Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Latvian Academy of Culture agency "Latvian College of Culture at the Latvian Academy of Culture"

Study field: Management, Administration and Management of Real Property

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Summary Assessment of the Study Field

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Latvian Academy of Culture agency "Latvian College of Culture at the Latvian Academy of Culture" (hereinafter - College) is an educational institution under the supervision of the Latvian Academy of Culture, which provides post-secondary education with the opportunity to obtain first-level professional higher education and fourth-level professional qualification. The College is a state institution founded on September 30, 2002 and is under the authority of the Ministry of Culture.

The study field "Management, Administration and Management of Real Property" has one study programme "Management of Art Institutions".

The Ministry of Culture has set that the main goal of the College is to provide the local and regional cultural institutions with highly professional specialists. Also, the employers emphasize the need for such specialists and the excellent employment rates of graduates serve as proof for that. The study field meets the needs and the development trends of the society and the national economy. There is a strong emphasis on the development of creativity and soft-skills in the study process.

The College has extensive collaboration with higher education institutions (especially with Latvian Academy of Culture), public cultural institutions and agencies, as well as municipalities, but also with cultural organizations belonging to civil society and private ones. It is important that this cooperation network covers all regions of Latvia.

However, the development plan of the study field for the next period is still under preparation and it is unclear what is going to be the main focus of the study field in the future. The challenge for the next strategy is to define the future employer of the graduates as the prestige of the regional cultural centers has decreased in the eyes of the students.

The college and study direction management is aware of the standards set forth in Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The quality policy has been developed according to the ESG. All the parties involved in the study process are well informed about the internal quality assurance system. There is a high level of trust in the system and parties involved see it as an effective way to improve the study process. The college has implemented an individual approach to students that provides the necessary support during the study process. The heads of specializations work as the mentors that not only help the students to integrate into the college, but also support them and give advice for their further development.

However, there is a lack of a final step in the loop regarding the feedback given back to the students. During the site visit, students also pointed out that they would like to have more detailed feedback after their traineeships, especially about the first one.

There is no system established for financing scientific research and/or artistic creation activities. That has surely affected the inconsistent results in this area. The academic staff lacks the motivation to develop their scientific research profiles. Their artistic achievements are not related to College. Although teachers are selected for their experience in art practices, it would be important to offer them also possibilities for further continuous professional development outside of artistic project-making. For those teaching arts, development programmes should be offered in the field of artistic research (the concept developed by ELIA (European League of the Institute for the Arts, Amsterdam) and systematized as Florence principles and Vienna paper); for those teaching management and entrepreneurship, programmes in research methodology; and for both groups programmes in teaching methods. There is also a potential for student involvement not only in practical operational work in order to gain as many skills as possible (as it was said: being just a TV operator would not be enough), but to include them in a research process by integrating elements of research methods in the study programme (marketing and audience development for example), and implementing the research as part of the practice-based studies.

As the College is professionally oriented, the teaching staff represents various professional fields within creative industries. Among them are the leading creative professionals in the country. They

are enthusiastic about their work at the College and feel supported and appreciated. However, there is a lack of consistent professional development plans. For example, professionals don't always have the necessary pedagogical skills. There is no established system that would ease their integration in the College. There is a need for a systemic approach to foster professional and didactic development. Some members of the teaching staff take part in mobility programmes. In recent years there have been successful projects implemented in collaboration with higher education institutions in Bulgaria, Mexico and others.

There are 107 state-funded places, which provide a steady income for the College. However, the number of paying students has decreased significantly in recent years (333 in 2013/2014, only 106 in 2019/2020), which means that the College might face challenges to maintain financial sustainability in the future.

The necessary infrastructure resources, material, and technical provisions required for the implementation of the study field are available for the College and the students and the teaching staff have access to them. The College has started to improve its e-learning resources and process, Moodle was introduced in March 2020. There is a possibility to develop it further, not only as storage of documentation but with possibilities for interaction. Students acknowledged that College quickly adapted to the new circumstances that were caused by the Covid-19 and the study process online has been organized smoothly.

The "Management of Art Institutions" is a first-level professional higher education study programme, the length of programme and amount is 5 semesters, 100 CP (150 ECTS) as full-time intramural studies, 6 semesters 100 CP (150 ECTS) as part-time intramural studies.

The study programme has been divided into several specialisations (Part C 50 CP) in the curricula: performing arts, music management, fashion and design management, photo and video production, multimedia production, and technical production of events. The amount of specialisations is high considering the number of students. There is no systemic approach established to ensure the same quality standards among specialisations. Some of the specialisations focus more on developing management skills (for example, music management), some focus more on artistic development (for example, performing arts). As the qualification awarded is the same for all specialisations, there is a risk of inconsistency.

The content of the specialisations is different, but the qualification awarded is the same for all specialisations (Cultural manager in the self-evaluation report, during the site visit experts were informed that the College plans to change the qualification to a Specialist in cultural affairs). The study programme has been aligned to the professional standard "Specialist in cultural affairs" that was approved on 12th August 2020 and is up to date. This standard is applicable to level 5 of the Latvian Education Classification (college education).

The name of the study programme "Management of Art Institutions" could be misleading because the programme lasts only 2-3 years and is not a bachelor study programme. It can be also asked, does the study programme provide sufficient competences to work as a manager of art institutions.

1. Management of the Study Field

Analysis

In general, the study field complies with the main directions of the strategic development of the College with an emphasis on the development of a high-quality education process and supply oriented to the needs of the cultural and creative industries market. The current development plan of the study field (2016-2020) complies with the Development Strategy of Latvia 2030, the National development plan of Latvia for 2014-2020, and other public policy framework documents. The study

field meets the needs and the development trends of the society and the national economy. There is a strong emphasis on the development of creativity and soft-skills in the study process. The Ministry of Culture, which is the governing institution of the College, has set that the main goal of the College is to provide the local and regional cultural institutions with highly professional specialists. This goal corresponds with the national policy of culture, which emphasizes the importance of the development of regional cultural institutions and creative industries in general. Also, the employers emphasize the need for such specialists and the excellent employment rates of graduates (92 % of all graduates from 2016-2018 are employed, 70% of all employed graduates work in the cultural sector) serve as proof for that.

However, the development plan of the study field for the next period is still under preparation and it is unclear what is going to be the main focus of the study field in the future. During the site visit the management of the study field explained that they will focus on STEM and design thinking approaches in the study process. The management has plans to introduce technology-mediated learning, 3D games skills, and other skills that will help students to work in a virtual environment. At the same time, it was visible that not all members of administrative and academic staff were familiar with the new vision. Also, the management acknowledged that they are not sure about the place of the College in the higher education system in Latvia due to possible legislative changes. There is an on-going process of negotiation with the Ministry of Culture. Also, the challenge for the next strategy is to define the future employer of the graduates as the prestige of the regional cultural centres has decreased in the eyes of the students.

One study programme - "Management of Art Institutions", is included in the study field. The structure of the management of the study field is quite complicated as there is a programme director (in some documents provided to the expert group referred to as - Head of Culture Management Department) and heads of specializations (in some cases even two heads in one specialization). There is a risk of too many decision-makers. At the same time, the decision-making process seems to be efficient, all parties involved are satisfied. During the site visit, the complicated structure was explained with the focus on a student-oriented system, where individual mentoring has been chosen as the main approach. The programme director and heads of specializations are supported by professional administrative and technical staff. As the college is quite small there is a strong team spirit and mutual respect and understanding.

The College has established a system for the admission of students that includes the results of compulsory centralised examinations (Latvian, foreign language, and as of 2020 - mathematics), and an additional requirement - interview, in which potential students present a prepared portfolio of creative works. It is possible to recognize previously acquired formal education and professional experience. To evaluate the achievements and learning outcomes of the students there is a system developed that includes regular student and academic/administrative staff surveys and also individual consultations with students in order to get a deeper understanding of their needs.

The stakeholders are aware of the concept of plagiarism. Effective detection tools are used and the internal culture of the higher education institution emphasizes the importance of academic integrity. There is also a clear procedure set if the principles of academic integrity have been breached. This applies to all the stakeholders.

In general, the information published on the website of the college regarding the study field complies with the information available in the official registers. However, some facts are outdated, for example, December 31st is stated as the end date of the accreditation although according to the regulatory framework that was affected by Covid-19 the term has been prolonged until June 30th,

2021. Also, the information is only available in Latvian. The English version of the website only provides general information about the College.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The study field meets the needs and the development trends of the society and the national economy. There is a strong focus on the development of creativity and soft skills. The employment rate of graduates is really high, which proves the need from the labour market.

There is a well-established system for admission and it is possible to recognize previously acquired formal education and professional experience.

Recently some important changes in the management structure and administrative staff have been made to improve the quality of the study field. However, the structure is still quite complicated with many decision-makers involved.

Although there is a general vision of the future for the study field, there is no detailed study field strategy developed for the next period and it is obvious that it currently affects the effectiveness. The management of the field acknowledged the uncertain situation regarding the general situation with college-level education in Latvia. Also, the Ministry of Culture has not set future goals for the College. The strategy development process has been affected by Covid-19. However, it should be a top priority for the college to proceed with the development of the strategy.

Strengths:
1. Compliance with the needs and the development trends of the society and the national economy.
2. High demand for graduates in the labour market, excellent employment rates.
3. Well established admission procedure.
4. Recognition of previous education and/or experience.

Weaknesses:
1. The development strategy of the study direction for the next period is not finished.
2. There are many decision-makers within a small institution, which causes a risk of non-effective management system. At the same time, the structure serves the needs of the students as it provides an individual approach.

2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

The College has established a quality policy, which is publicly available on their website. In the study field "Management, Administration and Management of Real Property" the internal quality assurance system is based on the College's quality policy and internal regulatory procedures.

The following factors are defined as crucial for the system to be effective:
1. There are set requirements for professional qualification and pedagogical experience in order to attract highly qualified academic staff
2. Lecturers are involved in the evaluation of study processes
3. The study programme director collaborates closely with employers and professional organizations to update the content of the studies.
4. There is an established system to receive feedback from students and lecturers regarding the study process. Once a year a student and lecturer surveys are conducted. There are also yearly graduate surveys and candidate surveys conducted in the College.

All the parties involved in the study process are well informed about the system. There is a high

level of trust in the system and parties involved see it as an effective way to improve the study process. The study programme director carefully reviews the results of the surveys and together with heads of specializations improvements are planned in the study process. Also, regular consultations with employers and professional organizations take place. Recently after the recommendations received from the employers, some important changes have been made in the study process. For example, the specialization "Lightning design" was transformed into a broader specialization "Technical production", which corresponds with the current trends and needs of the labour market. Qualification exam is regarded as an essential part of the system as representatives of the labour market are invited to evaluate the students. Afterwards, the results are discussed in methodological commissions.

However, there is a lack of a final step in the loop regarding the feedback given back to the students. Academic and administrative staff are informed about the results of the surveys and consultations with 3rd parties, but students don't receive this information. During the site visit, students also pointed out that they would like to have more detailed feedback after their traineeships, especially about the first one. Currently, the students only submit written reports but a discussion with other students and academic staff would be appreciated. There is also a lack of a formal system that defines how the results are used to improve the study process, and how the process is later monitored. More often informal methods such as conversations with academic staff are conducted.

The regulatory document "Latvian Academy of Culture Agency "Latvian College of Culture at the Latvian Academy of Culture" Procedure for the Development, Approval, and Updating of Study Programmes" has been developed. It states that a new study programme must carry out external expertise, involving three professionals working in the sector. Changes to an existing programme also require the views of industry employers. Only after the external opinion is gathered the changes can be approved by the Board of the College. Also, the study process is annually evaluated in self-assessment reports. Self-assessment reports are analysed by the College Board and approved by the Senate of Latvian Academy of Culture (hereinafter - LKA). Overall, the system is efficient.

The college and study direction management is aware of the standards set forth in Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The quality policy has been developed according to the ESG. There are set regulations (i.e. requirements for teaching staff, clear procedure of student admission, recognition and certification among other) and well designed internal processes (i.e. practices of student-centered approach), that involve all the parties. However, with some of the standards there are still challenges that the College faces, i.e. scholarly activity and professional development of teaching staff.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

There is a well developed quality assurance policy in the College with regular assessments done by students, graduates, academic staff, administrative staff and representatives of the labour market. In general all the parties involved are satisfied with the processes and there is a mutual trust in the effectiveness of the system.

Strengths:
1. Well established quality assurance system.
2. All the parties involved are satisfied with the quality assurance system.
3. High degree of involvement of representatives of the labour market.

Weaknesses:
1. The results of surveys are not reported back to the students.
2. Students are not sufficiently informed about the actions taken based on the survey results.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

The College has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study field. On the basis of the estimates made, the cost per student is EUR 1927.00. In addition, the College has attracted funding from other sources, so the actual cost per student in 2019 was EUR 1400.00. There are 107 state-funded places, which provide a steady income for the College. However, the number of paying students has decreased significantly in recent years (333 in 2013/2014, only 106 in 2019/2020), which means that the College might face challenges to maintain financial sustainability in the future. There is no system established for financing scientific research and/or artistic creation activities. That has surely affected the inconsistent results in this area. The academic staff lacks the motivation to develop their scientific research profiles. Their artistic achievements are not related to College.

The necessary infrastructure resources, material, and technical provisions required for the implementation of the study field are available for the College and the students and the teaching staff have access to them. There are two newly renovated computer labs with high-quality equipment that are equipped with the necessary software.

There are about 8000 units in the College library. There is access to digital databases, i.e. Lursoft. Also, the College collaborates with the Latvian Academy of Culture. The focus of the library is to provide students with resources that are specific to their specializations and can't be found in public libraries in Latvia. The facilities of the library are user-friendly. Resources are divided into thematic sections, they are easy to find. There is enough space for on-site learning, computers are available for studying. A high-quality copier-scanner is available to students. Books are given on loan to students.

There is a stage with the necessary sound, lighting, and multimedia equipment available to students. Although students would like to have access to the lightning equipment of the newer generation, the overall satisfaction with stage resources is high. There is also one additional black-box room available to students, which can be used for smaller events or rehearsals. On the upper floor, there is an open area available to students and staff, which is developed to foster creative processes. For the academic staff, there is no separate room available. However, there is enough space with separate desks in the office of the study programme director.

The biggest challenge for the College regarding resources is the maintenance of the building, which is state-owned. It is quite run down and although College has invested as much as they can in development of the premises, there is a strong need for a clear strategy of how this building will be maintained and developed. For example, currently it is not accessible for students with disabilities.

The College has started to improve its e-learning resources and process. Moodle was introduced in 2017 and upgraded version with interactive tools was introduced in March 2020. As interactive tools were introduced recently academic staff still needs practice to succesfully use them in their study course profiles. Also, other digital learning tools like Zoom and Microsoft Teams were mentioned. Those were introduced during the lockdown caused by Covid-19. Students acknowledged that College quickly adapted to the new circumstances that were caused by the Covid-19 and the study process online has been organized smoothly.

There is a system developed to attract highly skilled teaching staff. As the College is professionally oriented, the teaching staff represents various professional fields within creative industries. Among

them are the leading creative professionals in the country. They are enthusiastic about their work at the College and feel supported and appreciated. However, there is a lack of consistent professional development plans. For example, professionals don't always have the necessary pedagogical skills. There is no established system that would ease their integration in the College. There is a need for a systemic approach to foster professional and didactic development. Also, only some members of the teaching staff are motivated enough to carry out their scientific research. Although the College is professionally oriented there is a lack of strategy to improve the research. Some members of the teaching staff take part in mobility programmes. In recent years there have been successful projects implemented in collaboration with higher education institutions in Bulgaria, Mexico and others. Of course, that has added great value to the study process and the study quality.

The college has implemented an individual approach to students that provides the necessary support during the study process. The heads of specializations work as the mentors that not only help the students to integrate into the college, but also support them and give advice for their further development. Also, since the beginning of studies, first-year students work closely together with senior students and that also provides them with an additional support. The programme director provides the necessary support during the traineeships and development of the qualification project.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

State funded sites are always filled, but there is a decreasing number of paying students, which means that there might be limited opportunities for development in the future. There is no established system for financing scientific work and/or artistic creation.

In general, the necessary infrastructure for successful study process is provided. However, there are challenges with the building as it is not owned by the College (it is state-owned) and the future for the development of the premises is unclear.

The College has started to actively use Moodle in the study process. However, the quality of study course materials provided in the system is not consistent and generally only basic features of the system are used with no usage of interactivity. At the same time global pandemic has fastened the processes of learning digital skills among the teaching staff.

There is a system developed to attract professional teaching staff. Recently some important developments have been made in this direction. At the same time there is a lack of systemic approach when it comes to development of pedagogical and didactic skills of academic staff. The level of these skills is uneven. Some members of the academic staff participate in mobility on a regular basis.

The College has chosen mentoring as the most effective method in order to satisfy students needs. During the site visit it was evident that students are very satisfied with this approach.

Strengths:
1. State-funded sites and additional funding provide a good basis for financial stability.
2. Students appreciate the highly professional teaching staff that is motivated to develop their professional skills.
3. Students and graduates emphasize the high degree of individual approach (mentoring) in the study process.
4. The technical resources of the college are well developed.
5. The study process hasn't been interrupted due to Covid-19. The state of emergency has actually fostered the development of digital skills of teaching staff.

Weaknesses:
1. The decreasing number of paying students might cause a risk of financial stability and limit the

possibilities of development.

2. The technical condition of the building is quite poor. Although the college has tried to do some repairs, there are still many areas that are run down. Also, the building is not accessible for persons with disabilities. There is a strong need for a clear strategy that should be developed by owner of the building in collaboration with the College and Ministry of Culture.

3. The e-learning system was upgraded with interactive tools in March 2020, which means that the academic staff lacks practice. Currently, Moodle is mainly used for the upload of information and there is a lack of usage of interactive tools and a wide spectrum of tools available in the system.

4. There is a non-consistent approach to didactic development. The teaching staff is not motivated to do scientific research or artistic creation. Mostly their artistic achievements are not related to the college and they are not supported in any way.

4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

As the expectations for a college are different from the ones of a university, most of the teachers do not participate in scientific research, but have extensive practical activities and participate in artistic creation. It is clear that teachers are practitioners exactly in those fields that are taught at the College and that students appreciate their professional competence, and often participate in those creative projects. However, management as such is an applied scientific discipline, and it demands that professors should also be research practitioners, to be able to use different methodological skills, for example, strategic analysis methods, creation of feasibility studies, different audience research approaches, impact studies, etc. (the methods used the most within cultural management as an applied discipline).

In the self-evaluation report, it was stated that there is a number of directions where the scientific research and artistic creation in College is carried out, for example, "research of trends in the development of the cultural sector, the consumption of cultural products, digitalization of cultural heritage and opportunities for the acquisition of new technologies; analysis of operating environment and capabilities of small business and non-governmental organisations in culture, recreational and creative industries". However the accent is put on "artistic creation, and latest innovations", on creative project conceptualization and realization.

Thus, there is a place for improvement. Although teachers are selected for their experience in art practices, it would be important to offer them also possibilities for further continuous professional development outside of artistic project-making. For those teaching arts, development programmes should be offered in the field of artistic research (the concept developed by ELIA (European League of the Institute for the Arts, Amsterdam) and systematized as Florence principles and Vienna paper); for those teaching management and entrepreneurship, programmes in research methodology; and for both groups programmes in teaching methods. For example, the Academy might offer workshops, stimulate the creation of research working groups that would involve colleagues who haven't been involved before, even transdisciplinary groups, connecting professors of various disciplines.

The internationalization in all these domains is very weak (the only systematic cooperation that was mentioned was with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), maybe also due to the lack of English language usage that is a sine qua non of European and wider international communication today. International collaboration can be enhanced only if the College would join some of the adequate European networks: ENCATC (European Network for Cultural Administration Training Centers, Brussels) or ELIA. Both networks offer a wide area of "learning tools", workshops, conferences,

online seminars, student festivals, student congresses, etc. ENCATC is also publishing several periodical publications that would offer excellent opportunities for teachers to present their work, but also to read the achievements of colleagues.

The importance of publications in professional journals, not only academic, should be more underlined, as that would stimulate creating and codifying knowledge that is gained through practice.

The College has not developed systemic mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research (due to the lack of finances for conferences, paper publications, translation, etc), except through Erasmus+ projects that are mostly linked to digitalization. The implementation of Erasmus+ KA2 project DigiCult (Digital presentation and preservation of intangible cultural heritage) is developed in cooperation with the Free University of Burgas (Bulgaria) and the Latvian Ethnographic Outdoor Museum. "Given the importance of the Digital Agenda of the Europe 2020 Strategy for digitization and accessibility of cultural products, the College intends to continue practical research on the creation of and access to digital collections", that is an important task that might enhance wider and more theoretical research in digital humanities.

There is also a potential for student involvement not only in practical operational work in order to gain as many skills as possible (as it was said: being just a TV operator would not be enough), but to include them in a research process by integrating elements of research methods in the study programme (marketing and audience development for example), and implementing the research as part of the practice-based studies. Or, involving students in research done by the teaching staff, or in their artistic research process. Research-based learning is lacking, while practice-based learning, as well as project-based learning, that are the most important forms of learning at a college-level education are dominant and very well developed forms of learning. The staff has critically self-evaluated the possibilities of a college to do this, as "1st level professional higher education (2.5 years) is too short for students to fully acquire the academic skills required for scientific research work". However, it is stated that through an individualized approach to the most talented students, staff succeeds in finding ways to motivate them to participate in various research activities.

Specifically important was the conference (in 2014) whose aim was to promote the interest of future cultural managers in research processes and to show that research is practicable in cultural management in different sectors. Students developed interdisciplinary projects, created exhibition concepts, media products – newspaper or video clips, as well as songs, video clips on topics of their research interests. It is clear that emphasis was put more on project-making than on research, but that might be justified with a fact that more than half of students are studying art and design practices, not management.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Most of the teachers are art and cultural practitioners involved in artistic creation processes, involving students in different aspects of cultural project management, as well as in the production and artistic creation processes, depending on their specialization. The research, both scientific and artistic, is not in the first plan, although an interdisciplinary approach in the research of the possible uses of digitalization in culture, especially the new one - DigiCult, represents a new positive tendency in this domain, developed within Erasmus + program with an international component. Thus, it might relate to all study directions and involve more teaching staff in (transdisciplinary) research (that necessarily involves both those teachers with scientific and artistic backgrounds), as well as students.

Strengths:

1.The staff has a quite important artistic (creative) and professional practice.
2. Professional practice helps teaching staff to develop further, according to quick changes in cultural production technologies, and to integrate these newly gained skills in a teaching process.
3. The artistic and professional practice of staff is relevant for the study programme.
4. Professors of some study directions have relevant international research and art practice connections.
5.The students are involved in different phases of the artistic creation process during 4 internship periods as well as in practical creative projects.
6.There is a huge emphasis on teamwork and team creativity in conceptualization and implementation of students projects that leads to different and innovative programs inside and outside the college, with different partners, specifically in the fields of fashion ("Meringue"), stage art ("Bibliosmija"), production of cultural events ("Staro Riga"), Management of art institutions (partnership with Univ. Library in implementing projects), etc.
7.There is an attempt to offer more to the most ambitious and talented students regarding the scientific and creative research process.

Weaknesses:

1.Only a few members of the staff are involved in artistic or scientific research (mostly in the field of digitalization, information and new technologies).
2.No publications in peer-reviewed journals.
3.No institutional or personal involvement in international academic networks: European Network in Cultural Management and Policy (ENCATC), European League of the Institute for the Arts (ELIA), Association of Art Administration Educators (AAAE), etc.
4.No personal involvement in international professional associations for specific fields (i.e. International Organisation of. Scenographers Theatre Architects and Technicians - OISTAT)
5.The staff has some personal international connections, but no systemic approach from college.
6.Low level of English language speaking skills.
7.Low level of participation in international conferences and seminars.
8.A small number of publications in international journals (neither academic nor professional).

5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

The College has a well-developed and widespread local partner network that serves the development of the study field and the relevant study programme.

The experts underline especially the College's collaboration with the LKA, whose professors regularly are members of the qualification committee evaluating students' final works and papers, the students can attend courses at the LKA (and vice versa). The cooperation with the LKA is practical - there are joint students' projects when students of the College support LKA students' performances with technical production, light, and sound design. This voluntary work of the College students forms as well the first stage of their informal practice. Though, the College management regrets that they do not have cooperation with the LKA at the programme level, and expresses the hope that the new LKA programme "Creative Industries" could provide possibilities for cooperation in this field as well.

Cooperation with other educational institutions includes good relations with higher education institutions (EKA, RISEBA, ISMA, and others) providing bachelor's degrees. The corresponding study

programmes of the education institutions are comparable that allows transferring the College courses of the students getting enrolled in bachelor programmes, thus the College graduates can enter the later semesters of the bachelor programmes and complete them in shorter time taking into account the College level already accomplished. There are some successful cases of cooperation with secondary schools, developing a new collaboration model of "creative industry classes", which is important as secondary school graduates still are the main target group of the colleges.

The College has extensive collaboration with public cultural institutions and agencies, as well as municipalities, but also with cultural organizations belonging to civil society and private ones. It is important that this cooperation network covers all regions of Latvia. The College management emphasizes that the main employer is the Ministry of Culture and the system of municipal culture centres all over Latvia. The first traineeships of the College students have to be in the municipal culture centres, so this cooperation is being strengthened.

Especially important is the cooperation with employers and employers' organizations that allows the College to offer a range of possibilities to students for their internships and to realize practical projects. But collaboration with industry is also the learning process for professors ("we are following news in the industry - that is how we learn new things"). The field trips to the employers' organizations are a regular part of the study process. According to mutual agreements, the College students can use the technical resources of the partner organizations, for example, practical classes are held in Daile Theatre, Radio 5, Radio SWH, TV 24. The employers during the interviews expressed appreciation for the cooperation and the long-term contracts with the College regarding traineeships. An idea was expressed by the employers that, as a form of cooperation, there could be short training courses offered for the current employees of creative enterprises about the innovations and novelties in the field. As well, the employers are ready to co-finance students' projects.

The cooperation partners are well selected, and already today numerous alumni serve as a link between the College and the industry. Sometimes, alumni are invited to lecture, to transmit their new gained knowledge from practice to new generations of students. The representatives of the industry that the experts had spoken with, had highly appreciated students' energy, motivation, and skills.

Internationalisation is an important direction for the development of the College. The partner network with higher education institutions abroad is developing based on Erasmus+ project partnerships, both academic and research (Bulgaria, Georgia, Israel, Lithuania, Macedonia, and others). Active participation in the projects has allowed increasing teachers' and students' mobility (more for training and visit exchange, than for research). Though, the knowledge of the English language is a barrier that doesn't allow even more teachers to participate in international activities.

The partners from the Baltic region are few: Klaipeda university and college in Šiauliai (Lithuania) and Viljandi college (Estonia). There is an objective obstacle to enhance international collaboration, the fact that in most of the EU countries former "Hochschule" and Polytechnics had been transformed to universities, thus their students can not come here for the Erasmus exchange, as it would be considered inappropriate due to mismatch of the programme level, and also, universities are not stimulated to collaborate on a strategic level (strategic partnerships) with colleges. It is also the reason why it is difficult to find partners for the possible development of joint study programmes on the same - college level. The College should look for international partners of the same level in the countries with similar systems of education. As the College is a member of the Association of

Latvian Colleges, this could be a starting point to look for the international Associations of Colleges abroad to expand the international partner network.

Still, the international participation of some specialisations should be increased.

The College has started developing a system for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study field, however, there are a lot of challenges in implementing that. There are some international visiting lecturers, but that is not systematic. For the same reasons mentioned above, it is difficult to attract both professors and students from abroad. Some of the students would like to have more international guest lecturers. Especially in Music management, as the business is quite small in Latvia. It could be useful to get knowledge and impressions from other countries.

However, the College has started attracting students from Central Asia, but there is a language barrier and also problems with visas (the cooperation with Fergana university in Uzbekistan). The management also stresses that in order for the programme in English for foreign students to be cost-effective, the number of the students in a group should be not less than 20; at the moment it doesn't seem realistic to attract this number of students also because of the above-mentioned problems. The director of the College admits that the export capacity of the programme should be the priority. To this, sufficient knowledge of English is required and this is one of the expert recommendations especially for teaching staff, but also for students.

Cooperation agreements with companies abroad allow students to use Erasmus+ internships. This cooperation could be expanded. Though, the attitude of the State Education Development Agency is that the students have to find their placements themselves.

The students know about Erasmus+ mobility programmes and take part, however, their activity could be higher. For students it is easy to transfer the credits after Erasmus studies so this is not a barrier that would stop the students from participating in Erasmus mobility.
The experts want to emphasize that involvement in the international academic and professional networks in the field would be of great value both for the individual development of the staff and for the quality and development of the study direction.
A system for the provision and of organisation of traineeships has been developed within the study field and is being improved currently. There is a person dealing with the organization of traineeship - Head of the Centre for the Development of Quality and Competencies. The new approach to the development of students' practical skills is organized around three levels, or stages: the 1st level is voluntary work, which is happening while cooperating and supporting productions of other students in the College or in the LKA; in the 2nd level, there are four traineeships as a part of the study programme, each of them with different aims, and students are encouraged to try to join enterprises and organizations of different fields within these traineeships; the 3rd level is cooperation with the alumni of the College, this direction is under the development, it is planned to establish the alumni association, as soon as possible.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The College collaborates with institutions from Latvia and abroad, including the higher education institutions, employers and employers' organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, and others by implementing joint projects, organizing traineeships for students, exchanging teachers and students. The cooperation partners are from the field of arts and culture management, and there are wide possibilities for further development of the collaboration. Systems

and procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study direction are starting to develop, the College still has to address many challenges to develop this direction. The system for the provision of traineeships and its organisation is well developed in the College in cooperation with partner institutions.

Strengths:

1.A good network of organisations (municipalities, NGOs, companies) that offer traineeships and later - jobs for graduates
2.Long-term partnerships with industry and important professional associations
3.The College has solid respect among partners in the community.
4.There is a good collaboration with secondary schools
5.Cooperation agreements with other Latvian HEIs (with comparable study programmes) allow the College graduates to enter the bachelor study programs in later semesters
6.The cooperation with the LKA allows students' and teachers' collaboration in creative productions.
7.Industry professionals and professors of the LKA are involved in the assessment of the students' professional qualifications (qualification committees)
8.The College has been/ is involved in large Erasmus+ projects that have allowed to expand international partner network and increase students and teachers mobilities
9.There are some of the staff members and teachers who actively participate in international exchanges
10.Students are satisfied with their Erasmus+ experiences, the ECTS system works in the College.
11.A well-organised system of traineeships support the development of practical skills and qualifications

Weaknesses:

1.Most of the academic staff can't teach in English, so there are challenges to attract foreign students.
2.No links with international networks
3.No links with international industry and employers in the Baltic region and EU
4.No links in-between colleges in Latvia (for enhancing their position and rethinking developmental paths)
5.No links with colleges in the EU (for enhancing international cooperation practices, enabling also incoming student exchange)
6.No usage of potential college resources, such as crossings with a Library or Dance departments (both would need project management and entrepreneurial skills, while cultural managers might use some of information data gathering (thematic bibliographies creation) or archiving skills (how to archive a theatre production or an event) that are taught at Library department), etc. Even an excellent example of the inner partnership (developed in 2014) with a Dance department had not been repeated: "Stories of the park" – a dance show developed by lecturers of the contemporary dance study programme in collaboration with the choreographer from the US and music management students.

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

Analysis

The College has provided an analysis of the previous recommendation of the study field accreditation (conducted in May 2013) - Annex 14.

The only recommendation listed is in regard to the timing of the first traineeship - experts recommended postponing it to a later time. Due to the short implementation period of the study programme, College has decided to have the first traineeship no later than the end of the first year, to ensure an interrelatedness of theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The recommendation has been discussed among academic staff, as well as with traineeship placement providers and they have all come to conclusion to keep the system as is.

The College has also provided an overview of the weaknesses listed in the previous report of whom most were identified as weaknesses during this assessment as well, analyzed in other sections of the report. The College has defined all those weaknesses as non-essential or unproven at the time of reporting. Some improvements are made to the infrastructure since the previous reporting, new computers and their software has been acquired. Most of the weaknesses connected to the teaching staff - lack of scientific publications, English language skills of the local teaching staff and level of acquired academic degree by the teaching staff - as reported by the College have been averted, yet the expert group believes some more serious improvements are needed.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The College has a clear understanding of why it has chosen to overlook the recommendation. It has analyzed the recommendations given by the previous expert's group and discussed it among academic staff and employers.

Strengths
1.The College has analyzed the given recommendation and justified the need to implement the first traineeship as planned.

Weaknesses:
1. Weaknesses identified in the previous report have been found non-essential or unproven by the College, regardless - the expert group has analyzed all those aspects in other sections of the report and found them relevant this time as well.

7. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

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

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

2 1.1. The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.
   Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

   Justification: The internal quality assurance system is outlined in the self-assessment report, minor improvements are needed to fully close the feedback loop to the students.

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

   Justification: The current system is functioning, yet a more formal approach should be implemented.

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

Justification: The criteria and procedures for the evaluation of the students' results are available for students at the beginning of the study course. Various approaches for evaluation of the students' academic achievements are evident in their daily work.

5   1.4. Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.
Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Some elements of an internal system are in place. However, there is a non-consistent approach to didactic development and there is no systematic approach for improving the pedagogical skills of the teaching staff.

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

Justification: There are regular surveys for students, employers, and graduates. A systemic approach is needed to analyse risks of possible financial shortcomings, due to the decreasing number of paying students.

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

Justification: Annex 4, recently the college has implemented several changes, ensuring that the system is fully functioning.

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

Justification: Lacking long-standing international cooperation and involvement in international associations. Erasmus's potential is not fully executed. (Annex "Summary of statistical data on the incoming mobility", Annex 8) Local cooperation is long-standing and very strong. Not all specializations are equally offered possibilities to be involved in mobility

Annex 10, 11 and 12, as well as information acquired during the on-site meeting, confirms the findings.

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

Justification: Annex 9, scientific research is not as vital for college as would be for higher levels of higher education, thus only some scientific activity is visible in their work.
Artistic creation is evident in the work of academic staff outside of the college (in their professional work), yet its use is not too visible within the study content.

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

Justification: The College has provided an analysis of the previous recommendation of the study direction accreditation (conducted in May 2013) - Annex 14 - but has not sufficiently addressed the weaknesses identified back then.

8. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

1. To define clear and attainable aims of the study field for the next planning period
2. To update information on the website.
3. To analyse the content of each specialization and to make sure that each specialization complies with the qualification.
4. To introduce a system, which provides feedback to students regarding the results of the surveys until September 2021.
5. When starting a new study course, lectors should present the improvements they have made because of feedback or results of the surveys (until September 2021).

Long-term recommendations

1. To develop the study field strategy for the next period.
2. To organize workshops that would develop the research skills of the teaching staff. For example, a workshop about writing scientific papers.
3. To develop a strategy for research development that would include a system for financing scientific research.
4. To organize on a regular basis (at least once a year) a workshop for the academic staff in order to develop their Moodle profiles.
5. To develop a Moodle profile that could be used as a template by the academic staff to ensure a unified approach to e-environment.
6. To implement a system for improvement of English language skills of the teaching staff
7. To consider involvement in the professional international networks and active participation in them
8. To search for international partners on a college level in the EU to develop joint projects and, in the future, joint study programmes
9. To develeop a clear strategy regarding the premises. The strategy should be developed by the owner of the building in collaboration with the College and Ministry of Culture.

II. "Management of Art Institutions" ASSESSMENT

II. "Management of Art Institutions" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

The "Management of Art Institutions" is a first-level professional higher education study programme, the lenght of programme and amount is 5 semesters, 100 CP (150 ECTS) as full-time intramural studies, 6 semesters 100 CP (150 ECTS) as part-time intramural studies. The process of registration for studies is clear. Admission requirements are previous secondary education, the results of state

centralised exams (Latvian, foreign language, mathematics), and results of additional admission tests (interview with a portfolio of creative works.) The main target group is secondary school graduates. The second target group is professionals who are already employed in the field but don't have a qualification.

The study programme was licensed in 2002 with the title "Management of Art Institutions". This title is not adequate for the college level education. With this title the programme should be a bachelor level programme. However, in Latvia the colleges are not allowed to develop programmes for bachelor's level. The name of the study programme "Management of Art Institutions" could be misleading because the programme lasts only 2-3 years and is not a bachelor study programme. The content of the specialisations is different, but the qualification awarded is the same for all specialisations (Cultural manager in the self-evaluation report, during the site visit experts were informed that the College plans to change the qualification to a Specialist in cultural affairs). It can be asked, does the study programme provide sufficient competences to work as a manager of art institutions. The main objective is to educate future employees of the culture centres in regions. The graduates have practical not much academic skills, which is understandable because the degree is a college-level degree and therefore the specialist in cultural affairs could be a more suitable title.

The study programme has been aligned to the professional standard "Specialist in cultural affairs" that was approved on 12th August 2020 and is up to date. This standard is applicable to level 5 of the Latvian Education Classification (college education). The programme alignment with the new standard was submitted to the experts as additional information.

The number of students is decreasing (in full-time intramural form in 2018/19 there were 183 students less than 5 years before). Reasons for the decrease are according to the self-evaluation report: 1) the demographic situation in Latvia (decrease of birth in 1990s, 2) potential students select studies in other European countries, and 3) the prestige of an employee in the field of culture has decreased (especially the government and municipal institutions). Maybe young people do not see the cultural centres as very attractive job opportunities, but the degree gives qualification to get employed also in other sectors for example private companies or NGOs. On the other hand, the college as a major educator of personnel of the cultural centres could influence the image of the public sector actors. College's mission is to provide specialists for these local cultural organisations.

Even though the dropout situation has become better, there still is a high dropout rate, at least among the part-time intramural students (average 40.69%). The key reasons are related to financial resources, lack of motivation, the personality profile of students, and the students' psycho-emotional problems.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The title "Management of Art Institutions" is not adequate for the level of a college education and it can be misleading as the overall goal of the programme is to prepare employees that are specialists in their field, not managers of institutions. Of course, there are exceptions, when graduates become managers of small institutions, however, it is not a general trend. During the site visit the programme director also acknowledged that the programme should be a bachelor level programme. However, it is not currently possible as the laws in Latvia prohibit the development of bachelor-level programs in Colleges.

The main target audience for College is secondary school graduates and the College is successfully marketing this programme to them. However, the College should focus more also on other target groups, i.e. industry professionals with no formal education, life-long learning etc.

Strengths

1.Admission marketing activities meet well secondary school graduates needs.
2.Dropout rates have been diminishing.

Weaknesses
1.The title of the programme could be misleading.
2.Not a common shared vision on how to further develop the programme.
3.There could be more admission marketing activities targeted toward professionals who don't have a qualification.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

The study programme has faced many changes during the last years. Because of the lack of a general strategy for the study field, it is difficult to assess if and where the changes are targeted to. The content of the study programme has been created according to the needs of the cultural and art fields and labour market. The College should define more ambitious goals and be initiators for different activities and have a more entrepreneurial approach to activities.

In general the implementation process is on a good level both for full time and for part time studies. The study programme consists of three parts. Part A (20 CP) is general study courses, part B (30 CP) industry study courses and part C (50 CP) is specialisation courses. Part A is focused on the development of general and specific skills by providing theoretical knowledge for example in philosophy and culture theory, history of world civilisations and arts, Latvian culture. Language studies are also in that part. Part B offers courses about theoretical basics of management for example culture marketing, culture politics, cultural economics, cultural event production, basics of rights, entrepreneurship but also rhetoric and improvisation. Teaching methods are indicated to promote transforming the gained knowledge into creative projects.
The content of the study programme has been mapped against the new professional standard and the programme alignment with the new standard was submitted to the experts as additional information. The experts consider that the programme alignment with the professional standard is sufficient.
The curriculum of the study programme contains many 1 CP courses. Some of the courses, which involve personal interaction, are spread all over the semester. Students find these courses problematic and wish to be shorter but more intensive.

The descriptions of study courses (annex 20, annex 18) are well prepared and they contain the aim of the study course, tasks of the study course, intended learning outcomes, evaluation criteria, methods of the study course, form of the final examination, requirements for the acquisition of credit points, plan of the study course and resources of the course (literature, digital material, etc.)
The study programme has been divided into several specialisations (Part C 50 CP) in the curricula: performing arts, music management, fashion and design management, photo and video production, multimedia production, and technical production of events. The specialisation of event production has been created particularly for student admission in the year 2020 in part-time studies and this specialisation path has been a pilot project which should be evaluated and then a decision on continuation should be taken.
The amount of specialisations is high considering the number of students. The content of the specialisations is relatively close to each other, for example, photo and video production and multimedia production, and on the other hand, there are also very many learning objectives which are common for all specialisations. Some of the specialisation courses (i.e. digital marketing) start already in the first year of studies, while more general courses (i.e. marketing) come later in the

programme. The reason for early specialisation courses is that the students get the chance to realize what the specialisation really is. It can be asked, is the order of the courses logical and does it support the student's possibility to deepen their learning concerning a specific subject.

There is no systemic approach established to ensure the same quality standards among specialisations. Some of the specialisations focus more on developing management skills (for example, music management), some focus more on artistic development (for example, performing arts). As the qualification awarded is the same for all specialisations, there is a risk of inconsistency. The College offers its students a traineeship based on long-term collaboration agreements between College and cultural organizations and institutions. There are four training periods and each one is 4 weeks (48 hours). This is a relatively short time to involve one deeply in an unknown organisation. All training periods have thematic content and learning objectives have been set before the training period begins. There are some variations in the required learning objectives between specialities. In some cases, a student needs to produce his own project as a part of training while in the other cases the student is just observing the workplace, although they are doing the same level of training.

Students and the supervisors and employers in the training places know what learning objectives need to be achieved during the internship. The internship is planned very well and it allows deeper learning for students. The learning objectives are more challenging in the last internship than in the first one. The internship reports do not contain neither references, nor analysis based on theory. Students wish to share their internship experiences, and what have they learned in the training place. This needs a place in the curricula.
The college has a variety of internship placements. Not just organizations from the public sector (26%) but also private businesses (45%) and NGOs (29%). It gives a wider perspective of the culture and art field to the students (and new possible working places). Around 40 % of internships are found by students and 60 % offered by the college. The college needs to work on expanding its network of internship organisation and offer new places and perspectives for students.

Most qualification papers are developed in collaboration with employers in the places of the qualification internship. The qualification paper includes the project application. In the project application, the student defines the aim and tasks of the project, the target audience, describes marketing complex, the media communication plan, the engagement of stakeholders and sponsors, develops the schedule for the project´s human resources and implementation, project estimate, and defines the criteria for evaluating the results to be achieved within this project.

The topics of the qualification papers show that the projects are work life-oriented, real-life projects. The qualification paper demonstrates the academic skills and the project work proves practical skills. The system with two supervisors for the qualification papers was introduced in 2019. Before the students had to develop two separate final works/ papers – both in specialty, and specialisation. Now, the specialty supervisor consults about management and project management issues (chapter 2 in qualification paper), specialisation supervisor has better knowledge to develop specialisation part – industry analysis (chapter 1 in qualification paper) and analysis of the implemented project (chapter 3 in qualification paper). The chairperson of the qualification commission (a professor from the Latvian Academy of Culture) last year noted that the quality of the qualification papers has improved since the introduction of the new system.

The college has started to improve its e-learning process, Moodle was introduced in 2017. In 2020 new version with interactive tools was introduced. However, it's still mainly used as a file storage. In the future, the use of e-learning possibilities can offer new possibilities to continue education. Also, other digital learning tools like Zoom and MS Teams were mentioned. Feedback from students about

these tools is positive.

The types of evaluation methods are written clearly and accurately. The use of different evaluation methods - evaluation by lecturers, group evaluation, and individual evaluation is well balanced. Student-centered learning - teachers acting as mentors, practical works and individual approach requires the development of student's self-evaluation skills and understanding of personal professional development and identity. In addition, students can assess their colleagues. Using different evaluation methods the personnel can support the student's ability to take more responsibility for his own learning process.

The Meringue project in the year 2019 is a good example of the integration of different specialisations. It demonstrates well how the students can learn from each other and over the specialisation fences.

The students have possibility to take part of ERASMUS and other mobility programmes and have a training in abroad. According the students, they are avail themselves of the incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities, and the learning outcomes achieved during such mobility are well recognised.

Surveys for the students are made annually so the data is comparable and it helps to see the changes and impressions on a certain time scale. Feedback is listened to and noticed. The responses are very positive: content, practices, the compliance of the study programme, etc. Students are satisfied with their studies. Little negative feedback was given to the facilities.

Surveys for graduates are well-argued and processed. It is good that the college does it annually so the data is comparable and it helps to see changes and impressions on a certain time scale.

Surveys point out that in the year 2018 60% of graduates worked in a cultural sector. The survey shows that the study programme gives general work-life skills, not just cultural specific, to the students because they have been employed also in other sectors than culture. Recent graduate surveys show that students in different specializations have very different employability rates. Graduates are willing to join the alumni club and they see the benefits of that work.

Employer surveys are a good tool for developing the study programme and cooperation between the college and work life. Open communication helps the progress of co-operation and keeps the study programme close to the needs of the cultural and art field.

The process to improve the content of the study programme is well described and impressive. It seems that the development work is an ongoing process as it should be. It is wise to focus on some specific sectors each semester. Students have surveys about each lecturer every semester. The students and graduates have the feeling that the teaching staff is taking their concerns and ideas of improvement seriously. Communication between teaching staff and students seems to be clear and many media formats are used (e-mails, Moodle, phone calls). The students have the possibility to influence the practices and content of the courses, but they are not sure if the given feedback has influenced to the development process of courses. Academic staff does not underline the inputs given by students.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The study programme has faced many changes during the last years and there has not been a common shared vision on how to develop the programme. It seems there are no differences of the implementation process for full time studies and part time studies. Both are on good level. The students are satisfied with the learning and teaching and surveys show that employment rates are

high. The teaching staff has prepared precise descriptions of study courses and a variety of evaluation methods are used. Internships have been planned with the labour market representatives and the process works mostly well. Students are avail themselves of the incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities, and the learning outcomes achieved during such mobility are well recognised

Strengths:

1.The types of evaluation methods - evaluation by lecturers, group evaluation, and individual evaluation are well used.
2.Student-centred learning - teachers acting as mentors, practical works, individual approach.
3.The students and graduates have the feeling that the teaching staff is taking their concerns and ideas of improvement seriously.
4. Personnel and students have many communication platforms to use (e-mails, Moodle, phone calls).
5.College offers its students traineeship based on long-term collaboration agreements.
6.The training process is planned very well and it allows deeper learning for students.
7.Graduates are willing to join the alumni club and they see the benefits of that work.
8.Students and graduates are very satisfied with the curricula and teaching.
9. Study course descriptions are well developed.

Weaknesses:

1.Some of the courses especially with 1 CP are too much spread in the semester.
2.Traineeships - the reports don't contain references, no analysis based on theory.
3.The amount of specialisations is high considering the number of students. The contents of the specialities are relatively close to each other.
4.Students were not sure if the improvement had been put into practice.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

The College has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study field. On the basis of the estimates made, the cost per student shall be EUR 1927.00. In addition, the College has attracted funding from other sources, so the actual cost per student in 2019 was EUR 1400.00. There are 107 state-funded study places, which provide a steady income for the College. However, the number of paying students has decreased significantly in recent years (333 in 2013/2014, only 106 in 2019/2020), which means that the College might face challenges to maintain financial sustainability in the future. There is no system established for financing scientific research and/or artistic creation activities. That has surely affected the inconsistent results in this area. The academic staff lacks the motivation to develop their scientific research profiles. Their artistic achievements are not related to College.

The necessary infrastructure resources, material, and technical provisions required for the implementation of the study field are available for the College and the students and the teaching staff have access to them. There are two newly renovated computer labs with high-quality equipment that is equipped with the necessary software.
There are about 8000 units in the College library. There is access to digital databases, i.e. Lursoft. Also, the College collaborates with the Latvian Academy of Culture. The focus of the library is to provide students with resources that are specific to their specializations and can't be found in public libraries in Latvia. The facilities of the library are user-friendly. Resources are divided into thematic

sections, they are easy to find. There is enough space for on site learning, computers are available for studying. A high-quality copier-scanner is available to students. Books are given on loan to students.

There is a stage with the necessary sound, lighting, and multimedia equipment available to students. Although students would like to have access to the lightning equipment of the newer generation, the overall satisfaction with stage resources is high. There is also one additional black-box room available to students, which can be used for smaller events or rehearsals. On the upper floor, there is an open area available to students and staff, which is developed to foster creative processes. For the academic staff, there is no separate room available. However, there is enough space with separate desks in the office of the study program director.

The biggest challenge for the College regarding resources is the maintenance of the building, which is state-owned. It is quite run down and although College has invested as much as they can in development of the premises, there is a strong need for a clear strategy of how this building will be maintained and developed. For example, currently it is not accessible for students with disabilities.

The College has started to improve its e-learning process, Moodle was introduced in 2017 and upgraded version with interactive tools was introduced in March 2020. However, it is still mainly used as a storage of documentation. Academic staff needs some further learning to integrate the interactive tools in their profiles. Also, other digital learning tools like Zoom and Microsoft Teams were mentioned. Those were introduced during the lockdown caused by Covid-19. Students acknowledged that College quickly adapted to the new circumstances that were caused by Covid-19 and the study process online has been organized smoothly.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

As there is only one programme within the study field this section closely overlaps with the section No. 3 of Part I.

State-funded study places are always filled, but there is a decreasing number of paying students, which means that there might be limited opportunities for development in the future. There is no established system for financing scientific and/or artistic research.

In general, the necessary infrastructure for successful studying process is provided. However, there are challenges with the building as it is not owned by the College (it is state-owned) and the future for the development of the premises is unclear.

The College has started to actively use Moodle in the study process. However, the quality of study course materials provided in the system is not consistent and generally, only basic features of the system are used with no usage of interactivity. At the same time, global pandemic has fastened the processes of learning digital skills among the teaching staff.

Strengths:
1. State-funded study places and additional funding provides a good basis for financial stability.
2. Students appreciate the highly professional teaching staff that is motivated to develop their professional skills.
3. Students and graduates emphasize the high degree of individual approach (mentoring) in the study process.
4. The technical resources of the college are well developed.
5. The study process hasn't been interrupted due to Covid-19. The state of emergency has actually fostered the development of digital skills of teaching staff.

Weaknesses:
1. The decreasing number of paying students might cause a risk of financial stability and limit the possibilities of development.

2. The technical condition of the building is quite poor. Although the college has tried to do some repairs, there are still many areas that are run down. Also, the building is not accessible for persons with disabilities.

3. The upgraded e-learning system Moodle with interactive tools was introduced in March 2020, which means that the academic staff lacks practice. Currently, Moodle is mainly used for the upload of information and there is a lack of usage of interactive tools and a wide spectrum of tools available in the system.

4. There is a non-consistent approach to didactic development. The teaching staff is not motivated to do scientific or artistic research. Mostly their artistic achievements are not related to the college and they are not supported in any way.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

Most of the college staff members are practitioners in the field, they make their individual efforts improving their professional qualifications, implementing their artistic creations. The management of the college believes that the main motivational factor to work in college is its creative environment, as the college cannot compete with the salaries in the labour market. Most of the staff delivering courses in specialisations are part-time teachers. The college periodically offers some seminars or courses for the development of the pedagogical skills of their staff members (as mentioned in the self-evaluation report), but not systematically and regularly. The teaching staff is welcome to inform the management about their needs. The management (study programme director), consequently, addresses these needs, if possible. Still, there is a need to improve the English skills of the teachers. The challenge is to find funding for language training. In the previous years, there have been English courses funded from the project, but these were available only for administrative staff, not the teachers.

As the requirements for a college are different from the ones of a university, thus most of the teachers do not participate in scientific research, but have extensive practical activities and participate in artistic creation. The College has not developed systemic mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research (due to a lack of finances for conferences, paper publications, translation, etc), except through Erasmus+ projects that are mostly linked to digitalization. The importance of publications in professional journals, not only academic, should be more underlined, as that would stimulate creating and codifying knowledge that is gained through practice.

The experts suggest to focus more on professional development regarding the pedagogical/teaching skills and provide training for teaching staff coming from the industry.

Many members of the teaching staff are practitioners and they don't have the motivation to carry out research work. The College is trying to motivate the teaching staff to continue studies but usually they do not have time for studies. If the lecturer is a specialist recognised in the area, s/he usually does not have a MA or PhD degree. The College also has an issue with the age of academic staff. Older teachers usually have degrees but have problems with communication and teaching methods. The remuneration in this area is not very attractive. This is the reason why there are so many guest lecturers because in order to be elected one has to have a degree.

Study projects within different specialisations involve close cooperation among students of these specialisations, hence the teachers collaborate to ensure the study projects are successful and effective. Collaboration among teaching staff takes place during the students' traineeships and

development of the qualification work, as both training reports and qualification papers consist of theoretical and practical parts and the students are led by two teachers, who usually collaborate. The teachers are involved individually in artistic creation in their field. Some of the Erasmus+ projects have resulted in collective artistic collaboration and creation.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The College has to undertake more systematic measures in a target-oriented manner to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme. The professional qualification of the teaching staff members complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme, though more focused attention should be paid to the development of the scientific research and publications and/or artistic creation both at the national and international level. Collaboration between the teaching staff members is well developed.

Strengths:
1.Most of the teaching staff members are respected art practitioners and provide development of practical skills
2.Periodically, some seminars or training are provided for the teaching staff to increase their pedagogical skills
3.Teaching staff members collaborate in implementing various student projects within the study process
4.Involvement in international projects by some teaching staff members result in interesting creative projects (theatre art, fashion art)
5.Different generations of the teaching staff members provide various strengths to study process

Weaknesses:
1.There is no systematic approach for improving the pedagogical skills of the teaching staff
2.Insufficient level of English skills doesn't allow to participate in international projects and teaching mobility
3.Lack of motivation to perform research work
4.There are many teaching staff members with only bachelor's degrees, they should consider increasing their education level to a Master's degree, PhD.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Management of Art Institutions"

Requirements

1 1. The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued.
  Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant
  Justification: Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme (Annex 21) was added to the self-evaluation report and complies with Cabinet Regulation No. 202 of 16 April 2013 - https://likumi.lv/ta/id/256157-kartiba-kada-izsniedz-valsts-atzitus-augstako-izglitibu-apliecinosus-dokumentus. However, the qualification included in the diploma has to be aligned with the up-to-date professional standard.

2 2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.
  Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant
  Justification: Cooperation agreement with EKA about the possibility to continue studies in first level professional study programme "Management of entertainment industry"

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

Justification: A confirmation letter is added as Annex 22 of the study programme guaranteeing the students will be reimbursed.

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

Justification: The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in Latvian (Annex 6) - Latvian being their native language or after acquiring higher education in Latvian

5   5. The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.
Assessment of compliance: Not relevant
Justification: Not applicable

6   6. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts.
Assessment of compliance: Not relevant
Justification: Not applicable

7   7. The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.
Assessment of compliance: Not relevant
Justification: Not applicable

8   8. The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: A sample of the study agreement was added as Annex 23 and complies with the regulations No.70 of 23 January 2007 of the Cabinet of Ministers, '' Terms and conditions to be included in the study agreement'' - https://likumi.lv/ta/id/152072-studiju-liguma-obligati-ietveramie-noteikumi

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

Justification: Study course descriptions are well developed, contain all the necessary information and comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561, Paragraph two and Section 562, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

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

Justification: During the site visit experts were informed that the qualification will be changed from Cultural manager to Specialist in Cultural Affairs, which has been approved recently (on 12th August 2020). The study programme complies with this standard.

11 11. Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.
Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

12 12. The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard.
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Annex 16 of the SER outlines compliance with the education standard - https://likumi.lv/ta/id/6397-noteikumi-par-pirma-limena-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitibas-valsts-standartu

13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).
Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: Not applicable

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

Justification: CV's included in Annex 7.
List of publications and artistic creations included in Annex 9.
All members of the teaching staff fulfil at least one of the criteria (artistic creation achievements or 5-year practical experience).

15 P5 - Overall rating
Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: The study programme generally complies with the requirements of the legal acts except a few minor deficiencies that have to be solved.

Requirements (R6-R8)

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

Justification: In general there are enough resources to succesfully provide study process and achievement of study results. However, there is a risk of financial stability as the number of paying students decreases. Also, the premises of the College need some serious repairements.

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

Justification: Most of the college academic staff members have vast practical experience, which is necessary for professional education programmes.

3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.
Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: Not applicable

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The study programme complies with most of the requirements defined for it, except the fact that not

all members of the academic staff have demonstrated publications, artistic creation achievements or 5-year practical experience within the last 6 years.

Evaluation of the study programme "Management of Art Institutions"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Management of Art Institutions"

Short-term recommendations

1. Courses that involve personal interaction and are spread all over the semester could be planned more intensive in a more concentrted time frame - starting from next semester.

Long-term recommendations

1. To regularly provide the teaching staff with possibilities to develop their pedagogical skills in seminars, training, etc.

2. The college could take a more active role to uplift the image of studies and the cultural sector in general. College could work with municipalities to raise the attractiveness of cultural centers as a working place.

3. There could be more admission marketing activities targeted towards professionals who don't have qualifications. They could be a good target group for lifelong learning perspectives.

4. 1 CP courses could be incorporated into larger modules.

5. The order of the courses should be analyzed and evaluated based on the students needs.

6. The learning outcomes of study courses and tasks of practices of each specialization should be analysed and standardized in a way that corresponds to the professional qualification Specialist in Cultural Affairs.

7. The college needs to work on expanding its network of internship organisation and offer new places and perspectives for students.

8. To analyze the content of specializations and decide whether it would be possible to consolidate some of them, i.e. photo and video production and multimedia production.

9. Professional development courses about student-centered learning would be recommended. In the future, more and more peer collaboration and practice-based-learning would be appreciated.

10. It is important to make sure that students get to know how the survey process proceeds. One thing to improve is to make sure that students are aware of survey results. When starting a new study course, lecturers should present the improvements they have made because of feedback or results of the surveys.

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

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

Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment	
Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:	Partially compliant		Overall, the internal quality assurance system is established and works efficiently with some minor areas of improvement.	
R2 - The cooperation with different organisations from Latvia and abroad implemented within the study direction ensures the achievement of the aims of the study direction.	Partially compliant		Lacking long-standing international cooperation and involvement in international associations. Erasmus's potential is not fully executed. (Annex "Summary of statistical data on the incoming mobility", Annex 8) Local cooperation is long-standing and very strong. Not all specializations are equally offered possibilities to be involved in mobility Annex 10, 11 and 12, as well as information acquired during the on-site meeting, confirms the findings.	
R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).	Partially compliant		Annex 9, scientific research is not as vital for college as would be for higher levels of higher education, thus only some scientific activity is visible in their work. Artistic creation is evident in the work of academic staff outside of the college (in their professional work), yet its use is not too visible within the study content.	
R4 - Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations.	Partially compliant		The College has provided an analysis of the previous recommendation of the study direction accreditation (conducted in May 2013) - Annex 14 - but has not sufficiently addressed the weaknesses identified back then.	

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

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

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

Expert opinions do not differ.