Model for Sustainable Municipality Development in Vidzeme Region, Latvia”, Conference Proceeding Environment, Technology, Resources, Pages 11-17, Ind. SCOPUS.

Cooperating with Prof. M.Lešcevicā, I.Kreituze has studied the issues of diaspora involvement in the Latvian labour market: Lešcevicā, M., Kreituze, I. (2018). In: Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference “RESEARCH FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT 2018.” Volume II, 2018. pp. 173 - 179.

Under the guidance of Prof. Lešcevicā in the ECOSOC_LV VPP project 5.2.2. “Development of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Latvia Supporting the Smart Specialization Strategy” postgraduate students Anna Zamele Novicka and Mairita Zaķe worked as scientific guest assistants (2017-2018).

The involvement of students in research work at the doctoral level within the direction was started from September 2020, because the first doctoral students were admitted to the program “Economics and Business” in the academic year 2020/2021.

During the reporting period, under the guidance of Prof. Sarma Cakula, the lecturer M.Prata (PRATT) is developing her promotion work “The impact of information and communication technologies on the motivation of employees”, the results of which have been published in scientific articles by M.Prata (PRATT):

1. Pratt and S. Cakula, “The Impact of Using Technology-Based Communication on Quality of Work Relationships”, Baltic J. Modern Computing, Vol. 8 (2020), of. 1, 143-153, <https://doi.org/10.22364/bjmc.2020.8.1.07> (Scopus),
2. Pratt, S. Cakula (2020) THE IMPACT OF INFORMATION AND

COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ITC) ON EMPLOYEES 'MOTIVATION, INTED2020 Procedures, pp. 1581-1589. (WEB of Science)

3. Pratt M., Boudhane M., Cakula S. (2021) Predictive Data Analysis Model for Employee Satisfaction Using ML Algorithms. In: Saeed F., Al-Hadhrami T., Mohammed F., Mohammed E. (eds) Advances on Smart and Soft Computing. Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing, vol 1188. Springer, Singapore:
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-6048-4_13.

Research activities within ViA and the direction have also resulted in increased quality of students' final theses and correspondingly in the achievements at the national level. Māris Riekstiņš received a Certificate of Gratitude awarded by the Latvian Economic Development Forum (LEAF) within the framework of LEAF Award 2019 for the Bachelor's thesis "Launching of New Product of WOLF SYSTEM LLC: Investment Project Analysis" (supervisor S.Rozentāle), Baiba Stikāne received a Certificate of Gratitude awarded by the Latvian Economic Development Forum (LEAF) within the framework of LEAF Award 2015 for the Bachelor's thesis "IT Project Management and Implementation of the Project Planning System at "Muuv"" (supervisor V. Melbārde).

In addition to the involvement of the above mentioned students, 4 postgraduate students were involved in carrying out various research activities within the framework of HESPI during the reporting period. It should be noted that all lecturers of the BA direction have also actively participated in organizing and improving pupil research activities – they are consultants of the Ministry of Education and Science, participate in reviewing and evaluating pupils' research papers of Vidzeme region, thus developing research skills for potential students.

It must be concluded that involvement of students in research has significantly increased, it is facilitated by growing involvement of the BA lecturers in scientific research within the framework of HESPI, participation in research projects of various levels. During the reporting period, students from all study programmes, and especially postgraduate students were involved in research, and their involvement was purposefully directed to prepare the most eager and capable students for doctoral studies, the same approach will be also continued in the future. At the undergraduate level, students who were motivated for further studies and showed interest in research were involved in scientific research. It should be noted that writing of final theses at the undergraduate and postgraduate level in the BA study field involves applied research creating preconditions for cooperation in research within scientific institutions. It is planned to have much greater student involvement and contribution to research in the next period; it will be ensured by the newly developed doctoral study programme "Economics and Business".

4.6. Provide a brief description and assessment of the forms of innovation (for instance, product, process, marketing, and organisational innovation) generally used in the study direction subject to the assessment, by giving the respective examples and assessing their impact on the study process.

During the reporting period, the BA study direction focused mainly on creating innovations of the product – study offer. At the initiative of the BA lecturers, in collaboration with ViA Knowledge and Technology Center and Valmiera Business Incubator, a pre-incubation platform has been created to support young entrepreneurs. A possibility to get ready and start business during studies is already

in place, and the platform includes three laboratories. The Business Trial Laboratory (B-LAB) is designed to support and assess ViA students' business ideas before starting business, providing required advice and infrastructure support. The Innovation Laboratory (I-LAB) is a place to solve student-entrepreneur-organization collaboration challenges through a creative and innovative approach; this laboratory provides for an opportunity to work on real and innovative products/services for the needs of a specific company. The Student Internship Laboratory (S-LAB) offers students an opportunity to do study internship or gain practical experience working in one of ViA's laboratories and developing products and services for different institutions and organizations, a possibility to develop a practical project within an academic year or shorter period of time, students are provided with mentors (lecturers, entrepreneurs) and the necessary training. An example and proof that product innovation works is students' success in business idea competitions. BA undergraduate students E. Rubene and I. Vozkova were the winners of Vidzeme planning region final in a competition on regional business ideas "Business Express" (2016) organized by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development. Their business idea was to produce natural ointments for dogs, and they received EUR 5,000 to implement their idea. The young women started their own business in 2017 and continue to develop it.

The pre-incubation platform is also pedagogical innovation as it is an alternative form of training that provides practical outcome – a student is prepared for joining the Business Incubator and starting a business. Currently, within the framework of the project NatureBizz, a specialized interdisciplinary and professional education programme for the development of green micro-enterprises is being developed together with Nordic colleagues. The green movement and the demand for natural, healthy and organic products and services open up vast eco-business opportunities, and from 2021 it is also planned to offer this training on a pre-incubation platform.

This type of innovation ensures the improvement of study content, the improvement of the quality of teaching, as well as encourages changes in students' thinking and future business behavior.

A product and marketing innovation is a possibility for the BA undergraduate students to obtain a certificate in accounting which is agreed with SIA Tilde, and a certificate of SiA Briox Latvia; the above certificates confirm the quality of financial literacy and also serve as a marketing tool. The BUSINET (International Business Education Network) certificate and diploma of achievements in international cooperation, which can be obtained by students who have been in the network member states within the framework of mobility, are also considered as a product and marketing innovation.

The mentioned examples - the possibility to obtain certificates and diplomas significantly motivate students for more successful and in-depth acquisition of professional knowledge and skills, thus raising the quality of studies, providing graduates with competitive advantages in the local and international labor market.

Within the BA direction, an important student motivator is the BA excellence award, which is the dedication of lecturers, alumni, colleagues and friends to the most excellent student of the year who has honourably presented the name of BV and ViA in a public space. It is a way to support talented and gifted students within the direction.

Pedagogical innovation is one of the transversal topics since the implementation of the ESF project "Improvement and Development of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences Academic Staff" (SAM 8.2.2.) in 2018, within the framework of which lecturers visit classes of their colleagues, discuss the teaching process observed and professional improvement possibilities. Within the framework of this project, a new form of cooperation with the companies of the field is being tested – lecturer internship opportunities at merchants are organized facilitating the development of a closer cooperation with the field.

A very important block of innovations is technological innovations, investments in the expansion of ICT possibilities. Since autumn 2020, lecturers have also access to a modern multimedia studio where it is possible to both record lectures and conduct online classes using a light-board. There is also an auditorium where it is possible to organize small group work, project-based study process. These improvements were made within the project “Next Generation Micro Cities of Europe” in cooperation with Valmiera local government, Ventspils University of Applied Sciences and other partners. The impact of innovations on the study process is high – lecturers have modernized their teaching methods, pedagogical improvement has taken place as a result of which lecturers have expanded the range of their pedagogical methods and also the links which were established with the companies of the industry within the framework of the internship programme, possibilities to attract visiting lecturers have increased.

II - Description of the Study Direction (5. Cooperation and Internationalisation)

5.1. Provide the assessment as to how the cooperation with different institutions from Latvia and abroad (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers' organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, scientific institutes, etc.) within the study direction contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction. Specify the criteria by which the cooperation partners suitable for the study direction and the relevant study programmes are selected and how the cooperation is organised by describing the cooperation with employers. In addition, specify the mechanism for the attraction of the employers.

The cooperation implemented by the Business Administration study field is subject to the achievement of the strategic goals and results of the study field.

The main criteria for starting cooperation are as follows: possibilities for improving the content and organization of study programmes with a purpose to ensure competitiveness; positioning of the study field in the higher education market; possibilities to attract international students; enlarging the network of cooperation partners at the national and international level; gaining of international experience; possibilities to develop scientific research within the study field and to increase its capacity, possibilities for student involvement in research; deepening of cooperation with entrepreneurs of the region and the public sector with a purpose to improve the study content, to assess student professional competences and to introduce innovative solutions of the industry.

One of the main priorities of the Business Administration direction within the space of higher education is cooperation with Latvian higher education institutions.

There is regular cooperation with regional higher education institutions in Latvia such as Rēzekne Academy of Technologies, Daugavpils University, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (seminars, exchange of experience, guest lectures, participation in the State examination commissions). A significant result of cooperation is the establishment of consortium (ViA, RAT, VeA) and development and licensing of the Doctoral programme “Economics and Entrepreneurship”. During the reporting period, cooperation in research was developed within the framework of the State Research Programme ECOSOC LV, where

successful work with Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Daugavpils University, University of Latvia, Liepāja University and VeA was established.

ViA and the Business Administration direction have entered into cooperation agreements with Alberta College and College of Law on cooperation in studies and research. More active communication and collaboration is with Alberta College, where lecturers are involved in reviewing of the State examination papers.

The lecturers of the direction have established good cooperation with the administration of Vidzeme Planning Region through regular exchange of information, involvement in research and providing internship. Successful cooperation has been established with several local governments in Vidzeme (municipalities of Valmiera, Cēsis, Amata, Priekuļi, Kocēni, Mazsalaca, Ķekava, etc.), their representatives participate in the State examination commissions, local governments provide internship possibilities, representatives of local governments are involved in the research programmes at the State and local level, students are supported in conducting of applied research.

With the support of Valmiera local government grant, during the reporting period, the lecturers-HESPI researchers conducted several significant studies in response to the current events in the region (*Demand of the study programmes offered by Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences and their compliance with future labour market, 2017*), *Possibilities and preconditions for attracting human resources (including talents) to Valmiera city. Development of Citizen Attraction Strategy for Valmiera City (2018)*, *Patient Satisfaction Survey and Development of the Satisfaction Monitoring System Model at Vidzeme Hospital (2017)* etc.) Research contributes significantly to the development of the region, and even more synergy is created in the study process when the research results are integrated in the study courses. One of the most important activities in the cooperation network is the development of cooperation with entrepreneurs and employers. There is successful cooperation with entrepreneurs of various fields, local governments and public institutions, which help provide internship possibilities (JSC Valpro, JSC Swedbank, VTU Valmiera, LLC Madara 89, LLC Dižozols, Valmiera local government, Cēsis local government, JSC CĒSU ALUS, Amata local government, etc.)

In total, ViA has entered into more than 40 internship umbrella agreements with governmental, non-governmental organizations and business enterprises throughout Latvia.

A significant aspect in building cooperation network with employers is communication with professional organizations of the field – ViA is a member of the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, lecturers of the BA direction actively participate in more than ten professional organizations (Latvian Association for Econometrics, Association of Latvian Statisticians, Latvian Business Consultants Association, Association for Advancement of Baltic Studies, Global Business Education Network BUSINET, Latvian Filmmakers Union, Nordic Association of Agricultural Scientists, Latvian Council of Professors, Latvian Association of English Teachers, Association of Surveyors, etc.). In the field of finance and accounting, BV study field cooperates with SIA Tilde and SIA Briox (Sweden).

During the reporting period, BA successfully cooperated with Valmiera Business Incubator both to provide a pre-incubation platform for students within the projects of ViA Knowledge and Technology Center (ZTC) and involving lecturers in business idea expertise (V.Melbārde, J.Rozenbergs, A.Andersons), thus promoting innovative ideas. commercialization.

The Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry offers high quality professional development courses, which are of great benefit for lecturers, while activities in professional organizations ensure connection with the field.

Advisory councils for Bachelor's and Master's programmes are established in the BA direction.

Professionals of the field are involved in both boards.

Within the framework of the project SAM 8.2.2., lecturers of the study field have in-service training in the companies of the industry, thus promoting their professional development and enlarging the range of cooperation partners.

One of the ways to develop cooperation with the industry is to involve graduates in the study process and extracurricular activities of the study field through the ViA ALUMNI movement, which should be made more active in the future.

The main criteria for developing cooperation with employers are as follows: the necessity to cooperate with the industry in identifying its current trends in order to improve the quality of studies, to involve high-level professionals in teaching and improving the study process, to involve students in applied research in companies, to build a stable network of internship providers, to promote student employment after graduation. Upon choosing cooperation partners, another important factor is also employers' own interest in and openness to cooperation.

Employers are attracted through the ViA Convention of Advisors and consultative councils established in the study field, as well as through involving professionals in conducting guest lectures, participation in the State examination commissions, also by lecturer involvement in professional organizations, cooperation with local governments and business associations, lecturer in-service training in companies, and graduate activity in the ViA Alumni movement.

The main strategic goal – to ensure internationally competitive higher education in the area of business administration can be achieved by increasing involvement in internationalization processes of higher education.

One of the main strategic directions of internationalization of the Business Administration direction is active participation in BUSINET, the global business education network.

The Business Administration direction is a member of BUSINET (represented by A.Andersons). The international network provides opportunities for further education and exchange of experience for both lecturers and students. Students who studied or did internship abroad have an opportunity to obtain internationally recognized BUSINET certificates as proof of international professional and intercultural experience.

Development of international cooperation with foreign higher education institutions is aimed at study process improvement (exchange studies, internships abroad, lectures of guest professors, study internships and other activities promoting internationalization; private initiatives of lecturers within the framework of professional organizations). The BA course "Business Ethics" is taught each year by R.Ratkovic from Croatia. Involvement in the activities of SAM 8.2.2 project has enabled to attract Prof. G.Cardia (Malta), thus, gaining invaluable international experience for the lecturers of the Business Administration direction. During the 2020/2021 academic year, 2 more visiting professors from Kazakhstan and Belarus will work in the field of Business Management.

An important aspect of the cooperation is the provision of the double degree opportunities in cooperation with the EU and partner universities outside the EU. Kazakhstan, Moldova, Ukraine were defined as the main target countries for attracting students and for pursuing a double degree in the Business Administration direction. During the reporting period, visits and enquiries were made, but due to differences in regulatory frameworks, no significant progress has been made towards obtaining a double degree with partners from Germany (Jade University of Applied Sciences) and Kazakhstan (Kokshe University). Cooperation opportunities with the Ukrainian Mykolayiv State Agrarian University, whose management has expressed an interest in developing double degree programmes at the BA postgraduate level, are currently being assessed, as well as

negotiations are going on with the Kazakhstan partners. Partnerships are also developed in Europe: Estonia, Lithuania, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Italy and elsewhere to implement study programmes and promote international communication and student engagement.

A part of internationalization is involvement of lecturers in international science projects. The main project partners are the Nordic countries, Estonia and Lithuania.

The lecturers are mainly involved by participating in projects implemented by the Institute of Social, Economic and Humanities Research (HESPI), Institute of Sociotechnical Systems Engineering (SSII), as well as the Knowledge and Technology Center of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (ZTC). The Business Administration direction participated in the preparation of the EU project SAM 8.2.1-3., and all the elected lecturers started learning English and teaching methodology in a digital environment.

ViA, in general, provides various cooperation opportunities abroad: student and staff mobility within the Erasmus+ programme, inter-university cooperation within the framework of existing cooperation agreements (outside the Erasmus+ programme), cooperation within international organizations/partner networks, cooperation with foreign companies, local governments, governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The internationalization strategy of the study direction includes two lines of action: within the European Union (EU) and outside the EU. ViA has entered into about 80 international cooperation agreements. They enable successful cooperation activities with various ViA partners, such as student and lecturer exchange, exchange of experience, joint projects, courses, seminars, guest lectures, research and conferences, feedback on study quality assessment.

The cooperation between the BA study field and various Latvian and foreign institutions is fully subject to and focused on the achievement of strategic goals and study results in education, research, knowledge transfer and leadership of ideas ensuring internationally competitive higher professional education in the field of business administration in the country, developing the study field as a research centre in the field of sustainable regional economic development and as a platform for generating business ideas, starting a business and approving innovative solutions, promoting knowledge commercialization.

[Refer to information on the concluded co-operation agreements with other institutions, the subject of the agreement and the term of validity can be viewed in the appendix to the report \(see Annex 19\).](#)

5.2. Specify the system or mechanisms, which are used to attract the students and the teaching staff from abroad and provide a description of the dynamics of the number of the attracted students and the teaching staff.

Mechanisms for attracting international students:

- Information “study portals” – FindAMansters, topuniversities.com;
- Digital marketing on Facebook;
- Full-time higher education exhibitions in target countries;
- Electronic and hard copy brochures.

Mechanisms for attracting foreign lecturers:

- Personal contact of ViA academic staff;
- Participation in conferences;
-

International students have access to all information electronically, and there is a guide for international students. All international students are provided with accommodation in the hostel. Visa support is provided if required. All international students have the same rights as local students.

The lecturers are given access to the infrastructure to the same extent as the local staff. If necessary, assistance is provided with the visa.

[Refer to the annex for the overview of study mobilities carried out within the study direction \(see Annex 17\).](#)

5.3. In the event that the study programme entails a traineeship, provide a description of the traineeship options offered to the students, as well as the provision, and work organisation. Specify whether the higher education institution/ college provides assistance in finding traineeships.

Internship is an integral part of ViA study programmes. The goal of internship is to consolidate and supplement the knowledge acquired during the studies, as well as to improve student professional skills and competences in accordance with the requirements of the particular profession.

The duration and time of internship are specified in the study programme and correspond to the semester study schedule of each study group. The volume of internship in the BA direction's Bachelor's programme in Business Administration during the reporting period was 26 CP, while from 2020 it will be 20 CP. The amount of internship in the Master's programme in Business Environment Management is 6 CP, but students with an academic Bachelor's degree or equivalent higher education have to do qualification internship in the amount of 20 CP in order to acquire practical skills required for a company manager.

During internship a student represents Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences by qualitatively performing intended internship tasks and demonstrating independence, preparedness, knowledge and skills. A student also obtains materials for the development of the State examination – Bachelor's or Master's thesis, without disclosing confidential information of the internship provider to the third persons;

The following persons participate in the organization of internship: director of the Business Administration studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, internship supervisor approved by the BA direction, internship supervisor from the part of the company and a student himself/herself.

ViA has agreements with a number of organizations for the provision of internship, but basically a student chooses an internship provider independently in accordance with his/her interests and vision of professional development. Thanks to the long-term cooperation with entrepreneurs, the programme director has created a database of entrepreneurs, and it is used to provide internship. Entrepreneurs from Valmiera and Vidzeme region are happy to provide internship for BA students,

therefore, there is no problem with providing internship. Within the undergraduate study programmes internship was done every academic year (in amount of 6 CP), starting from 2020 internship will be done starting from the second year, while the undergraduate students will do internship in the 2nd or 3rd semester, depending on the duration of the programme. Internship places are approved by the head of the direction. The defence of internship takes place publicly. There is a procedure developed for preparation of a report on the tasks performed within the framework of internship and the quality of their execution. A student assesses his/her performance and improvement of skills within the framework of internship, as well as provides recommendations for the improvement of internship organization in his/her report and during defence. The supervisor also provides an evaluation of the student's performance.

For more details on internship refer to the programme description (see Part III, Section 2.4, Part IV, Section 2.4)

[Refer to the annex for the Internship Regulations of the study programmes \(see Annex 20\).](#)

[Refer to the annex for the list of agreements on the provision of study internships \(see Annex 21\).](#)

5.4. In the event that joint study programmes are implemented in the study direction, provide the justification of the creation of the joint study programmes and a description and assessment of the selection of the partnering higher education institutions by including information on the principles and the procedures for the creation and implementation of these joint study programmes. In the event that no joint study programmes are implemented in the study direction, provide a description and assessment of the plans of the higher education institution/ college for the creation of such study programmes within the study direction.

The joint study programme "Economy and Entrepreneurship" formed by three higher education institutions in the regions of Latvia: Vidzeme, Latgale and Kurzeme. The National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014-2020 envisages three priorities, of which one was/is "growth-supporting territories" with the action line "Promotion of economic development in the regions – promotion of territorial potential". Consequently, higher education institutions of the regions have an important role to play in providing top-level experts in the national economy and entrepreneurship, contributing to talent development in the region, creating new knowledge and solutions for sustainable economic development and growth in the regions. The consortium of the selected universities has already cooperated with RAT in the implementation of the joint Doctoral programme in engineering and with Ventspils University of Applied Sciences in the implementation of the development and research project "Next Generation Micro Cities of Europe" which related to the city development (Ventspils and Valmiera).

The programme has been developed taking into account the findings of the international report "Reforming the Doctorate in Social Sciences" (European University Institute, 2017), which covers examples of good practice in eight areas of doctoral studies: dissertation development, supervision of a Doctoral thesis, doctoral studies, correlation of academic and professional activities, technology applications, mobility and internationalization processes, funding principles, labour market opportunities.

The programme has been developed taking into account the reports of the experts of the World Bank Group, as well as advice and recommendations from the World Bank experts who visited

higher education institutions of Latvia. One of the recommendations that is taken into account is the inclusion of an agreement between the supervisor of the Doctoral thesis and the doctoral student in the study programme (Sursock, A. 2017, 2018).

Experts of the Council of Higher Education of the Republic of Latvia have also pointed out that study content and process should be carefully assessed and adapted to the requirements of the labour market. Higher education institutions in Latvia should cooperate more actively and purposefully, ensuring joint implementation of the study process, sharing of experience, involvement in joint projects and attraction of international students. In addition, greater and more effective cooperation is needed among the higher education institutions regarding Master's and doctoral studies. [1] The higher education development strategies of the consortium include promotion of cooperation with other higher education institutions in Latvia and abroad in the development and implementation of joint study programmes, in particular, doctoral programmes.

The programme has been discussed in the partner higher education study councils, in which the staff, students and employers participate. A working group for the development and implementation of the programme was established in each partner's higher education institutions (ViA Order No.61-p of 15.05.2019, VeA Order No. 21/M of 27.05.2019 and Order No. 33/M of 12.09.2019, RAT Order No. 7/194 of 05.04.2019). The inter-university team of experts, who regularly discussed the development of the programme 1-2 times a month, both in person and in webinars, was especially active.

The key issues for the implementation of the joint study programme are set out in the consortium agreement.

[1] Expert assessment by the study directions in Latvia, Higher Education Council, Riga, 2012, http://www.aip.lv/ESF_projekts_publ_32_1.htm

II - Description of the Study Direction (6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures)

6.1. Assessment of the fulfilment of the plan regarding the implementation of the recommendations provided by the experts during the previous accreditation of the study direction, as well as the assessment of the impact of the given recommendations on the study quality or the improvement of the study process within the study direction and the relevant study programmes.

In 2012, the Bachelor's study programme of the Business Administration direction was internationally assessed. Based on the expert assessment by the Decision No.19 of the accreditation commission of the Ministry of Education and Science of 22.05.2013, the programme was accredited (accreditation sheet No. 19) for the maximum period of 6 years (until 21.05.2019, the term is extended until 2020 by the Cabinet Regulations), date of the expert report: 31.03.2012.

During the post-accreditation period, mostly attention was paid to the following issues: improvement of the scientific qualification of the academic staff and increase of the number of publications, improvement of the study content and search for the programme niche within the

higher education space, alumni movement activation and introducing internationalization aspects in the study process and research. In general, the process of recommendation implementation has contributed to the improvement of the programme content, stimulated research and student engagement, fostered international cooperation and networking, providing for better study process and specialist training.

Following expert recommendations on avoiding content duplication in the Master's and Bachelor's programmes, the content was specified and revised at the programmes of both levels, new courses were developed, content of some courses was revised and their names were adjusted. In 2018, all course descriptions were revised to avoid content duplication.

In order to improve the study quality, an opportunity is provided for applicants to the Bachelor's programme to prepare for centralized examinations and studies by means of the preparatory courses organized by ViA, and students of all programmes can additionally improve their English. Introductory entrepreneurship courses provide classes that incorporate a knowledge-levelling mechanism. Applicants to the BEA Master's programme who do not have a Bachelor's degree in economics or administration have to take an entrance test in English and basic knowledge in the field, thus preparing them for studies.

During the reporting period, special attention was paid to research work of the study field through involvement in many international projects, which resulted in increased number of publications and student involvement in research. Studies were conducted within the framework of the projects of the Research and Science and Technology Centre of the Scientific Institute HESPI – at least one student was involved in each project. The winners were basically postgraduate students.

Involvement of students in research helped also implement the recommendation on linking scientific research with current events in the region, because along with international research, Hespri is carrying out Valmiera grant research and, during the reporting period, large-scale projects of the National Research Programme which are focused on research of the economy in the region. At the moment, the main topics of the annual projects, Bachelor's and Master's theses are business problems of the region. In 2018, a new study course "Regional Economics" was created for undergraduate students, which includes an analysis of Vidzeme region economic processes.

The recommendation for co-operation with other Latvian higher education institutions in implementation of the study programmes has been fully implemented, as the joint doctoral study programme "Economics and Entrepreneurship" of three Latvian higher education institutions is established.

A lot of work has been and is being invested to develop a joint programme with foreign higher education institutions, however, the efforts failed due to differences in regulatory frameworks and legal barriers. In 2020, it is planned to continue negotiations and harmonization process with Ukrainian, Kazakhstan and Albanian partners.

Both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are based on the world-recognized Business Administration standard, and are developed in such a way to meet the occupational standard Business Manager and Organization Manager. The programmes have modules of professional courses, instead of specialization. There are following differences highlighted: interdisciplinary approach, wide integration of information and communication technologies and digital tools, business process modelling and innovation generation. Work has been started on programme positioning in the eco-business niche.

Students have the right to take any course of their choice at both Latvian and foreign higher education institutions, and transfer of courses is stipulated and accepted.

As a result of course audits, a written examination has to be taken in all economy and business courses, thus ensuring impartiality in the course assessment.

Graduates are increasingly involved in the activities of the study programmes by offering jobs, providing internship, participating in the work of the Advisory Councils of the direction and ViA Advisory Convention, delivering lectures, organizing field trips, etc. The proportion of graduates in the region's labour market has increased significantly, contributing to the overall development of the region.

Refer to [Annex 22](#) for more details on the implementation of the recommendations of the previous study direction accreditation.

6.2. Implementation of the recommendations given by the experts during the evaluation of the changes to the relevant study programmes in the respective study direction or licensed study programmes over the reporting period or recommendations received during the procedure for the inclusion of the study programme in the accreditation form of the study direction (if applicable).

At the end of the reporting period, the joint doctoral program "Economics and Entrepreneurship" was licensed (license from 05.02.2020, implemented by RTA, VeA, ViA), admission to the program started in 2020/2021 academic year.

Licensing expert recommendation no.1. has been observed, the composition and workload of the lecturers of the study course "Business and Economic Trends" has been changed, the study course will take place for the first time in the spring semester of 2021.

Licensing expert recommendation no.2. is observed, the joint doctoral study program has more than 5 LZP experts in economics and or business. The joint study program council pays attention to the terms of LZP experts so that they are renewed in time.

Licensing expert recommendation no.3. has been taken into account when developing the MES Doctoral Study Development Plan. The developed plan envisages improvement of this recommendation.

Licensing expert recommendation no.4. The study plan has been left as before, it will be possible to objectively make decisions about those changes after at least one full year of studies.

Licensing expert recommendation no.5. to develop a development plan for the joint doctoral study program for the next 2 years. A joint doctoral study development plan has been developed for the participation of the SAM project in 2020. in the fall.

Refer to [Annex 23](#) for information on the implementation measures of the recommendations of the previous study direction accreditation.

Annexes

I. Information on the Higher Education Institution/ College		
List of the governing regulatory enactments and regulations of the higher education institution/ college	4P-ViA-normatives-15122020.docx	4P-ViA-normativie-akti-15122020.docx
Information on the implementation of the study direction in the branches of the higher education institution/ college (if applicable)		
Management structure of the higher education institution/ college	3P_ViA_structure.pdf	3P-ViA_struktura_paplasinata_pec_18032020.pdf
II. Description of the Study Direction - 1. Management of the Study Direction		
Plan for the development of the study direction (if applicable)	5.1.P - Attistibas-plans-Development-plan.docx	5.1.P - Attistibas-plans-Development-plan.docx
Management structure of the study direction	6P-BV-studiju virziena parvaldibas shema.docx	6P-BV-studiju virziena parvaldibas shema.docx
II. Description of the Study Direction - 3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction		
Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction	15P-BA-study-field-academic-staff-list-edited-30.12.2020.xlsx	15P-BV_docetaju parskata tabula_precizets_30.12.2020.xlsx
Biographies of the teaching staff members (in Europass Curriculum Vitae format)	16P-CV2019-precizets-22122020.zip	16P-CV2019-precizets-22122020.zip
Summary of the statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff over the reporting period	17P-BV_mobility-29102020-ENG.xlsx	17P-BV_pasnov-zin-starptautiska-mob-29102020.xlsx
II. Description of the Study Direction - 4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation		
List of the publications, patents, and artistic creations of the teaching staff over the reporting period	18P-publication-confer-projects-edited-04012021.zip	18P-projekti-konferences-publikacijas-preciz-04012021.zip
II. Description of the Study Direction - 5. Cooperation and Internationalisation		
List of cooperation agreements	19P-BA-direction-coorp-agreement-list.docx	19P-BV-virziena-sadarbibas-ligumi-saraksts.docx
Statistical data on the teaching staff and the students from abroad	17P-BV_mobility-29102020-ENG.xlsx	17P-BV_pasnov-zin-starptautiska-mob-29102020.xlsx
Statistical data on the mobility of students (by specifying the study programmes)	17P-BV_mobility-29102020-ENG.xlsx	17P-BV_pasnov-zin-starptautiska-mob-29102020.xlsx
Description of the organisation of the traineeship of the students	20P-BV-virziena-Praksu_nolikumi.zip	20P-BV-virziena-Praksu_nolikumi.zip
Information on the agreements and other documents confirming the traineeship of the students in companies	21P-BA-study-field-internship-agreement-list-edited.zip	21P-BV-virz-praksu-lig-saraksts-precizets.zip
II. Description of the Study Direction - 6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures		
Overview of the implementation of the provided recommendations	22P-Recommendations-prev-accred-.docx	22P-Ieprieks.stud.virz.akred.izteikto ieteikumu ieviesana.docx
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Confirmation signed by the rector, director or the head of the study programme or the study direction of the higher education institution/ college which states that the official language proficiency of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study direction complies 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.	15P-BV_docetaju parskata tabula.edoc	15P-BV_docetaju parskata tabula.edoc
III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period		
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard		
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme		
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)		
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules		
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.		
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued		

Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme		
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that 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 according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.		
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education		
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement		
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.		
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Electronically signed application form for assessment of a study direction	00-AIC-iesniegums-BV-VIRZIENS-eparaksts.edoc	00-AIC-iesniegums-BV-VIRZIENS-eparaksts.edoc

Other annexes

Name of document	Document
1P-01102019-ViA-studiju-programmas-akreditācijas-dati-redigets-2020FEB.xls	1P-01102019-ViA-studiju-programmas-akreditācijas-dati-redigets-2020FEB.xls
2P-Studentu-statistika-2010-2020-AIKA.xlsx	2P-Studentu-statistika-2010-2020-AIKA.xlsx
5P-ViA_Studiju-kvalitates-nodrosinasanas-politika-APST-31012020-LV.pdf	5P-ViA_Studiju-kvalitates-nodrosinasanas-politika-APST-31012020-LV.pdf
5P-ViA_Studiju-kvalitates-nodrosinasanas-politika-APST-31012020-ENG.pdf	5P-ViA_Studiju-kvalitates-nodrosinasanas-politika-APST-31012020-ENG.pdf
7P-Uznemsanas_noteikumi_2020-2021_APST-30102019.pdf	7P-Uznemsanas_noteikumi_2020-2021_APST-30102019.pdf
7P-Uznemsanas_noteikumi_2020-2021_APST-30102019-ENG.docx	7P-Uznemsanas_noteikumi_2020-2021_APST-30102019-ENG.docx
7P-DREU_ViA_VeA_RTA_Uznemsanas_noteikumi_2020-2021_APST_28022020.docx	7P-DREU_ViA_VeA_RTA_Uznemsanas_noteikumi_2020-2021_APST_28022020.docx
8P-Studiju-rezultatu-atzinas-nolikums-APST-28082019.pdf	8P-Studiju-rezultatu-atzinas-nolikums-APST-28082019.pdf
9P-ViA_Studiju_nolikums_APST-ar-ped- groz-31012020-LV.doc	9P-ViA_Studiju_nolikums_APST-ar-ped- groz-31012020-LV.doc
9P-ViA_Studiju_nolikums_APST-ar-ped- groz-31012020-ENG.doc	9P-ViA_Studiju_nolikums_APST-ar-ped- groz-31012020-ENG.doc
10P-ViA_Etikas_nolikums_26042017.pdf	10P-ViA_Etikas_nolikums_26042017.pdf
10P-Ētikas pārkāpumu izskatīšanas procedūra_shēma.pdf	10P-Ētikas pārkāpumu izskatīšanas procedūra_shēma.pdf
10P-ViA_Etikas_nolikums_26042017.pdf	10P-ViA_Etikas_nolikums_26042017.pdf
10P-Ētikas pārkāpumu izskatīšanas procedūra_shēma.pdf	10P-Ētikas pārkāpumu izskatīšanas procedūra_shēma.pdf
11P-BV-akreditacija-finanses-28022020.docx	11P-BV-akreditacija-finanses-28022020.docx
12P-Nolikums-par-velesanam-akademiskie_amati_20070627.doc	12P-Nolikums-par-velesanam-akademiskie_amati_20070627.doc
13P-Darba_samaksas_nolikums_20200930.zip	13P-Darba_samaksas_nolikums_20200930.zip
14P-ViA Docetaju darba saturs un pienākumi 28.05.2014.doc	14P-ViA Docetaju darba saturs un pienākumi 28.05.2014.doc
13P-Darba_samaksas_nolikums_20200930.zip	13P-Darba_samaksas_nolikums_20200930.zip
18P-BV-projekti-konferences-publikācijas.zip	18P-BV-projekti-konferences-publikācijas.zip
22P-Ieprieks.stud.virz.akred.izteikto ieteikumu ieviesana.docx	22P-Ieprieks.stud.virz.akred.izteikto ieteikumu ieviesana.docx
23P-AIC_skaidrojumi_par rekomendacijam_31012020-EUd.docx	23P-AIC_skaidrojumi_par rekomendacijam_31012020-EUd.docx
10P-Regulations-of-ethics-26042017-ENG.doc	10P-Regulations-of-ethics-26042017-ENG.doc
10P-Ethical Infringement Procedure Scheme.docx	10P-Ethical Infringement Procedure Scheme.docx
10P-Regulations-of-ethics-26042017-ENG.doc	10P-Regulations-of-ethics-26042017-ENG.doc
10P-Ethical Infringement Procedure Scheme.docx	10P-Ethical Infringement Procedure Scheme.docx
1P-2020FEB-ViA-study-programms.xls	1P-2020FEB-ViA-study-programms.xls
2P-Studentu-statistika-2010-2020-AIKA-BV.xlsx	2P-Studentu-statistika-2010-2020-AIKA-BV.xlsx
2P-Student-statistics-2010-2020-AIKA-BA-study-field.xlsx	2P-Student-statistics-2010-2020-AIKA-BA-study-field.xlsx
7P-DREU_ViA_VeA_RTA_Admission-regulation-to-EB_2020-2021_APST_28022020-ENG.docx	7P-DREU_ViA_VeA_RTA_Admission-regulation-to-EB_2020-2021_APST_28022020-ENG.docx
8P-Study-results-recognition-regulations-APPROVED-28082019.docx	8P-Study-results-recognition-regulations-APPROVED-28082019.docx
11P-BA-financial-information.docx	11P-BA-financial-information.docx
12P-Regulations-for-elections-in-academic-positions_20070627.doc	12P-Regulations-for-elections-in-academic-positions_20070627.doc
13P-Salary-Regulations-20200930.zip.zip	13P-Salary-Regulations-20200930.zip.zip
14P-ViA Content and Duties of Lecturer's Work 28.05.2014.doc	14P-ViA Content and Duties of Lecturer's Work 28.05.2014.doc
23P-AIC_skaidrojumi_par rekomendacijam_02012021-EUd.docx	23P-AIC_skaidrojumi_par rekomendacijam_02012021-EUd.docx
23P-AIC_recommend-joint-program_02012021-EBdr.docx	23P-AIC_recommend-joint-program_02012021-EBdr.docx
3pusejais-sadarbibas_ligums-kopiga-programma-27_08_2019-vea_rta_via(1)_20200224142548.edoc	3pusejais-sadarbibas_ligums-kopiga-programma-27_08_2019-vea_rta_via(1)_20200224142548.edoc
BV-VIRZIENA-Sadarbibas ligumi-2020OKT.zip	BV-VIRZIENA-Sadarbibas ligumi-2020OKT.zip
15P-BV_docetaju_parskata_tabula_precizets_30.12.2020.edoc	15P-BV_docetaju_parskata_tabula_precizets_30.12.2020.edoc
15P-BA-study-field-academic-staff-list-edited-30.12.2020.edoc	15P-BA-study-field-academic-staff-list-edited-30.12.2020.edoc
18P-publication-confer-projects-edited-04012021.zip	18P-publication-confer-projects-edited-04012021.zip
18P-projekti-konferences-publikācijas-preciz-04012021.zip	18P-projekti-konferences-publikācijas-preciz-04012021.zip

Business Administration

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Management, Administration and Management of Real Property</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Business Administration</i>
Education classification code	<i>42345</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Professional bachelor study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Vija</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Melbārde</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>vija.melbarde@va.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Mg.oec.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	<i>29288360</i>
Goal of the study programme	<i>The goal of the Business Administration study programme of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences is to provide training of highly qualified business administration specialists – company managers – capable of working in accordance with sustainable economic development tendencies and the changing global business environment.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<p><i>Tasks of the programme</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. To provide students with a comprehensive knowledge appropriate to business administration and specific knowledge and understanding of the economic processes and business environment, as well as of legal, financial and psychological aspects of business establishment and planning, organization and management.</i> <i>2. To develop students' skills and abilities in accordance with the goals set and occupational standard, choosing appropriate education methods, emphasizing acquisition of applied knowledge and research skills, use of digital solutions, teamwork and ability to think critically, to analyze problems, to assume responsibility, emphasizing development of communication, public speaking and reasoning skills.</i> <i>3. To promote student motivation for further education and personal development; to promote student development into an independent, socially responsible, creative personality who respects natural and cultural values, with the ability to work in a multicultural environment and to set up his/her own company.</i> <i>4. To promote professional development of the academic staff, supplementing the body of the teaching staff with experienced practitioners of the field from Latvia and abroad; to put into practice the values emphasized in ViA strategy, emphasizing student-centered and communication-promoting study environment.</i> <i>5. To develop cooperation with enterprises, State and municipal institutions and non-governmental organizations of the region, thus facilitating provision of internship possibilities and improvement of study quality, provision of feedback between academic environment and the field.</i>

Results of the study programme	<p><i>Learning outcomes of the study programme:</i></p> <p><i>Knowledge:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Knowledge on legal, financial, quality and psychological aspects of commercial environmental assessment, business establishment, operational planning, organization and process management;</i> <i>2. Knowledge on information acquisition, selection and processing, project development and implementation, innovation and research issues;</i> <i>3. Knowledge on the role and application of information technology in business management process;</i> <i>4. Knowledge and understanding of the binding laws and regulations of the field and the standards and operating principles of the professional environment;</i> <i>5. Knowledge and understanding of professional ethics, corporate social responsibility and the environmental and social impact caused by the projects of the field.</i> <p><i>Skills:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Students are able to assess in practice regularities and tendencies of the world economy, to analyze and assess business environment, to plan, organize and assess indicators of financial and economic development of the company, to elaborate development plans in accordance with the goals set, economic environment and market situation;</i> <i>2. Students apply the requirements of applicable laws and regulations, civil and environmental protection requirements and organize operations of the company in accordance with the changes in laws and regulations;</i> <i>3. Students are able to explain professional issues of the field and discuss them with specialists and the public, they know terminology and communicate in a foreign language;</i> <i>4. Students have self-motivation skills for self-education, professional activities, they plan and implement independent and group work, observe the norms of communication culture and professional ethics;</i> <i>5. Students carry out applied research within the field using a variety of research methods, IT technologies and digital tools.</i> <p><i>Competencies:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Students are able to critically analyze the economic situation and business environment, to start a business, to plan and manage company's activities and processes, to assess company's risks and development directions;</i> <i>2. Students are able to carry out research and develop concepts in the field, to present them publicly in the professional environment and to non-specialists, to form a social dialogue with society and to participate in building company's reputation;</i> <i>3. Students are capable of independent further education, to solve professional problems creatively, they are able to react efficiently to new developments in the field and demands of the changing professional environment;</i> <i>4. Students understand the basic issues of professional and academic ethics and are able to assess their responsibility regarding the impact of professional or academic activities on society and the environment.</i>
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Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>Bachelor Thesis</i>
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Study programme forms

Full time studies - 4 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>4</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>160</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary Education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Professional Bachelor's degree in Business Administration</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Manager of Company</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences	VALMIERA	CĒSU IELA 4, VALMIERA, VALMIERAS NOVADS, LV-4201

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme)

1.1. Description and analysis of changes in study programme parameters that have taken place since the issue of the previous accreditation certificate of study direction or the license of study programme if study programme is not included in the accreditation page of the study direction

Changes made to the study programme since the last accreditation are mainly determined by the Regulations on the State Standard of the Second Level Professional Higher Education (Cabinet Regulations No. 512 of 26.08.2014), the map of occupations included in the structure of the following fields: business, finance, accounting and administration (wholesale and retail trade, commercial sciences), and the new Occupational Standard for the Company Manager (adopted on 18.09.2019).

1. Degree and professional qualification to be awarded

Degree to be awarded – **professional Bachelor's degree in business administration** (until 2020 – professional Bachelor's degree in business management);

professional qualification – **Manager of Company** (until 2020 – manager of a company and institution).

Changes to the professional qualification are determined by the occupational standard for the Company Manager, the name of the degree to be awarded is adjusted in accordance with the classification of the science disciplines of Latvia.

2. Form and manner of implementation

Starting from 2020, only full-time studies (4 years, 8 semesters) will be implemented, cancelling part-time studies as there is no demand for part-time studies (no part-time admission during the reporting period).

3. Changes to the study content and planning

Compulsory study courses (Part A) 94 CP (previously - 104 CP):

General education courses:

1) new study courses: Business Communication 2 CP, Civil Defence 1 CP, and Environmental Protection 1 CP

2) course names are adjusted and the scope of the course in CP is changed:

(1) Business English 4 CP is implemented as two separate courses – Business English I 2 CP and Business English II 2 CP,

(2) Mathematics for Economists 2 CP (previously – Mathematics 4 CP).

Basic theoretical courses of the industry and IT courses:

3) names are adjusted:

(1) Statistics and Statistical Data Processing (previously – Statistics and Computerized Information

Processing),

(2) International Economics and Business (International Economics)

4) the name of the course is adjusted and the scope of the course in CP is changed:

(1) Financial Accounting 4 CP (previously – Financial Accounting and Computerized Accounting 6 CP),

(2) Business Plan 2 CP (previously – 4 CP),

(3) volume of the annual project is reduced to 6 CP (previously – 12 CP),

5) reduced internship volume and breakdown by years – 20 CP, cancelling internship in the 1st study year (previously – 26 CP).

Professional specialization courses (Part B) 40 CP (previously 48 CP), of which 20 CP for elective professional specialization courses – 20 CP:

Compulsory professional specialization courses include:

1) new courses: Regional Economics 2 CP and Second Foreign Language 4 CP,

2) the name of the course is adjusted and the scope of the course in CP is changed:

(1) Taxes 4 CP (previously – Tax System and Legislation in Latvia 2 CP),

(2) Audit 4 CP (previously – Audit 2 CP and Preparation of the Annual Report 2 CP).

3) four new modules of professional specialization elective courses are developed (10 CP each): Marketing Management, Wholesale and Retail, Financial Management, Innovation Laboratory.

4) New courses in scope of 24 CP are developed for the elective modules:

(1) Brand Development and Management in International Market 4 CP,

(2) Digital Marketing 2 CP,

(3) Export Marketing Principles and Tools 2 CP,

(4) Sales and Customer Service 2 CP,

(5) Shop Management 4 CP,

(6) Productivity and Creativity 2 CP,

(7) Intercultural Communication 2 CP,

(8) Innovation Management 4 CP,

(9) Financing Tools 2 CP.

Changes to the content and planning of the study programme are made with the goal to integrate in the studies the latest theoretical knowledge of the field, information technology tools, practical training for developing creativity and innovation abilities, which would prepare students more thoroughly for establishing and managing business activities. The courses emphasize aspects of the regional economy, and their content and planning take into account recommendations of the entrepreneurs.

1.2. Analysis and assessment of the statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down in the different study forms, types, and languages.

Statistical data on students (see Annex 2) reflect both the impact of economic development processes and the overall demographic situation in Latvia – during the reporting period, the total number of students has decreased, however, in the last three years both the number of admitted students and the total number of students have remained unchanged, and in 2019 and 2020 the number of admitted students has increased. Historically, BA programme has had the highest number of students, therefore the impact of economic and demographic tendencies is more pronounced. The number of graduates by 2017 was higher than the number of admitted students, which has fluctuated around 80% in recent years. The dropout in BV is traditionally small, it ranges from 1% to 3% of the total number of ViA students. This can be explained by the purposeful choice of the BA programme students, the prestige of the programme in the region, which provides for the graduates good job opportunities, thus motivating them for studies. Prior to suspension or termination of studies, discussions are held with each student to find out the main reasons for leaving the university or failure to complete the study plan. The main reasons are of financial nature – financial provision of student families and support are insufficient, therefore students start working; it is not easy to combine the work with studies, and students choose to work. It should be emphasized that employers also do not often show favour and do not support studies. During internship, companies often offer to continue collaboration by offering official employment, which is also a great temptation for students. Vidzeme region is economically active, labour force shortage is increasing, therefore it is easy for students to find a job. Paradoxically, entrepreneurs want qualified professionals, but at the same time, they support termination of studies to keep employees. In recent years, studies are terminated mainly in the first or second semester due to inability to acquire the study programme at a sufficient level (there is high internal competition within the programme), which is caused by insufficient knowledge acquired and learning skills developed at the secondary education level.

More and more students want to terminate their studies due to health problems. In such situations, a possibility to study according to the individual plan is always offered. Those who resume studies after an academic break also study according to the individual plan. The academic break is mostly used for dealing with health problems and for the purpose of child care.

Each case when a student is exmatriculated due to academic debt or after completion of a theoretical programme without defending the Bachelor's thesis is considered individually. These students are contacted regarding resumption possibilities to complete their studies, which many of them use several years after completing a theoretical course, successfully passing the State examination and acquiring a Bachelor's degree.

[Refer to the annex for the overview of the number of students in the study programme \(see Annex 2\).](#)

1.3. Analysis and assessment of the interrelation between the name of the study programme, the degree or professional qualification to be acquired or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements.

The goal of the Business Administration study programme of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences is to provide training of highly qualified business administration specialists – company managers – capable of working in accordance with sustainable economic development tendencies and the changing global business environment.

Tasks of the programme:

1. To provide students with a comprehensive knowledge appropriate to business administration and specific knowledge and understanding of the economic processes and business environment, as well as of legal, financial and psychological aspects of business establishment and planning, organization and management.
2. To develop students' skills and abilities in accordance with the goals set and occupational standard, choosing appropriate education methods, emphasizing acquisition of applied knowledge and research skills, use of digital solutions, teamwork and ability to think critically, to analyze problems, to assume responsibility, emphasizing development of communication, public speaking and reasoning skills.
3. To promote student motivation for further education and personal development; to promote student development into an independent, socially responsible, creative personality who respects natural and cultural values, with the ability to work in a multicultural environment and to set up his/her own company.
4. To promote professional development of the academic staff, supplementing the body of the teaching staff with experienced practitioners of the field from Latvia and abroad; to put into practice the values emphasized in ViA strategy, emphasizing student-centered and communication-promoting study environment.
5. To develop cooperation with enterprises, State and municipal institutions and non-governmental organizations of the region, thus facilitating provision of internship possibilities and improvement of study quality, provision of feedback between academic environment and the field.

Learning outcomes of the study programme:

Knowledge:

1. Knowledge on legal, financial, quality and psychological aspects of commercial environmental assessment, business establishment, operational planning, organization and process management;
2. Knowledge on information acquisition, selection and processing, project development and implementation, innovation and research issues;
3. Knowledge on the role and application of information technology in business management process;
4. Knowledge and understanding of the binding laws and regulations of the field and the standards and operating principles of the professional environment;
5. Knowledge and understanding of professional ethics, corporate social responsibility and the environmental and social impact caused by the projects of the field.

Skills:

1. Students are able to assess in practice regularities and tendencies of the world economy, to analyze and assess business environment, to plan, organize and assess indicators of financial and economic development of the company, to elaborate development plans in accordance

with the goals set, economic environment and market situation.

2. Students apply the requirements of applicable laws and regulations, civil and environmental protection requirements and organize operations of the company in accordance with the changes in laws and regulations.
3. Students are able to explain professional issues of the field and discuss them with specialists and the public, they know terminology and communicate in a foreign language.
4. Students have self-motivation skills for self-education, professional activities, they plan and implement independent and group work, observe the norms of communication culture and professional ethics.
5. Students carry out applied research within the field using a variety of research methods, IT technologies and digital tools.

Competencies:

1. Students are able to critically analyze the economic situation and business environment, to start a business, to plan and manage company's activities and processes, to assess company's risks and development directions.
2. Students are able to carry out research and develop concepts in the field, to present them publicly in the professional environment and to non-specialists, to form a social dialogue with society and to participate in building company's reputation.
3. Students are capable of independent further education, to solve professional problems creatively, they are able to react efficiently to new developments in the field and demands of the changing professional environment.
4. Students understand the basic issues of professional and academic ethics and are able to assess their responsibility regarding the impact of professional or academic activities on society and the environment.

Throughout the process of preparation of the study programme and also later in the following years, efforts have been made to review the study programme to ensure the compliance of the name of the programme with the degree and the professional qualification to be awarded.

The name of the programme "Business Administration" has been the name of the programme since the establishment of ViA and the beginning of the study programme, referring to the content of the programme and making it internationally recognizable. The name of the programme is already a brand within the business environment of the region. The name of the degree awarded – *professional Bachelor's degree in business administration* – was adjusted in accordance with the classification of the scientific disciplines of Latvia. Professional qualification – *company manager* – complies with the Occupational Standard.

During each accreditation period, an in-depth interconnection analysis of the programme objectives and the planned outcomes has been carried out to ensure the interconnection between the objectives and outcomes and to improve the content of the study programme in accordance with the development tendencies of the field. Descriptions of the goals and objectives of the programme have been used to map the study courses. Relevance and coherence between the outcomes of the study programme and the results of specific study courses are assessed annually by preparing a self-assessment report.

The relevance between the programme goals and outcomes is discussed at the end of each academic year at the Business Administration study direction council, and individually discussing it with the academic staff of the study direction. An important feedback is references, suggestions and criticism provided by students' internship supervisors, which help improve the content of the study courses to achieve the planned results more successfully. Admission rules of the study programme are formulated to attract students who are willing and interested to become

entrepreneurs or business managers, who are capable to orient in the events of Latvia and the world, to work with information and communication technologies, to plan and manage their own work, besides the admission rules inform them of the necessary basic knowledge and skills (results of centralized examinations in mathematics and foreign language – English, French, Russian, German – are taken into account). Taking into account that student research work is also an important component of the study programme, those who have shown good results in pupil research competitions have an advantage in admission. The following applicants are admitted beyond the competition: the winners of the Latvian and International Olympiads, as well as the ViA prize winners of the *Junior Achievement Latvia* pupil competition "Best in Economy", who have shown a consistent interest and gained experience in entrepreneurship at training companies.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof)

2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation.

Every year the study programme is improved based on the student, graduate and employer recommendations. Criticism and recommendations of students are reflected in the surveys at the end of each study course; information provided by the graduate surveys helps improve the programme significantly, because in professional activities one can objectively evaluate the performance and results of the programme. In 2016, there was a survey of employers, business professional associations, representatives of regional local governments, and there was a brainstorm on the programme development aspects. The forum's recommendations were used as a basis for the restructuring of the programme and the development of the new courses. In the development of the programme courses, the BA direction has respected the recommendations of the representatives of the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Latvian Food Bioeconomy Cluster, Vidzeme Planning Region, as well as the opinions of the State Examination Commission on labour market needs. In accordance with the entrepreneurs, there is a need for well-prepared graduates who can adapt flexibly to companies and adjust to the needs of the labour market. The entrepreneurs emphasized the need for digital skills, foreign languages, emphasized the demand for marketing specialists, highlighted financial management skills as an advantage in the labour market. In the context of the recommendations, four new modules of professional specialization (Part B) were created (10 CP each): Marketing Management, Wholesale and Retail, Financial Management, Innovation Laboratory. The development of modules ensured the inclusion of the latest achievements and tendencies in economics and management science in the course content. As for the elective modules, new courses in amount of 24 CP are developed (for more details refer to section 1.1.). In order to improve foreign language skills, from 2018 students have to acquire a second foreign language (4 CP), choosing Chinese, French, German or Russian. Knowledge of English is improved through elective module which offers courses in English (14 CP). Employers

found it useful to cancel the course Introduction to Philosophy (2 CP) of the compulsory part (Part A), and to include a course Business Communication (2 CP). In cooperation with the company LLC “Tilde”, the course of financial accounting was improved by including the computerized accounting system *Tildes Jumis*, and after the completion of the course the students will receive a certificate approved by the company. In 2019, the director of the study direction Business Administration collaborated with the expert council of the field during the process of developing the new occupational standard “Company Manager” (specialization – Marketing Manager) of the “Entrepreneurship, Finance, Accounting, Administration (Wholesale, Retail and Commercial Science)” which provided new ideas for programme development.

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. In case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels.

Information included in the study courses and outcomes to be achieved are reviewed every year, the lecturers take into account tendencies of the field and feedback given by the students regarding the study courses, and the literature used for studies is supplemented every year. Upon preparing the self-assessment report, formulations of the study programme goals are also reviewed each year and, where necessary, adjusted with respect to the content of the studies and methods used in the study process, including, where appropriate, information in accordance with the tendencies of the field (e.g., topics about digital marketing, e-commerce tools and the latest platforms, brand management in the global markets, circular economy principles, sustainability issues, etc.). The elective module consisting of the professional courses such as Marketing Management, Wholesale & Retail Management, Financial Management, Innovation Laboratory allows students to acquire deeper business aspects they are interested in, ensuring better achievement of the occupational standards and learning outcomes of the programme. Based on this analysis, results of the study courses are mapped, thus verifying the compliance of each individual course with the goals and objectives set in the study programme. The mapping of the courses of the BA study programme is added in the annex to the report showing how individual study courses contribute to the achievement of the study programme outcomes.

Refer to the annex for the mapping of the study courses for achieving learning outcomes of the BA study programme (see Annex 24)

2.3. Assessment of the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) by providing the analysis of how the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) used in the study courses/ modules are selected, what they are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

The study programme is implemented by help of various study forms – lectures, seminars, discussions, practical classes, use of on-line resources, social simulations, role plays, literature studies, applied games, individual and group consultations, study visits, case studies, presentations of student individual practical work (individually and in groups), fieldwork, *and* conferences in Webex. Advanced information technologies are widely used in the study process. During lectures, lecturers and students have an opportunity to use computer classrooms, multimedia laboratory. During the study process, opportunities provided by the intranet are actively used: moodle.va.lv – an electronic study environment, where necessary study materials and lecture presentations of each study course are stored, information is exchanged, where students post their presentations and homework; it is also used as an electronic repository of documents; intranet message repository; email, social media. Students studying or doing internships abroad can defend their annual projects and internships remotely on the WebEx platform. Covid 19 during the pandemic in the spring semester of 2020 studies, exams, defense work, i.e. the defense of the state examination-bachelor's thesis also took place remotely using the WebEx platform. The experience was successful - both lecturers and students learned new digital skills, looked for new ways of communication, and teachers learned new teaching methods appropriate to the digital environment.

A student has to acquire an average of 100 pages of scientific text per credit. No less than two individual papers should be written in each study course, as well as examinations have to be taken. At the end of the course, each student should take a written or oral examination, the assessment criteria of which are specified in the course description. Such a diverse range of study methods and technological tools ensures high quality studies – students acquire and consolidate both academic knowledge and practical application skills already in the course of the studies. In this way, a diverse, attractive and engaging study process is ensured providing also authentic experience (simulation games, role-plays, modelling), as a result of which students are well prepared for professional activity in the field of business.

The methods used by the lecturers of the BV study program are diverse, but interactive teaching methods dominate, which promote active and conscious participation of students in the study process. It should be emphasized that lecturers widely use case analysis based on business practice. The practical experience of the lecturers in business or in their field ensures the synergy of theoretical knowledge and practical experience, which, using a variety of teaching methodologies, fully ensures the achievement of study results and study goals.

In the study direction of BA, a student-centered approach to the study process is implemented, ie the student is involved as an active participant in the study process and objective self-assessment. This is ensured by active use of teaching methods, appropriate communication techniques, openness in cooperation with students.

The following forms of work are used to promote the dialogue with students: studies in small groups, which promote student involvement in the study process; application of interactive study methods; assessment of independent and research papers and their discussion with the authors; annual projects, peer review and public defence; consultations; cumulative assessment system; student surveys about the study course. There is a student-centered approach applied at ViA both in the study process and in everyday communication. Individual communication between a lecturer and a student (outside lectures, seminars and classes) is possible through individual consultations with the lecturer, as well as via electronic communication (e-mail) and Skype.

For more information on assessment methods and adherence to the principles of student-centred education, see Part II, Section 1.6.

2.4. If the study programme entails a traineeship, provide the analysis and assessment of the relation between the tasks of the traineeship included in the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study programme. Specify how the higher education institution/ college supports the students within the study programme regarding the fulfilment of the tasks set for students during the traineeship.

An integral part of studies is integrated internship at the companies in Latvia or abroad. During the reporting period the amount of internship in credit points was 26 CP, starting from 2020 the amount is 20 CP (in accordance with the Cabinet Regulations No. 512). During the reporting period, students did four internships – in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd study year and pre-diploma internship in the 4th study year, starting from 2020 there will be three internships – in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th study year. Entrepreneurs recommended to do without internship in the first study year as they think that students in the beginning of their studies do not have sufficient professional knowledge to fully integrate into the operations of the company. The decrease of the amount of internship is compensated by the increase of the proportion of practical classes and field trips to enterprises within the study courses.

Study internships comply and agree with the study courses of the respective period. Internship is done in companies, state and municipal institutions and enterprises under supervision of experienced specialists. The goal of internship is to provide students with opportunities to practice the skills and abilities necessary for the profession of a manager of companies and institutions in a real business environment, at the same time acquiring also new theoretical knowledge related to the particular work environment. Internship ensures that outcomes of the study programme related to the acquisition of practical skills and testing of theoretical knowledge in practical activities are achieved. Internship also promotes the link between students and the labour market already during their studies, and students often start working for the internship provider during their studies. Study internship is an important part of the study programme, therefore students are provided with various forms of support to have productive and positive internship experience. Each internship period has an internship supervisor from among the lecturers of the BA study direction. To have more effective cooperation and support for a student, there are two internship supervisors for each study year. It provides better communication between students and a placement. Internship supervisors form also a commission that evaluates internship during defence. The director of the study programme and the lecturers actively communicate with representatives of the field, inviting them to offer internship places. The business administration programme has a good reputation among professionals of the field, therefore providing internship places for students is not a problem, and companies often offer internship places themselves. An internship offer is e-mailed to students. Students have opportunities to get scholarships and do internship in foreign companies within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme – during the reporting period, 17 students have done internship in different EU companies. Students apply for internship every year by filling out an application form. The programme director gives his/her approval or rejects the choice if it is not possible to complete the internship programme in the company. Prior to commencement of internship, bilateral internship agreement (between ViA and the company) or triangular internship agreement (among ViA, company and a student) is entered into which is the basis for assigning for internship. During internship students prepare an internship report, which includes an in-depth study of the company's field of activity, thus improving both professional and research skills and competences. Often internship-based research becomes the basis for developing annual projects. During internship the BA internship supervisor communicates with a student, deals with the problems, provides consultations regarding the preparation of internship documents. At the end of

internship, internship supervisor at the company gives feedback. Starting from 2020, internship supervisor also provides an evaluation in accordance with the 10-point system. At the end of internship there is a public defence – students present their work and discuss the progress of internship and their observations, provide feedback on how the knowledge acquired during the studies has helped to do internship tasks. Within the framework of the internship defence student recommendations are taken into account when improving the study course content and internship organization. Internship is evaluated by a commission formed by the BA direction, it is evaluated according to the pass-fail system, but from 2020 it is evaluated in accordance with the 10-point system and a cumulative method. The Internship Regulations are developed for the Business Administration study programme, which include the internship programme, assessment criteria, instructions on preparation and formatting of internship documentation.

[Refer to the annex for the Internship Regulations of the study programmes \(see Annex 20\).](#)

[Refer to the annex for the list of agreements on the provision of study internships \(see Annex 21\).](#)

2.5. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the evaluations of the final theses.

It is planned to write three annual projects and a Bachelor's thesis within the study programme, this will help students apply and integrate theoretical and practical knowledge and develop skills and abilities to carry out research work. "Methodological Guidelines for the Development of Annual Projects and State Examination Papers" (written by Prof. S. Rozentāle, lecturer V. Melbārde) are developed and published for students of the Business Administration direction, providing undergraduate students with instructions on the content, methods, formatting, assessment criteria and procedure of the annual projects and the Bachelor's thesis.

The research papers cover a wide and diverse range of business topics. The topics of the Bachelor's theses are the part of the ViA's research direction *Sustainable Development of the National Economy and Knowledge Society*. In addition to the topics of entrepreneurship, students also carry out research on current economic problems. Students choose to study specific companies, where, in collaboration with the company staff and management, they analyze current issues and seek solutions. Often, students continue their research on these companies in their final theses. Often it is entrepreneurs who are interested in researching certain issues and in a certain topics of the Bachelor's thesis. There are also studies carried out on current issues and new trends in Latvia, various sectors of the economy and business, and a lot of research papers are written on business processes in Vidzeme region – economic activities of various companies of the sector, business establishing and development, competitiveness of enterprises, export problems, attraction of investments and other aspects are studied. The companies surveyed receive feedback because students usually present them results.

Below is a number of examples of the main thematic directions and topics of the Bachelor's theses written during the previous accreditation period:

- 1. Current tendencies in the Latvian economy and entrepreneurship, as well as economic development of Vidzeme region:**
 - The role of the economic "triangle" in the development of Vidzeme region
 - Vidzeme Industrial Park: the view of entrepreneurs

- Business development in Vidzeme planning region next to the Estonian border area
- Comparative analysis of the operations of the capital companies and private companies of the local governments of the Latvian cities: a case of real estate management
- Electric power market liberalization process for households in Latvia
- Development of non-bank crediting in Latvia
- Assessment of abnormally low offers in public procurements of forestry services
- Development of high technology and knowledge intensive enterprises in Vidzeme region
- Development possibilities of the social incubator in Latvia
- Social entrepreneurship development opportunities in Latvia
- Development of a range of services for a social enterprise in Kocēni municipality

2. Business starting, planning:

- Introduction of e-services in Valmiera city local government
- Export opportunities for Latvian companies to Azerbaijan
- Starting a new company in the recreation sector
- Possibilities for the creation and development of a “Playhouse” in Valmiera
- Crowd funding and its opportunities for the Latvian entrepreneurs
- Starting a new company in the recreation sector
- Comparative analysis of courier services in Latvia and Germany
- Business development in Vidzeme planning region next to Estonian border
- Assessment of strategic opportunities for development of N. Bomis’ bakery “Lielezers”
- Organization of a modern translation service company
- Establishment of an open office in Valmiera
- Support tools for starting business in Latvia
- Developing and promoting a new line of pet cosmetic products in the market
- Medical tourism development opportunities in LLC “Cēsu klīnika”
- Developing a business model for an alternative way of delivering parcels
- Development strategy of JSC “Lazdonas piensaimnieks”
- Assessment and perspectives of Gulbene Business Incubator

3. Business environment and market research, production of new products and services:

- Experience and opportunities of franchising in catering companies in Latvia
- Investigation of French market potential for "BYKO-LAT" wooden panel houses
- Investigation of new housing market of LLC “Latvio Appraisers & Consultants in Vidzeme” for project development in Valmiera and its surroundings
- Prospects for development of a bulk store in Valmiera
- Fuel pellet production starting possibilities in the company LLC “LIRIEM”
- Advantages of establishing International Business Service Centers in Latvia
- Analysis of internal and external environment and development possibilities in LLC “Madonas karameles”
- Potential assessment of investment objects in Beverīna municipality
- Development of high technology and knowledge intensive enterprises in Vidzeme region
- Assessment of investment for the revitalization of the degraded territories of Cēsis municipality

4. Business process analysis and solutions:

- Implementation of “Key Performance Indicators” parameter system for aviation security division of Riga International Airport
- Implementation possibilities of e-commerce solutions in LLC LUTRA
- Implementation of IT project management and project planning system in “Muuv”
- Process analysis and operation modelling of logistics service of LLC “VALPRO”
- Development of *Lean* system implementation plan for LLC “Valmiermuižas pils”
- Introduction of the principles of the circular economy in the food industry
- Sustainability assessment process
- Creativity in promoting innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises in Latvia
- Support software development offer for project management in JSC “Dikļu pils”

5. Marketing, strategic marketing planning, marketing communication, customer relationship management:

- Performance assessment of network marketing companies in Latvia
- Application of the marketing complex in the company LLC “Latvijas Mobilais Telefons”
- Development of a marketing strategy for Valmiera Glass UK Ltd to promote Atex products in the US market
- “Dabba” brand development opportunities in Latvia
- Development of medium-term business strategy for LLC ESPATTE
- City marketing as a business promoter in Cēsis
- Comparative analysis of marketing activities of the chain-store top! and leading food retail companies in Vidzeme
- Assortment management at “T.N. Rozalinde”
- Marketing complex for promoting LLC “Custom Way” niche product in the market
- LLC “EchoTech” product promotion in Latvian market
- Communication process and strategy of Riga National Zoological Garden
- External marketing communication of LLC “Circkle K Latvija”
- Use of social media in the marketing communication of SynotTip Premier League Championship football clubs
- Development of LLC “ZAAO” customer loyalty programme
- AS “Bigbank” customer attraction

6. Competition and competitiveness of enterprises

- Increasing of export opportunities for LLC Ērenpreiss Original in Germany
- Development opportunities for LLC “CowCare” in the Estonian market
- Moped “Riga 12” niche market, its development opportunities in Latvia and foreign markets
- Competitiveness of the Latvian dairy industry in the context of the Baltic States
- Increasing competitiveness of LLC “Amserv Krast”
- Competitiveness of LLC “Burtnieku Zirgaudzētava” in the industry market
- Competitiveness of JSC “Swedbank Latvija” in the market of short-term crediting of natural persons
- Assessment of heavy vehicle after sales services in Latvia

7. HR management, employee motivation and satisfaction, corporate social responsibility

- Employee motivation system in the company LLC “Valmieras Ūdens”
- Assessment of the management systems of the company “Vidzemes Energoceltņieks”
- Conflict management in LLC “BYKO – LAT”

- Assessment of the employee motivation system of LLC “VALPRO”
- LLC “BBS-Dizain”’s staff motivation
- JSC “Cēsu Alus” customer satisfaction assessment
- Corporate social responsibility in Latvian woodworking companies
- Corporate social responsibility in Latvian cosmetics companies
- Corporate Social Responsibility in Beverīna municipality companies

8. Investment management and risk analysis, financial management

- Launch of a new product for LLC “WOLF SYSTEM”: Analysis of investment project
- Financial and risk analysis of JSC “Olainfarm”
- Risk identification and assessment in wood processing company LLC “Gaujas Koks”
- Risk mitigation tools in the grain industry in Latvia
- Investment project assessment in LLC “A&C motors”
- Development of investment project in company LLC “Atspole” and its risk assessment
- Assessment of investment for the revitalization of the degraded territories in Cēsis municipality
- Economic justification of investments in Riga apartment market
- LLC “Trifeļu dārzs” investment plan
- Accounting, taxation and communication with the State Revenue Service for self-employed persons
- Municipal budget as a tool for achieving municipal development goals
- Attraction of financial resources for the dairy farming sector in Latvia
- Economic performance assessment and development possibilities of LLC “Vidzeme Olympic Center”
- Importance of financial analysis information in management decision at LLC “8 CBR”

Evaluations of the graduation papers (Bachelor’s theses) are stable during the reporting period 2014 - 2020, with a tendency to improve (see Table 5)

Table 5. Overview of the evaluation of the final papers 2014-2020

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Average evaluation	7.4	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.6	8.2	8.3

In general, the stability and improvement of grades is ensured by the student support system for final theses – students choose the topic of their theses at the end of the 6th semester, coordinate the topic and structure with the scientific supervisor, start literature studies and data collection. In the middle of the 8th semester, there is a pre-defence of the final paper, during which students present the data collected and the first conclusions from the data analysis. This ensures development of the final paper in a timely manner and paper development monitoring at the level of the study direction, besides, possible problems are detected earlier, students are more motivated to consult actively with their supervisors in a timely manner. “Methodological Guidelines for the Development of Annual Projects and State Examination Theses” (revised in 2019) elaborated in details and improved during the reporting period are of great support. The stability of the grades

and the increase in grades are partly due to the high internal competition for budget financing.

Refer to the annex for the informative overview on the compliance of the BA study programme with the State education standard (see Annex 25).

Refer to the annex for the informative overview on the compliance of the qualification obtained in the BA study programme with the profession standard (see Annex 26).

Refer to the annex for the plan of the BA study programme (see Annex 27).

Refer to the annex for the descriptions of the BA study programme courses (see Annex 28).

Refer to the annex for the sample study agreement of the BA study programme (see Annex 29).

Refer to the annex for the sample of the BA study programme diploma and its supplement (see Annex 30).

2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

One of the ways to find out student opinion about the study process is through online survey, which is conducted after each course. Students assess each course according to the 5-point system by the following criteria:

- goals of the course (definition and achievement of results),
- assessment of the teaching methods for the achievement of the course goals (relevance and variety of methods; opportunities for dialogue and discussion during the course; ability of the lecturer to listen to the views and arguments of others),
- organization of the study process (course requirements, assessment, study load, availability and use of study materials, communication with students),
- assessment of lecturer's work (possibility to receive answers to questions during lectures, seminars and consultations, as well as feedback from the lecturer on the work done; assessment of knowledge according to criteria set; pedagogical skills),
- student involvement in the study course (motivation on the part of the lecturer, self-assessment of involvement and independent work).

Students also give an overall evaluation and comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the course. The results of the surveys at the end of the academic year are analyzed at the BA direction council meeting, BV study program advisors convention, BA direction self-assessment development working group, thus ensuring improvements in both course content and practical organization.

In the academic year of 2018/2019, the total assessment of the courses taught by the lecturers of the study programme (in the 5-point system) was very positive – lecturers' professional ratings ranged from 4 to 5 points (only 3 courses had assessment of 3.8, which makes 10% of the total number of courses). In almost all courses, the contribution and professional performance of the lecturers were assessed higher than the content of the course itself.

The strengths, according to the students, are lecturers' practical experience in business, real examples, analysis of problem situations, responsiveness, individual approach to students. Students like interactive learning methods – group work, case study, modelling, business games, etc. Students positively assess the opportunity to speak in front of an audience, the opportunity to

acquire presentation skills, to conduct research within the framework of annual projects and internships.

Weaknesses of the lecturers' work – the unclear assessment system, it is not sufficiently explained, especially if the course is taught by several lecturers, some lecturers should use more interactive teaching methods. Course assessments sometimes are inconsistent or superficial, for example, it is often ticked that everything is OK and there are no recommendations, but the assessment is not maximal.

Increasingly more students indicate an excessive workload, too high pace of teaching, which points to decrease in students' overall knowledge level and a lack of learning skills. At the same time, students are self-critical in assessing their participation in study courses: insufficient preparation for classes, inactivity, lack of diligence and learning skills, leaving their own work for the last minute. This shows that students are not ready for independent study life, and they lack ambition. ViA generally needs to pay more attention to career education.

Graduate surveys are conducted on a regular basis at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences. Within the framework of the surveys, graduates provide information on their employment, assess their knowledge, skills and competences acquired during their studies and their applicability.

The results of graduate surveys are assessed by the study direction council, suggestions are taken into account in the improvement of the study programme.

Surveys during the reporting period show that the employment rate of the BA graduates is 90-100%. The survey of 2018 shows 100% employment. Graduates have paid employment in their speciality or related fields, they are continuing their studies or are otherwise employed (maternity leave, volunteering, ERASMUS+). Employment is, mainly, in the private sector, graduates work in Vidzeme and Riga region, including Riga. 11% of the BA graduates are employers or self-employed persons. Graduate employment is commensurate with their level of education, and graduates emphasize that knowledge acquired is very important for employment and career development.

Graduates are satisfied with the content and quality of their studies, and highly assess their knowledge and skills acquired during studies, with a particular emphasis on the role of internship. The following is assessed as the most valuable: communication and presentation skills, development of strategic and analytical thinking, orientation towards team work, international experience acquired during studies and internship. Graduates willingly provide internship possibilities to BA students, they are ready to deliver lectures, share their experience, organize events for the young entrepreneurs, but in general, they are passively involved in the ALUMNI movement.

Graduates recommend intensified teaching of foreign languages and more study courses in a foreign language to promote the development of communication skills, using the latest IT tools. Graduates approve international lecturer courses and courses in English. The survey shows that more and more students need intercultural communication skills, knowledge in communication psychology at work as the companies work in global market, as well as knowledge in marketing and project management skills.

Employers' criticisms and proposals are analyzed by listening to the opinions of the ViA Convention, BA study program advisory council and BA direction self-assessment development working group members, members of state examination commissions, participating in business forums, meeting with representatives of local governments and business organizations. The views of businessmen from Vidzeme region, which were identified and analyzed by participating in the National Research Programme ECOSOLV (2015-2018) were important.

In order to improve the quality of studies and implement external evaluation in the direction of BA, the BA study program advisory council has been established, consisting of program director, student representatives, graduates, industry representatives, employers' organization representatives and other external stakeholders at least 7 persons). The composition is renewed every year, the council meets once a year. Support is also provided by the working group for the preparation of the self-assessment report of the BA study field, which provides recommendations for all programs of the field, including the improvement of the BA study program. The composition of the self-assessment report preparation working groups consists of the director of the field, students, lecturers of the field, graduates of the program, representatives of the branch, a representative of the Administrative Department of ViA. The staff is renewed once a year, but meetings are held once a semester.

The opinion of employers, surveys of graduates and students are taken as a basis for changes that were made in the content and planning of study courses. Based on the results of the questionnaires, which emphasized the need to acquire knowledge and skills for work in the global market, the study content included the acquisition of a second foreign language, clarified the content of the course International Economics and Business, created new courses Intercultural Communication, Business Communication. Marketing and sales skills will be acquired in depth in the newly developed industry professional course modules Marketing (Brand Development and Management in the International Market, Digital Marketing, Export Marketing Principles and Tools, Advertising) and Wholesale and Retail Management (new courses Sales and Customer Service, Business Management). In response to student surveys, the content of the study course Mathematics was adapted to the goals of the study program and the results to be achieved, and Mathematics for Economists was created. The course content of the program includes a new course Regional Economics, lecturers also work to integrate digital solutions and tools in the study process, to develop communication and presentation skills.

Changes in the content and planning of the study program have been made with the aim to integrate into the studies the latest theoretical findings of the field, information technology tools, practical training for the development of creativity and innovation capacity, which would more comprehensively prepare for business start-up and management. The courses emphasize aspects of the regional economy, and the content and planning take into account the recommendations of entrepreneurs.

2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.

During the academic year of 2018/2019, 39 international exchange students from 10 countries: Albania, Belgium, France, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine and Germany studied at ViA. There are no in-coming mobility student statistics regarding the study directions, as students take courses from the joint offer "International Study Module" (with the exception of students from ESME Sudria in France, who take a specialized programme at the IF faculty).

The number of ViA students who study and do internship within the framework of the Erasmus+ exchange programme has decreased: 13 students are studying, 29 students are doing internship in

16 countries.

ViA has a sufficient scholarship fund for Erasmus+ studies and internship abroad, any student who has positive assessment can apply for a scholarship. International mobility applicants are assessed and approved by the BA study council.

The main directions of the BA student mobility are the EU countries and Kazakhstan, where several partner institutions of higher education are located.

The number of students involved in mobility is decreasing in the Business Administration direction during the reporting period.

The dynamics of the outgoing BA mobility student number can be seen in Table 6:

Table 6. Student mobility of the BA study direction in 2013-2019

Year	Studies	Internship	Total
2012/2013	7	9	16
2013/2014	7	6	13
2014/2015	4	1	5
2015/2016	4	1	5
2016/2017	1	0	3
2017/2018	3	0	3
2018/2019	3	0	3
2019/2020	2	2	4

One of the reasons of decreased outgoing mobility is total decrease of the number of students in the programme, however, the main reason is financial insecurity (due to the amount of the funding granted), besides, financial situation of the families does not allow to provide financial support. Because of the high cost of living, students do not travel to the Nordic countries, which dominated in the previous accreditation period; students choose studies and internship in Germany, UK, Spain and Estonia in recent years. Students are also discouraged by the lack of confidence in their English language skills and abilities, as well as by insecurity in intercultural communication. The undergraduates are kept back due to the job which they do not want to lose due to internship abroad.

BA study courses and internship abroad are recognized if the BA programme requirements are met. Prior to going abroad, students have to coordinate the courses to be acquired with the programme director, and, during the study period abroad, any changes to the study plan have to be harmonized to avoid overlapping of the courses or inconsistency with the programme. Upon return, the courses are recognized and an individual plan for continuing their studies is drawn up. Internships abroad are recognized after the completion and successful defence of all internship assignments.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

Information on the resources of the study programme and its provision is available in *Part II, Section 3.1.-3.3.*

3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific support, including the resources provided within the cooperation with other science institutes and institutions of higher education (applicable to the doctoral study programmes).

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)

4.1. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

The implementation of the Bachelor's study program in Business Administration was ensured by 29 lecturers, 16 of them - ViA academic staff. The academic staff consisted of: 7 lecturers with a doctoral degree (including 4 professors, 1 associate professor, 2 docents), 16 with a master's degree. Of all the lecturers, 13 were guest lecturers - specialists in the field. 55% of lecturers are elected to ViA. Out of all lecturers, 7 lecturers have obtained a master's degree or a doctor's degree in foreign universities, -3 lecturers from the BA academic staff. Five lecturers are graduates of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, which shows that the experience gained during the studies is a motivation to return to ViA later and share their knowledge, to get involved in the training of young professionals. There are several lecturers in several study courses (Research Methodology, Introduction to Entrepreneurship, Organizational Management, Proactivity and Creativity, Regional Economics). Many study courses are implemented, the elected lecturers cooperate with guest lecturers. In this way, a balance is achieved

between the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and its approbation, as well as the integration of current events in the study process takes place. During the accreditation period, the composition of lecturers has not changed significantly, the replacement of lecturers of certain courses is not related to the quality of teaching.

No significant quantitative changes in the composition of lecturers are planned in the future, but with the new accreditation period 3 new lecturers who have received their education abroad will work in the program, incl. two doctoral students. In 2021-2022, it is planned that 3 representatives of the academic staff (2 in management sciences and 1 in engineering sciences) will obtain a doctoral degree, thus increasing the number of doctors working in the program. Due to retirement, one guest lecturer will stop working, and the course Management Psychology will be taught by ViA assoc.prof.V.Silkāne.

4.2. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

It is important to combine academic knowledge with practical experience, therefore the elected academic staff of ViA and guest lecturers with practical experience in the field are involved in the implementation of the study programme. The selection of the lecturers involved is based on the following: competence acquired in academic work (preparation of study courses) in the areas relevant to the programme content, the direction of scientific activity and previous research topics, the degree and qualification, and practical experience. Preference is given to lecturers with a doctoral degree, a doctoral candidate status and doctoral students. In order to participate in international research projects, mobility activities, lecturers need a sufficient level of foreign language skills (B2 level). Preference is given to lecturers who know English, the English language skills can be improved at ViA. In 2018-2019, a part of ViA elected lecturers is improving their foreign language skills by participating in the English language training sessions within the framework of the ESF project "Development of Academic Staff and Human Resources of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences" (SAM 8.2.2)".

Elected staff involved in the programme has Doctoral degrees, Master's degrees and qualifications in economics, business administration, and management science. Some lecturers with engineering and pedagogical qualifications fit very well into the programme. Only foreign language teachers are not related to the field.

The lecturers involved in the implementation of the study program are recognized scientists, experts in the field of economics and management. Four lecturers are experts in economics and business administration at the Latvian Academy of Sciences (L.Mece, S.Rozentāle, M.Lešcevicā, A.Līviņa) one - in engineering sciences and technologies (S.Cakula), 4 lecturers perform

accreditation and licensing expertise in the Higher Education Quality Agency (S.Rozentāle, M.Leščevica, R.Cāne, A.Andersons), four lecturers (S.Cakula, L.Melece, S.Rozentāle, M.Leščevica) are members of promotion boards at the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies and Rēzekne Academy of Technologies.

The selection of guest lecturers is mainly determined by the recognition in the professional environment, practical experience in entrepreneurship in Latvia and abroad, thus it helps significantly ensure connection with the latest developments in the field. Some guest lecturers are specialists in a particular field, for example, philosophy, mathematics, law, thus providing business administration students with the necessary knowledge and skills.

During the reporting period, the course "Business Ethics" is taught annually in the program by a guest lecturer from a Croatian company (R.Jurkovic), in 2019 the course "Innovation Management" was taught by a visiting professor from Malta (D.Cardia), but in 2020/2021. In the academic year, the course "International Economics and Business" will be taught by a guest lecturer from Belarus (O.Maksimchikova), and the course "Creative Management" - by a professor from Kazakhstan (D.Ismailova). It is an opportunity for students to gain new knowledge and get acquainted with foreign experience, improve English language and intercultural communication skills. The qualification of the dedicated staff involved in the program complies with Article 39 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. Professional study program academic staff requirements. The program employs 16 elected representatives of the academic staff (55% of the total number of participants), of which 7 have a doctoral degree (44% of the academic staff); 4-economics, 1-pedagogy; 1- in communication science, 1-philosophy (PhD) (55% of the academic staff involved), other lecturers have professional master's degrees: social sciences (economics and business), political science (public administration, administration and administration), computer science and informatics, humanities and arts, biology. Several lecturers involved in the implementation of the program have a degree in engineering, which ensures a wider integration of information technology in studies. 45% of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the program are guest lecturers, incl. 1 with a doctorate (business administration) and a professional education and degree obtained abroad (Czech Republic).

The qualification of the academic staff, involvement in scientific research, international cooperation and, work experience, combined with attracted guest lecturers - recognized professionals in their field with international experience and global view on theoretical and practical aspects of business management, ensure the achievement of program study results.

In general, the qualification of lecturers, involvement in scientific work, knowledge of foreign languages, pedagogical experience meet the requirements for the implementation of a professional bachelor's study program.

Information on the involvement of academic staff in scientific research, both nationally and internationally, is available in *Part II, Section 4.4.* of the report.

4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).

4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.

Research activities within the BA study field are mainly organized through the ViA HESPI institute, where several lecturers – Prof. A. Līviņa, M. Rozentāle, Prof. M. Leščevica, lecturer Aigars Andersons, Assistant Professor L. Veliverronena – are elected. The lecturers involved in the study field align with the HESPI research direction “Sustainable economy and knowledge society”. Research interests of the BA study field are mainly related to the sub-directions *Development of national economy and regional governance, Human resources development and inclusive policy, Research of natural and cultural heritage*. Scientific topics cover aspects of national and regional economy, environment and governance. A. Andersons is a holder of a Master’s degree in social systems modelling, and therefore he represents also the other direction of research – Sociotechnical systems modelling technologies, which is one of the research directions at the Socio-Technical Systems Engineering institute (SSII). A researcher, Professor S. Cakula, is elected to the SSII scientific council, and her research direction is *E-learning management and technologies*.

Within the framework of HESPI, several projects funded by Valmiera city local government grant programme have been carried out, the most important of them were the following projects: “Possibilities and preconditions for attracting human resources (including talents) to the city of Valmiera. Development of population attraction strategy for Valmiera city” (2018-2019), “Demand for the study programmes offered by Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences and their compliance with the future labour market demand” (2016-2017). A very important project for Valmiera and the region is the project “Next Generation Micro Cities of Europe” (2018-2021), which is focused on research of Valmiera and Ventspils as regional economic centres and implementation of urban development innovations.

The research projects are both the contribution of the lecturers of the BEA study programme to the research of the socio-economic situation of the region and the benefit to the study programme, because the research data are used to improve the study content of courses, e.g., Regional Economics, Strategic Management, Investment and Risk Management.

The most significant activity for the BEA lecturers was participation in the sub-projects of the State research project ECOSOC LV (2015-2018): 5.2.2. Innovation and business development in Latvia in accordance with the smart specialization strategy (M. Leščevica); 5.2.3. Latvian rural and regional development processes and opportunities in the context of knowledge economy (S. Rozentāle, M. Ore, A. Andersons, V. Melbārde, undergraduate student R. Eglītis); 5.2.8. Processes of culture environment development, preservation of environmental diversity and urbanization in the context

of balanced development of Latvia (A. Līviņa, L. Veliverronena, I. Grīnfelde). Due to participation in the State research programme, a wide range of the BA lecturers could get involved, thus providing both the research base and the possibilities to include the results in the study content. The research project resulted in the development of the new study course *Regional Economics* (lecturers S. Rozentāle, V. Melbārde, M. Ore).

Currently, M. Leščevica, in cooperation with the Institute of Agrarian Resources and Economics, is involved in the project “Challenges and Solutions of the Latvian State and Society in the International Context (INTERFRAME-LV)” (2018-2021) of the State research programme “Latvian Heritage and Future Challenges for National Sustainability”. In 2020, work was started on the project “Life with COVID-19: Assessment of overcoming the crisis caused by the corona virus in Latvia and proposals for steadiness of society in the future” (No. VPP-COVID-2020/1-0013 (S. Rozentāle)) of the State research programme.

During the reporting period, the BEA lecturers conducted research projects commissioned by Vidzeme planning region, local governments, ministries, associations, deepening understanding of the region economic and business development, thus increasing lecturers’ professional competence, and providing a possibility to use research data in the study process and to involve students in approbation of research results.

During the reporting period, the representatives of ViA academic staff involved in the BV study program have 186 scientific publications. The lecturers have participated in 83 research projects, mainly of international scale, and participated in 158 conferences.

Assessing the involvement of the academic staff in scientific research, it can be concluded that the research topics are mainly related to the economy and business sector, regional economic development problems in the context of global economic change and Latvian economic development; the findings of research are integrated into the content of study courses; the established cooperation network is used in the implementation of new research projects; the study process integrates the experience of international research and cooperation projects (findings, teaching methods).

Information on the involvement of academic staff in scientific research, both nationally and internationally, is available in *Part II, Section 4.4.* of the report.

4.6. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

Upon planning and implementing study courses, lecturers pay a lot of attention to planning student individual and group work in such formats that would allow students to perfect or test the knowledge acquired through practical tasks – business simulation, modelling, strategic games – involving students from several study programmes, and the content of the task is jointly developed by the lecturers of several study courses. In this way, knowledge acquisition and approbation in an integrated way is enhanced. Experience gained during modelling and simulation of business situations is analyzed from different perspectives within several study courses. This approach is in line with the general tendency at the higher education institutions in Europe – to offer an integrated

approach to the training of young professionals that addresses thinking, process management and operational activity level. The transfer of ideas, experience and teaching methods is also facilitated if several lecturers teach one course. Such an approach is also possible, if, during the implementation of the study courses, elected lecturers cooperate with the guest lecturers – professionals of the field, who create the content of the integrated tasks according to the latest development tendencies. In this way, a good balance is achieved between the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and its approbation, as well as current issues are integrated in the study process.

Within the BA study program, 7 study courses are implemented, which are taught by several lecturers (Research Methodology, Introduction to Entrepreneurship, Statistics and Statistical Data Processing, Organizational Management, Regional Economics, Financial Instruments, Proactivity and Creativity). It is a way to ensure the cooperation of lecturers, and it helps to implement an interdisciplinary approach in studies. The courses taught together seem more interesting to the students, which stimulates their more successful acquisition.

Once in the reporting period, BV is audited for study courses, which has a very versatile mechanism of action in promoting the cooperation of lecturers and improving the quality of studies: there is an exchange of experience in the development of study content and application of methods; topicalities of the industry are identified; overlap of course content is avoided; the convergence and consolidation of the lecturers of the field takes place, the internal microclimate of the field is improved.

BA lecturers communicate in BA meetings, where topical study issues are regularly reviewed, discussions take place and joint decisions are made on aspects of study content and process improvement. Lecturers use electronic communication, WebEx platform for communication and cooperation.

ViA is implementing the EU structural funds project SAM8.2.2., within the framework of which joint trainings are organized for lecturers for the improvement of digital and pedagogical competence, as well as for the acquisition of English. Training has become a tool for peer-building and collaboration, especially in the Covid 19 pandemic.

On October 1, 2020, there were 77 students and 29 lecturers were involved in the implementation of the program, 16 of them were academic staff.

Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	2P-Student-statistics-2010-2020-AIKA-BA-study-field.xlsx	2P-Studentu-statistika-2010-2020-AIKA-BV.xlsx
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	25P-BA_compliance-educ-standard_edited-02012020.docx	25P-BV atbilstība valsts izglītības standartam-preciz-02012020.docx
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)	26P-BA compliance to prof occupation-edited-02012021.docx	26P-BV atbilstība profesijas standartam-preciz-02012021.docx
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	24P-BV-BVV-Studiju-rezultatu-kartejums.2020.xlsx	24P-BV-BVV-Studiju-rezultatu-kartejums.2020.xlsx
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	27P-Stud.pr.BA-plan_edited_20122020.docx	27P-Stud.progr.BV-plans_precizets_20122020.docx
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	28P-BV-kursu-apr.-BA-course-discr.-30122020.zip	28P-BV-kursu-apr.-BA-course-discr.-30122020.zip
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	30P-Diploma-paraugs-BV.zip	30P-Diploma-paraugs-BV.zip
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	BA_study-ensurance-agreement-translation.doc	BV_stud.nodrosinajums.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	29P-Studiju-liguma-paraugs-bv.docx	29P-Studiju-liguma-paraugs-bv.docx
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that 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 according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.		
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education		
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	29P-Study-agreement-sample-BA.docx	29P-Studiju-liguma-paraugs-BV.docx
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.		

Economics and Business

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Management, Administration and Management of Real Property</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Economics and Business</i>
Education classification code	<i>51345</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Doctoral study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Agita</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Līviņa</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>agita.livina@va.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Dr.oec.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	<i>29456089</i>
Goal of the study programme	<p><i>The goal of the programme is to carry out doctoral-level academic studies in business and economics, to prepare highly qualified experts (specialists) and researchers, who are able to create new knowledge in the field and to acquire a doctoral degree (Ph.D.) which corresponds to the international standards.</i></p> <p><i>Within the programme, it is planned to master more profoundly design and visionary thinking, a multidisciplinary approach, the ability to understand development of the national economy, organizational management and individual behaviour, research-based decision making, to develop steadiness to purposefully conduct research and implement innovations in business and smart growth of the economy.</i></p>
Tasks of the study programme	<i>The tasks of the programme are to develop doctoral students' analytically-critical research skills by integrating theoretical knowledge into applied research and problem solving. To prepare scientists, researchers, experts, high-level professionals for analytical, research and executive work in the public and private sectors. To increase the quality and capacity of research in Latvia, Europe and in the common research area of the world.</i>

Results of the study programme	<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Understands the theories of economics, management science and business, formation and development thereof, as well as topical trends in Latvia, Europe and the world.</i> <i>2. Understands the importance of social sciences in the development of society, creation of added value, promotion of the welfare of the state and solution of problem situations in certain sectors of the national economy and in the economics in general.</i> <i>3. Understands the factors influencing sustainable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and the use of new approaches in the management of organizations under the conditions of uncertainty and change.</i> <i>4. Knows the selection, substantiation, adaptation of new and tested methods (both quantitative and qualitative research methods) and the development of methodologies in the fields of economics, management science and business and in contact with other fields of science, interdisciplinary approach to research.</i> <i>5. Knows an efficient and flexible approach to the use and storage of the current and historical research data, copyright conditions.</i> <p><i>Skills:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>6. Is able to analyse and interpret global processes, theories, policies, using the experience and examples of worldwide-renown organizations in economics, management science and business.</i> <i>7. Is able to use information technology solutions in research and business, including data visualization methods.</i> <i>8. Is able to use technology, big data analysis and forecasting (Forecast and Foreseen) for creation of future scenarios, implementing original studies, some of which are at the level of internationally cited publications.</i> <p><i>Competences:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>9. Is able to independently and systematically find, analyse and synthesize information using scientific databases and other sources of information.</i> <i>10. Is able to independently evaluate and reasonably choose methods and methodologies appropriate to scientific research under conditions of uncertainty and changes in order to create innovative solutions for sustainable economic growth.</i> <i>11. Is able to communicate on economic, management science and business literature, current research and discoveries and discuss them with students, scientists, professionals and society in general in Latvia and in the international environment, both orally and in writing.</i> <i>12. Is able to manage business, management and research processes in companies, institutions and organizations, using the latest research-based knowledge and skills and observing the principles of ethical and socially responsible behaviour.</i> <i>13. To solve field-related problems and make complex decisions using design thinking principles and knowledge of consumer needs, behaviour change, circular economy, responsible entrepreneurship, general social skills and emotional intelligence.</i> <i>14. Is able to independently increase his / her scientific qualification.</i>
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Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>Doctoral Thesis</i>
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Study programme forms

Full time studies - 3 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Master's degree in social sciences</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Doctoral degree Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in Economics and Business</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences	VALMIERA	CĒSU IELA 4, VALMIERA, VALMIERAS NOVADS, LV-4201

Full time studies - 3 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Master's degree in social sciences</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Doctoral degree Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in Economics and Business</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences	VALMIERA	CĒSU IELA 4, VALMIERA, VALMIERAS NOVADS, LV-4201

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme)

1.1. Description and analysis of changes in study programme parameters that have taken place since the issue of the previous accreditation certificate of study direction or the license of study programme if study programme is not included in the accreditation page of the study direction

The joint Doctoral programme “Economics and Entrepreneurship” (with Rēzekne Academy of Technologies (RTA) and Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (VeA)) was licensed on 5 February 2020 by the decision No. 2020/02-L and license No. 04031-27 signed by the Chairperson of the Study Quality Commission T. Volkova on 14 February 2020.

This is a new licensed study programme, which takes into account expert recommendations specified in the licensing reports (Admission rules are developed, the joint quality system of the study programme is improved and the development plan of the study programme is developed, the proportion of ViA lecturers is increased in the study programme, the name of the study programme is adjusted, the Latvian language course is included for foreigners, course descriptions are updated, CVs of the programme directors are updated).

At the end of the reporting period, the joint doctoral program “Economics and Entrepreneurship” was licensed (license from 05.02.2020, implemented by RTA, VeA, ViA), admission to the program started in 2020/2021 academic year.

Licensing expert recommendation no.1. has been observed, the composition and workload of the lecturers of the study course “Business and Economic Trends” has been changed, the study course will take place for the first time in the spring semester of 2021.

Licensing expert recommendation no.2. is observed, the joint doctoral study program has more than 5 LZP experts in economics and or business. The joint study program council pays attention to the terms of LZP experts so that they are renewed in time.

Licensing expert recommendation no.3. has been taken into account when developing the MES Doctoral Study Development Plan. The developed plan envisages improvement of this recommendation.

Licensing expert recommendation no.4. The study plan has been left as before, it will be possible to objectively make decisions about those changes after at least one full year of studies.

Licensing expert recommendation no.5. to develop a development plan for the joint doctoral study program for the next 2 years. A joint doctoral study development plan has been developed for the participation of the SAM project in 2020. in the fall.

[Refer to the annex for the implementation of the recommendations expressed in the licensing of the program \(see Annex 23\).](#)

1.2. Analysis and assessment of the statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down in the

different study forms, types, and languages.

Admission to this study program began in 2020 in the Latvian language stream. In the first year, ViA enrolled 5 students and one student in the 2nd year (as in the later stages of studies), RTA - 3 and VeA - 4 students.

Discussions have been held repeatedly with the graduates of Master's programmes about the possibilities to continue doctoral studies at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences in Valmiera. This is also evidenced by the involvement of Master's students in the preparation of their research result publication and participation in student research conferences and other public events informing about the results of their research. ViA successfully involves students in the implementation of research projects.

The potential of the local students can be judged by the analysis of the number of postgraduate students.

From 2014 to 2019, strategic changes have been made to a number of Master's study programmes offered by ViA, which will continue in the following years, however, as shown by the dynamics of students and graduates, ViA has been able to attract and retain 69 to 98 students per academic year (on average 84 students) (on average 124 students per year in all study programmes offered by ViA), as well as the number of graduates of the Master's study programmes ranges from 20 - 50 every year.

	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020
Professional Master's SP "Strategic Tourism Management"	31	14	24	15	27	36
Joint academic Master's SP "International Tourism Event Management"	13	25	15	15	10	0
Professional Master's SP "Business Environment Administration"	29	29	29	19	24	32
Professional Master's SP "Strategic Communication and Governance"	25	12	22	20	20	21
TOTAL	98	80	90	69	81	89

During the period of time from 2014 to 2019, the number of students of the RAT Master's study programmes related to entrepreneurship is very stable varying from 47 to 64 students each academic year (on average 54 students per year).

	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020
Professional Master's SP "Financial Management"	21	12	16	19	11	11
Professional Master's SP "Electronic Commerce Information Systems"	17	14	17	12	17	24
Professional Master's SP "Management Science"	26	24	28	24	19	18
TOTAL	64	48	61	55	47	53

The number of students of two VeA Master's study programmes "Business Administration" and "International Business and Export Management" has increased in both study programmes from 2014 to 2019. In 2018 and 2019, 94-95 students studied in both study programmes.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Professional Master's study programme "Business Administration"	37	38	45	58	62	71
Joint academic Master's study programme "International Business and Export Management"		9	12	20	32	24
TOTAL	37	47	57	78	94	95

Advantages of the ERASMUS+ programme, both within and outside the EU, are used to attract international students, to reach potential students, as well as to collaborate with foreign universities in the area of research.

1.3. Analysis and assessment of the interrelation between the name of the study programme, the degree or professional qualification to be acquired or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements.

Upon successful completion of the study programme "Economics and Entrepreneurship", a Doctoral degree in Economics and Business (Ph.D) will be awarded. The applicants must have a Master's degree in social sciences or in an equivalent area of professional activity in order to begin studies in this programme. If the Master's or Bachelor's degree is not obtained in social sciences or in the corresponding area of professional activity, the applicant in accordance with the procedure established in the Cabinet Regulations No. 505 "Regulations on recognition of competences acquired outside formal education or through professional experience and on the recognition of learning outcomes achieved in previous education" has to evidence his/her work experience/non-

formal education relevant to the knowledge, skills and competences specified in the LQF Level 7.

The **goal of the programme** is to carry out doctoral-level academic studies in business and economics, to prepare highly qualified experts (specialists) and researchers, who are able to create new knowledge in the field and to acquire a doctoral degree (*Ph.D.*) which corresponds to the international standards.

Within the programme, it is planned to master more profoundly design and visionary thinking, a multidisciplinary approach, the ability to understand development of the national economy, organizational management and individual behaviour, research-based decision making, to develop steadiness to purposefully conduct research and implement innovations in business and smart growth of the economy.

The **tasks of the programme** are to develop doctoral students' analytically-critical research skills by integrating theoretical knowledge into applied research and problem solving. To prepare scientists, researchers, experts, high-level professionals for analytical, research and executive work in the public and private sectors. To increase the quality and capacity of research in Latvia, Europe and in the common research area of the world.

The programme is developed in such a way to encourage a student to develop a Doctoral thesis on a topic relevant to the national economy by offering topics of the Doctoral thesis already at the admission stage to the study programme; the applicant prepares an entry report on the chosen topic. The whole study process is organized in such a way that each course is practically viewed through the theme of the doctoral thesis.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof)

2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation.

Economic and business interactions play an important role in national and regional development. If the economy studies categories and regularities in the production, distribution, exchange and consumption of products and services from a societal perspective, business research allows us to assess the results achieved, their compliance with the desired results, and prepare adjustments, policies, and measures for the process of development of the national economy.[1]

The programme has been developed taking into account the findings of the international report "Reforming the Doctorate in Social Sciences" [2] (European University Institute, 2017), which covers examples of good practice in eight areas of doctoral studies: dissertation development, dissertation supervision, process of doctoral studies, correlation of academic and professional activity, usage of technologies, mobility and internationalization processes, funding principles,

labour market opportunities.

The programme has been developed taking into account the reports of the experts of the World Bank Group, as well as advice and recommendations from the World Bank experts who visited higher education institutions of Latvia. One of the recommendations that is taken into account is the inclusion of an agreement between the supervisor of the Doctoral thesis and the doctoral student in the study programme (Sursock, A. 2017, 2018). [3]

The thematic focus of the programme is based on the growing need for social knowledge and skills to effectively manage and use new technological solutions. Results of ViA research “Compliance of education offered in Valmiera and Vidzeme region with entrepreneurs’ demand and employment forecasts” (2016) [1] and the survey of higher education quality experts (local and foreign) carried out by ViA in 2017 confirmed the increasing role of social knowledge and skills in the future labour market and higher education (Rozentāle and Līviņa, 2017). Research “Analytical Description of the Ecosystem of Social Sciences and Humanities” [4] ordered by the Ministry of Education and Science in 2016 is taken into account in the development of the programme, which highlights the horizontal role of social sciences and humanities in the implementation of smart specialization in Latvia.

The programme is highly interdisciplinary, and its conjunctive element is entrepreneurship, which can be implemented in different sectors of the economy. In order to ensure academic integrity, two supervisors may supervise the Doctoral thesis: one from the field of business/economics and the other one from other fields of studies/sciences in the specific field of research, providing understanding of the specific field and processes (Sursock, 2017). Internationalization will be ensured by admitting international students, by attending summer/winter courses/seminars abroad within the framework of the study plan, promoting participation in scientific conferences, as well as inviting Doctoral thesis consultants from foreign higher education institutions and institutes.

Development and implementation of the programme is an important contribution to polycentric development as defined in the National Development Plan, as it brings together resources of 3 higher education institutions for achieving a common goal in 3 different regions of Latvia. ViA and VeA are partners in a joint project “Next Generation Small Cities in Europe” aimed at promoting the development of economic and business environment in both cities. The period of project implementation is from 2018 to 2021. Opportunities for doctoral studies significantly increase the qualification of the region’s inhabitants and the sustainability and retention of highly qualified personnel in the region.

Taking into account tendencies in economics and doctoral studies in economics and business offered by other higher education institutions, the volume of this programme is 120 CP (124 CP – for international students) or 180 ECTS for full-time studies over three years, offering the following content:

Programme structure	CP	Responsible higher education institution
STUDY COURSES 35 CP (29%)		
Quantitative research methods	10	VeA
Qualitative research methods	6	RAT
Business and economic tendencies	12	ViA
Assessment of competences	1	ViA

Scientific writing	4	RAT
Science communication	2	RAT
RESEARCH WORK 85 CP (71%)		
Doctoral thesis	85	RAT, VeA, ViA
TOTAL	120	
Latvian language (for international students)	4	RAT
TOTAL for international students	124	

During the process of programme development, learning outcomes are mapped to make sure that:

- planned learning outcomes of the study courses correlate with learning outcomes of the study programme;
- there is no overlap of subjects in the study programme;
- defined outcomes of the study programme and study courses are in line with the objectives of higher education (personal development; preparation of active citizens for democratic society; sustainable employment; development of an expanded knowledge base), the Latvian Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework.

The study content will be updated in cooperation with the higher education institutions of the consortium and employers, including the public sector, through a seminar-discussion on the development of regions and higher education institutions, for example, in 2020, such discussions - seminars will take place in the spring semester in ViA and RAT.

[1] Compliance of education offered in Valmiera and Vidzeme region with entrepreneurs' demand and employment forecasts (latvian only).
https://www.valmiera.lv/images/userfiles/cits/Petijums_Darba_tirgus_01_02.pdf

[2] Reforming the Doctorate in Social Sciences.
<https://www.eui.eu/Documents/ServicesAdmin/DeanOfStudies/ReformingtheDoctorate.pdf>

[3] Doctoral education: European trends.
https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/petijums-par-augstakas-izglitiba-parvaldibu-sadarbiba-ar-pasaules-banku/doctoral_education_european_trends_sursock1_0.pdf

[4] Analytical Description of the Ecosystem of Social Sciences and Humanities (latvian only).
https://viaa.gov.lv/library/files/original/Socialo_un_humanitaro_zinatnu_SHZ_ekosistemas_analitisks_apraksts.pdf

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. In case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels.

ViA's main unified research direction is digital solutions to social challenges. Since 2017, there are two research areas in the field of social sciences:

- Sustainable economy and knowledge society;
- Communication ecosystem and technologies.

There are three sub-areas for Sustainable Economy and Knowledge Society: Economics (Sarmīte Rozentāle, Leading Researcher), Heritage Preservation & Development (Linda Veliverronena, Researcher), Inclusive Policy and Human Resources Development (Feliciana Rajevska, Leading Researcher).

In 2019, ViA has started work on the development of a new development strategy, which is still ongoing, but three main missions (narratives) have been identified: Nature, Digitalization, Security and Safety, all of which must be managed and developed, requiring economic and management expertise. research. You can find out more about research directions here: <https://va.lv/en/research/research-directions>

At the same time, the implementation of the joint doctoral study program makes a significant contribution to the development of master's study programs, as professors, assoc.professors, who lead the research of doctoral theses, are themselves actively involved in research, teaching study courses in the master's program, leading the master's theses, sharing the obtained research results and fascinating students with their research attraction.

The study programme is developed in such a way to allow a student to carry out independent research in cooperation with the supervisor of the Doctoral thesis, and to provide current research topics on a global, national and regional scale, and also from the viewpoint of a specific field of the national economy. A large part of the study courses is intended to the acquisition of research methods to enable the student to choose and substantiate the most suitable methods for the research topic and in accordance with the possibilities and updates of modern technological solutions. Upon starting the studies, the student will know the topic of his/her Doctoral thesis, therefore, it is possible to analyze the specific topic in each study course and apply it through a specific topic, which will eventually give a far broader view of the research topic. The content of the study course Tendencies of Entrepreneurship and Economics is structured in such a way to include topics that are current in business and economic research, providing views from different angles, showing opportunities for researching the topic and explaining the situation/results from different angles, including different types of economy. Also, the courses Scientific Writing and Science Communication are designed in such a way to allow the student to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in these study courses to the process of preparation articles of research topic literature review and research results for publication, as well as to communicate research process and results with other researchers, the field and public in general.

The mapping of the study courses shows that the study courses and research work develop the skills of synthesis and analysis required to solve the problem chosen in the Doctoral thesis and to generate new knowledge, as well as to supplement and consolidate the existing knowledge in today's changing circumstances.

Proposed topics of Doctoral theses for the academic year of 2020/2021, which are related to the existing research projects or research projects which are prepared and submitted on these topics:

1. Tax policy challenges and improvement opportunities within the framework of the country's regional convergence.
2. Tax policy challenges and improvement opportunities in the context of the growth of the national economy.
3. Research methodology of company profitability and its assessment in the environment of

economic transformation.

4. Technological solutions for management decision making in changing and unpredictable conditions.
5. Human capital formation challenges in the context of business environment digitalisation.
6. Importance of documentary heritage in modern national economy.
7. Differences in usage of skills among generations and proper labour market supply.
8. Comprehensive tourism development monitoring and forecasting systems at the levels of different destinations, including the application of big data and technological innovation
9. Sustainable management of heritage in decreasing regions.
10. Circular economy in biosphere reserves.
11. Future changes in biosphere reserve and exploring of management models.
12. Mobility solutions in urban and rural space.
13. Alternative financial instrument attracting to business financing.
14. Behaviour and decision-making in financial markets and their impact on business financing.

On October 30, 2020, the Joint Program Council recommended that the initial topics and supervisors of the 1st year students be approved by the Science Council of the consortium university. On December 4, 2020, the Scientific Council of ViA HESPI approved the following topics and supervisors for doctoral theses for students:

PhD student	Institution	Topic of PhD Thesis	Supervisors
Gaļina Bukovska	ViA	Business and event tourism industry in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia: trends and development opportunities	Dr.oec. Agita Līviņa Dr. ģeogr. Andris Klepers
Anda Arkliņa	ViA	Determining the value and social significance of ecosystem services with a participatory approach in the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve	Dr.oec. Agita Līviņa Dr.ģeogr. Andris Klepers
Jānis Bikše	ViA	Application of documentary heritage in the national economy	Dr.oec. Agita Līviņa Dr. hist. Gatis Krūmiņš
Santa Lemša	ViA	Challenges of complex analytics adaptation in Latvia	Dr. oec. Sarmīte Rozentāle
Ieva Grīntāle	ViA	Flexicurity of remote work: Covid-19 crisis experience	Dr. oec. Sarmīte Rozentāle
Ieva Zaumane	ViA	Influence of the internal communication function on the company's business processes	Dr. oec.Maira Leščevica Dr.psych.Uldis Pāvuls

Student involvement in topics activated by research projects develops competencies in management and execution of scientific projects, including networking with other researchers from different countries.

2.3. Assessment of the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) by providing the analysis of how the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) used in the study courses/ modules are selected, what they are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and

the aims of the study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

The study process is implemented in accordance with the following basic principles: **quality** (a key factor for academic staff that contributes to significant intellectual and educational results), **synergy** (academic staff performs research-based academic activity), **accessibility** (academic staff is the most important study resource available to students), **motivation** (academic staff is motivated for development) and **ethics** (academic staff respects academic and corporate ethics).

The activity of consortium partners includes **a student-centred study process, a research process** focused on the demand for innovative products and services in the community, **a communicative process** envisaging knowledge and innovation exchange at the inter-university level, an efficient international academic and research collaboration, and **a technological process** focused on access to science-based higher education, introduction of new state-of-the-art technologies in the study and research process (including distance learning).

A relatively small number of students in higher education institutions in general and student groups furthers opportunities to take into account and consider a contingent of students and the diversity of their needs by developing appropriate learning approaches, as evidenced by the established doctoral competency assessment course. The programme will be implemented by encouraging self-dependence of doctoral students, while at the same time providing guidance and support from the part of professors, as well as mutual respect in their relationships. The programme director in each institution involved in the implementation of the programme ensures the following:

- the Professors involved in the implementation of the programme are familiar with the learning outcome assessing methods and receive support to develop their skills in this area;
- assessment criteria and methods are made public in advance;
- assessment provides doctoral students with a possibility to show the extent to which they have achieved learning outcomes;
- doctoral students receive feedback that provides advice on the study and research process, if necessary;
- assessment is consistent, fair to all doctoral students, and is made in accordance with the approved course descriptions.

At the time of preparing the report, no study course has been completed in this study program, in which the final assessments have been posted. The descriptions of the study courses indicate the criteria for receiving the assessment. Study methods have been chosen so that the student practices theoretical knowledge in his / her doctoral research on the topic during the study course.

In the autumn semester of 2020, study courses within the consortium of higher education institutions took place both in face-to-face classes - students traveling to the university, distance learning, which is the responsibility of the study course, and in remote form using digital platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Webex. The implementation of distance learning took place in accordance with the procedure established by the Ministry of Education and Science during the Covid-19 pandemic. Distance studies took place on a certain date and at a certain time, using a digital platform for students and lecturers. The first three months of studies have confirmed that in this model studies are successful and the parties involved are satisfied with the quality of work.

2.4. If the study programme entails a traineeship, provide the analysis and assessment of

the relation between the tasks of the traineeship included in the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study programme. Specify how the higher education institution/ college supports the students within the study programme regarding the fulfilment of the tasks set for students during the traineeship.

2.5. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the evaluations of the final theses.

As of the moment of accreditation of the study direction, no information is available on the doctoral theses prepared and defended.

Refer to the annex for the informative overview on the compliance of the EUd study programme with the State education standard (see Annex 37).

Refer to the annex for the plan of the EUd study programme (see Annex 38).

Refer to the annex for the descriptions of the EUd study programme courses (see Annex 39).

Refer to the annex for the sample study agreement of the EUd study programme (see Annex 40).

Refer to the annex for the sample of the EUd study programme diploma (see Annex 41).

2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

It is planned to have student, graduate and employer surveys to enhance the content and organizational performance of the study programme. We plan to pay special attention to face-to-face meetings with employers, including public organizations, as we collaborate in research projects to link them to the topics of the Doctoral theses. Accordingly, the higher education institution would offer students current research topics, which at the same time provide students with the opportunity to work as research assistants in the higher education institution, developing a Doctoral thesis.

In 2020, the director of the ViA program requested topical research topics for the Vidzeme planning region so that they could be offered to students for selection. At least once a year, a meeting of the Joint Advisory Board is planned, attended by representatives of industry, students and program directors, to update research topics and close collaboration. A meeting of the Joint Consultative Council is planned for the spring semester of 2021 to discuss the first year of study and prepare research topics for admission in 2021.

On December 9, 2020, the students of the program participated in an online meeting with foreign experts who evaluate ViA as a scientific institution.

The study program is implemented only for 3 months, graduate surveys have not been conducted yet.

2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.

Each student at ViA has an opportunity to participate in outgoing mobility within the framework of the ERASMUS programme and the Nordplus programme during the study process. The study programme will also receive incoming student mobility, including for the purposes of carrying out research for the Doctoral thesis.

The director of the study programme informs students about mobility opportunities provided by the institution of higher education.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

Information on the resources of the study programme and its provision is available in *Part II, Sections 3.1.-3.3.* of the report.

3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific support, including the resources provided within the cooperation with other science institutes and institutions of higher education (applicable to the doctoral study programmes).

The study programme is implemented in a consortium in cooperation with VeA and RAT, thus infrastructure and services provided by these higher education institutions are available to the students of this study programme. ViA has long-term cooperation relationships with the Nature Conservation Agency of the Republic of Latvia. Agency's database OZOLS which is useful for studying values of ecosystem services and their importance for the national economy and society is available for the development of Doctoral theses.

Within the framework of A.Kleper's postdoctoral project, a successful cooperation with the Central Statistical Bureau of the Republic of Latvia is established, which is important for data acquisition, exchange of experience in data obtaining, and processing methods.

Resources of the ERASMUS+ cooperation universities will be used taking into account the specific research areas.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)

4.1. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

There are no changes at the time of preparation of the accreditation documents.

4.2. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The procedure for assessing the qualification and competence of the teaching staff at ViA is regulated by the "Regulations on Elections to Academic Positions", the types of academic work and procedure for their remuneration are specified in the "ViA Remuneration Regulations". The content and duties of the work of the teaching staff, which determine the requirements for academic work, research, academic and scientific qualification improvement, as well as for administrative work, are approved by ViA Senate. To assess the work of the teaching staff, ViA surveys are conducted on each study course in the respective semester. ViA regularly promotes continuous education and training of its employees by supporting their participation in various local and international courses, seminars, conferences and experience exchange programmes.

The involvement of the teaching staff in the implementation of the Program has been performed taking into account the compliance with the Cabinet Regulation No. 381 ^[1]:

- For scientific qualification
 - lecturer's publications in international journals / international conference proceedings (at least three in the last 6 years);
 - participation in international scientific conferences abroad and in Latvia (at least three in the last 6 years);
 - LZP expert rights;
 - involvement in research in the last six years (from 2014) in social sciences and/or other fields of science, ensuring interdisciplinarity of the program (projects, grants);

- motivation of the teaching staff to work in a team with doctoral students;
- international experience in mobility visits abroad (teaching, exchange of experience);
- Development of study programs, study courses.
- Organizational competencies
 - Management of collegial institutions, participation in their work
 - Organization of international conferences
 - Editorial boards of scientific publications.

If the academic staff meets the above requirements, then it has a wide horizon, a network of international contacts, which is very important in working with doctoral students.

RTA, ViA and VeA will involve academic staff with high academic and research competence in the implementation of the programme. RTA, ViA and VeA take measures to develop and improve the academic staff, promoting its qualification improvement in the following:

- the use of technologies, including digital resources and innovation in the study process,
- learning of foreign languages at C1, B2 levels to ensure the internationalization process,
- current issues of higher education didactics and innovation in higher education.

Guest professors and guest researchers will be invited to the study programme to deliver lectures and lead seminars to share research experience and current research issues with students. Primarily, guest professors and researchers with whom ViA or consortium has collaborated in research projects will be invited, as well as experts in specific topics will be searched purposefully.

[1] Compliance is indicated on the staff CV.

4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).

The lecturers of the joint program have publications in the internationally recognized databases SCOPUS and Web of Sciences.

Refer to annex for information on scientific publications of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the doctoral programme (see Annex 18).

4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

Lecturer	Project	Source of funding	Period
Maira Leščevica	PPP EKOSOC-LV " Innovation and business development in Latvia in accordance with the smart specialization strategy",	IZM	2016-2019
	INTERFRAME-LV " Latvian heritage and future challenges for the sustainability of the state " project " Challenges for the Latvian state and society and the solutions in the international context	IZM	2019-2021
	project " Business and Wellness from Green Economy Growth " etc. CV	Interreg Central Baltic	2018 - 2020
Sarmīte Rozentāle	VPP EKOSOC-LV	IZM	2016-2019
	Analysis of the situation of the existing support instruments and development of conceptual proposals for the improvement of the tourism sector policy	Ministry of Economics	2019
	" Maximized Mobility and Accessibility of Services in Regions Affected by Demographic Change " Possibilities and prerequisites for attracting human resources (including talents) to Valmiera city . Population raising Strategy Valmiera city	Interreg	2017-2020
Agita Šmitiņa		Valmiera City Council Research grant	2018-2019
	Intercultural communication and cooperation for professionals for growth ",		2019
	" Entrance to future education Research "Employers' experience in communication with students - job seekers" etc. CV	ERASMUS	2017-2018
		University of Latvia	2017

Agita Livina	PPP Documentary Heritage Synergy	IZM	2019-2021
	PPP EKOSOC-LV Cultural environment development, environmental diversity preservation and urbanization processes in the context of Latvia's balanced development "manager.	IZM	2016-2019
	Maximized Mobility and Accessibility of Services in Regions Affected by Demographic Change » Scientific research : Opportunities of self-governments to influence the development of the local economy .	Interreg	2018-2019
	Optimizing the Governance and Management of the Natura 2000 Protected Area network in Latvia	EEZ, The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments .	2016
	<u>Report on the challenges of small and medium-sized cities, the potential for economic development, the impact on the overall territorial development of both Latvia and the European Union.</u>	LIFE integrated project VARAM	2020-2027
			2014-2015

Vineta Silkāne	National Research Program "Values in Action: Developing a Responsible, Secure and Educated Civil Society through Research and Modeling"	IZM	2018-2021. year
	Integrated measures at the national level to strengthen the representation of Latvia's research and development interests in the European Research Area "		2018-2021. year
	"Improvement of Vidzeme University College academic staff and development of human resources", project No.8.2.2.0 / 18 / A / 012. Head	IZM	2018-2021. year
	of the Academic Leadership Program, Strategic partnerships for higher education "	ESF	2018-2021. year
	Simulation Games in Strategic Communication "		
	"Social dimension of sustainability and social innovation" (SUSTINNO) and others CV	ERASMUS +	2014-2017 year
		IZM	
<hr/>			
Andris Klepers	Optimizing the Governance and Management of the Natura 2000	Life Integrated	2020-2027
	Protected Area network in Latvia		
	PostDoctorate research project " Tourism Intelligence Latvia". The research project is implemented with the PostDoctoral research support	ERDF	2018-2020
	Project " Lakesperience destinations " (case of Burtnieku Lake , North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve) - expert .	Municipality Wizards	2018-2019
	EKOSOC-LV sub-project " Impact of social awareness changes on sustainable provision of ecosystem services "	IZM	2014-2018
	Research " Preparation of input to the VASAB review " Development of Cities in the Baltic Sea Region "" . Etc. CV	VASAB secretariat	2015-2016

Kaspars Osis	Urban Innovation action project " Next generation Micro cities of Europe " and other CVs	EU	2019-2020
Linda Veliverronena	PPP EKOSOC-LV " " Cultural environment development , preservation of the nature diversity and Urbanization processes within the Context of the Balanced development of Latvia " . <i>The Significance of Documentary Heritage in Creating Synergies between Research and Society "</i> . Researcher. <i>Tourism industry analysis. Development of an action plan for the development of Latvia's tourism offer</i> Boosting Tourism Business Growth through Higher Professional Education .	IZM IZM Ministry of Economics Interreg	2016-2019 2019-2021 2018 2016-2019

4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.

The teaching staff of ViA participates in the implementation of the projects of the National Research Programme, involving students. The projects result in new knowledge, which is published in joint scientific articles. Cooperation between a student and the supervisor(s) of the Doctoral thesis is planned even more purposefully through joint research.

As the study program is currently taking place in the 1st semester, we can refer to the cooperation with those students with whom the cooperation has continued since the doctoral program at ViA.

Joint research work in projects and publications:

- S.Rozentāle, A. Līviņa with student Ieva Grīntāls (Former Kreituze). Joint publications, now Professor S.Rozentāle is the supervisor of the dissertation and works together with VPP Life with Covid (2020).
- M.Leščevica with student I.Zaumanis. Leščevica doctoral thesis supervisor, joint publication development stage.
- A.Līviņa cooperation with student A.Arkliņš. A.Arkliņa is involved in the activities of the UNESCO department and together with Līviņš plans her work, she has 2 publications and report conferences.
- A.Līviņa cooperation with student G.Bukovska. A joint manuscript on the adaptation of the

tourism industry in the conditions of COVID19 in the Baltic States has been adopted by Emerald publishing house.

- For S.Rozentāle and A.Līviņa, cooperation with the student J.Bikši, A.Arkliņš in the applied research on the development of the new administrative management model of Valmiera.
- A.Kleper has discussed cooperation with student A.Arkliņš on spatial data analysis.
- L.Veliverronena has involved students S.Lemšu in the development of a study course for a new master's program in financial management.

4.6. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

There are no students in the programme as of the time of submitting the self-assessment report. In order to ensure the cooperation of the teaching staff and to ensure the interconnection of the study courses, it is planned to have meetings of the lecturers and to hand over written information to the next person responsible for the implementation of the study course.

Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)	37P-EB-dr-coppliance-to-law.docx	37P-EUD-doktorantura_atbilstiba_Augstskolu_līk.docx
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	2P-Student-statistics-2010-2020-AIKA-BA-study-field.xlsx	2P-Studentu-statistika-2010-2020-AIKA-BV.xlsx
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	37P-EUD-doktorantura_atbilstiba_Augstskolu_līk.docx	37P-EUD-doktorantura_atbilstiba_Augstskolu_līk.docx
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	24P-EuD-kartejums-Eb-mapping-edited-30122020.xlsx	24P-EuD-kartejums-Eb-mapping-edited-30122020.xlsx
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	38P-Study-plan-doctoral-EB_edited_20122020.docx	38P-Studiju_plans-doktorantura-EUD_precizets_20122020.docx
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	39P-EB-study course descriptions-ENG-edited-04012021.zip	39P-EuD-kursa apraksti-LV-preciz-04012021.zip
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	41P-Joint-DR-diploma-example.doc	41P-EUD-kopiga-DR-diploma-paraugs.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	Pielikums_14_Vienosanas_LLU_RTA_ViA_VeA_stud_turp.pdf	Pielikums_14_Vienosanas_LLU_RTA_ViA_VeA_stud_turp.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	40P-EUD-kopiga-DR-studiju-liguma-paraugs.pdf	40P-EUD-kopiga-DR-studiju-liguma-paraugs.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that 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 according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.	EUD-docetaju-saraksts-anglu-valoda-precizets-26122020-TRANSLATION.docx	EUD-docetaju-saraksts-anglu-valoda-precizets-26122020.edoc
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.	Apliecinajums-EUD-AL.55.pants-Latvian-only.zip	Apliecinajums-EUD-AL.55.pants-Latvian-only.zip
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	Apliecinajums-EUD-AL.55.pants-Latvian-only.zip	Apliecinajums-EUD-AL.55.pants-Latvian-only.zip
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	40P-Study-agreement-sample-EB.docx	40P-EUD-kopiga-DR-studiju-liguma-paraugs.docx
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	AIP_atzinums-EUD-250st.pdf	AIP_atzinums-EUD-250st.pdf

Business Environment Administration

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Management, Administration and Management of Real Property</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Business Environment Administration</i>
Education classification code	<i>47345</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Professional master study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Vija</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Melbārde</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>vija.melbarde@va.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Mg.eoc.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	<i>29288360</i>
Goal of the study programme	<i>The goal of the Master's professional study programme "Business Environment Administration" is to prepare highly qualified business executives – managers or organizations – for governmental, public and private sectors whose theoretical knowledge, skills and competences meet the requirements of today's labour market and the world-recognized standard of professional Master of Business Administration and who are able to lead the organization in changing global environment.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<p><i>Tasks of the programme:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. To provide in-depth and expanded knowledge in accordance with the latest developments in the field, to provide acquisition of specific knowledge and to develop a set of skills and attitudes necessary for professional activity in accordance with the requirements of the occupational standard.</i> <i>2. To strengthen and develop student research skills for the work in the field and to motivate them to engage in applied research of municipal, regional and national business administration aspects, to develop an understanding of ethical responsibility regarding possible impact of scientific results and professional activity on environment and society, to develop ability to discuss complex scientific issues and professional aspects with professionals and the public, to prepare for doctoral studies in the field.</i> <i>3. To develop student self-motivation for independent professional development and lifelong learning, to develop skills to encourage the staff for further education, to develop skills of cooperation in multicultural and international environment.</i> <i>4. To promote the improvement of the study quality by ensuring professional development of the academic staff, involvement of national and international professors and professionals of the field in the teaching process, promoting cooperation with entrepreneurs and public sector, providing study and internship opportunities abroad, developing creative, student-centered and international study environment.</i>

Results of the study programme	<p><i>Learning outcomes of the study programme:</i></p> <p><i>Knowledge:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Theoretical knowledge and understanding on the global processes in the field and their impact on organizational development goal setting, strategic planning and development of culture appropriate to the strategy;</i> <i>2. Knowledge and understanding of the organizational theory, corporate governance, HR management, intercultural communication theories, knowledge of operational activities of the organization and methods of performance efficiency assessment, change and crisis management tools and their application for planning and managing effective organization performance;</i> <i>3. Knowledge of project, process and quality management to implement rational and coordinated operations of the structural units, to control, to attain the fulfillment of organizational strategies and development plans to ensure rational operation of the organization;</i> <i>4. Knowledge and understanding of binding laws and regulations of the field, professional environmental standards and operating principles, civil and environmental requirements;</i> <i>5. Knowledge and understanding of professional ethics, corporate social responsibility and environmental and social impact caused by the implementation of the projects of the field.</i> <p><i>Skills:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Students are able to plan, organize and monitor activities and development of the organization, to analyze investments in the improvement of environment and resources, to coordinate HR management policy in accordance with the goals of the organization, to compare with the field and global tendencies;</i> <i>2. Students are aware of global processes within the field and supervise organizational processes, coordinate inter-organizational and interdisciplinary collaboration;</i> <i>3. Cooperating with the functional managers, students are able to develop business and development plans and the budget, to acquire, analyze and apply information of the field and related information to develop strategic proposals for more efficient and effective use of organizational resources and operations;</i> <i>4. Students apply requirements of the binding laws and regulations and organize operations of the company in accordance with the changes in laws and regulations;</i> <i>5. Students conduct research and develop concepts for the appropriate and professional field, are able to reasonably explain and discuss systemic aspects of the field and professional area, observe ethical norms in communication.</i> <p><i>Competencies:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Students are able to independently formulate and critically analyze complex professional problems, to argue and make decisions related to organization management and development;</i> <i>2. Students are able to integrate knowledge from different disciplines, contribute to the generation of new knowledge, development of research or professional activity methods, introduce innovative, evidence-based achievements at work, demonstrate understanding and ethical responsibility for the potential impact of professional activity on the environment and society;</i> <i>3. Students are able to explain and discuss reasonably the complex or systemic aspects of the sector or profession concerned, to engage in social dialogue with the public and to build the organisation's reputation in the public space;</i> <i>4. Students are able to independently advance his/her professional improvement, to assume responsibility, demonstrate personal, social and civic interpersonal and intercultural skills.</i>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	Master's Thesis

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 1 years, 6 months - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>1</i>
Duration in month	<i>6</i>
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>60</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Professional bachelor's degree or equivalent higher education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Professional master's degree in Business Management</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Manager of Organization</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences	VALMIERA	CĒSU IELA 4, VALMIERA, VALMIERAS NOVADS, LV-4201

Full time studies - 2 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>2</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>80</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Academic bachelor's degree or equivalent higher education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Professional master's degree in Business Management</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Manager of Organization</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences	VALMIERA	CĒSU IELA 4, VALMIERA, VALMIERAS NOVADS, LV-4201

Full time studies - 1 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>1</i>
Duration in month	<i>6</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>60</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Professional bachelor's degree or equivalent higher education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Professional master's degree in Business Management</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Manager of Organization</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences	VALMIERA	CĒSU IELA 4, VALMIERA, VALMIERAS NOVADS, LV-4201

Full time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Academic bachelor's degree or equivalent higher education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Professional master's degree in Business Management</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Manager of Organization</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences	VALMIERA	CĒSU IELA 4, VALMIERA, VALMIERAS NOVADS, LV-4201

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme)

1.1. Description and analysis of changes in study programme parameters that have taken place since the issue of the previous accreditation certificate of study direction or the license of study programme if study programme is not included in the accreditation page of the study direction

Changes made to the study programme since the last accreditation are mainly determined by the Regulations on the State Standard of the Second Level Professional Higher Education (Cabinet Regulations No. 512 of 26.08.2014), the map of occupations included in the structure of the following fields: business, finance, accounting and administration (wholesale and retail trade, commercial sciences), and the new Occupational Standard for the Manager of organization (adopted on 18.09.2019).

1. Professional qualification

Professional qualification to be awarded – **Manager of Organization** (until 2020 – manager of a company and institution).

Changes to professional qualification are determined by the profession standard of the Manager of organization.

2. Changes to the study content and planning:

- New courses are developed(6 CP):
- Strategic Management of Organizations / 2 CP (compulsory course, Part A),
- External Communication of Organizations 2 CP (elective course, Part B),
- Smart Technologies and Data Security 2 CP (elective course, Part B).

2) course names are content are adjusted:

- Project Management Strategies and Tools (previously - Project Management Strategies and Innovative Processes) 2 CP,
- E-Commerce and E-Business (previously E-Commerce and Business) 2 CP,
- Communication in International Business (previously Intercultural Communication) 2 CP,

3) new elective course module (Part B) *Business Networking* (6 CP) is created, the following courses are included there:

- External communication of organizations 2CP,
- Smart Technologies and Data Security 2 CP,
- Social Networks in Business Environment 2 CP.
- changes are made to course planning:
- study course *Strategic Management of Organizations* / 2 CP, is included in the content of the compulsory courses (Sem. 1)
- study course *Modern Logistics Systems* (2CP) is included in the module *Business to Business* (B2B).

Changes to the content and planning of the study programme are made with the goal to integrate the latest theoretical knowledge of management science, relevant IT tools, emphasizing aspects of

internationalization and digitalization. The course *Strategic Management of Organizations* is developed to provide more effectively knowledge, skills and competences in planning and management. The course *Modern Logistics Systems* logically integrates into the B2B module as it shows companies how to improve business processes. The purpose of creating the new module *Business Networking* is to demonstrate the opportunities for organization collaboration in the society of the digital age. New courses *External Communication of Organizations* and *Smart Technologies and Data Security* will provide managers with the support required for addressing current challenges. The revised and supplemented courses mainly focus on international business aspects.

1.2. Analysis and assessment of the statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down in the different study forms, types, and languages.

The study programme is implemented by means of 1.5-year and 2-year full-time programmes. Although the programme may be implemented in Latvian and English, it is delivered only in English due to the demand and strategic goals of ViA, namely, to ensure internationalization of the study process. During the reporting period from 2013 to 2016, the number of students was practically unchanged, a decrease was observed starting from 2017, when by the decision of the Senate of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences students were admitted to the programme every two years. Students were not admitted only in 2017 and 2019; in 2020, 15 students were admitted again. Although the programme has a good reputation in both the region and the State, the decrease in the total number of students is significantly influenced by the general demographic situation and the level of solvency of the population in the region and the State. It was typical in recent years that only those students who had received State-funded budget places continued their studies. During the reporting period, student dropout of the total number of students varies and amounts on average 4-5%, which can be considered to be a good indicator. Almost all students have a job; therefore, the main reason for dropping out is their inability to combine workload with studies. Quite often employers do not provide support, even impose categorical requirements to discontinue studies. In such cases, students choose to keep the job and not to continue their studies. Health problems are also a serious reason for dropping out. A possibility to study according to an individual plan is always offered in such situations. Those who resume studies after an academic break also studies according to an individual plan. An academic break is mainly taken due to financial problems and work, as well as during childcare. The study field provides an individual approach to each student who is ex-matriculated due to academic debts, discharged as having acquired the theoretical programme. These students are contacted about the possibilities to resume and complete their studies, which are used by many of them.

1.3. Analysis and assessment of the interrelation between the name of the study programme, the degree or professional qualification to be acquired or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements.

The **goal** of the Master's professional study programme "Business Environment Administration" is to prepare highly qualified business executives – managers of organizations – for governmental, public and private sectors whose theoretical knowledge, skills and competences meet the requirements of today's labour market and the world-recognized standard of professional Master of Business Administration and who are able to lead the organization in changing global environment.

Tasks of the programme

1. To provide in-depth and expanded knowledge in accordance with the latest developments in the field, to provide acquisition of specific knowledge and to develop a set of skills and attitudes necessary for professional activity in accordance with the requirements of the occupational standard.
2. To strengthen and develop student research skills for the work in the field and to motivate them to engage in applied research of municipal, regional and national business administration aspects, to develop an understanding of ethical responsibility regarding possible impact of scientific results and professional activity on environment and society, to develop ability to discuss complex scientific issues and professional aspects with professionals and the public, to prepare for doctoral studies in the field.
3. To develop student self-motivation for independent professional development and lifelong learning, to develop skills to encourage the staff for further education, to develop skills of cooperation in multicultural and international environment.
4. To promote the improvement of the study quality by ensuring professional development of the academic staff, involvement of national and international professors and professionals of the field in the teaching process, promoting cooperation with entrepreneurs and public sector, providing study and internship opportunities abroad, developing creative, student-centered and international study environment.

Learning outcomes of the study programme:

Knowledge:

1. Theoretical knowledge and understanding on the global processes in the field and their impact on organizational development goal setting, strategic planning and development of culture appropriate to the strategy;
2. Knowledge and understanding of the organizational theory, corporate governance, HR management, intercultural communication theories, knowledge of operational activities of the organization and methods of performance efficiency assessment, change and crisis management tools and their application for planning and managing effective organization performance;
3. Knowledge of project, process and quality management to implement rational and coordinated operations of the structural units, to control, to attain the fulfilment of organizational strategies and development plans to ensure rational operation of the organization;
4. Knowledge and understanding of binding laws and regulations of the field, professional environmental standards and operating principles, civil and environmental requirements;
5. Knowledge and understanding of professional ethics, corporate social responsibility and environmental and social impact caused by the implementation of the projects of the field.

Skills:

1. Students are able to plan, organize and monitor activities and development of the organization, to analyze investments in the improvement of environment and resources, to coordinate HR management policy in accordance with the goals of the organization, to compare with the field and global tendencies;
2. Students are aware of global processes within the field and supervise organizational processes, coordinate inter-organizational and interdisciplinary collaboration;
3. Cooperating with the functional managers, students are able to develop business and development plans and the budget, to acquire, analyze and apply information of the field and related information to develop strategic proposals for more efficient and effective use of organizational resources and operations;
4. Students apply requirements of the binding laws and regulations and organize operations of the company in accordance with the changes in laws and regulations;
5. Students conduct research and develop concepts for the appropriate and professional field, are able to reasonably explain and discuss systemic aspects of the field and professional area, observe ethical norms in communication.

Competencies:

1. Students are able to independently formulate and critically analyze complex professional problems, to argue and make decisions related to organization management and development;
2. Students are able to integrate knowledge from different disciplines, contribute to the generation of new knowledge, development of research or professional activity methods, introduce innovative, evidence-based achievements at work, demonstrate understanding and ethical responsibility for the potential impact of professional activity on the environment and society.
3. Students are able to explain and discuss reasonably the complex or systemic aspects of the sector or profession concerned, to engage in social dialogue with the public and to build the organisation's reputation in the public space.
4. Students are able to independently advance his/her professional improvement, to assume responsibility, demonstrate personal, social and civic interpersonal and intercultural skills.

Throughout the process of preparation of the study programme and also later in the following years, constant efforts have been made to review the description of the study programme to ensure the compliance of the name of the programme with the degree and the professional qualification to be awarded. In 2019, two new documents were approved – *Qualifications Framework for Business, Finance, Accounting, Administration (Wholesale, Retail, and Business)* and occupational standard – **manager of organization**; the above documents updated the interconnection analysis of programme goals, objectives and planned outcomes in order to ensure mutual harmony of tasks and outcomes, improvement of the study programme content according to the development tendencies of the field. Descriptions of the programme goals and tasks are used to map study courses. Relevance and coherence between outcomes of the study programme and outcomes of specific study courses are annually assessed by preparing a self-assessment report. Information on the study programme implementation and achievement of the tasks is assessed every academic year by meeting with students and members of the advisory council, by carrying out analysis at the study direction council meetings. The admission rules of the study programme are formulated in such a way to provide those who are motivated and ready for business studies with a possibility to study – for those who have professional Bachelor's degree in economy or management the weighted average grade in the Bachelor's diploma supplement is taken into account in the competition, while applicants who have a Bachelor's degree or equivalent education in other fields have to take an entrance test (weighted average grade in diploma

supplement – 50%; entrance test – 50%).

The goal of the admission test is to check applicants' knowledge and proficiency in the basic principles of economic activity and theoretical and practical aspects of business administration. The admission test is developed by the lecturers of the BEA study programme, its evaluation criteria and content are approved by the BA study field council. Evaluation criteria are as follows: 1) understanding of the operating principles of economic regularities at the micro and macroeconomic level; 2) basic knowledge about starting and running a business; 3) understanding of business planning, finance and personnel management issues; 4) basic knowledge and understanding of the use of marketing tools in business.

Applicants' tests are marked by a commission (consisting of 3 lecturers) established by the BA study field; each answer is marked and individually assessed; the final evaluation consists of the commission's average evaluation in a 10-point system. The applicant has failed the test, if the mark is lower than 4 points. The content of the test is updated every year.

Applicants with a diploma of excellence are admitted without competition.

The BEA study programme is implemented in two versions – in the amount of 60 CP (1.5 years) and 80 CP (2 years). The amount of studies depends on the degree and qualification obtained in previous studies, and it is directly related to the admission regulations. If the applicant has a professional Bachelor's degree (the 5th level professional qualification is obtained) or equal higher education, the amount of studies is 60 CP, and duration of studies is 1.5 years, but if the applicant has obtained an academic Bachelor's degree or equal higher education, the amount of studies is 80 CP, and duration of studies is 2 years. The amount of 20 CP is for an additional internship, thus complementing theoretical knowledge and skills previously acquired in academic education and ensuring the achievement of the goals and results of the study programme. The admission test, in its turn, ensures the selection of theoretically and practically prepared applicants in the field of business, and provides a possibility also for students of other scientific disciplines to study in the BEA programme. According to the previous experience, inclusion of the admission test in the admission regulations is reasonable because more motivated and better prepared students are admitted, thus ensuring achievement of study goals and results more successfully.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof)

2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation.

At the end of 2019, at the meeting of the BV study field, the new professional standard "[Manager of Organization](#)" (latvian only) was reviewed, according to which the BVV study content was reviewed, a comparison was made between the results specified in the study program and the requirements

of the professional standard. It has been concluded that the content of the study program complies with the requirements included in the professional standard "Head of Organization". The new standard was also presented to the ViA Advisory Council.

The study programme is improved every year based on student survey and employers' recommendations. Student surveys reflect criticism and recommendations at the end of each study course; information provided by the graduate surveys helps significantly improve the programme, because the programme and its outcomes can be impartially assessed during professional activities. Responding to the developments of the field during the previous accreditation period, a new elective module Business Networking is created, which includes 2 new courses "External Communication of Organizations", "Smart Technologies and Data Security". In accordance with the requirements of the new occupational standard, a new course "Strategic Management of Organizations" was included in the programme.

In 2016, development issues of the Business Administration direction was discussed with representatives of employers, entrepreneurs' professional associations and regional municipalities. Recommendations of the forum were taken as a basis for programme restructuring, development of new courses, improvement of the internship regulations. Upon improving courses of the programme, the BA direction has respected recommendations of representatives of the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Vidzeme Planning Region, opinions of ViA Advisory Convention and the State Examination Commission regarding needs of the labour market. Entrepreneurs are of the opinion that strategic planning and financial management skills are essential for company managers, they have to be aware of the latest information technologies, and they have to be able to communicate with employees. Entrepreneurs emphasize that currently managers with marketing skills are required in the labor market, and implementing the programme in English is considered to be a great advantage.

The changes made in the content and planning of the study program are subordinated to the professional standard, taking into account the recommendations of employers, including the latest theoretical findings of management science and aspects relevant to entrepreneurship. This was taken into account when developing the modular system of elective courses (Part B), which currently consists of 3 modules: Export Marketing, Business to Business and the newly created module Business Networking. The modules of these courses reflect the current aspects of business development, providing students with opportunities to learn the most relevant information technology tools in business, to be aware of and be able to manage digitization processes in organizations, manage and promote the export of companies. The optional business networking module was introduced to improve the ability to manage both the organisation's internal communication and ensure successful external collaboration. It is economics and business, the latest scientific knowledge of management, trends in business - digitization, innovation, global market challenges and interdisciplinarity - are integrated into the content of the module courses. There is no difference in the acquisition of the study content between the program with the amount of 80 credits and the program with the amount of 60 credits in the acquisition of the theoretical course, the difference is an additional 20 credits of practice for the students of the 80 credits program. Modular courses allow students who have previously obtained an academic bachelor's degree (80 credits program) to supplement the missing knowledge and skills, as well as to focus on the current issues of current business management and organization management through the acquisition of module courses.

Professional Master's degree in Business Administration is awarded after passing the State examination - defence of the Master's thesis. The master's thesis is an independently performed, qualified summary of research results with a theoretical substantiation, based on the latest knowledge in economics and business, as well as management science and practical applications in

the management of organizations. The goal of the Master's thesis is theoretical and practical research and analysis of a current business management problem (question, process), integrating theoretical knowledge acquired during interdisciplinary study courses and practical skills for applying theoretical knowledge in research.

(Requirements for Master's Thesis see in Annex 34).

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. In case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels.

Information included in the study courses and outcomes to be achieved are reviewed every year, lecturers take into account tendencies of the field and feedback given by the students regarding the study courses, and the literature used for studies is supplemented every year. Upon preparing a self-assessment report, formulations of the study programme goals are also reviewed each year and, where necessary, adjusted with respect to the content of the studies and methods used in the study process, including, where appropriate, the latest tendencies of the field (e.g., commercial data security, the use of smart technologies in business, project management tools, global communication challenges, etc.).

The information included in the study courses and modules, the results to be achieved and the set goals are fully related to the overall goals of the study program and the results to be achieved, which are shown by the mapping of study results.

The optional course module of Part B makes up only 6 credits of the total compulsory amount of 60 credits. Students of both the 60 credits program and the 80 credits CP program learn one module, thus there are no differences in the acquired content between the two variants of the study program. The choice of the module takes place in the previous semester on the recommendation of employers (members of the State Examination Commission, the University Council of Advisers, the BV Advisers Convention, practice supervisors) in response to market requirements.

Export Marketing, Business to Business (B2B), Business Networking – allow students to acquire more profoundly current business administration aspects they are interested in, ensuring achievement of occupational standards and programme outcomes more effectively. Based on this analysis, results of the study courses are mapped, thus verifying the compliance of each individual course with the goals and objectives set in the study programme. The mapping of the BEA study programme courses is added in the annex showing how individual study courses contribute to the achievement of study programme outcomes.

Refer to the annex for the mapping of the study courses for achieving outcomes of the BEA study programme (see Annex 24).

2.3. Assessment of the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) by providing the analysis of how the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) used in the study courses/ modules are selected, what they are, and

how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

The study programme is implemented by help of various study forms – lectures, seminars, discussions, practical classes, use of on-line resources, business simulations and modelling, literature studies, applied games, individual and group consultations, study visits, case studies, analysis of audio and video materials, presentations of student individual practical work (individually and in groups), *Skype and WebEx* conferences, internship. Advanced information technologies are widely used in the study process. During lectures, lecturers and students have an opportunity to use computer classrooms and the multimedia laboratory. During the study process, opportunities provided by the intranet are actively used: *moodle.va.lv* – it is an electronic study environment, where necessary study materials and lecture presentations of each study course are stored, information is exchanged, where students post their presentations and homework; it is used also as ViA electronic repository of documents; intranet message repository; email, *WebEx*, social media. A student has to acquire an average of 100 pages of scientific text per credit. No less than two individual papers should be written in each study course, as well as examinations have to be taken. At the end of the course, each student should take a written or oral examination or submit a larger scale presentation demonstrating the knowledge acquired during the course. Such a diverse range of study methods and technological tools ensures high quality studies – students acquire and consolidate both academic knowledge and practical application skills already in the course of the studies. In this way, a diverse, attractive and engaging study process is provided, students gain experience (simulation games, role-playing games), opportunities to create a portfolio useful for further careers, more fully preparing for professional work in the field.

Given that students with different education and qualifications acquired in the previous stage study together (there is 80 CP in the 2-year program and 60 CP in the 1.5-year program), then lecturers should use more individual approach, discussions, situation modeling in order to study at the same high level. the content would be acquired by students who have obtained an academic bachelor's degree or an equivalent higher education at the previous level of education.

In general, it can be concluded that diverse teaching methods are used in BV study programs, but in all classes interactive teaching methods dominate, which are based on students' active and conscious participation in the study process (main principle - learning by doing). The second dominant is practice-based teaching methodology - cases of practice-based business management, which are tested in practice in companies and organizations. The practical experience of lecturers in business or in their field has a high added value, which, using a variety of teaching methodologies, fully ensures the achievement of study results and study goals.

In the study direction of ViA and, including BA, the whole study process is student-centered - subordinated to the formation of students as active participants in the study process and evaluation of study results, developing students' professional skills and competence, critical thinking and objective self-assessment. It serves both the teaching methods used and the type of communication and cooperation with students.

The following forms of work are used to promote the dialogue with students: studies in small groups, which promote student involvement in the study process; application of interactive study methods; assessment of independent and research papers and their discussion with the authors; consultations; cumulative assessment system; student surveys about the study course, internship defence. Individual communication between a lecturer and a student (outside lectures, seminars

and classes) is possible through individual consultations with the lecturer, as well as via e-mail and WebEx.

For more information on assessment methods and adherence to the principles of student-centred education, see *Section 1.6. in Part II*.

2.4. If the study programme entails a traineeship, provide the analysis and assessment of the relation between the tasks of the traineeship included in the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study programme. Specify how the higher education institution/ college supports the students within the study programme regarding the fulfilment of the tasks set for students during the traineeship.

Master's internship is an important part of the study process, which is done at the companies in Latvia and abroad. Internship allows testing the knowledge and skills in a real work environment and gaining new insights and skills. Students who have obtained a professional bachelor's degree or a comparable higher education are undergoing an internship in the amount of 6 credit points in accordance with the master's internship regulations approved at the BA direction. Internship takes place within the second semester.

Students with a previously obtained academic bachelor's degree or equivalent higher education undergo a master's internship in the amount of 6 CP and also a qualifying internship in the amount of 20 CP (according to the approved internship regulations for 2-year studies), providing a total internship in the amount of 26 CP. Thus, by additionally practicing in an organization, students acquire the practical aspects of business management and supplement the theoretical knowledge and skills previously acquired in academic education, thus ensuring the competence provided for in the standard of the head of the organization. The 20 CP internship provides a compensable mechanism for the acquisition of business management knowledge and skills missing in previous education.

The programme director is responsible for successfully organized internship. At the end of internship, there is a public presentation and defence of student reports.

Internship ensures achievement of study programme outcomes related to practical skills and theoretical knowledge testing in practical activities. A programme director supervises internships. Internship is assessed by a defence commission set up by the BA study direction council. The study programme director and lecturers actively communicate with representatives of the field, asking them to offer internship places. BEA has a good reputation among professionals of the field, so companies often offer placements themselves. Internship offers are e-mailed to students. Students have a possibility to get scholarships and do internship at foreign companies within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme (during the reporting period, 11 students did internship abroad).

BA has accumulated considerable experience of cooperation with employers in matters of organizing internships. The program director has a database of companies, which is used to provide internships, but students mainly look for internships themselves, because they can choose a company, location, which is often important for financial reasons (low transport costs, close to home and family). Often, the internship takes place in the workplace, thus providing in-depth research of the organization and giving feedback to companies that evaluate it and use it in practice. If a student has problems, the program director helps to provide internships in the region's companies or at the university.

Students apply for internship by filling out an application form. The programme director gives his/her approval or rejects the choice if it is not able to complete the internship programme in the company. Prior to commencement of internship, the programme director discusses the tasks to be performed during internship, the procedure of entering into agreement, the procedure for preparing and defending the report documents. Prior to commencement of internship, a bilateral internship agreement (between ViA and the company) or a triangular internship agreement (among ViA, company and student) is entered into which is the basis for commencing internship. During internship students prepare an internship report, which includes an in-depth study of the company's field of activity, thus improving both professional and research skills and competences. During internship the BEA internship supervisor communicates with a student, deals with the problems, provides consultations regarding the preparation of internship documents. At the end of internship, internship supervisor at the company gives feedback. From 2020, internship supervisor also provides an evaluation in accordance with the 10-point system. At the end of internship there is a public defence of internship, when the students present their work and discuss the progress of internship and their observations, provide feedback on how the knowledge acquired during the studies has helped in the internship tasks. Within the framework of the internship defence students' recommendations are taken into account when improving the content of the study courses and improving the organization of internships. Internship is evaluated by a commission formed by the BA direction, it is evaluated according to a pass-fail system, but from 2020/2021 acad.year it is evaluated in accordance with the 10-point system and a cumulative method.

The Internship Regulations are added in Annex 20.

Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences has agreements for the provision of internship – a list of agreements is added in Annex 21 to the report.

2.5. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the evaluations of the final theses.

The study programme envisages the development of the Master's thesis, which helps students apply and integrate theoretical and practical knowledge and develop research skills. Research papers cover a wide range of topics. "Methodological Guidelines for the Development of Annual Projects and State Examination Papers" (by Prof. S. Rozentāle, lecturer V.Melbārde) are developed and revised in 2019 for the students of the Business Administration direction, providing instructions on the content, research methods, formatting, assessment criteria and procedure of the Master's thesis. The theses cover a wide and diverse range of business topics. The topics of the Master's theses are part of the ViA's research direction *Sustainable Development of the National Economy and Knowledge Society*. In addition to the topics of entrepreneurship, students also research current economic problems and regional aspects, also research of practice companies at the request of the employer.

Below is a number of examples of the topics of the Master's theses defended by the BEA students during the reporting period:

1. Current tendencies in economics and business management in Latvia, Vidzeme region:

- Open remuneration policy for developing strong company culture for Y generation employees

- Development of organic food market in Latvia
- Consolidation and factors contributing to closer cooperation in the liner shipping industry
- Eco-entrepreneurship as a competitive advantage in tourism business
- Factors affecting the absorption of the EU structural funds during the planning period of 2007-2013
- Improvement of provision and organization of emergency medical care in Latvia
- Social entrepreneurship as a model for promoting youth employment in Latvia
- Mortgage crediting impact on the development of the national economy in Latvia
- Outsourcing tendencies in Latvia
- The impact of cultural and historical heritage on the economic activity of companies, a case of Mazsalaca municipality
- Remote work opportunities in Vidzeme region

2. Planning and managing the operations of the organization

- Strategic planning approach to innovation in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in Riga
- New product development and implementation strategy in the company STENDERS
- Strategic management process and strategy development for Līga Nature SPA
- Life cycle investment strategy as a social security instrument for State-funded pension scheme in Latvia
- Developing a management accounting concept for P-D Valmiera Glass USA Corp.
- Compliance of management competences with the labour market requirements in Vidzeme region
- Labour protection organization in retail companies in Latvia
- Solutions for increasing workforce efficiency in manufacturing companies
- Quality management tendencies in the forest sector in Latvia: PEFC and FSC certification
- Improvement of performance assessment system in JSC "Cēsu alus"

3. HR management, employee motivation and satisfaction

- Personnel recruitment and selection process improvement possibilities at LLC CatchSmart
- HR management tendencies in small and medium-sized enterprises in Latvia. A case of Vidzeme region.
- Comparison of customer satisfaction between LLC "Rimi Latvija" and LLC "Maxima Latvija"
- Employee motivation system in Latvian commercial banks
- Development and implementation of communication standard in company "X" group
- Integration of new employees in JSC "Valmieras stikla šķiedra"
- Improvement of hospitality and restaurant staff training and management process at Valmiera Vocational Training Center

4. Marketing, marketing communication

- Promotion of local products and competitiveness in foreign markets. A case of Joint Stock Company "Aroma Chemical" in Moldova
- The role of impact marketing in the development of a new brand
- Development of marketing communication strategy of SIA "Abula"
- Product promotion and sales promotion management in retail supermarkets
- Development and significance of direct purchase of organic food products in Latvia
- Social media as a marketing tool for B2B companies
- Marketing communication between small tourism companies and destination: A case of England and Latvia
- Advertising revenue impact on the financial position of SLLC "Latvijas Radio"

- Raising capital for product promotion through social support platforms

5. Business development, innovation, competitiveness

- Development possibilities of LLC “Pedelites” at the border of Latvia
- Project management approach to business development within the Quinto Group
- Sustainable development in LLC “WOLTEC”
- Involvement of Latvian diaspora in promoting entrepreneurship and innovation in Latvia
- Development potential of creative industries in Valmiera
- Opportunities for innovation in pre-school education institutions: cases of Latvia and the world
- Education, local government and business cooperation in the context of the knowledge economy
- Opportunities to increase the competitiveness of retail businesses: Case of Gulbene municipality
- Promotion of entrepreneurship in rural areas of Vidzeme region
- International competitiveness of VIZULO and possibilities for export development

Evaluations of the graduation papers (Bachelor’s theses) are stable during the reporting period of 2014 - 2019, with a tendency to improve (*skat.7.tabulu*).

7.tabula. Overview of the evaluation of the final papers 2014-2020

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Average evaluation	8,0	8,6	8,0	8,0	8,2	8,5	8,8

The grades of the Master's theses are consistently high. Stability of grades is ensured by the student support system for final theses – students choose the topic of their theses at the end of the 1st semester, coordinate the topic and structure with the scientific supervisor, start literature studies and data collection. In the middle of the 3rd semester (for 1.5 year programme) and in the middle of the 4th semester (for 2-year programme), there is a pre-defence, during which students present theoretical concepts, the process of research and the first conclusions. This ensures control over the progress of thesis development, and more timely detection of potential problems.

Refer to the annex for the informative overview on the compliance of the BEA study programme with the State education standard (see Annex 31).

Refer to the annex for the informative overview on the compliance of the qualification obtained in the BEA study programme with the profession standard (see Annex 32).

Refer to the annex for the plan of the BEA study programme (see Annex 33).

Refer to the annex for the descriptions of the BEA study programme courses (see Annex 34).

Refer to the annex for the sample study agreement of the BEA study programme (see Annex 35).

Refer to the annex for the sample of the BEA study programme diploma and its supplement (see Annex 36).

2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

One of the ways to find out student opinion about the study process is through online survey, which is conducted after each course. Students assess each course according to the 5-point system by the following criteria:

- goals of the course (definition and achievement of results),
- assessment of the teaching methods for the achievement of the course goals (relevance and variety of methods; opportunities for dialogue and discussion during the course; ability of the lecturer to listen to the views and arguments of others),
- organization of the study process (course requirements, assessment, study load, availability and use of study materials, communication with students),
- assessment of lecturer's work (possibility to receive answers to questions during lectures, seminars and consultations, as well as feedback from the lecturer on the work done; assessment of knowledge according to criteria set; pedagogical skills),
- student involvement in the study course (motivation on the part of the lecturer, self-assessment of involvement and independent work).

Students also give a summary of the course and comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the course, make suggestions which at the end of the academic year are analyzed at the meeting of the BA direction.

The average evaluation of the BEA programme given by students is 4.5 (highest – 4.8, lowest – 3.9). The lecturers' professional competence, connection with business practice in Latvia and abroad, as well as personality charisma are highly appreciated. Students appreciate the use of diverse teaching methods, group work. More effort and work is required for study courses based on the use of IT software, which partly explains the lower course rating, but also demonstrates insufficiently acquired IT knowledge and skills in previous studies. Students admit that they do not work enough independently, but at the same time point to the heavy workload. BEA students want more practical training which could be used in their work or business, rather than theoretical knowledge. Surveys show that some lecturers do not explain clearly assessment criteria, therefore the priority of methodological work of the BA direction is to develop a common understanding of assessment.

Graduate surveys are conducted at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences on a regular basis. The survey of 2019 shows that graduates of the BA direction are employed – they have paid employment in their speciality or related fields, they continue their studies or are otherwise employed (maternity leave, volunteering, ERASMUS+). Mainly employment is in the private sector, graduates mainly work in Vidzeme and Riga region, including Riga. Employment rate of BEA graduates – 100%. Unlike the graduates of the bachelor's program, where 11% are employers or self-employed, BEA graduates are not among them, all are employees. Their jobs correspond to the level of education, the knowledge acquired is very important.

Graduates are satisfied with the content and quality of their studies, and highly assess their knowledge and skills acquired during studies, with a particular emphasis on strategic planning and analytical thinking skills, as well as communication and presentation skills. BEA Master's students particularly emphasize the involvement of professionals of the field who give a practical insight into business. Students want more courses to be taught by foreign guest professors, and they think that the latest IT developments should be used in the study courses. Graduates especially emphasize

the importance of studying English as an opportunity to improve their knowledge of a foreign language, which is also an important advantage when competing in the labour market. Graduate recommendations are taken into account upon integrating more digital business solutions in the programme.

Employer criticism and suggestions are analyzed upon hearing the views of the members of ViA Convention, BA Advisory Council, State Examination Commission, in business forums, and meetings with representatives of local governments and business organizations. The views of businessmen from Vidzeme region, which were identified and analyzed when participating in the National Research Programme ECOSOCLV (2015-2018) were important.

The opinion of the BEA study program advisory council established in the direction of BA on the issues of study content and organization is a very important support in the improvement of study quality and implementation of external evaluation. The composition of the BEA study program advisory board consists of the program director, students, graduates, industry representatives, the employers' representative and representatives of other external parties, in accordance with the objectives of the study program and study direction (at least 7 persons). The composition is renewed every year, the council meets once a year.

In the direction of BA studies, a working group for the preparation of a joint self-evaluation report has been established, which also provides recommendations for the improvement of the BEA study program. The composition of the self-assessment report preparation working groups consists of the director of the field, students, lecturers of the field, graduates of the program, representatives of the branch, a representative of the Administrative Department of ViA. The staff is renewed once a year, but meetings are held once a semester.

Employer views, graduate and student surveys are taken as the basis for changes in the content and planning of the study courses (see Section 2.1).

Anketēšanas un aptauju rezultātu analīze tika ņemta vērā, pilnveidojot studiju kursu *Projektu vadības stratēģijas un rīki, E-komercija un e-business*, pastiprinot digitālos aspektus; no jauna izveidoti 3 studiju kursi *Organizāciju ārējā komunikācija, Viedās tehnoloģijas un datu drošība, Sociālie tīkli biznesa vidē* (izvēles modulis *Biznesa tīklošanās* 6 kp), kas aktualizē sadarbības tīklu veidošanas un vadīšanas prasmes organizācijā digitālajā laikmetā.

2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.

During the academic year of 2019/2020, 27 international exchange students from 8 countries. There are no in-coming mobility student statistics regarding the study directions, as students take courses from the joint offer "International Study Module" (with the exception of students from ESME Sudria in France, who take a specialized programme at the IF faculty).

The number of ViA students who study and do internship within the framework of the Erasmus+ exchange programme has decreased: 17 students are studying, 13 students are doing internship in 14 countries.

ViA has a sufficient scholarship fund for Erasmus+ studies and internship abroad, any student who has positive assessment can apply for a scholarship. International mobility applicants are assessed

and approved by the BA study council.

The number of students involved in mobility is decreasing in the Business Administration direction during the reporting period.

The dynamics of the outgoing BEA mobility student number can be seen in [Table 8](#):

Table 8. Student mobility of the BA study direction in 2013-2020

Year	Studies	Internship	Total
2012/2013	1	1	2
2013/2014	1	2	3
2014/2015	-	3	3
2015/2016	-	-	-
2016/2017	-	2	2
2017/2018	-	1	3
2018/2019	-	2	2
2019/2020	-	-	-

Students of the programme are eager to do internship, however, they do not take advantage of study opportunities at all in recent years. Increasing interest in internship can be explained by willingness to gain new work experience, interest in entrepreneurship and sometimes it is the search for employment. Since almost all students work, it is practically impossible to go abroad to study for one semester as nobody wants to lose his/her job. Because of the high cost of living, students do not travel to the Nordic countries, which dominated during the previous accreditation period, they go to do internship to Germany, Great Britain, Spain and Estonia in recent years. BEA study courses acquired abroad and internship done abroad are recognized if the requirements of the BEA programme are met. Before going abroad, students have to harmonize their courses with the programme director to avoid doubling or inconsistency with the programme. Upon returning, the courses are recognized and an individual plan for continuing their studies is drawn up. Internships abroad are recognized after the completion and successful defence of all internship assignments.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and

technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

Information on the resources of the study programme and its provision is available in *Part II, Sections 3.1.-3.3.*

3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific support, including the resources provided within the cooperation with other science institutes and institutions of higher education (applicable to the doctoral study programmes).

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)

4.1. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

The implementation of the **Business Environment Administration Master's programme** was ensured by 19 lecturers: 7 with a doctor's degree (including 4 professors, assistant professor and 2 visiting professors), other lecturers and industry professionals with a master's degree. 58% of the lecturers of the Business Environment Administration Master's programme are elected.

Three lecturers are graduates of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, which shows that experience gained during studies is motivation to return to ViA and share the knowledge. Several study courses have several lecturers (Corporate and Public Finance, HR Development, Business Process Simulation Modelling, Project Management Strategies and Tools). Many study courses are implemented by the elected lecturers cooperating with guest lecturers. Many of them acquired education and gained experience in business and work abroad (USA, Republic of South Africa, UK, Germany, Sweden), which positively influence the content quality and teaching methodology. In this way, a balance is achieved between the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and its approbation, as well as current issues of the field are integrated in the study process. During the accreditation period the composition of the lecturers has not changed significantly, replacement of lecturers of individual courses is not related to the quality of teaching, but to the changes in the content of studies.

Currently, no changes are planned in the staff of the lecturers involved in the program, but by 2023 3 of the lecturers plan to defend their doctoral theses, thus the number of doctors working in the program will be increased to 10 doctors.

4.2. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

It is important to combine academic knowledge with practical experience, therefore the elected academic staff of ViA and guest lecturers with practical experience in the field are involved in the implementation of the study programme. The selection of the lecturers is based on the following criteria: the direction of scientific activity and previous research topics, the degree and qualification, competence and knowledge acquired in academic work (preparation of study courses) in the areas relevant to the content of the programme, also practical experience. Preference is given to lecturers with a Doctor's degree, a doctoral candidate status and to doctoral students. In order to participate in international research projects, mobility activities, lecturers need a sufficient level of foreign language skills (B2 level). Preference is given to lecturers who know English, the English language skills can be improved at ViA. In 2018-2019, a part of ViA elected lecturers is improving their foreign language skills by participating in the English language training sessions within the framework of the ESF project "Development of Academic Staff and Human Resources of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences" (SAM 8.2.2)".

The qualification of the dedicated staff involved in the program complies with Article 39 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. Professional study program academic staff requirements. The program employs 11 elected representatives of the academic staff, 5 of whom have a doctoral degree; 2-economics, 1-pedagogy; 1-physics, 1-law (45% of the academic staff involved), the rest have professional master's degrees: social sciences (economics and business), political science (public administration, administration and administration), computer science and informatics, humanities and arts, biology. One lecturer has two master's degrees, one has a master's degree in Sweden. 42% of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the program are guest lecturers, incl. 2 with a doctorate (in business administration and philosophy) and a professional education and degree obtained abroad (USA). Several lecturers involved in the implementation of the program have a degree in engineering, which ensures a wider integration of information technology in studies.

The lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme are recognized scientists, experts in the field of economics and management. Three lecturers are experts in economics and business administration at the Latvian Academy of Sciences (S. Rozentāle, M. Lešceviča), one lecturer is an expert in computer science and informatics, education science (A. Kapenieks), one is an expert in engineering and technology (S. Čakula). Two lecturers carry out accreditation and licensing expertise at the Quality Agency for Higher Education (S. Rozentāle, M. Lešceviča), four lecturers (S. Čakula, L. Melece, S. Rozentāle, M. Lešceviča) are members of promotion boards at the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies and Rēzekne Academy of Technologies.

The selection of guest lecturers is mainly determined by the recognition in the professional environment, practical experience in entrepreneurship in Latvia and abroad, thus it helps significantly ensure the connection with the latest developments in the field. Some guest lecturers are specialists in a particular field, for example, political science, communication sciences, law. During the reporting period, students had the opportunity to attend lectures by foreign guest

professors (Egypt, Albania, Belgium, Austria, etc.), an elective course in Global Marketing was taught by the US Professor within the framework of the Fulbright Scholarship.

Qualification of the academic staff, involvement in scientific research, international cooperation and work experience, combined with attracted guest lecturers - recognized professionals in their field with international experience and global view on theoretical and practical aspects of business management, ensure the achievement of program study results and goals.

In general, the qualification of lecturers, involvement in scientific work, knowledge of foreign languages, pedagogical experience meet the requirements necessary for the implementation of the professional master's program, incl. English.

Information on the involvement of academic staff in scientific research, both nationally and internationally, is available in *Part II, Section 4.4.* of the report.

4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).

4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.

Research activities within the BA study field are mainly organized through the ViA HESPI institute, where several lecturers – Prof. M. Rozentāle, Prof. M. Leščevica, lecturer Aigars Andersons – are elected. The lecturers involved in the study field align with the HESPI research direction “Sustainable economy and knowledge society”. Research interests of the BA study field are mainly related to the sub-directions *Development of national economy and regional governance, Human resources development and inclusive policy, Research of natural and cultural heritage*. Scientific topics cover aspects of national and regional economy, environment and governance. A. Andersons is a holder of a Master’s degree in social systems modelling, and therefore he represents also the

other direction of research – Sociotechnical systems modelling technologies, which is one of the research directions at the Socio-Technical Systems Engineering institute (SSII). A researcher, Professor S. Cakula, is elected to the SSII scientific council, and her research direction is *E-learning management and technologies*.

The BA study field is actively working on attracting new forces to research, including doctoral students, which are represented by a lecturer A. Andersons, who is writing his doctoral thesis “Integrated Service-Oriented Business Model in Digitally Transformable Ecosystems” within the ViA doctoral programme “Sociotechnical Systems Modelling”. The thematic directions of research projects of lecturer A. Andersons and Prof. S. Cakula are an example of how an interdisciplinary approach is implemented within the BA study field, and specifically within the BEA study programme, emphasizing the acquisition of digital skills and their integration into the study content. This is also confirmed by research of J. Kapustāns, a lecturer, who is an expert in politics, within the framework of doctoral studies in political science and inclusion of research results in the course *EU policy in business*.

Within the framework of HESPI, funding has also been attracted within the framework of several projects financed by Valmiera city local government grant programmes with a purpose to carry out research for the needs of the region. Lecturers participated in the following research projects “Possibilities and preconditions for attracting human resources (including talents) to the city of Valmiera. Development of population attraction strategy for Valmiera city” (2018-2019), “Demand for the study programmes offered by Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences and their compliance with the future labour market demand” (2016-2017). A very important project for Valmiera and the region is the project “Next Generation Micro Cities of Europe” (2018-2021), which is focused on research of Valmiera and Ventspils as regional economic centres to address common challenges in implementing urban development innovations. The above research project is a significant contribution to research of the socio-economic situation of the region and the labour market, as well as the research data and results are used to improve the study content in the business context of the region.

During the reporting period, the BEA lecturers have conducted a number of research projects commissioned by Vidzeme planning region, local governments, ministries, associations, deepening the understanding of the region economic and business development, as well as including the findings obtained in the study courses.

The BEA lecturers facilitate the flow of information and quality assurance of scientific activities, for example, by informing colleagues and students about experience gained at conferences on economic and business topicalities, and by presenting their research during HESPI research discussions.

The most significant activity for the BEA lecturers was participation in the sub-projects of the State research project ECOSOC LV (2015-2018): 5.2.2. Innovation and business development in Latvia in accordance with the smart specialization strategy (M. Leščevica and a BEA postgraduate student); 5.2.3. Latvian rural and regional development processes and opportunities in the context of knowledge economy (S. Rozentāle, undergraduate and postgraduate students).

Currently, M. Leščevica, in cooperation with the Institute of Agrarian Resources and Economics, is involved in the project “Challenges and Solutions of the Latvian State and Society in the International Context (INTERFRAME-LV)” (2018-2021) of the State research programme “Latvian Heritage and Future Challenges for National Sustainability”. In 2020, work was started on the project “Life with COVID-19: Assessment of overcoming the crisis caused by the corona virus in Latvia and proposals for steadiness of society in the future” (No. VPP-COVID-2020/1-0013 (S.Rozentāle)) of the State research programme.

Information on international scientific research projects is available in *Part II, Paragraph 4.3*.

During the reporting period, the representatives of ViA academic staff involved in the BEA study programme have written 102 scientific publications, the largest number was in 2017, which can be explained by the large number of lecturers involved in the State research programme ECOSOC LV. Lecturers have been involved in 37 different projects, most of which have been international projects. During the reporting period, representatives of the academic staff have participated in 58 conferences, which were mainly international.

Analyzing the research situation of the academic staff within the BEA study programme, it must be pointed out that there is a wide range of research topics, however, they are mainly related to the economy and business sector, regional economy and development issues in the context of global changes. It is important that postgraduate students are also involved in scientific research, the findings of research are integrated into the content of the study courses, teaching methods acquired while gaining international experience are applied in the study process, and the cooperation network established is used in the implementation of new research projects.

Information on the involvement of academic staff in scientific research, both nationally and internationally, is available in *Part II, Section 4.4* of the report.

Refer to the annex to the report for a list of scientific publications of the elected research staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes of the BA study field (see Annex 18).

4.6. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

Upon planning and implementing study courses, lecturers pay a lot of attention to planning individual and group work in such formats that would allow students to perfect or test the knowledge acquired through practical tasks – business simulation, modelling, strategic games – involving students from several study programmes, and the content of the task is jointly developed by the lecturers of several study courses. In this way, knowledge acquisition and approbation in an integrated way is enhanced. Experience gained during modelling and simulation of business situations is analyzed from different perspectives within several study courses. This approach is in line with the general tendency at the higher education institutions in Europe – to offer an integrated approach to the training of young professionals that addresses thinking, process management and operational activity level. The transfer of ideas, experience and teaching methods is also facilitated if several lecturers teach one course. Such an approach is also possible, if, during the implementation of the study courses, elected lecturers cooperate with the guest lecturers – professionals of the field, who create the content of the integrated tasks according to the latest development tendencies. In this way, a good balance is achieved between the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and its approbation, as well as current issues are integrated in the study process.

Within the BEA study program, study courses are implemented, which are taught by several lecturers (Human Resources Development, Business Process Simulation Modeling, Corporate and Public Finance, Project Management Strategies and Tools) - it promotes both lecturers' cooperation

learn with more interest and more successfully. Lecturers also meet in BA meetings, where issues of study content and process improvement are regularly reviewed. In the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic, lecturers communicate more actively on the WebEx platform. The EU structural fund projects SAM8.2.2 implemented by ViA, which organizes joint trainings for lecturers for the improvement of digital and pedagogical competence, as well as for the acquisition of English, make a great contribution to the improvement of mutual communication and the improvement of the study process.

As of 1 October 2020, there were 15 students and 19 lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme, of which 11 - academic staff.

Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	2P-Student-statistics-2010-2020-AIKA-BA-study-field.xlsx	2P-Studentu-statistika-2010-2020-AIKA-BV.xlsx
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	31P-BEA-compliance-education-standartd-edited-02012021.docx	31P-BVV-atbilstiba-VIS-LV-02012021.docx
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)	32P-BVV atbilstiba profesijas standartam-preciz-02012021.docx	32P-BEA compliance to prof occupation-edited-02012021.docx
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	24P-BV-BVV-Studiju-rezultatu-kartejums.2020.xlsx	24P-BV-BVV-Studiju-rezultatu-kartejums.2020.xlsx
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	33P-Study-progr-BEA-plan_3sem_4sem_edited-20122020.docx	33P-Stud.progr.BVV-plans_3sem_4sem_prec.20122020.docx
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	34P-BVV-kursu-apr.-BEA-course-discr.-30122020.zip	34P-BVV-kursu-apr.-BEA-course-discr.-30122020.zip
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	36P-Diploma-paraug-BVV.zip	36P-Diploma-paraug-BVV.zip
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	BVV_study-ensurance-agreement.doc	BVV_studiju nodrosinajums_ligums.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	35P-Studiju-liguma-paraug-BVV.docx	35P-Studiju-liguma-paraug-BVV.docx
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that 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 according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.	15P-BV_docetaju parskata tabula.edoc	15P-BV_docetaju parskata tabula.edoc
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education		
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	35P-Study-agreement-sample-BEA.docx	35P-Studiju-liguma-paraug-BVV.docx
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.		