

# Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Riga Building College

Study field: Arts

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

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The Expert Panel evaluated the Riga Building College's Arts study field and its single study programme Restoration (41211) as 'good' in the context that any identified deficiencies are insignificant and the study programme meets the requirements. The student-centred teaching and learning experience is appreciated by those highly-motivated students who progress to successfully conclude their studies. The Expert Panel identified many strengths in the study field through its single programme, recognising the significance of its contribution to capturing aspects of Latvian and European heritage that might otherwise be lost to future generations. Nevertheless, looking to current and future developments in national and international higher education the Expert Panel have identified some weaknesses, the significance of which will increase over time. Recommendations are made to assist RBC in reflecting on the future of this study field, especially in the context of RBC's institutional strength as a provider of education in the built environment.

The major positive aspects of the study field and its programme as currently managed and delivered are as follows. The study content is well structured and well distributed through general, practice-based and specific industry based internships. The teaching and learning is student-centred, with an individual approach based around a master and apprentice model. There are five study directions within the programme with the possibility to choose one specialisation. There is a collaborative structure for creating strategic policies, involving individuals and small groups working towards the common goal of quality enhancement. Ongoing professional development of teachers is based on a clear competency improvement plan. There is an effective network of local collaborators in the restoration industry covering different organisations, universities, institutes, companies and municipalities. Staff members are closely related to the industry and there are good possibilities for research activities connected with the market. Employers are highly satisfied with the alumni of the college.

Taking a longer term view, the emerging weaker points for which recommendations are made relate to the following aspects. A central issue relates to the strong practice-based studies. While this is a valuable part of the student experience, it poses the risk of insufficient focus on teaching the criteria of the context and general ethics of the profession. Equally, although applied research and a highly practical approach to studies can produce highly skilled professionals-craftsmen, it might not generate innovations within the industry and produce graduates with the attributes to be leaders in the higher levels of educating others and managing complex projects within the industry. This may be put in a national context of the lack of a clear national education policy in which to locate the long term vision for such a master-apprentice style of professional level programme. The programme faces challenges with decreasing student numbers and a lower status compared to other higher education institutions, which could affect its reputation and ability to attract students. Allied to this, the lack of a more targeted admission system can lead to an imbalance between the numbers graduating in particular specialisations and the needs of society and the market. Regarding quality assurance, the College's emphasis on statistical data might not accurately reflect the student experience or point out areas for development that might not be readily quantifiable. There is a threat to sustainability from the absence of a staff succession plan during generational change, which may lead to a significant loss of the specialist expertise required to develop the study field to a high standard in niche areas. A relatively low proportion (5.85% of the total expenditures) is allocated to the material and technical expenses of the study field's programme. International cooperation is not as strong as local due to lack of English language implementation in the study programme and the fact that this is only a first level higher education offering. Incoming and outgoing mobility is low.

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

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### **1.1 Management of the Study Field**

#### **Analysis**

1.1.1 There is only one study programme in the study field. The aims of the study field align with the mission of Riga Building College (RBC), in that it provides highly skilled professionals, through short cycle professional higher education, to meet the needs of society and the economy in respect of the specialisation of restoration (SAR p.4 and meetings with management and industry stakeholders). The aims are applicable to the needs of both the public and the private sector (SAR p.12 and meeting with management). However, the output number of graduates meeting the needs of society and the economy is not balanced. Graduates with niche skills meeting the needs of society sometimes found that oversupply led to their skills being restricted to use in a side job (SAR p.13) while industry voiced that there was an undersupply in respect of architecture restoration in the construction sector (meeting with industry stakeholders).

1.1.2 A SWOT analysis of RBC (SAR, p.16) has identified an ongoing need to develop modern study facilities and infrastructure. While this is embedded in the development plan (SAR Annex 1.1) the Expert Panel found an air of reality among stakeholders in the study field that ongoing limitations on financial resources will impede progress on this unless the resources for RBC as a whole are significantly increased (meetings with staff and students). Nevertheless the Expert Panel did not detect a loss of morale among the highly motivated students in their engagement with the study field in the current infrastructure (meetings with staff, students and tour of facilities). This may be related to an identified strength of RBC, in the strong representation of the student voice in RBC's governing Council and committees (SAR, p.6 and p.16).

The SWOT analysis also noted a weakness in respect of the lack of competition for advertised academic positions. The loss of staff who are specialists in the study field through generational change is a matter of concern for industry (meeting with employers).

An identified threat, echoing the findings of the previous evaluation of RBC, is the insufficiently grounded and unclear education policy on the place of colleges in higher education (SAR, p.17). Interestingly, this issue was also raised in the previous evaluation of this study field's only programme, in a report dated 27 November 2011 by the Experts of the International Evaluation Commission acting under a European Social Fund Project on evaluation of higher education programmes. It is difficult to see how this key issue can be meaningfully tackled by RBC alone in its development plan but it must be recognised as an inhibiting factor in the generation of ambition for the development of the study field beyond the status quo. In summary the factors controllable by RBC through its development planning process are such that the Expert Panel agrees with the assessment by RBC that "the strengths of the field of study prevail over the weak" and that its specific development plan (SAR Appendix 2.1.2) fully addresses issues under its control: quality, industry cooperation, national and international HEI collaborations, and strengthening of base assets (SAR, p.18). The wider issue of Latvia's future education policy, while outside of the direct management control of RBC, is of concern to the Expert Panel as it can be an inhibiting factor in generating a strong sense of ambition among the RBC community.

1.1.3 Structural units involved in the study process have clear responsibilities across the Director of Study Programme and the management of the Departments of Restoration, Study Department, International Relations, Management Department, Human Resources, Internship Department, supported also by the Library management and a Public Relations Officer (SAR, p.18, 19). The

strategic priorities and development strategy of RBC are growth-orientated in respect of the study field through an emphasis on developing professional qualifications through adult education (SAR, p.6). The development strategy of the College is naturally centred around its Architecture and Construction study field but the Expert Panel were satisfied that this was not being implemented to the disadvantage of the Arts study field (meetings with management, teaching staff, and students). The decision making is efficient in a management structure that is compact and student-centred with significant student representation in the governance structures (SAR, p.6 and meetings with management and staff). Support from administrative and technical staff is satisfactory, especially from I.T. support staff as the role of digital resources becomes ever more important in the study field (meeting with academic staff).

1.1.4 Admission has been impacted by the general demographic situation in the country. The number of students in the study field has declined from 81 to 31 during the evaluation period, a situation described as “beyond the control of the College” (SAR, p.5), due in part to a reduction in budget places. The entry requirement is a secondary education but RBC also recognises non-formal education (SAR, p.20). The Expert Panel learned that most admitted students had relevant prior learning and that this was recognised by RBC (meetings with students). Both the RBC and the National Cultural Heritage Board (NCHB) recognise the value of growing admissions through interdisciplinarity, especially with stronger ties between the two study fields of RBC (SAR, p.14). Thus a situation has arisen where the admission system is not as rigorous as it would be if the programme was oversubscribed by applicants. This is both a strength and a weakness. The strength is that it allows a highly student-centred approach to be taken on a case-by-case basis as teaching staff allow new students to experiment with courses before choosing their specialisation (meeting with students). The weakness is that limited financial resources are not being targeted to the needs of the market in respect of the construction industry (meeting with employers). The Expert Panel does not have a strong view on this as the graduates have an important role to play in preserving many aspects of Latvian heritage besides building architecture. Their specialist skills have a vital role to play in respect of the needs of society as much as to the needs of the construction economy.

1.1.5 Assessment of achievements are defined and relevance is assured through involvement of the NCHB (meeting with management). The RBC Council establishes the evaluation system of many specialisations in restoration that are not regulated by external legislation. These are numerous and RBC provides recommendatory evaluations without prejudice to the person’s right to provide services (SAR, p.12). The Expert Panel found that industry stakeholders identified a desire for greater investment in the development of restoration specialists in works of architecture, specifically growth in the number of qualified professionals in building restoration, but the value of educating specialists in niche areas, such as textiles, was not in any way dismissed (meeting with industry specialists). The principles and procedures for assessing achievements follow approved procedures and are publicly disseminated (SAR, p.21). Assessment of the diploma and applied research involves industry stakeholders. The integration of assessing achievements and relevance of assessment methods to graduate attributes was positively summarised by a statement that “RBC graduates think like a restorer” (meeting with industry stakeholders), reflecting RBC’s design of study programmes to encourage student-centred learning (meetings with stakeholders and tour of facilities).

1.1.6 Academic integrity is underpinned by RBC’s Code of Ethics and by RBC regulations (SAR, p.22). The College is part of a 19 member association using a unified plagiarism control system (SAR, p.21) underpinned by lectures to students on academic honesty by external speakers and members of the RBC staff. The technical, methodological and organisational elements are in place for effective anti-plagiarism checking, under the control of the librarian in charge. Cultural development is

underpinned by the “Code of Ethics of Riga Building College” and lectures to students on academic honesty by external speakers and members of the RBC staff.

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

The aims of the study field align with RBC’s mission to provide highly skilled professionals to meet the needs of society and the economy in both the public and private sector. The ethos of the study field’s only programme is commendably student-centred but this often leads to imbalance in the specialisation of graduates entering the job market. Graduates with niche skills meeting the needs of society sometimes found that oversupply led to their skills being used as a side job while industry voiced that there was an undersupply in respect of architectural restoration.

A SWOT analysis has informed the development plan, which is growth-orientated in respect of RBC’s role in developing professional qualifications through adult education. The SWOT analysis has identified an ongoing need to develop modern study facilities and infrastructure. Financial planning is however hampered by an identified threat which is largely outside the control of RBC to solve alone. That is the insufficiently grounded and unclear education policy on the place of colleges in higher education, an issue also raised in the previous evaluation of this study field’s only programme in a 2011 European Social Fund Project. This lack of national strategic direction translates into an inhibition on the part of RBC to be more ambitious in the development of the study field.

The Expert Panel found the students to be highly motivated. The supportive student-centred learning atmosphere is underpinned by strong representation of the student voice in RBC’s governing Council and committees.

The structure of the management team and the units involved in the study process have clear responsibilities. Decision making is efficient in a management structure that is compact and student-centred. The input of support staff is satisfactory, especially from I.T. support staff in respect of existing and emerging digital assets.

The admission system is functional but not as rigorously selective as would be required if the programme was oversubscribed by applicants. The number of students in the study field has more than halved since the last evaluation despite the fact that entry requirements are a secondary education and RBC also recognises non-formal education. Relevant prior learning is recognised and duly credited.

Assessment of achievements are defined and relevance is assured through involvement of the NCHB. Academic integrity is underpinned by in-house codes, regulations, and lectures, supported by a unified plagiarism control system in association with 18 other institutions.

#### **Strengths:**

1. Strong representation of the student voice in the College’s governance structures.

#### **Weaknesses:**

1. The absence of a staff succession plan during generational change may lead to a significant loss of specialist expertise to develop the study field to a high standard in niche areas.
2. Declining enrolment and status as the lowest level of higher education: The programme faces challenges with decreasing student numbers and a lower status compared to other higher education institutions, which could affect its reputation and ability to attract students. Allied to this, the lack of a more targeted admission system can lead to an imbalance between the numbers graduating in particular specialisations and the needs of society and the market, resulting in some graduates unable to achieve full-time employment in their specialisation while industry finds a shortage of graduates in the architecture restorer field.
3. The lack of a clear national education policy on the place of colleges in higher education makes financial planning difficult in respect of investment in the diverse specialisations of the study field

and stifles ambition for its development.

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

### **Analysis**

1.2.1. RBC has established a quality policy that is accessible to the public. This system is continuously evaluated and updated and comprises core, management, and support activities. Assurance of the study's process's quality is achieved through several actions:

Docents update and enhance study courses once a year. They also check students' progress and manage their academic debt four times a year (SAR p.24).

Self-evaluation of the study program is carried out once a year. This is done by the Director of Study Programs, presented to the Council for approval, and then it is posted on the College website. Internal audits are carried out to verify the application and viability of the processes mentioned. The College's lawyer is a member of the quality management team, which is headed by the College's quality manager. The system strives to guarantee openness and adherence to the legal framework. Overall, it is apparent that RBC is committed to ensuring the quality of its operations by having in place a thorough quality management system.

The Expert Panel found clear evidence of a collaborative structure in place for creating strategic policies (SAR p.6, meeting with staff and students). Different groups within the RBC have proposed ideas and suggestions for how the college programme can advance and evolve in the future. This inclusive approach involves individuals and small groups working together towards the common goal of improving the college's programmes (SAR p.23). The study programmes and study course programmes outline the expected learning outcomes, and students get familiar with the methods utilized for instruction, learning, and assessment. Students' workloads and advancement are often assessed. Procedures for student assessment are evaluated for efficacy. Once per academic year, a survey and evaluation of the learning environment's suitability is carried out. The inclusion of a competency improvement plan for teaching staff is also an important aspect of ensuring the quality of education at RBC (SAR p.102). This shows that the institution is invested in the ongoing professional development of their teachers, which can lead to better teaching practices and ultimately benefit the students. Overall, the Expert Panel found that RBC has a well-rounded approach to addressing insufficient grades and improving the quality of education (SAR p. 69). By involving all stakeholders and prioritising ongoing professional development, they are taking steps to ensure the effectiveness of their Internal Quality Assurance System.

1.2.2 RBC has a comprehensive quality assurance system in place to ensure that its study programmes are relevant and up to date. The internal audit process evaluates the knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired by students in relation to the requirements of the labour market in the restoration sector. The College regularly reviews and updates its study courses, checks student achievements, and conducts self-evaluations of its study programmes.

The development of new study programmes is based on principles such as relevance to the field of study, compliance with regulatory requirements, employment prospects for graduates, and integration into international research projects. The College consults with professional organizations and employers during the development process and involves academic and administrative staff in curriculum development. The introduction of new study programmes is motivated by labour market demand, and related study programmes in Europe and around the world are evaluated to inform the development process. Overall, RBC has formulated a well-designed system for ensuring the quality and relevance of its study programmes. RBC regularly reviews and analyses study and course programmes to ensure their relevance to the labour market. The quality assurance process includes updating courses annually, checking student achievement four times a year, and conducting a

yearly self-evaluation of the study programme (SAR p.26). Developing new study programmes is based on various factors, including relevance, resources, and compliance with regulatory requirements (SAR p.68). A working group of staff, employers, and professional representatives develops the programme, and experts assess related programmes worldwide. RBC addresses poor teacher evaluations through a process of evaluation, self-improvement, and resolution (SAR p.104).

1.2.3. The Regulations "Procedure for Submitting and Reviewing Proposals and Complaints of Riga Building College Students" outlines the steps for students to follow in case of conflicts or disagreements. The college encourages regular evaluation and consideration of students' complaints and suggestions to improve the college's development paths. Students can address their suggestions or complaints to their group curator, head of the concerned department, Deputy Director for Studies and Research, or the College Ethics Committee. (SAR p.26) The decision on the outcome of the complaint or proposal must be in writing and notified to the complainant within one month. A specific case involving a complaint about a lecturer's behaviour was analysed by the College. Despite the lecturer's expertise, conflicts and complaints led to the search for a replacement, and the course is now taught by a different lecturer. The College took steps to update the course curriculum, evaluation criteria, and communication with the students. Ultimately, the College aimed to maintain good relations with the students and ensure that they could meet their commitments before defending their thesis.

1.2.4. RBC collects and analyses statistical data in accordance with set regulations (SAR p.27). The main focus of their data collection is on the number of students enrolled and exmatriculated. The college also conducts surveys of students, employers, graduates, and academic staff to gather feedback on the study process, living conditions, administration activities, evaluation of lecturers, knowledge and skills acquired by students, job opportunities and study process administration work (SAR p.76). The results of these surveys are used to improve and add to the study programme, make changes to the content of individual study courses, and manage internships. In terms of quality assurance, the college conducts an annual self-evaluation of the field of study/programme, prepared by the director of the study programme and the head of the department, in cooperation with the self-evaluation committee of the field of study/programme (SAR p.22).

The college also places a strong emphasis on data protection principles and ensures that personal data is collected and processed only for specific, explicit, and legitimate purposes (SAR p.28) The college also takes appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure the protection of personal data against unauthorised or unlawful processing, accidental loss, damage, and destruction.

Finally, employees who have access to personal data are trained to handle it in accordance with the regulatory enactments, such as completing the Data Protection Training Course (SAR. p.28).

1.2.5 Information relevant to the study field is published in all languages used to implement the study programme and is identical to the information found in the official registers (VIIS and E-platform). This information is available to applicants and students.

The Head of the Study Department is responsible for entering information in the State Education Information System (VIIS) (SAR p.28). Directors of study programmes and public relations specialists are responsible for posting information on the website (SAR p.95). The ICT specialist is responsible for entering information into the E-platform, while another ICT specialist handles technical input of information on the college website. The HR specialist is responsible for updating the Register of Academic Staff (SAR p.28).

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

To guarantee the excellence and applicability of its study programmes, the Riga Building College has put in place a well-designed quality assurance system. This approach comprises periodic reviews and analyses of study and course plans, annual course updates, four-yearly assessments of student success, and a yearly self-evaluation of the study plan. The college also creates new study programmes based on criteria like relevance to the subject of study, adherence to legal standards, graduate employment prospects, and inclusion in global research initiatives. To better the College's development paths, students are encouraged to submit suggestions or grievances. The College analyses statistical data and conducts surveys of students, employers, graduates, and academic staff to collect feedback on the study process, living conditions, administrative activities, and evaluation of lecturers, student knowledge and skill development, employment opportunities, and administration of the educational process. Through a process of examination, self-improvement, and resolution, the College also takes action to resolve negative teacher evaluations.

#### Strengths

1. Riga Building College has a collaborative structure for creating strategic policies, involving individuals and small groups working towards the common goal of improving the college's programmes.
2. The College regularly reviews and updates study and course programmes to ensure their relevance to the labour market, with a quality assurance process that includes checking student achievement and conducting a yearly self-evaluation of the study programme.
3. Riga Building College is invested in the ongoing professional development of their teachers, with a competency improvement plan in place.
4. There is a clear division of responsibilities among the staff for entering and updating information in the State Education Information System, college website, and Register of Academic Staff.

#### Weaknesses

1. The effectiveness of the evaluation, self-improvement, and resolution procedure to resolve subpar instructor evaluations is not yet established in respect of measuring its impact on addressing student concerns and enhancing teaching quality.
2. Although crucial, the College's emphasis on statistical data might not accurately reflect the student experience or point out areas for development that might not be readily quantifiable. The College could gain by incorporating detailed input from students and other stakeholders to help with quality control.

### Assessment of the requirement [1]

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

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

The strategy's goals and directives, as well as collaboration with business and other relevant higher education institutions, are supported by the quality assurance system. The outcomes of qualification work (theses, diploma projects), as well as applied research, are routinely evaluated and analysed. Results are published on the RBC Moodle platform.(SAR p.6-11).

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

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

Study programme development involves a variety of stakeholders, including employers,



business associations, college professors, and others. Plans for internships in the programmes offer chances for hands-on learning. The College Council internalizes the approval of study plans. (SAR p.6-11, and meeting with the staff).

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study programmes have defined expected learning outcomes and are established in accordance with the College's strategic objectives. The College regularly assesses study programmes to make sure they are meeting their goals and the needs of both students and society.

With the participation of students, graduates, and industry representatives, programmes are assessed on a regular basis. Programmes are created, updated, and enhanced as a result. The results of the evaluation are published on RBC Moodle platform.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Riga Building College has an evaluation system that complies with government regulations. Clear criteria are used for grading, and students receive feedback. Grades are available on Moodle, and evaluation is regularly analysed. The Internal Regulations outline evaluation criteria and procedures. (SAR p.20,21).

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The College prioritises teacher competence with fair and transparent recruitment procedures. They support innovative teaching methods and technology use to help students develop their skills. The teachers are collaborating with many institutions in the restoration field. The student can complete an internship by working in restoration organizations, museums, archives, or libraries, improving the information and skills they have already learned while in school and gaining the necessary abilities and competencies. The teachers are developing their skills with ERASMUS possibilities abroad. Looking to the future, however, and further improvement it would be wise to create a staff succession plan (SAR p.44, 45, 54 and meeting with the staff and the representatives of institutions).

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

RBC collects statistical data on student enrolment and conducts surveys of students, graduates, employers, and academic staff to gather feedback. Results are used to improve study programmes, individual courses, and internships. The College conducts an annual self-evaluation of the field of study and programme to ensure quality assurance. (SAR p.27,28).

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

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

The College has a quality control system that is in line with their plan and incorporates business and other institutions of higher learning. They regularly assess and analyse qualifying work and the findings of applied research.

(SAR p.22,23).

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

### **Analysis**

1.3.1. The College has established a sufficiently effective system for determining and distributing the financial support required for the implementation of the study field and the corresponding study programme. According to the SAR p.29 the proportion of material and technical expenses for the study process, library is 5.85% of total. In addition to that there are extra resources being attracted for the material-technical base from EU projects and local projects from the Ministry of Education (SAR p.31 and meetings with management, the director of study field/programme and the academic staff). The most prominent example of the additional funding is the project according to a contract with the Central Financing and Contracting Agency for ERDF project "Modernisation of the laboratory for testing the properties of construction materials" (SAR p.31 and the laboratory seen on the tour of the facilities).

There is a procedure for analysis of the funding and available resources, it is carried out annually (SAR p.30). The management of the College meets with lecturers and directors of study programmes to discuss the results achieved during the previous academic year and to prioritise the needs of the study areas for the next phase. In the meetings with the director of study field/programme and the academic staff it was approved that the procedure is effective and discussions happen regularly, even 2-3 times per year.

There is a system for funding scientific and applied research for the academic staff members (SAR p.44-45, p.47-48 and interviews). The academic staff members mentioned the possibilities and being encouraged to participate in research projects, conferences and seminars, both local and international, as well as participating in international collaboration projects. There were mentioned international collaboration projects with Finland, Lithuania, Poland, Luxemburg, Germany, Austria, Spain, Hong Kong and others. The academic staff members confirmed the system for funding as effective. In the interviews academic staff, students, graduates all confirmed that also students are involved in research projects. The emphasis is more on the applied research, one form of which is the qualification work (diploma thesis). Every group in the interviews including employers confirmed the close collaboration with the industry.

1.3.2 The infrastructure resources and material and technical support necessary for the implementation of the study field/programme in general are sufficient. There are different levels of provision of material and technical resources (laboratory equipment, software, library resources) comparatively between different fields of restoration (natural and artificial stone materials / restoration of manuscripts, documents, books and other paper items / restoration of carpentry products / restoration of textile products), still the college has found ways to provide specific needs of all the fields. For example, students who have chosen paper restoration are taught material science, restoration technology and practice using the facilities of the National Archives of Latvia and the National Library of Latvia, this is done on the basis of cooperation agreements (SAR p.38 and meetings with all the stakeholders). Despite the relatively low percentage of investment (proportion of material and technical expenses for the study process, library is 5.85% of total) and uneven distribution between different fields all the stakeholders approved to be satisfied with this model.

The system for improvement and purchase of material methodological, informative, etc. provision is functioning. According to SAR, meetings with all stakeholders and tour of the facilities, resources (laboratory equipment, software, library resources) are available to students and teaching staff. The system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of material, methodological, informative provision seems to be working more in an informal manner due to relatively small number of students and close collaboration, individual approach, for example if a certain extra book is needed, it would be quickly arranged and provided (interviews with teaching staff and students).

1.3.3 The College has developed a system for the improvement and purchase of methodological and informative provision. All the stakeholders are highly satisfied with the available library resources and database availability, approved in interviews at all levels. The system for improvement of methodological and informative resources is a regular cooperation between the library and faculty staff and students (SAR p.40-42 and interviews with staff members). It could be beneficial to introduce more formal and standardized procedure to prevent possible cases of inequality due to better or worse individual relations and communication skills.

Both students and the academic staff find it sufficient and enough for reaching the study program goals, that the College does not subscribe to large databases, which require large funds, but makes maximum use of the resources offered by the National Library of Latvia, RTU, and the RBC library collection (SAR p.41-42 and interviews). Students also approved the usefulness of a seminar on "Information Searching in the NLL Resources" that is organised at the College with the participation of a consultant from the National Library of Latvia.

1.3.4 The information and communication technology solutions are being used effectively in the college. The Moodle platform is actively used by students and the academic staff. The information and communication technologies development expertise is well developed and corresponds to the different needs and levels of the users. Specific programs and tools for the restoration study field are being introduced and used by students, such as AutoCAD, Revit, building information modelling - BIM and more (SAR p.43 and interviews with the academic staff and students).

1.3.5 The College has defined, implemented and followed procedures (for the study field and the corresponding study programmes) for attracting qualified teaching staff. The procedure is clear and provides the college with the academic staff sufficiently (SAR p.43-44 and interviews with the management). RBC has developed regulations for selection and recruitment of lecturers, that ensure meeting the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. Advertising for vacant academic posts in an open competition, elections of academic staff by a secret ballot at a meeting of the College Council, option for the College Council to decide on not opening a competition instead recruiting guest docents or lecturers are reasonable measures and gives the college flexibility to react according to the needs and in the interests of the study process and quality.

During the meeting with the management it was pointed out that currently the college has a well-created team of teaching staff and guest lecturers: they are specialists, senior specialists, and most of them have PhD qualification. There is not currently a shortage of adequate and professional teaching staff, the average age of teaching staff being approximately 50 years. However, the salary in the college cannot compete with the industry (for full time position). The solution to this situation is in the hiring of guest lecturers. On one hand it is disadvantageous due to the workload and fragmentation, still on the other hand it is advantageous for bringing direct knowledge from industry.

1.3.6 The college provides adequate methods for determining, improving and evaluating the results of the professional and didactic development of the teaching staff (SAR p.44-45). The college has developed internal rules on set of criteria that is connected to remuneration, which motivates the

staff. In the meeting with the teaching staff they approved the questionnaires and surveys being carried out, the development courses being organised, opportunities for international experience exchange and conferences being provided. The results of the questionnaires about the development courses and other activities are being evaluated and taken into account for further action. Judging from the satisfaction rate of the students, graduates and employers, the measures taken by the college are effective (evidence from the persons participating in the interviews).

1.3.7 During the meeting with teaching staff, all the members participating agreed that the workload is balanced. The administrative load is not perceived as unfairly onerous. The participants were satisfied with the work of the Human Resource Department. The distribution of the workload presented in SAR. p.46 shows the balance. The combination of a relatively small number of students together with both students and teaching staff being enthusiasts of restoration could also play a role in the high satisfaction rate and a perception that the workload is balanced.

1.3.8 The college has a well-functioning support system to meet the needs of students. Students are supported in their studies by a curator and the Study Department that help both technically and psychologically, students with disabilities are ensured environmental accessibility (SAR p.46-47). This was acknowledged in the interviews by management, students and graduates. Concerning a question of assistance available - more in terms of intellectual and psychological assistance additional to physical help and environmental accessibility - the management pointed out the situation that the industry requires highly capable specialists and therefore the college is in position to satisfy it. The college is considering entrance exams to raise the threshold of admission requirements and to find even more motivated students. Judging from the meetings it must be mentioned that the student and college relations are based on an individual approach, making the process student-centred. The presence of the historic manner of master and apprentice can be felt and it must be beneficial for the students of restoration.

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

Resources and provision of the study field / programme are fully compliant with all the criteria and correspond to reaching the goal of educating LQF level 5 specialists with qualification "restorer".

#### **Strengths:**

1. Individual approach. Master and apprentice model. Student centred learning. (Relatively small number of students and both the students and the members of the teaching staff being enthusiasts of restoration).
2. High number of guest lecturers providing close connection with the industry.
3. Close collaboration with the industry, cooperation agreements with restoration institutions and organisations.

#### **Weaknesses:**

1. The relatively low proportion of the total expenditures of material and technical expenses for the study process and library is an insufficient investment in the material-technical base: The programme has received only 5.9% investment to achieve strategic goals, which may limit its ability to provide the necessary resources for effective teaching and learning.
2. The different levels of provision of material and technical resources (laboratory equipment, software, library resources) comparatively between different fields of restoration (natural and artificial stone materials / restoration of manuscripts, documents, books and other paper items / restoration of carpentry products / restoration of textile products).

## 1.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

### Analysis

1.4.1. The development goal of the RBC is “a modern, innovation- and growth-oriented, internationally renowned college of construction, architecture and restoration”, as well as the mission of the RBC is “to provide the construction sector with highly skilled professionals - the builders of a modern, people- and environment-friendly living” (SAR, p.4). Aligned with the goal and mission of the RBC, the study field “Arts” implements one first level professional higher education study programme “Restoration” (SAR, p.62) with the goal “to prepare specialists who meet the needs of the restoration industry, who are engaged in research, conservation and restoration of the technical condition and materials of cultural heritage, are able to independently plan, carry out and manage restoration work”.

Therefore, RBC has a strong emphasis on carrying out applied research and diploma projects as a practice of restoration, evident from the study programme’s subject descriptions, list of diploma projects, as well as in the provided possibilities to carry out practical research work in the programme’s laboratories, workshops and RBC’s partner institutions. The students are also fulfilling the requirement of conducting an internship of nine weeks within the RBC’s partner institutions (SAR, p. 76, 77, interviews).

The directions are aligned with the current demands of the industry (SAR, p.6, 12, 13, 70, interviews) and the standard of the profession (SAR, p.12), implementing five main directions of restoration (metal, wood, polychrome wood, stone, paper restoration) (SAR, p. 78, interviews). As the standard of the profession is oriented towards restoration of the objects and the study programme belongs to the study field “Arts”, the five main directions of restoration and their respective researches are oriented to the sector of restoring the artworks, as well as applied crafts objects. RBC has a strong link to the construction sector, and, as was evident from the Expert Panel’s conducted interviews, also provides skilled professions who are capable to work within the building industry. Nevertheless, evidence is clear (SAR, p. 14 and the conducted interviews) that the link to the construction and architecture sector is in need of a greater supply of highly educated specialists who can work with the complexity of the buildings. The Expert Panel found that this indicated the direction to strengthen.

1.4.2. The study process is organized into 1) general study courses, 2) industry training courses, 3) optional courses, 4) practice, 5) internships, 6) qualification work (SAR p.64, 72, 73). This structure, ranging from theory to practice, is carried out starting with the first year of three year studies. The variety of applied research and practical studios is carried out according to the specifics and knowledge at each.

1.4.3. International cooperation within the field of applied research is ensured through the EU Erasmus+ project, and another strategic partnership project is currently underway "Sustainable, High-Performance Building Solutions in Wood" (SAR p.49, 50). The Expert Panel found satisfactory evidence of involvement and knowledge of the respective connections (interviews with the teaching staff).

1.4.4. Research work of the RBC lecturers is oriented towards applied research (SAR p.50, 51). Priority directions of research work are related to specific study courses. RBC has ensured the equipment and space necessary for the corresponding courses as could be seen when the Expert Panel visited the facility, as well as ensured contracts with the partners that need restoration work, for example, collaboration with Rundāle Palace Museum (SAR, p.13). RBC has ensured mechanisms, both organizational and technical, for the involvement of the teaching staff in applied research and artistic creation. For example, involvement into research is addressed through Erasmus+ strategic

partnership projects (SAR p.49, 50, 51). Infrastructure and the material and technical provisions ensure technical grounding for carrying out the applied research (SAR, p. 31–39).

1.4.5 RBC has developed mechanisms for the involvement of the students in applied research and other practical tasks through internships and studio practices during all study years. For example, students have had internships with restoration specialists from Rundāle Palace Museum (SAR, p. 13, 17), or specialists working at Riga Brothers' Cemetery Complex restoration, in private restoration workshops, restoration workshops of museums, Latvian National Archives and Library (SAR, p. 73, 76).

1.4.6 The specifics of the restoration field is that each project is comparatively individual, and both staff and students need to look for new restoration technologies continuously (SAR, p.47 and interviews with the staff). The staff and the representatives from the employers field noted that it is impossible to know all the new solutions in the sector and emphasised the relevance of the general ethics and mode of thinking as restorers, and the need to be capable of finding the solution, technology and carrying out the research.

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

Overall, the study field “Arts” and its sole program “Restoration” is fully compliant with the requirement “Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the level of development of scientific research and artistic creation”. The study field “Arts” and its sole program “Restoration” have integrated applied research and practical studios at all levels of the studies. The process of carrying out the research complies with the needs defined within the industry and the RBC’s goals.

#### **Strengths:**

1. Range of five study directions within the programme with the possibility to choose one specialisation.
2. Applied research and practical tasks with the staff of RBC and the partner institutions are highly integrated within early stages of the studies.
3. The study process is individually tailored according to the specific direction which the student has chosen.
4. Individual study track for those with previous higher education experience.
5. Good possibilities for research activities of the teaching staff connected with the market.

#### **Weaknesses:**

1. Applied research and a highly practical approach to studies might produce highly skilled professionals-craftsmen, though it might not generate innovations within the industry, as well as professionals who can be leaders in the higher levels of educating others and managing complex projects within the industry. As such a goal is not currently specifically defined within the programme, this observation has suggestive character.
2. The process of international connections might be strengthened.
3. Motivation for teaching staff involved in applied research activities such as publications, could be strengthened.
4. High and immediate practical response to the needs of the restoration sector may not result in prognostics of further needs in the future.

### **Assessment of the requirement [2]**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

There is involvement by teaching staff and students in applied research targeted to develop innovative solutions and become leaders of the field in Latvia, although it is moderate.

## **1.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation**

### **Analysis**

1.5.1. RBC cooperates with the higher education institutions (HEI) of Latvia. During the site visit administration and academic staff members indicated their close relations with Riga Technical university (RTU) in terms of joint research and some of staff members are also employed in RTU. RTU also has signed an agreement with RBC that they will take Restoration students if the study field does not get accredited. Since this is a professional study programme employers and different organisations from the field are the biggest contributors and allies to the study field. During the site visit administration, staff and employers representatives in internship providers, such as restoration company "Restaurātors", organisation "Rīgas pieminekļu aģentūra", museum "Rundales pils muzejs", Latvian National Library, mentioned some individual workshops; company "RE&RE", church "Rīgas doma baznīca", Kuldīga municipality. All of the stakeholders during the visit indicated how important it is to give students opportunities to develop their skills in restoration during the internship. In some cases, employers are happy to take students during studies to teach them already from the beginning under supervision of restorator masters. As mentioned by employers in Latvia there are so many national heritage objects that need to be restored that there is a lack of specialists, and they are in great need. Such collaborations with the field and different organisations, companies are beneficial for the study field and development of the study programme. The study programme director also confirmed that they are developing a study programme based on the needs of industry. Employers also mentioned that after graduation students can go to international internships, for example to Romania, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, and they are encouraged to do so to raise their competencies in their speciality. Regarding Municipalities Kuldīga municipality was mentioned the most, but in general any municipality can be of interest in this study field to preserve and conserve some of its heritage. Students sometimes are involved in preservation of their hometown relics. During the visit of facilities students demonstrated for example spears from Limbazi city archaeological dig site. Such a variety of internship places and potential working places ensures that all skills learned during the study programme can be appropriately utilised. The cooperation partners are selected in view of the specific features in the study field "Arts" and they are relevant to the study programme Restoration. All of partners have contribution to the development of study programme that results in highest standards set for students in the field of restoration.

1.5.2. At first the Expert Panel would like to indicate that the study field is being implemented only in the Latvian language and as a full-time programme. Because of this aspect the Panel is aware that it is hard to establish good cooperation with HEI's and other organisations abroad. Nevertheless, during the site visit interviews different aspects of foreign connections were indicated and mentioned. For example, RBC has a good connection to Estonian restorators. They have been visiting each other and teaching new approaches to conservation of different materials. During the site visit college representatives mentioned that they are planning on joint projects among Austria, Finland, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia to create new methodological materials and also potentially a joint study programme. RBC has also put in the effort of creating a new restoration study programme with Kaunas university in Lithuania for Architectural restoration, but this project was

rejected because RBC can offer only first level higher education which is not equal to the bachelor level. The same reason is a limitation because students cannot attend ERASMUS+ mobility as freely as they would like, since this is a college level education and they cannot attend universities for practice. This also was supported by students and alumni during the site visit. One way to surpass this is by going on ERASMUS after graduation, which some students have done previously. They can go to a full time internship. In general students can attend international mobility. Incoming student mobility is limited due to the language barrier. But some cases of international students are reported (SAR, p.56). Academic staff members indicated that they also have possibilities to attend foreign workshops related to their restoration field to raise competencies and learn new approaches.

1.5.3 Currently there is no unified system for attracting foreign students or staff members. All connections from abroad are mostly based on previous collaboration or are contacts from ERASMUS+ network. Teaching staff mobility is mainly based on short term visits with the defined aim of learning a specific material preservation technique, rather than being viewed in a wider context of growing institutional partnerships. Nevertheless these outgoing mobility activities, carried out to date, have been beneficial for the development of the study field through its respective study programme. The lack of English language courses within 20% of allowed study course limit is undermining potential exchange. RBC could promote incoming mobility and make the teaching and learning experience more attractive for foreigners by introducing more study courses in the English language. Such an approach would surely help to develop connections with foreign partners and thereby promote greater teaching staff mobility. The Expert Panel sees this point as adequate at current levels, given the examples mentioned of foreign collaboration during the site visit and the fact that the study programme is a first level professional programme implemented only in Latvian language, but potential for greater mobility exists. During the site visit students mentioned examples how they are more often participating in post graduate ERASMUS+ programme. All stakeholders demonstrated overall knowledge about outgoing and incoming mobility opportunities within this study field.

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

The college cooperates strongly with the institutions from Latvia such as municipalities, enterprises, and different organisations. There is also indication of good collaboration with foreign partners, which are based on attempts of creating joint study programmes with different countries. Such collaboration can be considered beneficial within the framework of the study field, and such cooperation contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field and the relevant study programmes. The cooperation partners are selected in view of the specific features of the study field and the relevant study programme. Teaching staff and students participate in both outgoing and incoming mobility based on available opportunities.

Strengths.

1. Study programme alumni are highly appreciated among employers, different local organisations such as museums, archives etc.

Weaknesses.

1. Low outgoing teaching staff mobility.
2. Lack of English language courses within 20% of allowed study course limit is undermining potential exchange mobility for students and staff members.

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



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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

RBC is implementing cooperation with local and foreign partners, these collaborations are beneficial for the study programme and are aligned with aims of the study field.

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

### **Analysis**

The recommendations from a previous evaluation derive from a 2011 European Social Fund's (ESF) Project 'Evaluation of Higher Education Programmes and Suggestions for Quality Improvement'. No specific recommendations were made and it was concluded that the programme was highly sustainable, which presumably met the Evaluation Commission's brief. Nevertheless, the Evaluation Commission identified eight weaknesses which RBC has interpreted as a mix of formal and informal recommendations. Responses to six of the recommendations are set out in detail (SAR, Annex 3). Of the remaining weaknesses, one is external to RBC control ("insufficiently reasoned and unclear education policy on the place of college in the higher education system.") and the other is unintelligible and therefore cannot be framed into a recommendation ("Assessment of the learning outcomes is probably on down-on-earth-level as no verbal pollution is usually needed when target is universally understandable"). The Expert Panel concluded that RBC has fully responded to the weaknesses within the College's control, as follows:

1. Limited opportunity to continue studies. RBC's has responded to this weakness by negotiating an agreement with the Faculty of Materials Science and Applied Chemistry of Riga Technical University. This allows continuation of education of students of the RBC restoration study programme in the study programme "Materials Engineering". Programme comparison with the Academy of Arts continues.
2. Reduced financing for purchase of restoration programme literature. RBC has responded through acquisitions and agreements. In the period since the previous evaluation over 300 books on restoration and art have been acquired, most in English. An agreement has been signed with the National Library of Latvia to use the databases of eight major libraries.
3. Weak ERASMUS exchange. RBC has responded by concluding 36 bilateral agreements in 19 countries and there is evidence of these yielding results. Twenty five students of the restoration studies programme have taken up Erasmus+ opportunities through both studying and internships overseas. Lecturers of the study field have both lectured at partner universities abroad and gone on experience exchanges. Incoming mobility includes restoration programme students from Spain, Lithuania and Turkey.
4. Weak physical environment, especially in respect of ventilation. While it is acknowledged that further improvements are desirable, progress has been made. The fifth floor premises was renovated to make creative student-friendly spaces; the workshop for wooden furniture restoration was renovated; ventilation issues were resolved through extractor hoods, bactericidal lamp and a fume cupboard.
5. Insufficient state financing for regular renewal of the material and technical base. Modern material preparation and material properties inspection and testing equipment was purchased.
6. Poor foreign language fluency, lack of study materials in English available in the library. Lecturers have improved their command of English, guest lecturers have lectured in English, 187 books in English have been acquired by the library since the last evaluation.

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

RBC did not have a specific set of formal recommendations to address from an evaluation of sustainability that was conducted in 2011, the last evaluation. Nevertheless the weaknesses reported were adopted as semi-formal recommendations and fully addressed where control was in the hands of the College. A weakness regarding unclear education policy regarding the place of colleges in higher education remains an issue but is not fully in the control of RBC to address. The matter was raised in Section 1.1, where an ongoing weakness is noted and a recommendation is included in Section 1.7 and so the weakness is not repeated here.

Strengths:

1. Proactive engagement with all shortcomings highlighted in the ESF Project Report despite no formal recommendations being listed for improvement at institutional or programme levels.

#### **Assessment of the requirement [4]**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The previous evaluation (in 2011) was under a different system, covering an evaluation of the study programme. Nevertheless the Expert Panel are satisfied with RBC's response to the commentary in respect of the Study Field, having read SAR Annex 3 and discussions in meetings with both management and staff.

#### **1.7. Recommendations for the Study Field**

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

1. A review of societal and market needs should be carried out to quantify the approximate number of graduates required to meet national and European demand for each specialisation in the study field and the admission system should then be redesigned to transparently align admitted applicants on merit with these needs through evaluation of the necessity of introducing entrance exams.
2. The College should seek greater long-term vision from the Ministry on the national education policy in respect the place of colleges in higher education and develop its strategic priorities based on this vision, which may or may not alter its current trajectory in respect of the study field, especially in the context of its ambitions for growing adult education.
3. Consider assessing the impact of the teaching quality enhancement process by measuring the effectiveness of the last stage in the quality loop – feedback to students and relevant staff – to ensure that current practice is optimal in closing off concerns raised regarding subpar performance.

##### **Long-term recommendations**

1. The development plan should more strongly address the issue of staff succession planning, in collaboration with industry through raising the prestige of the profession, to address the threat to the study field from loss of specialist expertise during generational change.

|   |
|---|
| 2. Seeks ways of supplementing the quantitative (statistical) data in the quality control system with qualitative input from students and other stakeholders to further develop the quality enhancement aspect of the quality assurance process.  |
| 3. Evaluate the possibilities of raising the proportion (5.85 % of the total expenditures now) of material and technical expenses for the study process, library or attracting additional financial resources for resources.  |
| 4. Balancing the different levels of provision of material and technical resources (laboratory equipment, software, library resources) comparatively between different fields of restoration. Providing more for the lacking ones - restoration of manuscripts, documents, books and other paper items / restoration of textile products. |
| 5. Reconsider the strategic goals of the programme and subsequently the content of the studies in order to strengthen education of leaders of the restoration industry in Latvia, moving away from an over-emphasis on producing highly skilled professionals-craftsmen.  |
| 6. Generate innovations within the field of restoration in Latvia by strengthening international cooperations.  |
| 7. The study field should find ways of endorsing research related activities and support system for teaching staff involved in scientific research activities.  |
| 8. Endorse mechanisms to encourage outgoing teaching staff mobility, as well as joint tailored projects.  |
| 9. The study field should allocate more resources to strengthen the research output in the study field in order to envision the further needs of the field and related industries.  |
| 10. Consider creating some study courses in the English language, so the study programme could become more attractive to foreign students.  |

## II - "Restoration" ASSESSMENT

### II - "Restoration" ASSESSMENT

#### 2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

2.1.1. According to the classification of Latvian education (the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 322, 13.06.2017) Study programme "Restoration" 41211 is under the Visual Plastic arts field. In this classification study programme also complies with study field Arts. The study programme contents regarding renovation and maintenance of monuments are also in compliance with the study field.

2.1.2 First level professional study programme "Restoration" with code 41211 is only full-time programme implemented in Latvian language for 3 years (6 semesters) awarding 120 credit points (CP) or equivalent of 180 ECTS. Latvian language as an implementation language is reasonable and justified with local needs of the industry. Students after successful graduation of the programme obtain qualification "Restorator". The study programme aims to develop necessary skills to conserve, preserve and restore cultural heritage in different variations. The main objective of the study programme is to prepare specialists who comply with professional standard and can work independently in the industry. Results after the study programme are to demonstrate a comprehensive and specialised knowledge and perform practical tasks in the profession in an

analytical manner (SAR page 62-63). Such interrelation between aim, objective and results is reasonable, logical and is supported by overall information provided about the study programme. Since this is a first level professional study programme enrolment requirement to have Secondary school education is also reasonable and allows to achieve study programme goal – to prepare highly skilled, new specialists in restoration.

2.1.3 The College has indicated that they have taken into account alumni and stakeholder opinion and suggestions for study programme improvements and about future direction of the study programme. To meet the needs of employers some new subjects, such as Chemistry of Material studies have been introduced. Few study courses have changed their name, to make subjects more precise or to bring new knowledge to students. The Expert Panel found that all changes made to the study programme have been analysed and discussed among stakeholders. Changes are justified and this has allowed RBC to modernise the study programme in accordance to the needs of industry (SAR page 64-65).

2.1.4 The study programme has a very strong social justification background. The graduates conserve and preserve Latvian cultural heritage and are doing a most important task in maintaining cultural heritage. However the low profile is such that this important work is not always noticed. Restorers are part of the construction sector which is the seventh largest employment sector. Also there is an abundance of specialisations for restorators – textile, architectural, paper etc. (SAR section 3.1.3. page 70). The current dynamic of students in the study programme is at steady decline, looking at the previous accreditation period more than 50% decrease comparing year 2013/2014 (81 student) to year 2022/2023 (31 student). Such changes are caused by decreased support of state funded places and also due to COVID-19 pandemic. Another alarming trend is that more than 50% of enrolled students do not graduate from the study programme and the biggest drop out of students is in first year (SAR page 5). A strategy to raise the student number in the study programme needs to be planned and implemented in the coming years. During the site visit administration members mentioned that they are considering creating an admission examination for the enrolment. Such an approach indeed can decrease potential dropout rate. Since this programme is in a unique position that trains restorators for different materials – wood, glass, rock etc. than it is advisable to advertise opportunities of this education more. This also can attract potential students to the programme. RBC does not have overall data about restoration graduates and their workplaces, but they are informed that college alumni can be found in different jobs: state, municipal or privately sponsored companies, restoration workshops, construction sites. During the site visit almost all alumni indicated that they are working directly in the field, so that is a good indication. During the site visit employers also supported the statement that new restorators are needed in the industry and there are a lot of job opportunities.

2.1.5 N/A

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

The study programme is generally compliant with the study field and provides a unique opportunity for students to acquire the qualification of restorator. Aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme are interrelated and compliant with study field arts. All the changes made to the study programme are based on renewal of the profession standard and are reasonable. The study programme covers a wide variety of different skills and competencies stated in the profession standard. Study programme graduates are needed and supported from industry to maintain and ensure the future of Latvian national heritage. Although the study programme graduates are highly demanded in the labour market, the interest in study programme is decreasing and it reflects as a

loss of more than 50% of enrolled students during the last nine year period. Procedures to raise awareness about the study programme and the restoration career needs to be carried out.

Strengths.

1. Study programme has a unique position in Latvia by providing different options to specialise working with different materials.

Weaknesses.

1. Student numbers are gradually decreasing each year.

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

### **Analysis**

2.2.1 The content of the study programme is relevant to the needs of the industry (SAR, p. 11-16). The relevance of the study programme and its five directions was also confirmed by the representatives of the related institutions and employers. Although the National Cultural Heritage Board has not carried out the market research and forecasts for restoration from the Arts sector, the survey of its leading workers revealed the main needs and directions of the industry. The representatives of the related institutions and employers confirmed that they are consulted for continuous updating of the study courses.

The study programme was altered by the new standard of the profession "restorer", dated 15.12.2021. According to the new professional standard, there is a greater emphasis on the object restoration than architectural restoration (SAR, 64). Though the construction sector requires emphasis on building restorers and architect-restorers (SAR, 14), the current programme is designed to meet the needs on object restoration in the field of Arts. The programme short and long-term aims, as well as the study courses are targeted towards the criteria specified in the standard and needs of the industry. For example, the five study directions follow the needs of the industry - metal, wood, polychrome wood, stone, paper (SAR, p. 12, 13, 14). The National Cultural Heritage Board has not carried out market research and forecasts for restoration from the Arts sector, though the institution lists the areas where restoration is needed and establishes a system for the evaluation of the qualifications of specialists in restoration specialties not regulated by external legislation (SAR, p. 12, 13).

As follows from SAR, p. 64, 72, 73, the study process is organised into 1) general study courses, 2) industry training courses, 3) optional courses, 4) practice, 5) internships, 6) qualification work. This structure, ranging from theory to practice, is carried out starting with the first year of three year studies, ensuring that in each study year corresponding level and amount of general subjects and practice studios are carried out. The programme's content is well proportioned between general courses and specialization courses and thus provides a basic education in the specialty on which the specialisation is based (SAR, 72). By choosing one specialization, the students also receive all the requirements specified in the professional standard through general courses. The relevance of the general courses was also emphasized by the representatives of the industry during the experts' visit. Difference of specialization is related to the specifics of the material (metal, wood, polychrome wood, stone, paper).

The structure of the programme, the study courses, as well as the system of evaluation of students' knowledge, skills and abilities complies with the requirements of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia (Cabinet Regulations No 141 "Regulations on the State Standard of First Level Professional Higher Education" (20.03.2001) (SAR, p. 20, 64, 72, 73).

The study course descriptions provide detailed account related to the study courses.

2.2.2 N/A

2.2.3 The study programme is implemented with student-centred learning in mind both at strategic goal level, as well as in the study course organisation. Student-centred education strategies could be evidenced through the interviews with the students, each confirming that the RBC is always open for the dialog to find individual approaches to the specific interest or research of the restoration field. The practice-based approach to the study courses in relation to the general study courses directs towards the goal of the programme and the standard of the profession to educate skilled professional craftsmen. The approach can also be named master-student or master-apprentice centred learning, thus ensuring strong connection to the practical work to the related market sectors. Difference of specialization is related to the specifics of the chosen material (metal, wood, polychrome wood, stone, paper). The students are encouraged to try working with all the materials during the first study year, eventually choosing one direction to specialize in (SAR, 74, 75).

2.2.4 The students are fulfilling the requirement of conducting the internship of nine weeks within the RBC's partner institutions (SAR, p. 76, 77, interviews). As follows from SAR, p. 64, 72, 73, the study process is organised into 1) general study courses, 2) industry training courses, 3) optional courses, 4) practice, 5) internships, 6) qualification work. This structure, ranging from theory to practice, is carried out starting with the first year of three year studies. The employers during the interviews confirmed that it is valuable for the related institutions to involve students in their work from early stages of studies. The employer and the provider of the internship construct the master-student or master-apprentice centred learning. The tasks of the internship are related to the learning outcome of the chosen study direction or specific study course. The Expert Panel determined that the internship complies with the requirements of the programme (SAR, p. 72-74). and contracts with the institutions (SAR, p. 76-78), based on documentation provided with detailed account on the structure and content of the internships.

2.2.5 N/A

2.2.6 SAR, p. 79 states that at the end of the study programme "Restoration", qualification work is developed – applied research and diploma project (restoration work). In applied research, students conduct research on a topic related to the preservation of cultural heritage, in the diploma project (restoration work), students, under the guidance of a qualified restorer, develop a restoration programme for an object and carry out its restoration. SAR, p. 79-94, surveys the themes of the diploma projects which evidence the main directions of the restoration programme.

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

Overall, the study field "Arts" and its sole program "Restoration" is fully compliant with the requirement "The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof". The study field "Arts" and its sole program "Restoration" have well integrated and coherent study content, as well as sequence of the subjects. The process of carrying out the studies complies with the needs defined within the industry and the RBC's goals.

#### **Strengths:**

1. The structure of the study content is well structured and well distributed through general, practice-based and specific industry based internships.
2. Strong master-apprentice tradition.
3. Strong possibility to tailor the study curriculum to the specific restoration work or direction.

#### **Weaknesses:**

1. Having strong practice based studies is a risk of insufficient focus on context and general ethics of

teaching the criteria of the profession.

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

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

Not applicable

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

### **Analysis**

2.3.1 The general information about the system for resources and provision of the study field/programme established, implemented and the effectivity of it is included in Section 1.3 of this report.

The study provision, informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision generally comply with specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme. The library includes relevant resources offered by the National Library of Latvia, RTU, and the RBC library collection, Open Research Library, subscriptions to periodicals – all of which provide conditions for the implementation of the study programme (SAR p.96-97). In the tour of the facilities the Expert Panel inspected the library and the separate book repository and reading room for restoration programme students. Material and technical provision in the premises of the college and according to cooperation agreements with of the National Archives of Latvia, the National Library of Latvia and other institutions from the industry provides specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme. Computer applications and software provides a flexible and student-oriented environment (SAR p.96), it was found true by the experts in site visit both proved by interviews and tour of the facilities.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. The funding available to the study programme, funding sources and the use of funding ensures full implementation of the study process. The study programme is financed by the state budget subsidy and its own revenues, as well as foreign financial assistance and other services (SAR p.29, p.100 and interviews with the management). Extra resources are attracted by funding of the State Culture Capital Foundation (SCCF) (SAR p.100-101). The base cost per student determined by state is met in the college (SAR p.100). The minimal number of students is not defined by the college due to the variable number of fee-paying students (SAR p.101). The profitability of the study programme is ensured, costs per student are covered by the state budget grants and tuition fees. The funding available and facilitation of the development of the study programme is an open question. The existing funding ensures full implementation of the study process for now and the nearest future. Still the development for long run would require a significant rise in funding available, for example for needs of additional premises or development of workshop rooms for more fields of restoration.

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

Resources and provision of the study programme are fully compliant with all the criteria and correspond to reaching the goal of educating LQF level 5 specialists with qualification “restorer”. The college has managed to find compensating mechanisms for attracting financial resources, providing

specific needs of all the fields and attracting qualified teaching staff, for now. The question stands about the sustainability of this model.

Strength:

1. Given that there is only one study programme in the study field, the strengths identified in Section 1.3 of this report are applicable to this section also.

Weaknesses:

1. Given that there is only one study programme in the study field, the weaknesses identified in Section 1.3 of this report are applicable to this section also.

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

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Resources and provision of the study programme are fully compliant with all the criteria and correspond to reaching the goal of educating LQF level 5 specialists with qualification “restorer”. The college has managed to find compensating mechanisms for attracting financial resources, providing specific needs of all the fields and attracting qualified teaching staff, for now. The question stands about the sustainability of this model. (SAR p.28-47, 95-106 and meetings with all the stakeholders).

## **2.4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

2.4.1 Overall, the review provides a clear overview of the teaching staff involved in the "Restoration" study program, their qualifications, and their use of modern technologies in the learning process. The study program for the academic year 2022–2023 is being carried out by 18 academic staff members, including 8 docents, 3 lecturers, 18 guest lecturers, and 4 assistants. In the annex, paragraph 2.3.7, a list of teaching staff and guest lecturers is provided, together with information about their credentials and the courses they teach. Additionally attached to this sentence are CVs in the Europass format for academic personnel and guest lecturers. Involved in the educational process are also visiting professors from Latvia and beyond. The main method used to bring in guest professors from outside is Erasmus+ inbound mobility. The study plan includes the lectures of an Estonian guest professor who is here with us. The criteria 2.5.2 and 2.5.3 of Chapter 3 of The Study Field Self-Assessment Report's second section. The academic staff for the academic year 2022–2023 is made up of 5 specialists in the subject and bachelor's degree holders (16% of all lecturers), 18 lecturers with master's degrees (58% of all lecturers), and 8 lecturers with doctoral degrees (26% of all lecturers). (SAR p.102). Potential disadvantage is that not all teaching staff members are open to working with modern technologies, which could limit the use of digital tools and resources in the learning process. However, the engagement of guest lecturers and institutions related to the preservation of cultural heritage is a strength of the program, as it provides students with a diverse range of perspectives and experiences (SAR p. 54). Additionally, the use of the e-study system Moodle is beneficial for communication and coordination between faculty and students (SAR p.43). Overall, while there are some potential areas for improvement, the "Restoration" study program appears to have a qualified and dedicated teaching staff that is committed to providing a quality learning experience for students. The Expert Panel came to this conclusion after the individual



meetings with groups of teachers and students.

2.4.2 The recruitment of new teaching staff has improved the quality of studies and allowed students to acquire more specific, professional knowledge and skills. However, some disadvantages may include the loss of experienced teaching staff who retired and a potential lack of continuity and consistency in teaching methods (SAR p.102). The evaluation of the performance of teachers is carried out systematically by an internal quality evaluation committee, based on several criteria such as conducting applied research, participation in seminars and professional development courses, creative work and publications, advice for Erasmus students, and participation in industry-related bodies (SAR. p.103). Overall, the passage suggests that efforts are being made to improve the quality of the Restoration study program by incorporating new teaching staff, reorganising courses, and evaluating the performance of teachers (SAR p.104). The average age of the academic staff in the academic year 2022/2023 is 50 years.

2.4.3 N/A

2.4.4 Overall, the data suggests that different academic personnel have focused on different areas of academic pursuit, and there is variation in the level of activity and engagement in different areas among the personnel listed. This is logical due according to the different segments of the applied research in the restoration field. (Annex 2.4.4-Mācībspēku\_publicācijas\_EN.docx).

2.4.5 The lecturers who teach in the restoration program are involved in developing and implementing the course, ensuring that science and practice are integrated. They suggest topics to be added to study courses and contribute to the quality of study courses through mutual cooperation. Meetings are organised by the Department of Restoration and the RBC to discuss various issues, including reviewing test materials, accepting qualification works, and developing practice tasks and reports. Lifelong learning seminars and exchanging new ideas in teaching and research are ways in which cooperation is fostered between teaching staff (SAR p.105). RBK organises vocational training courses and educational tours to restoration-related sites, involving teachers from other departments. The teaching staff also participate in seminars, conferences, workshops, and professional trips organised by various organisations to increase their qualification. The ratio of teaching staff to students in the academic year 2021/2022 is 1:1.

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

According to the assessment of the "Restoration" study programme, the teachers are knowledgeable and dedicated to giving students a high-quality education. The use of contemporary technologies may have some room for improvement, though, and the departure of competent teachers may have an impact on consistency and continuity. The programme is being improved by adding additional teaching personnel and assessing educator performance, among other things. In order to advance their education, the lecturers plan and implement courses as well as take part in professional development programmes, seminars, and practical training.

Strengths:

1. The teaching staff is qualified and dedicated to providing a quality learning experience for students.
2. The engagement of guest lecturers and institutions related to the preservation of cultural heritage provides students with a diverse range of perspectives and experiences.
3. The use of the e-study system Moodle is beneficial for communication and coordination between faculty and students.

4. Efforts are being made to improve the quality of the Restoration study program by incorporating new teaching staff, reorganising courses, and evaluating the performance of teachers.

Weaknesses:

1. Not all teaching staff members are open to working with modern technologies, which could limit the use of digital tools and resources in the learning process.
2. The loss of experienced teaching staff who retired may lead to a lack of continuity and consistency in teaching methods.

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

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The performance of teachers is evaluated systematically by an internal committee based on criteria such as conducting applied research, participating in professional development activities, publishing creative work, advising Erasmus students, organising study tours and workshops, and participating in industry-related organisations. (SAR p.102 - 104, meeting with the College teaching staff , Annex: 2.3.7. List of teaching staff Restoration.xlsx).

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

### **Requirements**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

RBC has provided a detailed document in Annex 6 (Compliance of the study programme "Restoration" with the State education standard). This annex provides proof of the Study programme "Restoration" 41211 compliance with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation of 20 March 2001 No.141 "Regulations regarding the State Standard for the First Level Professional Higher Education".

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study programme complies with a valid professional standard of "Restaurator" approved with protocol No. 7 to the Coordinated Tripartite Cooperation Subcouncil on Vocational Education and Employment at its meeting on 15 December 2021. (<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-197.pdf>) Successful finishing of study programme allows to obtain this qualification. See Annex 7.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study programme implementation language is Latvian. Study course descriptions are prepared in Latvian and English languages. Study course descriptions are well prepared and comply with requirements set in Law of Higher education institutions. Additionally it is advisable that the study course literature is renewed on an annual basis and is not older than 10 years. See in Annex 10.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Diploma complies with requirements set in Cabinet of Ministers Regulation of 16 April 2013 No.202 "Order how state recognised higher education documents are issued". But the Diploma supplement is outdated and needs to be renewed. If RBC can provide the renewed diploma supplement by the time of the Study Quality Commission meeting this criteria can be changed to fully compliant.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

Not applicable

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

Not applicable

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

Not applicable

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

RBC has provided an electronically signed declaration, stating that the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Restauration" 41211 are proficient in the Latvian language in accordance with the state regulations. Letter No. 01-9/140e signed on 2nd December 2022.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

Not applicable

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study agreement is fully compliant with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 46, paragraph 2 and regulations of Cabinet of Ministers 23.01.2007. to Regulation No. 70 "Mandatory regulations to be included in the study agreement" (Annex 2.4.1.Study Agreements examples).

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

RBC has provided confirmation (Mutual agreement) Registration No. 01000-4.1.-e/39, with Riga Technical university that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in professional Bachelor level study programme "Material engineering" if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. In long term it is advisable that college find another study programme of the same level where students could continue their studies. This issue is not significant enough to decrease evaluation of this requirement to partially compliant.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

RBC has provided the document - Refund and Compensation Policy Statement, No. 01-9/139e signed on 2nd December of 2022), which confirms that the students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked due to the actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

Not applicable.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

Not applicable.

## Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

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

Study programme meets requirements set forth in the Law of Higher Education Institutions and other regulatory attachments. Note that the diploma supplement provided from the College is currently outdated, however it can be easily updated according to regulations and the Expert Panel take the view that it therefore does not negatively affect overall compliance of the criteria.

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

It is concluded that the study programme meets the requirements. No specific deficiencies were found that need to be addressed in the short term. The structure of the study content is well structured and well distributed through general, practice-based and specific industry based internships. The teaching and learning is student-centred, with an individual approach based around a master and apprentice model. This is supported by close collaboration with the industry, especially cooperation agreements with restoration institutions and organisations.

The Expert Panel would however comment on a number of longer term issues that need to be considered in the context of this programme being the sole offering in the study field. The first point relates to the strong practice-based studies. While this is a valuable part of the student experience, it poses the risk of insufficient focus on teaching the criteria of the context and general ethics of the profession. Equally, although applied research and a highly practical approach to studies can produce highly skilled professionals-craftsmen, it might not generate innovations within the industry and produce graduates with the attributes to be leaders in the higher levels of educating others and managing complex projects within the industry. This may be put in a national context of the lack of a clear national education policy in which to locate the long term vision for such a master-apprentice style of professional level programme. Indeed there is even a threat to the status quo from the absence of a staff succession plan during generational change, which may lead to a significant loss of specialist expertise to develop the study field to a high standard in niche areas. Greater direction is needed at national level, from which future educational and resourcing plans can be built. Such clarity would allow better financial planning across the two study fields of RBC where, for example, a relatively low proportion (5.85% of the total expenditures) is allocated to the material and technical expenses of this study field's programme. Greater national direction would also address a current imbalance between the numbers graduating in particular specialisations and the needs of society and the market by prompting the possible need for more competitive entry to certain specialisations.

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

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

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

### **Short-term recommendations**

1. Update the diploma supplement according to Cabinet of Ministers Regulation 202.

## Long-term recommendations

1. Evaluate the necessity of introducing entrance exams.
2. Reconsider the strategic goals of the study programme and subsequently the content of the studies to endorse the status of the profession, as the standard of the profession has also endorsed the position of the profession itself within the current economical scheme in Latvia.
3. Recommend teaching staff to take use of training or professional development opportunities to become more familiar with and comfortable using contemporary technologies, enabling more efficient use of digital tools and resources in the learning process.
4. Ensure that the expertise and skills of departing teaching staff are transferred to new staff members and to maintain continuity and consistency in teaching approaches, the programme should take into consideration developing a mentorship or knowledge transfer programme.

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

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

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

| Requirements   | Requirement Evaluation |  | Comment   |
|--|------------------------|--|---|
| R1 - Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 2.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing its internal quality assurance system: | Fully compliant        |  | The strategy's goals and directives, as well as collaboration with business and other relevant higher education institutions, are supported by the quality assurance system. The outcomes of qualification work (theses, diploma projects), as well as applied research, are routinely evaluated and analysed. Results are published on the RBC Moodle platform.(SAR p.6-11). |
| R2 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the level of development of scientific research and artistic creation (if applicable)  | Fully compliant        |  | There is involvement by teaching staff and students in applied research targeted to develop innovative solutions and become leaders of the field in Latvia, although it is moderate.  |
| R3 - The cooperation implemented within the study field with various Latvian and foreign organizations ensures the achievement of the aims of the study field.   | Fully compliant        |  | RBC is implementing cooperation with local and foreign partners, these collaborations are beneficial for the study programme and are aligned with aims of the study field.  |

| <b>Requirements</b>  | <b>Requirement Evaluation</b> |  |  | <b>Comment</b>  |
|--|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| R4 - Elimination of deficiencies and shortcomings identified in the previous assessment of the study field, if any, or implementation of the recommendations provided. | Fully compliant               |  |  | The previous evaluation (in 2011) was under a different system, covering an evaluation of the study programme. Nevertheless the Expert Panel are satisfied with RBC's response to the commentary in respect of the Study Field, having read SAR Annex 3 and discussions in meetings with both management and staff. |

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

| <b>No.</b> | <b>Study programme</b> | <b>R5</b>    | <b>R6</b>       | <b>R7</b>       | <b>R8</b>       | <b>Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)</b> |
|------------|------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| 1          | Restoration (41211)    | Not relevant | Fully compliant | Fully compliant | Fully compliant | Good  |

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

None