

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: Information and Communication Sciences

Experts:

1. Maija Burima (Chair of the Experts Group)
2. Sirje Virkus (Secretary of the Experts Group)
3. Marta Viļuma (Secretary of the Experts Group) (Student Union of Latvia)
4. Ágústa Pálsdóttir
5. Ilona Kiukucāne (Employers' Confederation of Latvia)

Summary Assessment of the Study Field

Summary Assessment of the Study Field

The study programme "Library Science and Information" (LSI) is the only first-level professional study programme within the field of library and information science in Latvia and because it meets a growing need for qualified librarians the programme is important. The programme is well managed, and a good cooperation has been assured with the library field. However, the e-environment needs to be strengthened further so that the study programme can be developed more towards changes that are taking place, where electronic services have become an increasingly more important part of modern library activities.

A Quality Assurance System (QAS) has been set up, but it is not unified and needs some improvements. In particular there is a need for more emphasis on continuous development and improvements of the study programme. In addition, the QAS needs to ensure that information is collected through anonymous surveys, allowing students to evaluate each course and different groups of the staff to evaluate each other's work.

When it comes to College's resources overall, it can be said that it is good. Students and teaching staff stated that there is an existing system in place that provides necessary study materials if not accessible books in the library, then being ordered from other libraries or available in databases. One of the main concerns that arouse specifically in the question of resources is the English language proficiency of the teaching staff as the largest part of the the most recent study materials are being provided in English. The second concern is staff's unwillingness to conduct research and participate in research projects which shall be improved to at least a minimum level.

This is the only study programme in the field of library sciences providing the qualification "Library information specialist", therefore it is supported by employers and it is chosen by people working in the sector. The graduates of the study programme have an opportunity to continue studies in the bachelor's programme in the study programme "Information management" offered by the University of Latvia, however coordination with the professional educational programme "Library Science" offered by the Training Centre of the National Library of Latvia could be improved.

The content of the study programme LSI is constantly improved by cooperation with the employers, but It is important that the study programme LSI strengthens its role in the system of education in the library and information sector by providing the comprehensive and updated content and thus attracting more students.

1. Management of the Study Field

Analysis

The self-evaluation report (p. 9-10; SER) describes changes in the environment in Latvia which are leading to a decreasing number of libraries. It also presents figures showing that there is a lack of qualified librarians working in the libraries and points out that in order to protect and promote the interests of libraries, it is necessary that sufficiently qualified library staff is available. A survey of the College graduates in 2019 and interviews with employers in 2019 also confirms that there is a growing need for library specialists in the sector (p. 18). This was further confirmed at the meeting with graduates and the meeting with employees.

The study field and study programme (LSI) were set up to meet this demand. It is the only first-level professional study programme within the field of library and information science in Latvia. The programme is aimed at library employees who have education in non-library industries, or who have not received higher education, as well as people with secondary general education interested in working in the library sector. The graduates obtain a qualification valid for the labour market in the library sector, corresponding to the competence of a specialist in libraries. In addition to this, the

graduates have the possibility of continuing the studies in a bachelor's programme, second year, offered by the Social Sciences Faculty of University of Latvia study programme "Information Management" in part-time studies (p. 56, SER).

The LSI study programme was prepared in accordance with the quality standards and guidelines of the European Qualifications Framework, Regulations Regarding the State Standard for First Level Professional Higher Education and in conformity with the professional standard (p. 9, SER). In addition, the implementation of the programme is in line with actions recommended in the national Library Strategy 2014-2020 (p. 10, SER).

At the meetings with academic staff and the director of the study programme it was confirmed that they work well together as a team. Academic staff has been involved in decision making about goals for the development of the study field/programme and the implementation of it. Meetings are held regularly with the academic staff, in the beginning and at the end of a semester. Improvements of the study programme have, furthermore, been made in cooperation with the study field "Information and Communication Science" (ICS) of the University of Latvia (p. 20-21, SER).

The SER identifies weaknesses related to the limited resources for technical renewal and provision of the informative and methodical study base of the study process (p. 22-24, SER). To solve this problem the study field has collaborated with the library field. It is, however, vital for the College to support the study programme to promote the e-environment. This is necessary in order to be able to develop the study programme towards changes that are taking place in the environment and the activities of libraries, where electronic services have become increasingly more important.

The SER acknowledges the potential of developing the programme more in the direction of distance education (p. 10). This can improve the possibilities for the student group, people who work during their studies, to complete it. A limited number of e-courses have been launched. By getting more support from the College, there should be an opportunity to increase the number of distance learning courses, which in turn could increase attendance at the study programme and help to reduce student dropout.

In addition, the study programme is not sufficiently visible in the current College's Strategic Plan (2016-2020). A new strategic plan is under preparation and it is important that care is taken to correct this. For the study programme to be able to base its work on the strategic plan it must be included in it. This needs to be reflected in the goals defined in the plan, as well as in the action plan set out to achieve the objectives. At the meetings with the College management it was stated that this will be done.

The system for the admission of students is described in the SERT (p. 25-28). Admission requirements are assessed at a meeting of the ICS study programme department, based on statistical information about the study programme, student results, and by consulting with the employers. The requirements are governed by the admission rules approved by the College Board. The study programme is part-time, it is particularly aimed at people who are either working in a library or interested in working in the field of libraries. Because the study programme is arranged as part-time, people can continue/start working in the library sector during their studies. At the meetings with the students and the employees it was confirmed that they were well aware of this system and procedures and that they approve it.

The College has defined a Code of Ethics, including a chapter about the ethical requirements for students where the rules for plagiarism are described, what is deemed as violation of academic integrity and the punishment for it. The student contract also explains their responsibility in the matter.

The students are, furthermore, also presented with the principles of academic integrity in

introductory lectures. The College is currently examining the possibilities for acquiring an electronic anti-plagiarism tool (SER, p. 29-30). No information about this is to be found in SER nor on the public websites of the College. The ethical requirements were discussed at the meeting with the students, particularly regarding plagiarism, and their answers indicate that they have an understanding of the ethical requirements.

Information about the study programme on the College website, is only available in Latvian, which complies with the language in which the study programme is implemented.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The study programme is particularly important as it is the only one of its kind in Latvia and because it meets a growing need for qualified librarians. On the whole the management of the study programme is good; people work together as a team and there is good cooperation with the library field and the University of Latvia. There is, however, an extreme necessity for the study programme to get more support from the College to be able to promote the e-environment so that the study programme can meet the requirements of modern working methods. Support is, furthermore, needed from the College to increase distance learning provision, which can help to increase attendance at study and reduce student dropout.

Strengths:

1. The study programme is the only first-level professional study programme in Latvia which ensures the acquisition of a qualification corresponding to the competence of a specialist in libraries.
2. There is a growing need for library specialists in Latvia and the study programme meets an important demand for qualified librarians.
3. The graduates have the possibility of continuing the studies in the second year in a bachelor's programme offered by the University of Latvia.
4. Studies are implemented in the form of part-time studies, therefore students have the opportunity to work full-time.
5. Teachers and the study director work well together, good teamwork.
6. There is also good cooperation with the library field and the Library of the University of Latvia.
7. In addition, a good cooperation is with the National Library of Latvia.

Weaknesses:

1. Resources for technical renewal and provision of the informative and methodical study base of the study process are limited. It is necessary that the College supports the study programme by promoting the e-environment.
2. The number of distance courses are limited. Distance education needs to be promoted and it is necessary that the College supports this.
3. The study programme is not visible enough in the current College Strategic Plan and this needs to be rectified in the plan that is currently under preparation.

2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

The College quality management, the responsibility for quality assurance, and the College values which the system is based upon, are described in the SER (on pages 6-8 and p. 30-39). In 2019, the previous system was audited. A quality management system (QMS) manual was developed, which is based on the core process map of the QMS which is presented in Annex 3, SER. The quality management processes are structured according to the cycle "Plan-Do-Check-Act" (p. 6). However, the QMS should place more emphasis on ensuring continuous development and improvements of the study programme, as well as efficient performance of the study field and programme. A more detailed action plan for achieving the goals would also be an improvement.

The SER describes the mechanism for cooperation with professionals in the field and their involvement in developing the curriculum according to professional standards (p. 32-33, SER). A meeting with employees confirmed that they are satisfied with this cooperation and the outcome of it.

The students' views are examined by surveys to programme candidates and programme graduates (p. 33, SER). At the meeting with students and graduates it was stated that they are very satisfied with the study programme.

The students' opinion is also examined by conducting a survey among current students, once a year. Meetings with the students are also held on a regular basis during the semester (p. 33, SER). In the interview with the teaching staff it was stated that the student group is small, the teaching staff frequently communicate with them during the semester, and that the students regularly provide them with feedback about the teaching. The SER, furthermore, describes examples of student initiative and suggestions and how it has been used to develop the curricula (p. 34, SER). This procedure and outcome were also discussed at the meeting with the teaching staff.

At the meeting with the students it was confirmed that the relations and interaction with the teaching staff were in general good and that the teaching staff can easily be accessed. The students, furthermore, expressed their approval of how the study programme had been developed. However, the view was also expressed that if students had the opportunity to anonymously evaluate each course every semester, they would have the chance to say their opinion more frankly and honestly.

In addition, the SER and QMS Manual do not state that the performance of the College senior management group is being evaluated (by academic and other staff), as a part of the College Quality Assurance System. The system needs to cover this aspect as well and enable the staff to evaluate the work of senior management.

According to the QMS information is collected about main indicators, e.g., student admission, drop-out rates, number of students per one academic person, proportion of the academic staff with a grade, etc. Furthermore, the standards set forth in Part 1 of the ESG have been integrated into the QMS (p. 36-39, SER) and long-term challenge regarding the implementation recognized (p. 39, SER).

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The Quality Assurance System is not unified and needs some improvements. More emphasis is needed on continuous development and improvements of the study programme. Furthermore, it is extremely important that the system covers all activities at the College and that different groups can evaluate each other's work. In addition to collecting information through discussions about what has been done well and where improvements are needed at meetings, it is necessary to collect data, on a regular basis, through anonymous surveys and thus allowing people to express their views more frankly and honestly. Thus, the need for conducting an anonymous student survey for each course, every semester, is emphasised. This would allow the students to focus specifically on each course in their evaluation, and to do so frankly.

In addition, the study programme/college is advised to consider the possibility of conducting a mid-

term student survey for each course. Getting feedback from students at that point makes it easier for teaching staff to make adjustments where needed, according to the cycle "Plan-Do-Check-Act". Furthermore, it is necessary that the system allows teaching staff (and other staff) the possibility to assess the management group by anonymous surveys on a regular basis.

In addition to areas where the Quality Assurance System needs improvements, there are also certain strengths, particularly regarding how the feedback obtained from students and the emphasis that has been placed on understanding the needs of the labour market has been used to improve the study programme.

Strengths:

1. Good connection with library managers and other professionals in the field, which is important for the understanding of the requirements of the labour market.
2. There are examples that demonstrate that when the students give feedback about the teaching it is being valued, and attempts are made to correct shortcomings and improve the curriculum based on their suggestions.

Weaknesses:

1. Emphasis on continuous development and improvements of the study programme is not strong enough.
2. Anonymous student surveys are not conducted for each course, every semester.
3. Anonymous mid-term student surveys are not conducted.
4. Teaching staff (and other staff) do not have the possibility to assess the management group by anonymous surveys.

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 and the relevant study programme, although, it is being questioned whether it is sufficient for providing the necessary materials and resources for qualitative study process provision.. As stated in the SER there is a system for financing the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities in place as an example that part of the staff remuneration is covered as funding for research activities and for communication services. Although, it has to be noted that all the interviewed representatives of the academic staff outlined that they are not actually interested in research activities which are related to this College as largely lecturers for this study programme are guest lecturers and have been provided with research project activities in other higher education institutions. Another aspect found is that the permanent staff is not interested in such activities and prefers lecturing. Thus, even though some elements of the system for scientific research and/or artistic creation activities are in place, it is necessary to engage the staff within such activities. The administration and academic staff outlined that they have been offered to be engaged in such activities by not having a particular interest to participate. It also is being reflected within the workload. Only 10 % of the time devoted to the research if ever at some point and the staff of the College does not see it as a problem as they concentrate on practical skill provision outlining that they are a college not a university. Experts team found out also another aspect which may influence lack of research activity and engagement expect voluntary disinterest - the majority of the lecturers are guest lecturers not a part of the permanent academic staff which only supports the idea of non - engagement in scientific research activity. Experts kindly encourage more activity in this sphere.

The College has identified the infrastructure resources and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study field, and they are available for the College. Although, it has to be noted that the information which is provided within the SER is not complete. There has been mentioned the fact that the College has the necessary equipment for the study process, such as monitors, audio tuning system, but no information has been provided on the exact numbers of the specific equipment in use are available for individual use by students for study purposes outside the College premises. What is seen as a great plus is that the lectures are being recorded for situations when students are not able to attend the lecture at the particular time indicated. Although, it has to be outlined that in case of recording, students have to be informed about such activity if the recordings at any time are being used again for other courses of other study years.

As indicated by the students and the teaching staff, they stated that they have access to the necessary resources. They outlined the accessibility of the Wi-Fi within the premises of the College. They pointed out that the librarian is doing constant research when it comes to new additional materials that may be added to the courses and are necessary. When visiting the library, it was noticed that available resources within the library itself were rather limited, especially, what comes to resources in English. As it was stated by the College staff, they use databases rather than books and if books are used then preferably in Russian or Latvian and as pointed out by both students and teaching staff - everything needed is available concerning the resources. In addition, the books that are not available in the College library are usually available either in the National Library or in the Central Library.

What comes to the common system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of the material, technical, methodological, and informative provision, in fact, it is in place. Teaching staff proposals for new sources of information for the College Library collection are evaluated once a year which the expert group thought is not enough, but as outlined by the teaching staff, it is the official procedure but the proposals are discussed between the librarian and staff on a regular basis. In case of a need new books are being bought and provided for the specific lecturer in the particular course.

The College has developed and implements and complies with the procedures for attracting highly skilled teaching staff for the study field and programme.

As stated already before concerning academic and research workload balance, the teaching staff is not interested in the research activities which would be advised to be improved.

The teaching staff members take part both in outgoing and incoming mobility, which brings added value to the implementation of the study process and the study quality. As outlined by the teaching staff and as stated within the SER they participate in ERASMUS+ programme mobility as well as take part in professional development events including the professional development programme "Organization and Management of Pedagogical Process" offered by the Lifelong Learning Centre of Rezekne Academy of Technologies; open lectures, courses outside the College.

What comes to the needs of the teaching staff for professional and didactic improvement, these are identified in a target-oriented manner. Improvement measures are being undertaken as many activities outside the College are being offered for personal and professional development.

The Expert team are particularly concerned about the English level and knowledge of the teaching and academic staff. It was highly noticeable that such knowledge is lacking as during the time of the visit interpreter was necessary and only a few of the staff did speak in English. From the perspective of resources, the concern being raised is the capability of providing the best possible resources and study materials for the courses as most of them are in English today. From the experts' side the

advice would be to provide opportunities for the staff English courses to improve their skills so that later on they can provide study materials in English also to the students and to enrich the library also with more English study literature, books in this study program.

It can be stated that the College has identified the support necessary for the students and established a well-functioning support system, based on the needs of the students. Students personally feel heard and there is a well-functioning feedback system which allows them to solve the problem that has arisen immediately or in case of inaccessibility to a certain book. Plus, as now distance learning is being introduced students and teaching staff now have the opportunity to access lecture recordings online. As the Moodle system is being established all the necessary materials are being uploaded for them on this system where everything is very easy to access. Students also outlined the individual approach that they receive from the lecturers concerning any questions that arise within the study process.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

All in all, the College has a rather good resource base and the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process, even though, large part of the resources are not available at the premises of the College Library and has to be accessed in a different library outside the College. One of the main concerns is the level of English that is for the teaching staff and whether it is sufficient. The second is staff's unwillingness to conduct/participate in research activities.

Strengths:

1. Accessibility to Wi-Fi at the premises of the College.
2. The study materials, resources are constantly updated taking into consideration the needs of the teaching staff and students.
3. Individual approach and communication between teaching staff and the students.
4. Moodle system where all the necessary materials are easy for students to access.
5. Financial resources for providing scientific research are stated as found.

Weaknesses

1. One of the main concerns is that the College teaching staff lacks English language skills thus why they have not the capability of providing students study materials in English which are the main source of the newest literature in almost any study field. From the experts' side the advice would be to provide opportunities for the staff English courses to improve their skills so that later on they can provide study materials in English also to the students and to enrich the library also with more English study literature, books in this study program.
2. Ratio of academic and research workload of lecturers is seen as imbalanced. Lecturers devote around 10% of their working time to research work within the scope of their academic workload which is not seen as convenient and enough.
3. Most of the lecturers for this study program are guest lecturers.
4. Staff is not interested in conducting research.

4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

One of the priorities of the College development strategy for the period up to 2020 is according to the SER “competitive creative and artistic activities and research” (p. 4, SER). In line with the priorities, the College’s Strategic Plan “Latvian College of Culture at the Latvian Academy of Culture operational and development strategy 2016-2020” defines the strategic goals and directions for the development. Scientific research is mentioned among the goals of the College quality policy and in providing professional higher education (p. 4, SER). It is also mentioned that “the College Strategy sets out objectives for positive changes in education, research and creative activities” (p. 6, SER). The SER states that the strategic objectives and corresponding lines for the development of the ICS study field are defined in accordance with “the framework of the cultural policy in the library sector, and in line with the College’s strategy for operation and development for 2016-2020 and its implementation plan” (p. 19, SER). However, a new strategic plan is still in the development process. It is also stated that “research activities at the College are guided by the needs of the study fields and take into account the specificity of the College as a first level professional higher education institution, intending to combine practical research and implementation of creative projects according to national and international trends” (p. 49, SER). These arguments were confirmed during the interviews with the College management.

According to the SERT, ICS research direction is focusing on the “comparative analysis of the activities of Latvian memory institutions in creating digital collections, the research of the course of activities and the impact of the results on digitalization of cultural products today” (p. 49, SER). During the reporting period, emphasis was placed on developing research skills in line with the College’s facilities (p. 49). However, the target of growth was to expand networks by developing the Library Information Unit as a Support Centre for Academic Research (p. 19, SER). These arguments were confirmed during the interviews with the management.

Thus, the College and the ICS study field have clearly identified research in its priorities and strategic goals; the study field complies with the development aims of the College. However, although the College is willing to become a research-led institution in its strategic goals, no clear implementation plan and evidence to achieve such a level was found. In addition, the College has implemented systems of quality assurance and continuous quality improvement for its education programmes, although in relation to its research activities such systems are less well developed and there is limited formalised control. Stakeholder involvement in research activities is also generally limited. Thus, the College has partly implemented a policy of promoting research excellence. The academic staff needs more input than the baseline to achieve a higher research standard.

The SER states that scientific research is integrated in the teaching and learning process of the study programme. The completed research, publications and participation in various research projects by academic staff help to improve and update the course content and support the development of students’ research skills. The academic staff have initiated various research activities in their courses (e.g. reviews, research works, elaboration of term papers and qualification papers) according to their research interests in the field. In addition, the study programme includes a special course “Research methodology” (2 CP) in which students acquire knowledge and skills of how to integrate research from diverse fields, develop new working methods, solutions and approaches at the library. The content of the Term Papers and practical research carried out within the courses reflects the students’ skills in analysing problems in their field, conducting interviews with professionals on possible problem-solving scenarios, and giving their views on possible alternatives (pp. 49-50, SER). These statements were confirmed during the interviews with students and staff.

The students are involved in scientific research through Term Paper in the speciality of the study programme and through the development of Qualification Paper (p. 52, SER). In the empirical part of

the Term Papers practical research is carried out in the field, using different "research methods and interviews with industry professionals and library" users' (p. 74, SER). As of October 2019, a new Regulations for the Qualification Paper has been revised providing more emphasis for independent research within the framework of the Qualification Paper and corresponding to the research directions of the programme. The proposed research topics will be coordinated with employers – professionals of public and academic libraries (p. 74, SER). Research tasks are also included into several courses of the study programme (e.g. "History of book publishing and libraries", "Information sources and search", "National bibliography", "Introduction in information literacy"). Involvement of students in practical research projects takes place within the framework of sectoral studies and in projects at international level, using the funding of existing partners (e.g. Riga City Municipality, Swedbank), particularly by promoting the development and implementation of creative industries and libraries and information-related projects (e.g. development of digital projects with the Ethnographic Outdoor Museum). Thus, lecturers of the study programme promote students to take part in practical studies and development projects, in cooperation with allied organisations and memory institutions (pp. 52-53, SER). These statements were confirmed during the interviews with students, staff and graduates. Thus, it was evidenced that students of the study programme were involved in scientific research in a variety of areas of the study programme and the College has developed mechanisms to promote the involvement of the students in scientific research that seems to function well.

It is stated in the SER (pp. 50-51) that scientific research is also carried out through the Erasmus+ programme. However, only one example - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences - was provided. In addition, it was mentioned that there exists cooperation with the Šiauliai State College and that the College is developing other cooperation opportunities with foreign higher education institutions and with lecturers of other study fields, to improve the content of the study programme (p. 23, SER). The interviews with the academic staff confirmed that international cooperation in the field of scientific research is quite modest.

According to the SER, the College does not have the status of a scientific-research institution, and therefore funding for research work is not allocated. Research activities are carried out by lecturers, participating in various projects or in the main work of industry institutions and organisations, or by guest lecturers in their academic workplaces. The ratio of academic and research workload of lecturers is 90/10; lecturers devote up to 10% of their working time to research work within the scope of their academic workload (p. 47, SER). This is clearly not enough to achieve excellent research results.

The section in the SER: "The strategy for motivating teaching staff provides that an initiative for the use of new techniques and technologies in the study process, including participation in research and artistic innovation activities, is to be put in place among the criteria for determining professional eligibility for higher salary rates. The introduction of project results is supported, enabling innovative forms of study to be used to reinforce new methods in the study process. Assessing the potential for individual innovation of lecturers and supporting participation in international conferences and the publication of scientific works, as far as financial opportunities are concerned" (p. 51, SER) is so general that it is difficult to understand if there are any measures in place or it is just a statement what needs to be done in the future. This was clarified during the meetings with the College management and academic staff. It was evidenced that the College has not developed sufficient mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research yet. Furthermore, the academic staff was not even interested in research activities related to the College. The majority of the academic staff of this study programme were guest lecturers and were involved in research activities in other higher education institutions. The permanent staff preferred to focus on practical

activities instead of research. This can be explained by a fixed imbalance between the academic and research workload of teaching staff (90/10) in the College.

The teaching staff told the expert group that College effectively supports attendance to conferences, stays in other institutions (including abroad), and that it provides adequate resources for these purposes. During the reference period, academic staff participated at five conferences and published five publications (p. 51, SER). However, this is a rather modest result and, according to Annex 9, SER, these are mainly reports or presentations at conferences and not publications in international peer-reviewed journals. In addition, according to the Annex 9, SER only three out of 20 lecturers involved in the programme have scientific publications.

According to the SER, there is also evidence that academic staff have been involved in some research projects. The SER and the interviews with the academic staff confirmed that there are sufficient research resources and facilities at the College. Research resources intended for the implementation of the study field are offered in addition to the College Library also in cooperation with the Latvian Academy of Culture, the Latvian National Library, the University of Latvia Library, the Central Library of Riga and other libraries (p. 41, SER). However, the number of English-language information resources in the College library was small, which is probably also related to the teachers' poor English language skills. This, in turn, can be an obstacle to high-quality research. The argument about teachers' limited language skills is based on the observation data that teachers used an interpreter during the expert visit to convey their views to the experts and vice versa.

In the SWOT analysis of the study field the following opportunities were seen in the future: a) activation of lecturers' research activities by producing publications in the field of information management; b) collaboration with industry professionals in the field of scientific research that enables students to develop high quality study work and Qualification Papers (p. 23, SER). Thus, the direction is the intention to make research more efficient.

Thus, the expert group finds no strong evidence of a system of institutional level recognition and support to engage teaching staff in scientific research. Mechanisms to ensure an efficient operation of research activities are not well developed and systematically monitored. While the importance of research is clearly in evidence in the institution's strategic goals and there is a broad awareness among the academic staff of the importance of research, this is not clearly translated into an apparent awareness of the importance of achieving the highest quality outputs. As a result, the research efforts do not fully make an intellectual contribution to the institution's reputation.

The SER indicates that the field innovations, research and field development tendencies are directly implemented in the study courses: both as a theoretical lecture material and as the subject of seminars, study works and discussions (p. 46, SER). For example, in 2019, several lecturers have taken part in the cataloguing training at the National Library of Latvia in accordance with the requirements of Resource Description and Access (RDA), the latter being directly implemented in the content of the study course "Bibliographical description" and "National bibliography". A similar case in 2019 was the participation in conferences on the studies of the local history at the National Library of Latvia, the participation in lectures arranged within the framework of "Invisible library" programme of the National Library of Latvia, and other seminars and conferences, which provided significant input for the lecturers to improve the content of the respective study course (p. 46, SER).

The SER also indicates that during the reporting period, innovations were made in the content of the curriculum of the study programme "Library Science and Information", improving its responsiveness to industry trends, and introducing modern forms of study, such as creative labs, in collaboration

with other study programmes implemented in College (p. 54, SER). The interviews with employers confirmed that they were very satisfied with the knowledge and skills of the graduates of the study programme. However, the interviews with the academic staff did not reflect that the curriculum change would have been very innovative taking into account the current developments in big data, open data and link data and other aspects of data science and related fields.

The SER states that the study programme introduces innovative principles and elements, such as e-learning modules, activates students and faculty in creative projects (p. 54, SER). However, the interviews with the academic staff and students did not reflect that the staff is very familiar with innovative pedagogical approaches in higher education. The only innovation mentioned during the interviews was the learning Management System Moodle which was mainly used as a repository of resources. The design thinking was also mentioned by the College management, but the teaching staff was not able to give any example how this approach was implemented in the study programme.

Organizational innovation was highlighted in the SER that included provision of full support to the overall study process by developing a network of collaborative partners (public and academic libraries, professional library organizations), providing access to databases, creating a research and interactive study environment that fosters closer study links with professional practice, as well as social innovation by activating cooperation between specializations, improving organizational culture and the collaborative environment in general, which facilitates integration into professional activities and facilitates personal development (p. 54, SER).

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The directions of scientific research in the study field comply with the development aims of the higher education institution and they are relevant to the study field and the relevant industry. The relation between scientific research in the study field and the study process has been defined. Scientific research is integrated in the study process of the study programme. The College has developed mechanisms to promote the involvement of the students in scientific research. International cooperation in the field of scientific research within the study field is quite modest. The College has not yet developed sufficient mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research. Innovative solutions are implemented in the study process to a small extent. Lack of English language skills of teachers is an obstacle to excellent research activities.

Strengths:

1. The College and the study field have clearly identified research in its priorities and strategic goals. The directions of scientific research of the study field comply with the development aims of the College.
2. The directions of scientific research are relevant to the study field and the relevant industry.
3. Scientific research is integrated into the study process of the study programme.
4. The College has developed mechanisms to promote the involvement of the students in scientific research.
5. Students develop research skills through the Term Paper, Qualification Paper and various courses.
6. The College effectively supports attendance of academic staff in conferences, stays in other institutions, and provides adequate resources for these purposes.

Weaknesses:

1. The College has not developed a clear implementation plan to achieve the status of a research-oriented institution.
2. The College has not yet developed sufficient mechanisms for the involvement of teaching staff in scientific research.
3. The research production of the study field is rather modest.
4. The motivation of the academic staff to contribute to the research activities is very low.
5. International cooperation in the field of scientific research within the study field is limited.
6. Innovative solutions (methodological and technological innovation) are implemented in the study process to a small extent.
7. Ratio of academic and research workload of academic staff (90/10) is an obstacle for scientific research.
8. Insufficient knowledge of English can be an obstacle to high-quality research.

5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

According to the Strategic Plan of the College "A strategy for the activities and development of the Latvian Culture College for 2016-2020", one of the College's main objectives is to promote internationalisation. It is stated that the objective is to create open, direct and operational internal and external communication and a positive image of the College locally and internationally (p. 4, SER).

The College has established cooperation with several institutions in Latvia and abroad. The main cooperation partners in Latvia are libraries (National Library of Latvia, University of Latvia Academic Library, Riga Central Library, Library of Latvian National Museum of Art). For example, a long-term cooperation agreement was established with the National Library of Latvia in 2015, focusing on the development and promotion of the industry educational offerings, innovation, collaborative opportunities in science, research and innovation, and the promotion of the strategic development of the library industry (p. 56, SER). There is also cooperation with the University of Latvia in the field of curriculum development and graduates of the study programme may continue their education in the study programme "Information Management" of the University of Latvia (p. 56, SER). The list of cooperation agreements includes twelve institutions (Annex 10, SER).

The above-mentioned cooperation partners also provide internship opportunities for students of the study programme and students can use resources of their libraries in their learning process.

The main cooperation partners from abroad are the Šiauliai State College in Lithuania and Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The cooperation with the Šiauliai State College includes business trips, exchange of guest lecturers and internship offerings as part of the Erasmus+ programme (p. 72, SER). The College library has welcomed eight students from the Šiauliai State College having their traineeship (pp. 55-56, SER). The cooperation with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences has been launched in 2016. In the framework of the bilateral programme for the exchange of scientists, work has been launched on a study on the digitisation of cultural heritage (p. 45, SER). In the last three years, the College has participated in the cooperation projects of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences on the digitisation of cultural heritage and conducted a scientific study (p. 51, SER).

One of the College's main promoters of internationalisation is the ERASMUS Mobility Charter, which has been used by the College since 2010. The main internationalisation activities are academic staff and students' mobilities. During the reference period, seven members of the College academic staff have used Erasmus+ opportunities and enriched their experience and developed their competences in the UK, Germany, Israel, Bulgaria, Georgia, the Czech Republic and Macedonia (p. 45, SER).

The main type of mobility is the outgoing mobility of academic staff (13 exchanges). There were only

two incoming mobility of teaching staff (Israel and Ukraine) according to the Annex 8, SER during the reporting period. The incoming students have come only from the Šiauliai State College. Thus, the level of incoming mobility, both academic staff and students, is relatively low. The system or mechanisms which are used by the College to attract the students and the teaching staff from abroad have not been very efficient. The main opportunity used is Erasmus+ mobility and projects, and promotion of collaborative universities. The study programme, for example, has not used the potential of the College webpage. English language skills of the academic staff and students may be an obstacle to international cooperation. The academic staff also noted during the interviews that it is almost impossible to accept international students for full-time studies as they offer part-time studies only. It was mentioned that the opportunities for attracting students from abroad at present are fairly limited because the courses are not delivered in English or in a language other than Latvian. Until programmes are made readily available in English or other languages this will remain very limited.

The SER states: “The number of foreign students and teaching staff is increasing with years to come. It is growing moderately but steadily, as more and more partners are becoming interested in lecturing at College” (p. 58, SER). No evidence was found to confirm this argument.

The SER states that: “There is an active exchange of students and teaching staff, as with the EU, its partner countries’ universities and businesses” and “The international cooperation process is implemented with active participation in EU and EEA education and research programmes and projects, activities defined in bilateral cooperation agreements, student and lecturer exchange programmes, and participation in international academic and professional cooperation networks” (p. 56, SER). Although it is obvious that there is a good collaboration at the national level, the international cooperation is quite limited and has not been developed in a systematic way; there are many other opportunities in addition to the mobility of academic staff and students.

There have been a number of different types of training, workshops and exchange of experience provided by guest lecturers and trainers from abroad in the College, in which College teaching staff have participated (p. 45, SER). In addition, the lecturers participate in annual international scientific conferences of the University of Latvia, professional seminars and conferences hosted by the National Library of Latvia, seminars of the Riga Central Library, professional events organised by the Association of Latvian Librarians and the Association of Latvian Academic Libraries (p. 46, SER).

Several cooperation partners provide internship opportunities for students of the study programme. The study plan and study schedule in the LSI study programme provide for students with four minimum traineeships of 16 credits, the duration of each traineeship: 4 weeks of 48 academic hours. In total, 179 practices were implemented between 2014 and 2019, of which 70% in municipal public libraries, 21% in higher education institutions’ libraries and 7% in school libraries (Annex 12, SER). The organisation of the traineeship is described in detail in the SER and in the Annex 12 and 13 of the SER. Students can also apply for Erasmus+ traineeships and recent graduate traineeships. However, students have not used the opportunities of the Erasmus+ traineeship and recent opportunities of graduates’ traineeships over the reporting period, which can be explained by the specifics of the target audience of this study programme (pp. 57-58, SER). Employers are discussing the content of the traineeship and are involved in the Qualification Examination commission of the College (p. 56, SER). These arguments were confirmed during the interviews with the representatives of employers.

Since there is no other higher education institution in Latvia with similar first level professional higher education programme in library and information science, realisation of a joint study programme is complicated. The undergoing regional planning reform in the country will affect the demand for library and information centre employees, so the subject of joint study programmes

might become relevant.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The College cooperates with institutions from Latvia and to a limited extent abroad within the study field, and such cooperation contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field and the study programme. The cooperation partners are selected in view of the specific features of the study field and the relevant study programmes. However, the College has not developed yet a sufficient system and procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study field. A common system for the provision of traineeships and the organisation thereof has been developed within the study field. The joint study programmes are not developed.

Strengths:

1. The College has established good cooperation with institutions in Latvia and such cooperation contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field and the study programme.
2. The cooperation partners are selected in view of the specific features of the study field and the relevant study programmes.
3. A common system for the provision of traineeships and the organisation thereof has been developed within the study field.
4. The employers are involved in discussing the content of the internship.
5. The internship providers are satisfied with the knowledge and skills of the students of the study programme.

Weaknesses:

1. International cooperation is quite limited and has not been developed in a systematic way.
2. The level of incoming mobility, both academic staff and students, is relatively low.
3. The system or mechanisms which are used by the College to attract the students and the teaching staff from abroad have not been very efficient.
4. The College has not used the potential of its webpage to attract students and the teaching staff from abroad.
5. English language skills of the academic staff and students are an obstacle to international cooperation.
6. The implementation of studies in Latvian language only is an obstacle to attract students and the teaching staff from abroad.

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

Analysis

The College has taken into consideration most of the recommendations that were provided during the previous procedures for the assessment of the study field.

The College has improved and modernized its electronic equipment and library resources. During the visit the experts did see some very noticeable improvements made as it has been stated by the College - one computer class that has been restored and one newly created computer class with the necessary study equipment - computers, monitors. In order to achieve that, the College has taken

into account the previously stated recommendations as participation in STEM program projects.

What relates to developing library information resources, as it has been stated by the academic staff, it is being done at the beginning of each study year. Although, as they have noted to the experts, it is only the official procedure, they are constantly taking into consideration recommendations made by the students or academic staff of possible resources in need.

What is related to the recommendation of the strengthening use of electronic resources and improvement of the students' computer skills, significant changes were identified. Access has been provided to library information resources in an online catalogue by implementation of BIS Aleph, operation of the online catalogue until the middle of 2019. Implementation of BIS School Alice, providing an online directory since the August of 2019. Access to electronic databases has been introduced. Since the study year of 2019, the College provides access to subscribed databases, 2 e-Books and trial databases.

In order to provide students with necessary skills on how to use the online catalogues and databases, the College has implemented information literacy classes for 1st year students at the College Library at the beginning of every study year.

What comes to practical workshops for students to use digital resources recommendation, the College has managed to introduce a training session organized in cooperation with the National Library and such activity is being done since the September of 2019.

In order to upgrade professional skills in information retrieval, the College has implemented practical classes in study courses Research Methodology, Information Sources and Search, Information Literacy, Information Systems which takes place within the time of the particular study courses.

Relating to the recommendation that the study programme should include aspects of the social role of libraries as including social aspects of libraries in the content of studies, it has been done during the study courses updating the contents of study courses as Local Studies in the Library, Information Services for User Groups, User Groups - Children and Teenagers, Digital Communication and Social Networks, Professional Ethics.

In order to achieve cooperation for regional practical research projects as coordination of the topics of Qualification Paper with the employers of the sector and offer relevant practical research in study courses, it has been done through practical research in local history, recruitment policy and heritage conservation and studies on the development of library collections, work methods for different user groups, organization of school libraries.

Overall, it can be seen that the College has been paying attention to the recommendations given and trying to introduce and implement the necessary changes to improve the study process and the quality of the studies in general.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The College has contributed to the analysis of the recommendations and their implementation in view of the specific features of the study field and the relevant study programme. Some of the recommendations have been completed 6-7 years ago.

What comes to the analysis, it is being believed that the College has tried to improve all the necessary aspects according to its capabilities and resources. As it has been stated, the College has

taken into consideration all of the recommendations given by the previous accreditation group. The recommendations have been mostly implemented.

Strengths:

1. The recommendations are being taken into consideration and being implemented.
2. The College has improved and modernized its electronic equipment and library resources.
3. Students are being introduced with the databases and the use of catalogues before the studies take place in the beginning of every study year.

7. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

- 1 R1 - 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

Most of the procedures have been established but there are shortcomings related to their implementation.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The policy and procedures have been established. However there are some shortcomings, in particular relating to continuous improvement of the study programme, as well as evaluation procedures that need to allow both staff and students to express their views anonymously on a regular basis.

- 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: Partially compliant

A mechanism for the development and internal approval has been developed. However, there are some weaknesses in relation to the inspection of the performance. The system needs to cover all activities at the College, with the feedback mechanisms allowing different groups of staff to anonymously evaluate each other's work.

- 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

The criteria, conditions, and procedures have been developed and made public.

- 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

Internal procedures have been developed but they need some improvement, particularly regarding student evaluation of the courses and teaching.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

This has been done for the most part but there is a need to improve the system. In particular, it is necessary to collect data through anonymous student surveys for each course, every semester, allowing them to focus specifically on each course in their evaluation and express their views more frankly and honestly.

- 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: Partially compliant

Improvements of the study programme have been made, in good cooperation with the library field. There are, however, shortcomings and there is a need to better ensure continuous improvement development, and efficient performance of the study programme. In particular, sources for technical renewal are limited. It is necessary to promote the e-environment so that the study programme can meet the requirements of modern working methods, as well as to increase distance learning provision, which can help to increase attendance at the study programme and reduce student dropout.

- 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

The College has established good cooperation with institutions in Latvia, but international cooperation is quite limited and has not been developed in a systematic way. The College has not used the potential of internationalisation.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Research has been clearly identified in the priorities and strategic goals, and research complies with the development aims of the College. Some mechanisms to promote the involvement of academic staff and students in scientific research have been developed. However, a clear implementation plan to achieve the status of a research-oriented institution and sufficient mechanisms for the involvement of teaching staff in scientific research has not yet developed.

- 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: Fully compliant

The College has taken into consideration the previous recommendations from the experts group and has done what is in its capacity to make according improvements.

8. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

Resources for technical renewal and provision of the informative and methodical study base of the study process are limited. It is an extreme necessity for the study programme to get more support from the College to be able to promote the e-environment so that the study programme can meet the requirements of modern working methods.

The number of distance courses are limited. Support is needed from the College to increase distance learning provision, which can help to increase attendance at study and reduce student dropout.

It is extremely important that the QMS covers all activities at the College and that different groups can evaluate each other's work. In addition to collecting information through discussions about what has been done well and where improvements are needed at meetings, it is necessary to collect data, on a regular basis, through anonymous surveys and thus allowing people to express their views more frankly and honestly. Thus, the need for conducting an anonymous student survey for each course, every semester, is emphasised. This would allow the students to focus specifically on each course in their evaluation, and to do so frankly.

In addition, the study programme/college is advised to consider the possibility of conducting a mid-term student survey for each course. Getting feedback from students at that point makes it easier for teaching staff to make adjustments where needed, according to the cycle "Plan-Do-Check-Act".

Furthermore, it is necessary that the system allows teaching staff (and other staff) the possibility to assess the management group by anonymous surveys on a regular basis.

As the amount of guest lectures exceed the amount of permanent teaching staff which is seen as having an impact also on other aspects such as the capability of conducting scientific research, experts time advise to enlarge the number of permanent teaching staff.

International cooperation should be developed in a systematic way.

The College should use the potential of internationalisation.

A clear implementation plan to achieve the status of a research-oriented institution should be developed.

Sufficient mechanisms for the involvement of teaching staff in scientific research should be developed.

Innovative solutions (methodological and technological innovation) should be implemented in the study process more explicitly.

The development of English language skills of the academic staff should be promoted.

The College should use the potential of its webpage to attract students and the teaching staff from abroad.

Long-term recommendations

From the experts' side the advice would be to provide opportunities for the staff English courses to improve their skills so that later on they can provide study materials in English also to the students and to enrich the library also with more English study literature, books in this study program. That would not only benefit the staff each of the persons individually but also the quality of studies and study process in general.

II. "Library Science and Information" ASSESSMENT

II. "Library Science and Information" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

The study programme "Library Science and Information" (LSI) is the first level professional higher education study programme with the goal to prepare educated, professional, competitive specialists with the qualification "Library information specialist" for the work in public and private institutions and non-governmental organizations. The qualification "Library information specialist" corresponds to the level 5 of the Latvian qualifications framework. The study programme has been developed according to the professional standard "Library information specialist" that was approved on 21st October 2009 and is still in force.

According to the SER provided by the College the study programme LSI has been prepared according to the development guidelines for the library sector and the demand for the qualified library staff with higher education.

As highlighted in the SER and also according to the information gained during the expert group's meetings with the students, former students and the employers, the study programme LSI is unique for several reasons:

- 1) This is the only study programme in the field of library sciences providing the qualification "Library information specialist";
 - 2) The programme can be acquired in the form of part-time studies, giving the opportunity for students to work full time;
 - 3) The graduates of the study programme have an opportunity to continue studies in the bachelor's programme in the study programme "Information management" offered by the University of Latvia.
- The above mentioned three points were repeatedly stressed by the students, the former students, the employers and also the teaching staff during the meetings with the experts.

The objectives of the study programme LSI (or tasks, as formulated in the SER p. 63) are set to ensure the training of the qualified specialists and to provide them with necessary skills. The study programme LSI aims to provide comprehensive theoretical knowledge of methodologies, technologies and legal acts and normative documents relevant to libraries and information centres. Since the person with the qualification "Library information specialist" can be the manager of the small library or the branch of library as was stressed by teaching staff and former students, the understanding of the principles of library management as a cultural institution, the work environment and human resource management are also among the objectives of the programme.

The tasks of the programme are also the necessity to develop the skills to manage information resources and to provide professional information services, to organize the work and technological processes of the library and to communicate and collaborate with the clients, partners and society (local community).

The aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the programme LSI are defined according to the Professional Standard for the Library Information Specialist. As was mentioned during the expert group meeting with the management of the study field, the representative of the college Gita Komarova, Study Programme Director (also the Head of College Library Department), is part of the group of professionals preparing the update of the professional standards in the library sector. The new professional standard will also involve the update of the content and learning outcomes of the study programme in the future.

Since the study programme LSI is the only programme in the ICS study field implemented by College the SWOT analysis provided in the SER (p.23) is largely relevant also to the study programme. One of the weaknesses mentioned in the SWOT analysis is the small number of students studying in the study field, consequently in the study programme LSI.

The admission requirements for the students are that they have completed general secondary education with results in the State examination in Latvian and foreign language.

The SER (p.67) identifies the target group of the study programme LSI - the persons already working in different libraries (school libraries, public municipal libraries) and aiming for college education in their field of work. That is why the study programme is implemented as part-time studies (or part-time extramural studies) only. According to the discussions in the Expert group meetings with the stakeholders the emphasis is on practical training in different types of libraries in order to expand their experience, and also in addition on the information literacy, communication, the work with the different user groups and the event organization. All involved stakeholders who participated in the meetings with the group of experts stressed the practical side of the study programme LSI and the ability of students and graduates to apply their knowledge at work.

The study programme LSI might be appealing also for the young people who are interested in working in libraries or information centres and who want to get a higher education in 2 years and to start working during the studies.

According to the data provided in the SER and also in the expert group discussions with the stakeholders, the number of students in the study programme LSI is declining. One reason for that is the lack of or incomplete coordination with the professional educational programme "Library Science" offered by the Training Centre of the National Library of Latvia.

According to the Library Sector Strategy 2014 - 2020 the overarching goal of the sector is developing libraries as an important resource for the smart and sustainable growth of society which ensures the accessibility of Latvia's cultural heritage and promotes it, enhances public literacy and informational literacy, supports cultural and educational processes, etc. To reach this goal it is important that the study programme LSI strengthens its role in the system of education in the library and information sector by providing the comprehensive and updated content.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The study programme LSI has been prepared according to the development guidelines for the library sector and the demand for the qualified library staff with higher education. The aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the programme LSI are defined according to the Professional Standard for the Library Information Specialist.

In Latvia this is the only study programme in the field of library sciences providing the qualification "Library information specialist", therefore it is supported by employers and it is chosen by people working in the sector.

The programme is implemented in the form of part-time studies, giving the opportunity for students to work full time.

The programme has practical focus and graduates are able to apply their knowledge at work.

The graduates of the study programme have an opportunity to continue studies in the bachelor's programme in the study programme "Information management" offered by the University of Latvia, however coordination with the professional educational programme "Library Science" offered by the Training Centre of the National Library of Latvia could be improved.

It is important that the study programme LSI strengthens its role in the system of education in the library and information sector by providing the comprehensive and updated content and thus attracting more students.

Small number of students restricts and hinders the development of the programme.

Strengths:

1. The strong practical focus of the programme

Weaknesses:

1. Very small number of students.
2. Insufficient coordination with the professional educational programme "Library Science" offered by the Training Centre of the National Library of Latvia.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

According to the provided documentation, the content of the study courses corresponds to the goal and planned objectives of the study programme LSI and supports the acquisition of the professional competencies, skills and knowledge included in the professional standard and provides theoretical knowledge, research skills and practical skills, giving the basis for independent professional activity. The specialized study courses, such as Management of Library Work and Legislation, Management of Information Services and Centres, Information Systems, Management of Digital Resources in Memory Institutions provide theoretical knowledge, theoretical approaches and directions of development of library science and information management.

The study courses, like Collection Management, Bibliographic Description, Classification, Introduction to Bibliography Science, National Bibliography, provide knowledge of librarian work processes and practical skills in classifying information resources, creating indexes, understanding the importance of bibliographic description in the process of organizing information in libraries, etc.

This corresponds to the learning outcomes described in the SER and in the mapping of the study courses (Annex 18, SER). According to the discussions in the expert group's meeting with the stakeholders, the knowledge and skills previously mentioned are highly rated by the students, graduates and employers.

The study subjects Methodology of Research, Information Sources and Search provide the knowledge of electronic information resources, availability and usage of the resources, develop the ability to carry out analysis of information sources and develop research and problem-solving skills, also develop the skills of working with electronic resources, selecting the resource according the specific requests and formulating the results in the appropriate form.

The study subject Basics of Law and Copyright gives the knowledge of the fundamental principles of law, the regulatory framework of key legislation, and ability to find, analyze and apply legal norms.

According to the learning outcomes defined for the study programme LSI and the professional standard of the Library Information Specialist, one of the key competences is the ability to work with different groups - children, adults, researchers, and students. The study subjects Information Services for Different User Groups, User Groups - Children and Teenagers include social aspects of libraries as it was recommended in the previous accreditation.

To ensure the relevance of the study programme LSI and compliance with today's requirements and needs of the sector and society, the study subject Introduction to Information Literacy was introduced to provide knowledge of theoretical and practical aspects of information literacy and to develop the ability independently develop the information literacy plans for different user groups. The expert group discussions also stressed the necessity for Introduction to Pedagogy and Andragogy in order to improve the ability of library specialists to help to work with the information to different social groups.

According to the SER, the content of the study programme LSI is constantly improved by cooperation with the employers. The necessity of discussions of the future development of the study programme LSI and the development strategy of the study field was one of the topics of the expert group's meeting with the employers.

The theoretical knowledge acquired in the study course mentioned above is reinforced in practice during 4 traineeship periods in the different types of libraries.

Although the majority of the students are working full time in libraries, they stressed the importance of the practice in different libraries (by size, by specialization, by target audience, e.g. Braille or the National Library of Latvia, etc.) in the discussions with the expert group.

During the fourth traineeship period at the end of the fifth semester the students are preparing the Qualification paper. Until 2019 the qualification papers were mostly bibliographical indexes related to the regional studies or other relevant topics to the library users. The topics of the Qualification papers were selected and the bibliographical indicators were developed in the close cooperation with libraries.

The new Regulations for the Qualification papers came into force in October 2019 providing wider choice of the topics for the research, giving the chance for students to prepare not only the bibliographical index but also to make other types of research based on sector of region relevant information. This has been assessed very positively by students and former students.

Since the study programme is implemented in the form of part-time studies, the study implementation methods include active teaching using various practical tasks, consultations, seminars and workshops, including lectures and on-line classes. The advantage of small groups was repeatedly stressed by students and academic staff. It was mentioned that working in small groups provided an opportunity to develop close relationships between students and teaching staff and the possibility to use an individual approach and provide immediate feedback.

During the expert group's meeting with the academic staff it was emphasized that the teaching staff are more professionals than academics, especially for the speciality subjects, and they are able to provide practical insight in their teaching. It was also stressed that the previous experience and knowledge of students has been assessed and recognized since some of them had been working in the libraries for several years already.

According to the information provided in the SER, the evaluation methods used in the implementation of the study programme LSI are written and oral examinations after the completion of the study course. The type of the evaluation for a final examination of the study course, evaluation criteria and other types of assessment are specified in the description of the study course.

During the expert group's meetings with the academic staff and the students it was stressed that together with the results of evaluation, students also receive the feedback and guidance from the teaching staff on how to improve knowledge and skills in the study course and to achieve the learning outcomes. The small number of students helps to provide the student - centered education process where teaching staff acts as mentors providing psychological support to students (encouraging them to use new skills and technologies, working in a new field outside the usual comfort zone, taking initiatives, systematically learning and improving academic skills) as mentioned in SER.

In order to improve the quality of studies the student, graduate and employers surveys are conducted regularly. The students' surveys are conducted during the semester. The analysis of the study process evaluation questionnaires allows to assess the students' satisfaction with the organization and quality of the study process, the satisfaction with the infrastructure and available study resources. As can be seen from the information provided in SER (p.37) the anonymous surveys are used only to analyze the reasons for the termination of the studies.

Once a year the College conducts the graduates' survey by the telephone interview. While the College provided a statement on a survey for

graduates from 2013-2019 performed in 2019, the expert team could not obtain any information on this from the SER or during the site visit. Summarizing the data of the graduates' surveys, the College representatives stressed that the relevance and conformity of the competences provided by the study programme to the labour market in the sector is confirmed by the high employment rates of the study programme graduates. However, it is possible that the small number of students and graduates does not give the representative evaluation of the relevance of the study programme to

the needs of the library sector in general. The satisfaction of the employers was mentioned during the expert group's meeting with the employers, although none of the employers participating in the meeting could confirm the involvement in the discussions about the development of the future strategy of the study field and programme.

The number of the students involved in the incoming and outgoing mobility is marginal due to part-time study form.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The content of the study courses corresponds to the goal and planned objectives of the study programme LSI and supports the acquisition of the professional competencies, skills and knowledge included in the professional standard for the Library Information Specialist. The specialized study courses provide theoretical knowledge, theoretical approaches and directions of development of library science and information management, and practical skills in classifying information resources, creating indexes, understanding the importance of bibliographic description in the process of organizing information in libraries. This corresponds with the learning outcomes described in the SER and in the mapping of the study courses (Annex 18, SER). According to the discussions in the expert group's meeting with the stakeholders, the knowledge and skills previously mentioned are highly rated by the students, graduates and employers.

The study courses also help to develop competencies and skills to work with different groups - children, adults, researchers, and students.

To ensure the relevance of the study programme LSI and compliance with today's requirements and needs of the sector and society, the study subject Introduction to Information Literacy was introduced to give knowledge of theoretical and practical aspects of information literacy for different user groups. During the expert group discussions it was stressed the necessity also for Introduction to Pedagogy and Andragogy in order to improve the ability of library specialists to help to work with the information to different social groups.

Strengths:

1. There is a good balance between the specialized study courses for library and information specialists and study courses providing more general competencies and skills, such as Project management, Digital Communication and Social Networks, Management of Human resources, Event Management Methodology.
2. Well organized practical training and cooperation with different types of libraries provides the opportunity for students to understand the complexity of information systems, management of digital resources, and development of skills in selecting the electronic resources.

Weaknesses:

- 1 The employers are not involved in the discussions and development of the new strategy of the Study field and the study programme LSI;
2. Students working full-time are not interested in outgoing mobility.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

One of the most topical priorities of the College is the introduction of the learning environment Moodle, which is especially topical when providing distance learning. The College started using it only in March 2020, having created a platform within the framework of the European Union project

“Latvijas Kultūras akadēmijas un Latvijas Kultūras koledžas pārvaldības efektivizācija un studiju procesa modernizācija”: (Nr.8.2.3.0/18/A/020)

<https://kulturaskoledza.lv/blog/2020/02/21/latvijas-kulturas-koledza-turpina-e-risinajumu-pilnveidi-un-ieviesanu/>. Moodle e-learning environment is accessible from the College website. 22 lecturers from “Library Science and Information study program” (total in college – 37 lecturers) delivered study courses in Moodle platform on November 2020. In the corresponding semester (Fall 2020), 10 study courses had been taught in LIS programme, 6 of them on full scale in Moodle (information received during the site visit, November 13, when getting acquainted with the College Moodle system and through additional information). During the acquaintance with the Moodle e-learning environment, it was stated that a part of the study courses provides a description of evaluation of mid-term tests, which shows that the programme coordinators and lecturers understand the importance of the evaluation system for combined studies, at the same time, this process must be continued in accordance with topical methodological approaches and forms of assessment in the e-learning environment. It should be noted that some of the study courses elaborated in the e-learning environment mainly perform the function of a repository of learning materials and, improving further the e-learning environment.

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia pays for the licenses of the conference platform Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

When meeting with the students of the programme to be assessed, key words such as “information literacy”, “practical knowledge”, and other designations related to information communication technologies and exciting, interesting learning were mentioned. A large part of the students of the programme are already working librarians. Students demonstrate an understanding that they will need contemporary digital skills in their further professional careers that can be acquired through the use of technology in the learning process.

For students of the study programme to be assessed, the study process takes place in several classrooms - those intended for lectures with visual material demonstration, for example, the study course “World art history” and those intended for inclusive group work. There are 2 computer classes (the latest one was created just in 2018), where the study courses “Information sources and search”, “Information systems” are taught.

The learning environment is creatively decorated with exhibitions of college students. Academic and general staff as well as students have access to the recreation room, a room for brainstorming. Students of the programme participate in various college events held in the concert hall with a special lighting and sound system. It is a place where conferences and other events are also held.

The College is situated in a building that cannot be adapted for students with special needs, including a library, though the College staff is ready to adapt and provide personalised support if there are such students.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Sufficient material and technical base is provided for the implementation of the study programme, but in some aspects modernization and improvements are required. As the e-learning environment MOODLE is a new study tool at the college, the college failed to demonstrate a sequential mechanism between the stages: e-environment content - material authors of materials - users of materials and did not explain how all parties are systematically synchronized and trained, how the e-learning environment is aligned with the study content. During the meeting, both students and graduates pointed to the rapid increase of the IT component importance in the industry. It was not clear how this industry requirement has been already included in the programme and how it is going to be intensified as a component in various study courses.

Strengths:

1. A large part of the students of the programme are already working librarians, so they have a wide access through an interlibrary subscription to the literature and sources necessary for studies.
2. Support for online teaching platforms from the Ministry of Culture.

Weaknesses:

1. The library has a minimum number of books related to the specificity of the programme; only a few have been published in recent years.
2. There is an insufficient number of books in foreign languages. It would be advisable to reconsider the number of copies of books, because part-time students from different regions of Latvia study in the programmes, therefore the actual exchange of books between them at the time between examination sessions is not possible.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

The study programme involves competent lecturers who are interested in promoting the acquirement of students' knowledge, skills and professional competences. The necessary procedures for recruitment of staff have been established, the dialogue on the expected learning outcomes in study courses has been maintained. The College has developed procedures for staff engagement and / or employment processes (including vacancy announcements, recruitment, election procedures, etc.) (SER, p. 45). It is not specified who develops and approves vacancy descriptions and requirements for the candidates when starting the selection procedure. This procedure should be provided an internal regulatory framework and be aligned with the requirements for job applicants in the programme and in the institution as a whole.

The qualification of the academic staff and visiting lecturers involved in the provision of the programme complies with the conditions of the study programme implementation and the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and the Cabinet Regulation No. 793 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations Regarding Opening and Accreditation of Study Fields" and the content of the study programme. The report states that "The College regularly evaluates the competence and suitability of the lecturers and, if necessary, recruits new lecturers to ensure the study process" (SER, p. 85). During the meeting, neither the management nor the lecturers referred to this procedure, the impact on the quality of the study programme implemented by the College.

The activities mentioned in the SER regarding ensuring the qualification and quality of work of the academic staff are sufficiently diverse, though they are implemented in the form of campaigns. It is necessary to develop a unified system binding on the management and staff of the College (SER, section, p. 46).

There is a need to improve teaching staff's understanding of the differences between intermediate and final assessment of learning outcomes and their differences from the assessment of study quality or student-centered education principles, which must take place anonymously in order to obtain an objective idea. The meeting with the lecturers showed that there is some confusion regarding these notions.

During the visit, the expert group obtained information that for about a year within the framework of a project financed by the European Union, the College has been transferring the elements of the study programme content to the Moodle e-learning environment. At the same time, it should be noted that this is not a new system and its existence should be seen as an acute necessity and not

as an innovation. The views of the College management, lecturers and students on the special role of the e-learning platform in the distance learning situation were reduced to the understanding that it is an important support during the constraints of face to face learning caused by COVID19 pandemic. At the same time, the fact that small groups allow for ensuring individual communication between the students of the programme, administration and lecturers confirmed at the meeting with students and lecturers is positive, which is a very important factor in the part-time study situation.

The staff of the assessed professional study programme of the College includes a sufficient proportion of professionals in the field, which the College indicates in the SWOT analysis as its strength - "Qualified lecturers, who are professionals working in the field with practical and pedagogical work experience, are attracted" (SER, p .23.)

The College is aware that investments must be made in raising the qualification of lecturers, ensuring cooperation, analysis of learning outcomes, as well as matching the study content and learning outcomes to knowledge, skills and competences between study courses within the study programme and involvement of lecturers in scientific research. Therefore, within the framework of the recent management reform the post of a programme coordinator who would arrange these procedures has been introduced. The "opportunities" section of the SWOT analysis includes several aspects aimed at raising the qualification and scientific involvement of the teaching staff:

"1. To promote wider use of e-environment in the study process by organizing different study forms and methods, availability of digital study materials and diversity of communication possibilities; 2. Collaboration with the lecturers of other study directions of the College, improving the content of the study programme; 3. More active involvement of lecturers and students of the study direction into the science and professional events, exhibitions, seminars, conferences; 4. Activation of lecturers' research activities by producing public actions in the field of information management" (SER, p. 24).

It follows that the College is aware of the need for mutual cooperation of lecturers, as well as cooperation with external partners in the areas of strategic development: "The next period College Development Strategy 2021-2027 foresees the continuation of study course lecturers' cooperation in the fields of creative industries, information management and new information technologies, seeking integration opportunities, in the sense of new content priorities from 2021 defining introduction of creative process support technologies in the study process, increasing the number of technological specializations and the share of digital skills in existing study programmes" (SER, p. 25)

The report provides certain examples of the involvement of the academic staff in scientific research. The College should think about the symmetrical involvement of the lecturers of the study programme in science, because the College has changed the form of a qualifying paper (meeting with graduates they indicated that it was their recommendation) and the works are no longer developed as bibliographic indicators, but rather as a research into some topic. Consequently, the issue of research methodology, sources, structure becomes topical for the scientific advisors.

A positive feature of financial security, which was pointed out by the teaching staff during the meeting, is the possibility to apply for and receive support for creative leave without losing one's salary.

Annex 9 "List of publications, patents, and artistic creations of the teaching staff over the reporting period" demonstrates that only 3 out of 20 lecturers involved in the programme have scientific publications. At the same time, the fact that the design of bibliographic data of submitted publications is inconsistent, as it does not provide complete bibliographic information about the publication, and the number of publications is small, (but it should be noted that it is the first level professional higher education study programme "Library Science and Information"), can be justified by the absence of a shared strategy on the common field (s) of scientific research in the study field, which could be developed together with the cooperation partners of the programme - the Latvian Academy of Culture and the Latvian National Library, which have significant scientific research.

Only a systematic scientific research practice of the scientific advisors themselves will give them the

opportunity to supervise the students' qualifying papers at a high level.

In the SER (p. 10) the College refers to The National Culture Policy Framework Document "Creative Latvia: Library Industry Strategy 2014-2020". That provides an exhaustive assessment and multifunctional character of the library as a cultural institution of public interest today, therefore, the College states that a modern library is a "center for the acquisition of modern information and communication technologies". This statement must be adapted to the content of the study programme, and for this purpose systematic professional development of lecturers is required to keep the content of the programme offered by lecturers topical, otherwise the qualitative implementation of the programme would be threatened, as evidenced by the threat regarding the introduction of the study programme identified by the College, "Turning to possible threats to the realization of the study programme, first of all, they are related to the quality of the study process organization and lecturers' work, as well as the quality of the technique used" (SER, p.. 25).

In fact, at all meetings (with College management, programme administrators, lecturers, students, graduates) the need to improve English language skills was pointed out.

Many lecturers have low workloads and they work part-time in the College, as well as find out about their workload for the following academic year at the beginning of the academic year and enter into a contract for only one certain academic year. Such a situation does not promote the sense of security and trust of the employed staff, does not stimulate the minimally employed lecturers to plan their career in the long run, balancing it with the improvement of their qualifications and contribution to moving the programme towards excellence and innovation.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The College employs enthusiastic and competent lecturers and support staff for the implementation of the study field. There is a conviction that the study process is successfully implemented in the institution in accordance with the previously accredited study programme. At the same time, it should be noted that the field of "Information and Communication Science" in today's information society is developing very rapidly, and these trends should also be represented in the study programme "Library Science and Information". In turn, the views expressed during the meeting with students and graduates show that the programme is not yet sufficiently focused on students' acquisition of digital communal competencies to transfer them to the update of library's work and communication with the public.

During the meeting with the teaching staff, the information was received that the content and literature of the study courses of the programme are updated at the beginning of each academic year. In fact, at all meetings (with College management, programme administrators, lecturers, students, graduates) the need to improve English language skills was pointed out, which would ensure: (i) more intensive internationalization: attracting foreign visiting lecturers, foreign internships for students within Erasmus + programme, elaboration of joint publications with foreign colleagues and publishing in international scientific editions, etc.; (ii) integration of more diverse study materials and study forms into the content of study courses.

Strengths:

1. The College management, lecturers, and support staff work as a team.
2. The possibility for staff to apply for and receive support for creative leave without losing one's salary.
3. After the annual student surveys, methodological meetings are organized, in which the coordinators of the study programme discuss the results with the lecturers.
4. In the pandemic situation, the College quickly reorganized its work into a distance learning format.
5. For lecturers who do not have the appropriate technical equipment at home to conduct

remote classes, workplaces have been equipped to deliver classes remotely from college.

Weaknesses:

1. There is a need to improve teaching staff's understanding of the differences between intermediate and final assessment of learning outcomes and their differences from the assessment of study quality or student-centered education principles, which must take place anonymously in order to obtain an objective idea.
2. Insufficient English language component of study program implementation at all levels.
3. Many lecturers have low workloads and they work part-time in the College, as well as find out about their workload for the following academic year at the beginning of the academic year and enter into a contract for only one certain academic year.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Library Science and Information"

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the attachment is provided in The diploms.pdf and complies with the regulations

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: Partially compliant

Cooperation agreement.zip.

This requirement is not fully - compliant as the agreement indicates that "LU shall undertake to accept the applications and to register the graduates of part-time intramural studies of LKA LKK first-level professional higher education study programme "Librarian Science and Information" for the second study-year part-time correspondence studies in bachelor study programme "Information Management" at the LU Faculty of Social Sciences" as LKA LKK offers a professional higher education study programme and LU offers bachelor study programme.

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

The relevant document is attached in ANNEX 22_ Loss Compensation Arrangements.docx and complies with the requirements

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

The confirmation was obtained through the attachment 1lektoru cv_eng.pdf and also a compliance statement attached

- 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

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

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

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

The sample of the study agreement complies with the necessary provisions ANNEX 23 Study Agreement.docx

- 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

ANNEX 20_Descriptions of the Study Courses.docx

The study programme is implemented in Latvian and it complies with the requirements. The study course descriptions are advised to examine the possibility to be adjusted to the online learning environment.

- 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

ANNEX 17_Comparison of the study Programme with the Profession Standard.docx

The study results of the study program "Library Science and Information" (the set of competences, skills and knowledge to be acquired) are focused on the requirements of the profession standard "Library Information Specialist" (approved in 2009).

- 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

Not applicable

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The ANNEX 16_Compliance of the Study Programme LSI with the Educational Standard.docx confirmed programme compliance with the Cabinet Regulation No. 141 "Regulations Regarding the State Standard for First-Level Professional Higher Education", as adopted on 20 March 2001.

- 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

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

1lektoru cv_eng.pdf.

It is kindly advised for some of the lecturers to publish more.

- 15 R5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Most of the legal requirements except the requirements about the possibilities to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme have not been met.

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

The conditions have been met, but for the programme to be up-to-date and competitive, the library resources, scientific research work and its transfer to the study process have to be strategically improved.

- 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

Annex 1lektoru cv_lv.pdf

Annex 8_pielikums_Statistikas apkopojums par mācībspēku ienākošo un izejošo mobilitāti-1.docx9_pielikums_Mācībspēku iesaiste zinātniskajā pētniecībā.docx

ANNEX 11_Statistical Data of the Outgoing and Incoming Mobility.docx

The compliance with the requirements has been stated.

- 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

Not applicable

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Most of the legal requirements except the requirements about the possibilities to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme have not been met.

Evaluation of the study programme "Library Science and Information"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Library Science and Information"

Short-term recommendations

Emphasis on continuous development and improvements of the study programme needs to be strengthened. Anonymous student surveys should be conducted for each course, every semester. This would allow the students to focus specifically on each course in their evaluation, and to do so frankly. In addition, it would be desirable if anonymous mid-term student surveys were conducted. Getting feedback from students at that point would make it easier for teaching staff to make adjustments where needed, according to the cycle "Plan-Do-Check-Act". Furthermore, teaching staff (and other staff) should have the possibility to assess the management group by anonymous surveys.

The College needs to improve the home page by aligning the information in the Latvian and English versions of the website; as regards the programme to be accredited, the information on the succession of the programme according to the continuing education programme of the National Library of Latvia and opportunities of further study at the University of Latvia after graduation from the College programme must be indicated. The website should also emphasize the synergy of the programme with other College study programmes.

Long-term recommendations

The study programme needs to become more visible in the College Strategic Plan.

It is necessary that the College supports the study programme by promoting the e-environment and by supporting distance education.

It would be advisable to create a catalogue of graduates' qualifying papers.

It is necessary to pay more attention to the integration of self-directed study principles in the e-learning environment, the e-learning environment should be activated as a place for discussions and reflections.

A common approach to integrating Zoom lessons into the Moodle environment needs to be developed.

The supportive training courses on Moodle designing should be organised for the College teaching staff.

In order to comply with the policy set for libraries by the information society, it is necessary to include a larger "information literacy" component in the study content, for example, the study courses "Introduction to information literacy", "Digital communication and social networks".

After the accreditation during the implementation of the study programme, when evaluating and updating the annual study courses, the evaluation of the study content should be provided from the positions of topical information technology acquisition content and methodology.

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

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

Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R1 - Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 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	Most of the procedures have been established but there are shortcomings related to their implementation.

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R2 - The cooperation with different organisations from Latvia and abroad implemented within the study direction ensures the achievement of the aims of the study direction.		Partially compliant	The College has established good cooperation with institutions in Latvia, but international cooperation is quite limited and has not been developed in a systematic way. The College has not used the potential of internationalisation.
R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).		Partially compliant	Research has been clearly identified in the priorities and strategic goals, and research complies with the development aims of the College. Some mechanisms to promote the involvement of academic staff and students in scientific research have been developed. However, a clear implementation plan to achieve the status of a research-oriented institution and sufficient mechanisms for the involvement of teaching staff in scientific research has not yet developed.
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.	Fully compliant		The College has taken into consideration the previous recommendations from the experts group and has done what is in its capacity to make according improvements.

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)

No.	Study programme	R5	R6	R7	R8	Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
1	Library Science and Information (41322)	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Good

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

-