

Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies

Study field: Management, Administration and Management of Real Property

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Summary Assessment of the Study Field

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LLU study direction 'Management, administration and real estate management' has clearly defined attainable goal, which well-suites the new LLU Vision and values. The vision of LLU 'to be one of the leading universities of science and technologies in the Baltic Sea region, specializing in the sustainable use of natural resources aimed at the enhancement of quality of life for society' is incorporated in to the study process and present in many courses.

LLU has established Quality management system and it is publicly available. LLU Quality Management System demonstrates the implementation of all ESG standard requirements, it contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programmes and study direction. The system ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction and the relevant study programmes.

The procedures for the development and review of the study programmes of the study direction and the feedback mechanisms are defined and they are logical. LLU collects and analyses the information on study programmes of the study direction on a regular basis and uses it to improve the study direction.

LLU has 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.

LLU has set research excellence as long term goal and medium-term objective. Academic staff motivation system related to research has been developed. To achieve this goal, involvement in international research projects should be enhanced and more emphasis placed on scientific publication in peer-revised high quality journals instead of conference proceedings. Stronger emphasis on research methods also in the bachelor programme and master programme "Business Management" could be recommended.

LLU has established a cooperation with all stakeholders and have demonstrated some good results. Still the system for involvement of corporate partners in the development and implementation of the study direction and procedures for cooperation could be further developed.

LLU has recently started to implement study programmes in English and this is a good step towards internationalisation of education. Newly developed joint master study programme "Agri-food business management" is unique example of international cooperation. Still the number of international exchanges is still quite limited and there is a place for improvements.

The academic master study programme "Agri-food business management" is unique in the market and its design and content of the study courses well correspond to the industry requirements. Programme has highly qualified teaching staff. Still the number of students in the programme is still very small, especially from Baltic countries. Programme has good perspectives for further internationalisation, however, currently the possibilities for staff and student international exchange in programme related areas are quite limited and should be widened. It is said that will have a joint diploma, however, the diploma sample prepared for assessment is not a joint diploma. It is highly recommended to design a joint diploma clearly indicating that graduates have studied in three Universities.

Professional master programme "Business and Management" is MBA type programme delivered in two languages - Latvian and English. The programme has experienced healthy increase in the number of students in the assessment period and has good perspectives, especially in respect to international cooperation. It could be beneficial to increase international cooperation since there is no data about incoming ERASMUS students in the programme.

Professional master programme "Project Management" provides project management related

competences which are needed in the companies. Overall, this a well-designed, well organised and well delivered study programme with increasing number of students. The quality of the courses is high, and the content is relevant. The teaching staff is well qualified, and resources are generally sufficient. The quality of the programme well is demonstrated by the quality of Master thesis. It is planned to start implementation of the professional master's study programme "Project management" in English language in 2021. No doubt that this would contribute to further development of the study direction.

Professional bachelor programme 'Entrepreneurship and Business Management' (or "Business and management of the company" as it should be translated from Latvian) aims to ensure acquisition of professional Bachelor in Entrepreneurship and Business Management. Study programme goal, tasks and intended results are interrelated, but sooner related to management education; however, development of entrepreneurial competences is not foreseen. It is recommended to review programme name, mainly as it is translated in English, to align the programme name with goal, tasks and learning results. Since programme aim still include intention to 'educate entrepreneurs', learning outcomes could be improved by introducing intentions to develop entrepreneurial skills in line with European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp).

First level professional higher education programme "Business Management" ensures acquisition to business specialist qualification. It is a well-designed, well organised and well delivered study programme. Still the number of students in the programme has decreased significantly and have been very low during last two years and this may threaten the existence of the programme in future. Programme has specific delivery mode (part-time; weekend) what makes it very appropriate choice for a specific target market and justifies the reason of its existence. Increasing programme promotion could be recommended and contribute to attraction of higher number of potential students.

1. Management of the Study Field

Analysis

The aim of the LLU study direction "Management, Administration and Management of Real Property" is clearly stated and is "to ensure preparing internationally competitive, high-professional-level management specialists for the fields of commerce, business, entrepreneurship, project management as well as agricultural and food business management". The aim of the study direction is in line with the LLU vision 'Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies is one of the leading science and technology universities of the Baltic Sea region, with a specialisation in the sustainable exploitation of natural resources to improve the life quality of society'

The self-assessment report demonstrates the attainability of the study direction`s aim and link it LLU vision by explaining that management specialists become innovation introducers in enterprises not only in Zemgale region but also throughout Latvia. Since the specialisation of LLU is` associated with research on the bioeconomy, the implementation of management programmes includes a bioeconomy aspect (page 22). The sustainability and bioeconomy aspect was also proved to be present in all study courses, as it was evident from the discussions with programmes` faculty during the visit. The academic master programme 'Agri-food Business Management" has been introduced since the spring semester 2018/2019 academic year and this should contribute to LLU long-term goal 'excellence in research'. The programme has no graduates jet; therefore it is not possible to tell what will be the programme related research outputs.

The field of study is administered in accordance with the external regulatory framework and the LLU Quality Management System Assurance Plan.

The study direction is implemented at the LLU Faculty of Economics and Social Development (ESAF), which is in accordance with the goal defined by its Statute. The study direction is managed by Dean, vice-deans, each study programme has dedicated programme director, ESAF institute director is also involved. Support personnel involved in the implementation of the study programmes include three secretaries. The management of the study direction is consistent with the structure of LLU (as presented in Appendix No 4).

The study direction under assessment implements five study programmes: level 1 programme "Business Studies"; bachelor programme "Entrepreneurship and Business Management" and two professional master programmes "Business Management" and "Project management" and one academic master programme "Agri-food Business management" which is a joint international programme implemented with partner institutions from Lithuania and Estonia.

The programme directors are responsible for programme implementation on daily bases as well as for development. The duties of support personnel are to keep student files, keep faculty documentation, inform students, and manage and account for internal and external documentation. During the onsite visit, it was proved by the students and by the lecturers, who mentioned the same support channels and were positive about the quality of support services.

The Methodology Commission is a structural element ensuring cooperation between structural units and the development of the study programmes. It includes Programme directors and responsible departments and/or institutes. Its` functions are regulated by the Statute of the Methodology Commission (LLU Senate Decision No. 6-107 of 9 April 2008). Separate Methodology Commission is established for each level of studies (bachelor and master).

The stakeholders seem to be involved in the management of the study direction (e.g. students, personnel, research institutes and other organizations related to research, employers, industry experts and organizations). During the visit programme alumni expressed the willingness to be involved more, however, many of them are involved as guest lecturers.

During the assessment visit the evidence showed that the structure of the management and administration of the study direction and the study programmes are oriented towards the development, the decision-making seems to be efficient. The necessary support is provided by the administrative and technical staff.

Students' admission procedures, as well as recognition of the study period, professional experience, and the previously acquired formal and non-formal education is regulated by the vice-rector for studies ordinance On the Procedure of Admission to LLU, the Senate decision Regulations regarding Enrolment on Bachelor Studies at LLU, the Senate decision Regulations regarding Enrolment on Master Studies at LLU and the vice-rector for studies ordinance On the Rights and Obligations of Applicants and LLU during Admission. Admission regulations in Latvian as well as in English, as well as the admission process for foreign applicants are available on LLU website.

The process corresponds with all national requirements (e.g. Law on Higher Education Institutions, Cabinet regulation No. 846 of 10 October 2006 Regulations regarding Requirements, Criteria and Procedure for Enrolment on Study Programmes).

Applicants can commence their studies at later stages and the process established in LLU is regulated by the LLU rector ordinance On Commencing Studies at latter stages and it complies with the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Cabinet Regulation No. 932 of 16 November 2004 Procedure for Commencing University Studies at Later Stages.

LLU has a process for the recognition of learning outcomes achieved through previous education or professional experience - it is regulated by the vice-rector for studies ordinance On the Assessment and Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved through Previous Education or Professional Experience at LLU, and the Statute on the Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved through

Previous Education or Professional Experience approved by the LLU Senate. The process complies with the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Cabinet regulation No. 36 of 10 January 2012 Regulations regarding the Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved through Previous Education or Professional Experience.

During the accreditation visit the commission did not meet any students who have used the recognition of the previous education, however, according to the information provided in SAR, it should be concluded that the processes are in place, they are logical and efficient.

LLU procedures and mechanisms for academic integrity are described in LLU rector ordinance Procedure for Submitting Electronic Copies of Graduate Theses and their Examination in the Plagiarism Control System; and LLU rector ordinance Violations of Academic Integrity in Graduate Theses and Doctoral Dissertations.

LLU has concluded an agreement on the use of an inter-university unified computerized plagiarism control system allowing to examine all graduate theses on plagiarism in both bachelor and master programmes.

To deal with plagiarism cases Plagiarism Assessment Committees is established which includes the programme director, the supervisor, the director of the institute, a representative of the Faculty administration, and the head of the Methodology Commission, and the students with suspicious work is invited. Measures taken in case of plagiarism include expelling and allowing to re-write the graduate thesis not earlier than after one year on another topic.

It is evident that LLU mechanisms for academic integrity are established and include all stakeholders. However, the described mechanisms relate to the graduate theses and not to other student works. It still remains unclear whether there are any regulations related to other student works and especially how plagiarism is introduced from the very beginning of the studies.

The information published on the website of the LLU regarding the relevant study programmes of the study direction complies with the information available in the official registers. It provides important information for the candidates and the students and is published in all languages in which the study programmes are implemented.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Study direction 'Management, administration and real estate management' has clearly defined attainable aim, which well-suites the LLU Vision and goals. So, the study direction is important in the overall portfolio of study directions and its importance in relation to research is growing.

Strengths:

1. LLU expertise in bioeconomy and sustainable development which well supports LLU vision and overall strategic focus.
2. Overall vision of LLU is also transformed to study programmes and study courses and all the lecturers mentioned related topics they discuss in their study courses.
3. The communication between the students and administration is good, no vertical gap of power was felt.
4. Two motivational system for academic staff related to teaching and research activity seems well functioning.

Weaknesses:

1. In line with LLU goals and objective related to research excellence, the depth of empirical research in bachelor and master thesis should be strengthened.

2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

LLU has established a Quality management system description and assurance plan approved on 2016 October 10. LLU quality management system is based on an “Investors in Excellence Standard”. It covers Quality management system policy, Quality management system management model; describes process management and supervision; risk management and assessment methodology; human resources management policy and quality management system assurance plan (in reality it is not planned, but just a list of assurance activities). The document is publicly available at <https://www.llu.lv/sites/default/files/2020-08/Quality%20Assurance%20System.pdf> .

The quality management system of LLU covers all the spheres of LLU activity and includes 19 main processes (four management processes, six basic processes and nine support processes). Self-assessment report informs, that study process is divided into 90 processes. The detailed joint scheme of study processes discloses interconnectedness of 90 processes. During the onsite visit, experts tried to clarify the owners of 90 processes and how they correspond with the main 19 processes. Also, LLU was asked to provide experts with the 90 processes of the joint scheme of study processes and a list of “owners” (responsible positions for implementation) of the processes; however, the LLU didn’t provide the scheme to experts, because it is confidential. There was a feeling of confusion among representatives of LLU during this discussion. This confusion might be caused by misuse of the term “process”. Experts make a guess (as all documents were not provided), that LLU has 19 main processes, and the study process is divided into 90 subprocesses or even procedures. Still, it is unclear how it is managed, how it works with other main processes, such as the process of distance learning and the process of lifelong learning. Also, there is a question of 90 processes management effectiveness. Experts recommend minimising the quantity of study process processes.

LLU Quality Management System policy does not name the ESG standard as the one, which requires special attention. However, LLU Quality Management System demonstrates the implementation of all ESG standard requirements. LLU quality policy aims to create a favourable and development-friendly institutional environment for those who link creativity and professional development with LLU. During the onsite visit, students emphasised friendly relationships with lecturers and administration, which help to solve any equations. Lecturers assured, that staff recruitment and development procedures are transparent and are promoted for professional development, as well as for scholarly activities and innovativeness in teaching. Still, little evidence experts got regarding business representatives’ involvement in the decision-making process.

The positive side of the LLU Quality management system is that it has risk management and assessment methodology. Risks are identified, analysed and managed for each key process.

LLU quality management system ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction and the relevant study programmes through the constant measurement of stakeholder satisfaction, internal quality audits on the compliance of processes with internal and external regulatory documents. The whole system has repeated certification according to “Investors in Excellence Standard” every second year. The last recertification LLU quality system passed in 2018.

LLU “Regulation of Studies” foresees a flexible and wide variety of students learning results evaluation forms. So, lecturers are free to choose the most appropriate evaluation form which corresponds with the learning outcome. During the onsite visit, students proved that lecturers discuss learning outcomes and evaluation strategies with students during the first lecture of the course. It demonstrates that the quality system for achieving the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction and the relevant study programmes exists.

LLU procedures for the development, review and feedback mechanisms of the study programmes are clearly defined, logical and efficient. The study programme director and any lecturer have an opportunity to initiate the implementation of the new courses. Self-assessment report indicates that feedback from students, alumni and employers is collected via survey questionnaires. During the onsite visit, students proved that they are surveyed and can express their opinion regarding study

programmes content, study process and environment. Also, students have an opportunity to submit suggestions and complains according to LLU Regulation of Studies. Students can submit complaints about the final thesis's grade, the study process's organisation and procedures, the tuition fee and ex-matriculation. However, there is no opportunity to submit complaints regarding other questions (e.g. discrimination). Also, it is not clear why students can complain regarding the tuition fee, if a student decided to enter studies with specific tuition fee, and it is agreed in the study contract. During the onsite visit, experts were informed that LLU informs programme stakeholders about implemented measures via Annual report on the field of study; however, experts were not provided with the example of such a report.

During the onsite visit, experts were provided with the prove that LLU collects and analyses the information (statistics) on the relevant study programmes of the study direction regularly and uses it to improve the study direction results.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

LLU has an established Quality management system. Quality management policy is publicly available. LLU Quality Management System policy does not name the ESG standard as the one, which requires special attention. However, LLU Quality Management System demonstrates the implementation of all ESG standard requirements. LLU quality management system ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance.

Strengths

1. LLU Quality management system is that it has risk management and assessment methodology.
2. Friendly relationships between students, lecturers and administration
3. Transparent procedures of staff recruitment, development and promotion

Weaknesses

1. There is confusion between main processes, sub-processes and procedures.
2. Division of study process into 90 processes seems to be less effective
3. Little evidence about business representatives' involvement in the decision-making process
4. Students complain procedure has limitations regarding questions which can be addressed.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

Financial planning is performed by LLU Financial Planning Centre in accordance with the LLU financial management policy, strategy and tactics. Each year, the LLU Senate approves the distribution of LLU consolidated budget revenues and expenditures and the LLU budget. The process takes place in accordance with the financial management regulations of the Re-public of Latvia. The LLU Senate approves a procedure for proportional budget revenue/expenditure

Distribution. The consolidated budget of LLU and the budgets of the Faculties show total revenue broken down by source and by expenditure purpose as well as by type and code of the expenditure LLU has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study direction and the relevant study programs. LLU approves the distribution of its consolidated budget revenues and expenditures annually. The system distributes the funds between faculties well enough to keep all the study programs of the study direction. There also is a well-based system for financing scientific research, and this system is efficient.

The HEI has identified the infrastructure resources and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study field. There are classrooms in the faculty equipped with audio and video equipment. Students and teaching personnel have at their disposal Technology and

Knowledge Transfer Division (TEPEK), which aims to promote the protection of intellectual property of scientists and companies and the commercialization of research results at the HEI. Also, seven hostels, one sports centre, a large and modern library, as well as a few smaller libraries (3.3 of Self-Assessment report) located in different faculties are available to students and academic personnel. The library users have an opportunity to search for information in ten subscribed foreign and national online databases (such as EBSCO, SCOPUS, Science Direct, Wiley Online Library, SciVal, CRC Press: Taylor and Francis Group, CABI), which are the most popular databases for business studies which entail the highest level of the research publications relevant to the programme. The library resources are supplemented regularly based mostly on recommendations and requests of teaching personnel. The LLU Fundamental Library has developed a Collection Supplementation Policy, which states that the main priority is placed on the programmes delivered at and the research fields of LLU. Faculty members during the visit approved that books are purchased if needed. The funds invested in the development of the library has been increased every year (SAR page 58).

LLU has Virtual learning platform "Moodle" which is fully employed by the lectures of the study direction. During the onsite visit, lecturers demonstrated platform and study content which is provided to learners of the programme. Students confirmed that 100% of the lecturers use the Moodle system. Content is including different sources of material, such as readings, ppt presentations, videos, hyperlinks to relevant sources on the internet. For the online teaching LLU use a conferencing system called BigBlueButton. Students proved that online learning goes properly during this Covid-19 period.

Students' survey results show that 6% of respondents evaluated premises as excellent, 45 % - as good and 40 % as satisfactory. So, in general, premises are very good for the study process implementation, however, there is room for improvement. Development of soft skills requires workshop-style activities, so there could be more classrooms with easily mobile furniture (e.g. transferable tables, just chairs and board, video).

There are systems and processes in place for improvement of the material, technical, methodological, and informative resources, e.g. the Statute of Fundamental Library of LLU, Collection Supplementation policy.

The attraction and employment of teaching personnel are governed by the Statute of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies on Academic Job Positions approved by the HEI Senate. Academic personnel professional development involves participation in appropriate professional development programmes, exchange of experience, and participation in conferences and seminars, as evidenced by the documents issued upon the completion. Every six years, academic personnel are entitled to six-month paid academic leave for research or for research activities outside their workplace. Other than that, there are several different possible self-development programmes for teaching personnel to improve, for example, an opportunity to participate in international scholarship contests and EU-funded projects aimed at raising the qualifications of teaching personnel through acquiring new knowledge and skills. Academic conferences, foreign language courses, professional development seminars, mobility activities, and participation in committees are events with the most involvement. Table on page 64 in Self assessment Report serves as a proof of existence and popularity of the various forms of professional development activities within LLU during the assessment period.

The workload of teaching staff is analysed as breakdown of kind of teaching related activity (page 65), unfortunately research is not included in this analysis. The individual academic workload is planned for each academic year in accordance with the LLU Statute on Academic Workloads and the

rector's ordinance On the Planning, Accounting for and Control of Individual Workloads of Academic Personnel, which defines the components of workload of academic personnel, workload rates and the procedures of accounting for and control of the workload. According to discussions with teaching staff during the visit, the academic and research workload seems to be somewhat balanced, however, more time for research could be advantageous.

System for financing scientific research is mainly project based. LLU has a system in place that accurately prescribes the use of basic funding - each researcher receives remuneration for individual research performance, the amount of which depends directly on his/her re-search performance (SAR page 75).

Incoming and outgoing mobility of teaching staff members has increased in the reporting period (as indicated in Annex 5), moreover, in recent years, the teaching personnel of EASF have been competing for outgoing mobility.

Incoming mobility for teaching personnel is mostly made up of guest lecturers during the International Weeks. The teaching mobility brings added value to the implementation of the study process and the study quality, especially on programmes delivered in English. More structured approach for attracting international faculty members for delivering full study courses could be recommended.

There are different kinds of financial support in form of scholarships, tuition fee reliefs for students with five possible criteria, as well as support for foreign students. Students seem to be satisfied with the provided support.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The higher education institution (hereinafter HEI) has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study direction and the relevant study programs. The HEI has identified the infrastructure resources and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study field. There is all infrastructure required for remote learning.

Strengths

1. There is access to the main electronic databases or research publications relevant to the study field.
2. Well employed virtual learning platform "Moodle" and an online conferencing system called BigBlueButton.

Weaknesses:

1. Not enough classrooms which are proper for workshop-style lecturing.

4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

The directions of the scientific research of the study direction "Management, Administration and Management of Real Property" complies with LLUs aims and strategy. Strategic and long-term research goals for the study direction are defined in the Research Programme of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies 2015-2020, which stipulates the objective of excellence in research and the prioritization of the social science research (Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies Development Strategy 2015-2020). Furthermore, the prioritized fields of research within the social sciences complies well the study direction, particularly the following prioritized research fields: Sustainable economics of the bioresource industries; Land and property

management studies; Efficiency of manufacturing processes and competitiveness of companies.

Research is well integrated into the curriculum and design of the study direction (evident from course descriptions). Most teaching staff performs research and research results are integrated directly in the courses (self-assessment report, teaching staff CVs and meeting with teaching staff during site visit). Based on teaching staff's CVs the research topics generally match the course topics in the study direction. The production of teaching materials is closely related to research activities which creates a strong link between research and education (from self-assessment report). Private sector cooperation is well established with 13 papers within the field of the study direction published in 2017/2018 as jointly produced by LLU-researchers and private sector researchers (self-assessment report).

The relation between scientific research is ensured and seems to be efficient. The outcomes of staff research activities are integrated in the study process in the study programmes of all levels.

International research cooperation is said to be a priority at LLU, and examples of such cooperation is provided in the self-assessment report (page 72). For example, international cooperation takes place in form of EUs 7th Framework Programme Projects and Erasmus+ projects; COST actions; Horizon2020 projects; ERA-NET project and other. However, it seems to be based on a few researchers and the research projects are not covering all core areas of the study direction.

Some of the researchers primarily publish in national journals (according to teaching staff CVs). This has improved since the previous accreditation of the study direction, but there is still room for further improvement on all number of international peer reviewed publications.

All in all it was evident that international cooperation in the field of scientific research within the study direction and the study programmes is ensured, it has been improved in a target-oriented manner since previous accreditation.

The teaching staff is invited to participate in research processes and incentivised by an institutional remuneration scheme. The institution has created opportunities and support for applications for research funding at both, national and international levels (self-assessment report page 74 presents many examples). In the assessment period there have been approximately 50 research projects.

LLU has a system in place that accurately prescribes the use of basic research funding. According to this system, each researcher receives remuneration for individual research performance, the amount of which depends directly on his/her research performance. To increase the research capacity of LLU and to encourage the involvement of new scientists, an internal grant programme Implementation of the LLU Research Programme has been established. The incentive system at LLU remunerates teaching staff for research outputs as well as teaching quality (stated in self-assessment report and confirmed at site visit meetings with both senior management and academic staff).

Teaching staff conforms that they are invited and motivated to engage in research, although it is not a requirement to publish in peer reviewed international journals (meeting with teaching staff at the site visit). This could be a recommendation for further improvement of the research in social sciences.

Overall, the mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research developed in LLU are well-functioning and efficient.

Students are invited to participate in research processes in a number of ways, especially on master level; as part of their master thesis, in institutional research conferences and in an internal grant programme (stated in self-assessment report). The students on master level are provided courses in research methods as part of their studies.

The teaching personnel have an opportunity to use the LLU internal grant programmes

'Implementation of the LLU Research Programme and Strengthening Scientific Research Capacity at LLU' which among other aims include promotion of the involvement of master students in research. LLU held student scientific conferences every year, e.g. the international student scientific conference Students on their Way to Science, the master student scientific conference Development in Diversity. The research papers of the best master students, in cooperation with their supervisors, are enhanced and submitted to international scientific conferences or to scientific publications for publication.

The involvement of bachelor students in research processes is limited but exists.

LLU has developed mechanisms to promote the involvement of the students in scientific research they are well-functioning and quite efficient. The students of the master study programmes seem to be more involved in scientific research, involvement of bachelors and first level programme students could be strengthened.

Several examples of innovative solutions in the study programs are provided (in the self-assessment report). The meetings with students and academic staff at the site visit confirm that, for example, the entrepreneurial event Entrepreneur DNA is held annually and organised primarily by the students. Some examples of innovative solutions origins from international cooperation with foreign universities, but this is rather limited and can potentially be expanded by more inspiration from international collaboration. For example, by more use of guest lecturers and more outbound students who can bring home ideas for innovative solutions.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The overall development aims of the institution complies with the research within the direction of study, the research done by academic staff corresponds well with the study direction and the research is generally used in the study courses. Teachers are motivated to do research and students are invited to be part of research processes.

Strengths:

1. Strong link between the research and teaching.
2. The incentive system encourages teaching staff to engage in research.

Weaknesses:

1. The number of international peer reviewed publications is quite low.
2. The international cooperation is limited, mainly in terms of participating faculty members.

5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

The faculty of Economics and Social Development (further ESAF) is one of the eight faculties of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (further LLU), which allows to take advantage of being part of larger LLU, utilising its cooperation and international networks and at the same time develop ESAF own network. Both, LLU and the ESAF showed a good approach toward cooperation within and with other institutions and determination of development of internationalization.

Following cooperation forms were identified during the evaluation process: internal, external with institutional partners, external with alumni's.

The internal cooperation is strongly developing in the programme Agri-food Business Management, where practical courses are held in the Faculty of Food Technology and especially in Technology transfer centre. Beside the practical courses, lectures from Faculty of Food Technology are providing

course Innovation of food system for Agri-food Business Management programme students (Annex 18 of particular study programme). The internal cooperation is also ensured within overall management of LLU (Council, Senate etc.). It is advisable to enhance this cooperation and also to develop with other faculties.

The external cooperation is many-sided. The unique joint master programme Agri-food Business Management is conducted in cooperation with the Estonian University of Life Sciences and Vytautas Magnus University, which is good and very practical cooperation form and platform to be developed also in future. This joint master programme complies with overall mission and vision of LLU with focus on sustainable use of natural products and enhancement of quality of life for society. The ESAF is also cooperating with other universities, e.g. Transport and Telecommunication Institute, Aeres University of Applied Sciences and others. The common work with other universities is also established in doctoral studies.

LLU in time period of Year 2013 – 2019 has concluded 63 mutual cooperation agreements with different institutions and educational organizations in the areas of research, educational cooperation, programme development and many other fields (Annex 7), which is good basis for programmes development and institutional recognition. It is important to strengthen cooperation with local and regional secondary and professional school network.

There is certain degree of cooperation with entrepreneurs, who are involved in the study programme basically in two formats: by providing places for internships and they are invited as guest lectures and experts in commissions for bachelor`s papers and master thesis assessments.

Students could find the places for internships on LLU website, however at the time of visiting LLU, there were no places available. ESAF has concluded 17 agreements with different enterprises and institutions in time period Year 2013 – 2019 (Annex 10). The faculty members are helpful to find the places for internships. After this practical training, employer has possibility to evaluate the student`s preparedness for the labour market and competences. Those evaluations programme directors` use for improvement of particular programme. Although overall system for internship is in place, there is need for larger number of involved enterprises from practical business field. Also ESAF could make easier the process for students to find more targeted places for traineeships.

In the programme director duties description (page 25 Self-evaluation report) is not clearly stated the responsibility for cooperation with employers and particularly in assistance for students for traineeships. This is important area, where clear definition of responsibility is necessary.

Besides the role of guest lecturers and internship programmes, another form of cooperation could be considered – workshop type learning with case solving scenarios where academic staff, employers, and practitioners are having more supportive than teaching role.

ESAF is putting effort to maintain connection with alumni`s. In Year 2013 the association Club of LLU Economists was founded for that purpose, however this association is serving whole ESAF faculty, not specific programme direction and, as from the name, it is more oriented towards Economics study programme. The current membership totals 82 alumni, however in the meeting during the on site visit none of the alumni`s expressed any activities in this association, whereas there is an opportunity of improvement. Every year ESAF is organizing Alumni Week, where former students are giving lectures on specific and currently actual topics.

In general, cooperation contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction.

The international cooperation could be reviewed as an outgoing and incoming flow process. LLU has 27 partners for Erasmus+ mobility activities (Self-evaluation report page 79) and overall 112 foreign students in 11 study programmes in the academic year 2019/2020 (Self-evaluation report page 10).

The teaching personal has opportunity to participate in Erasmus+ and BOVA mobility programmes, international scientific conferences and international scholarship contests, EU founded projects. The programme direction teaching personnel has participated 97 mobility activities and 42 seminars and courses delivered outside during time period from Year 2013 – 2019 (Self-evaluation report page

64). Taking in to account time period and overall number of academic staff, the outgoing activity should be increased, especially in the involvement of the teaching activities abroad.

Incoming mobility statistics for teaching personnel are mostly made up of guest lecturers during the International Week. In the study year 2018/2019, there were 20 international guest lecturers (Annex 5.2.), overall number is slightly increasing. There are 18 international students from 9 countries in particular study direction in study year 2019/2020 and two international lecturers in study year 2018/2019, except for the programme Agri-food Business Management (Annex 8).

There is support system for the foreign students; ESAF has delegated one person from secretariat to be responsible for this support.

LLU performs various marketing activities in different markets, including placement of information in two international e-marketing web sites, in order to attract foreign students and promote studies in English language. Also informative booklets have been published. Those activities are contributing to attraction of foreign students and to some extent also to attract foreign lectures, however more targeted approach should be developed and more extensive international marketing activities performed.

It is advisable to increase the incoming mobility activities for both: students and teaching staff. The outgoing activity of teaching staff should be increased, especially in the involvement of the teaching activities abroad.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

ESAF cooperates with wide variety of institutions from Latvia and abroad to achieve the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction, partners are selected within every study programme needs. The system for attraction of foreign students and lectures is in place, however the overall activity should be increased and system developed, more targeted approach executed. Students are provided with possibility to participate in traineeships, the process and system is in place; however closer cooperation with employers is advisable. Recently developed joint master programme Agri-food Business Management complies with mission and vision of LLU, the procedures for development of this programme are in place. Generally, well developed and established good cooperation with different institutions and other HEI in Latvia.

Strengths:

1. The unique joint master programme Agri-food Business Management, which is conducted in cooperation with two other universities from Baltic States.
2. There is established system for internships and scholarships for students.
3. There is a good cooperation between students and the faculty members, the lecturers are accessible and open for question solving for students.
4. There is a support system for international students, both on LLU and ESAF level.

Weaknesses:

1. The alumni`s could be more involved in the actual study process and evaluation of the programmes.
2. The amount and intensity of cooperation with enterprises should be increased. There is a need for more determinate definition for responsibility (probably for study programmes directors) for this activity.
3. There is comparably small number of foreign students and permanent international academic staff. The marketing activities for attraction of international students are fragmented towards different markets; the strategy to focus on fewer markets could be considerate.

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

Analysis

Since previous accreditation of the study direction portfolio of study programmes in the study direction was broadened, thus a new study programme “Agri-food Business Management” went through the licensing procedure in September of 2017.

Appendix 11 presents 15 recommendations, two of them are related to the new programme “Agri-food Business Management”. These two recommendations are planned to be fully implemented during the study years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.

The first 13 recommendations of the first expert group had been implemented before the current evaluation.

Part of the Recommendations of the expert commission were oriented towards improving relationships with employers, including alumni and employers in the decision making and establish advisory board of employers. A lot has been done in this direction, and in the Appendix No 11 it is said that the recommendations are implemented. Still further improvement in this direction are advised. For example, in 2013, the association “LLU Economists’ Club” was established. However, during the visit the evidence that this club is really functioning as Advisory Board was not found. Moreover, the commission did not have a possibility to meet any employer who belong to this club. Alumni during the visit confirmed that they would like to be more involved in decision making. No doubt, that this is a good start, still further developments are advised.

One of the recommendations was related to necessity to improve the quality of final thesis by enrich thesis with international sources. This seems to be done since international sources were present in all the Thesis presented for evaluation during the visit. However, the Thesis presented for review had quite weak empirical research part, none of them included quantitative research and statistical data analysis. Only the thesis “Project management” programme included subchapter titled “Research methodology”.

Other part of recommendations was related to improvement of general learning environment, language skills and research activity of the teaching staff. These recommendations of previous expert commission were implemented according to the plans which were prepared after the accreditation process.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Almost all the recommendations were implemented during the time between the previous accreditation, some are in process. During an onsite visit, the expert group got evidence about the implementations related to the improvement of the general learning environment. Language level of the teaching staff met during the visit was good.

An expert commission of the previous accreditation emphasized the need to strengthen the links with employers and involve them in decision making. Current (of 2020) expert commission recommends continuing the work started in this direction. Moreover, currently the LLU has also English-speaking graduates who expressed the willingness to participate in the alumni community but cannot do that due to language. Therefore, it is recommended to have alumni community also in English language.

Current (of 2020) expert commission also recommends continuing the work with improvement of the final Thesis by strengthening the empirical research part and including subchapter titled “Research methodology” in the Thesis for all programmes.

Strengths:

1. Most of the previous accreditation recommendations were implemented after the accreditation process and it gave a visible progress for study process development.

Weaknesses:

1. Although a lot has been done to strengthen the cooperation with employers and alumni and involve them in the decision making, this has not been fully achieved yet.
2. The recommendation about improvement of the final thesis and enrich thesis with international sources has been implemented, still the empirical research part remains quite limited.

7. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

- 1 Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant
Justification: Systems and policies, as well as quality assurance system in LLU contribute to continuous improvement and development, efficient performance of the study direction.
- 2 1.1. The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant
Justification: LLU has an established Quality management system, it is publicly available.
- 3 1.2. A mechanism for the development and internal approval of the study programmes of the higher education institution/ college, as well as the supervision of their performance and periodic inspection thereof has been developed.
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant
Justification: Mechanisms are in place and study programmes are assessed once a year.
- 4 1.3. The criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, have been developed and made public.
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant
Justification: Students approved that criteria for the evaluation are clear and help to achieve the intended learning outcomes.
- 5 1.4. Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant
Justification: LLU has two assessment procedures for assuring the qualification of academic staff which seems to work properly.
- 6 1.5. The higher education institution/ college ensures the collection and analysis of the information on the study achievements of the students, employment of the graduates, satisfaction of the students with the study programme, efficiency of the work of the academic staff, the study funds available and the disbursements thereof, as well as the key performance indicators of the higher education institution/ college.
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant
Justification: All the necessary information is collected and analysed, funds are available and KPI are set.
- 7 1.6. The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant
Justification: LLU Quality Management System demonstrates the implementation of all ESG standard requirements, it ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance.
- 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: Fully compliant

Justification: Generally, well developed and established good cooperation with different institutions and other HEI in Latvia.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Level of scientific research complies with need for bachelor and master level studies.

- 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

Justification: All shortcomings and deficiencies are eliminated. Recommendations provided by previous assessment commission are generally implemented, still some are in progress.

8. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

To solve confusion between main processes, sub-processes and procedures and to minimise the quantity of study processes for the higher effectiveness of process management;

To extend the areas of the possible student's complains;

To improve involvement of business partners in the decision-making process.

Long-term recommendations

Develop further international cooperation and programme specific exchange opportunities

To strengthen the contribution of study programme towards achievement of LLU vision it is recommended to consider inclusion of dedicated study courses related to sustainability, responsibility and bioeconomy. Currently LLU adopts 'across the curriculum' approach, however scientists have argued that this approach does not provide enough time and space needed to study complex sustainability issues with non-experts (e.g. Floyd et al., 2013, p. 755).

Larger involvement of foreign lecturers is advisable.

ESAF could develop more focused marketing approach, to attract students from schools in Latvia and define the strategy for acquiring of international students. This should be developed within framework of overall LLU marketing approach and with close cooperation with LLU management.

In another words, mentioned in other places - increase practical aspects in study process, find other ways of collaboration with employers, business and organizations leaders. In this process student self organized activities should be continued (e.g. Entrepreneur DNA) and increased.

To work on further development of study programmes in terms of - introduction of new learning methods, enhancing learning versus teaching approach and increasing connectivity with current business and management development trends and issues.

II. "Business Studies" ASSESSMENT

II. "Business Studies" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

The first level professional study programme 'Business Studies' envisages acquisition of the professional qualification 'business specialist'. The name of the programme and the qualification are logically interrelated.

Aim of the programme is to 'educate qualified business specialists who perform organisation and management of business activities in order to ensure efficient operation of a company and its structural units, who, by having acquired high-quality higher professional education, are able to plan and ensure the operation of the company in accordance with the requirements of legislation and market development trends'. The aim of the programme and its three objectives are logically linked with the name and qualification.

Programme admission requirements are corresponding to first level programme in management field and are in line with Articles 46 and 47 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 846 of October 10, 2006 on Requirements, Criteria and Procedures for Admission to Study Programs.

Programme Intended learning outcomes are formulated as knowledge, skills and competences which are in line with Latvian and European qualification framework (LQF and EQF) Level 5. The number of learning outcomes (nine) seems appropriate.

Since 2014 the study programme is delivered in Latvian in part-time form only. Currently there are 16 part-time students in the programme. The number of students has significantly decreased during the assessment period - in 2014 there were 66 students, however, only 4 of them full time students. Still the programme management has plans to deliver the programme in full time form, if there will be students willing to study in full time studies. The submitted documents show that the LLU has capacity to deliver this programme also in full time study form.

In the period since the last accreditation certificate for the field of study has been issued, changes have been made in two parameters of the program - the study program is not delivered in the form of extramural studies, as students did not prefer this form of studies and the professional qualification to be awarded - a business specialist - was made precise in accordance with the National Professional Standard for Business Specialists.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The name of the study program, the degree, the professional qualification or the degree and the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The changes made since the last accreditation were necessary and well-performed.

Strengths:

1. Clear and concise intended learning outcomes related to LQF.

Weaknesses:

1. Number of students in the study programme have significantly decreased . This may threaten the existence of the programme in future.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

The descriptions of the study courses are of good quality and include all the required information e.g. course aims, learning outcomes, course content and planned hours, recommended literature and additional sources of information, organisation of the independent studies, assessment structure

and course value in credit points and ECTS.

The study courses included in the study program reflect professional standards, including descriptions of skills and competencies. The content is relevant and complimentary, and it complies with the aims of the study program, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the scientific trends. The aims and learning outcomes of study courses are related to the aim, content, and learning outcomes of the study program. The traineeship is an integral part of the study program, which provides students with an opportunity to apply the acquired knowledge and skills in practice while working in Latvian companies.

The study implementation methods are not so diverse in other programmes of the study division. Students mentioned seminars, practical classes and independent work. The programme puts emphasis on practical tasks which constitute not less than 30% of the study courses' volume (page 162) what is in line with the Regulation No. 141 "Regulations Regarding the State Standard for First Level Professional Higher Education" of the Cabinet of Ministers as of March 20, 2001. Students also approved that 100% lecturers use the MOODLE in variety of ways and that pedagogical methods are diverse and interesting.

The study programme's "Business Studies" curriculum includes two professional traineeships in the total amount of 16 CP: in the 3rd semester "Analysis and Accounting" (8 CP) and in the 5th semester "Business" (8 CP). This complies with the Regulation No. 141 "Regulations Regarding the State Standard for First Level Professional Higher Education" of the Cabinet of Ministers as of March 20, 2001. Aims and tasks of the traineeships are clearly explained in SAR (p.164, 165), available on LLU website and also clear to the students.

Students and graduates confirmed that they are surveys about the quality of the study courses after the completion of the course. 67% of the surveyed employers believed that all the study courses included in the study programme were necessary and up to date (according to SAR page 160). The outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies. The curriculum of the programme and content of the of study courses are regularly analysed in the meetings of the faculty and in the methodological commission for undergraduate studies. Improvements were made in all study courses in 2018/2019 when knowledge, skills, competencies, and assessment methods were improved and updated.

The students of the 1st level study program "Business Studies" have not applied for the international mobility visits in the reference period. There is some concern about no applications for international mobility visits from the students of this study program in the reference period, but as surveys have shown 80% of the students of this study program have no wish to go abroad, it is possible that in this case, students of this specific study program are not the target audience of the mobility programs.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The Content of Study programme and its implementation correspond to the requirements of the first level professional programmes.

Strengths:

1. The content of the programme is orientated towards practical application of knowledge and skills and thus is in line with regulations for the first level professional programmes.
2. The study process is well organized, executed, and maintained.
3. Students' filled surveys have shown high results on knowledge gained, readiness to do the job.

4. Provision of the study process and employers' feedback on students is also close to excellent.

Weaknesses:

1. There is no international mobility of students.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

The resources used for first level professional programme 'Business Studies' mostly are the same for whole study direction.

The study, informative, material, technical and financial provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, create the prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes, and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process also in the future. Lectures are supported by current technologies, multimedia projectors, video materials, teaching aids, and handouts. Active learning forms are used in seminars and practical classes. The HEI e-learning environment offers support materials as well as handouts for students' independent work. Methodological guidelines for writing course works and the qualification thesis are available on the faculty website. Student-centred learning is implemented in different seminars, practical work assignments, presentations of traineeship reports.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Resource base at LLU ensure the prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes of programme "Business studies" and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process also in the future.

Strengths:

1. Strong material and technical resource base which include laboratories and applied software systems.

2. Modern library, wide the reading room, which is available for students` individual work.

Weaknesses: not identified

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

The programme 'Business Studies' involves academic staff from several faculties.

During the reference period, changes in the composition of the teaching staff were related to closure of the branches and changes in the curriculum. Currently there are no professors, one associate professor and four assistant professors in the programme, still this is completely in line with the level off the programme. Positively that there are five visiting lecturers form industry, thus professional and practical side of the programme is strong. An active participation of young lecturers in the study process has been a positive trend. The total number of academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme was 18.

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study program and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments (28% of teaching staff has PhD; others have master degree). The number of teaching staff members elected in the academic positions increased

during the reference period from 49% to 72% (report page 171).

The quality of teaching staff enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

Academic staff members are involved in research projects related to their subjects and they take part in research projects - examples provided in SAR page 173-174, Annex 6 and were mentioned during the visit. Faculty research and publications are linked to the topics of delivered study courses and used in the teaching process.

Mechanisms of cooperation include methodological commissions and board of faculties.

In the next reference period, it is planned to promote the cooperation among members of the teaching staff and to involve several lecturers for teaching one study course.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The qualification of the academic staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Business studies" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the first level professional programme and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

Mechanism for collaboration between the teaching staff members exist and collaboration happens both at the programme management and faculty level. Teaching staff take part in research related to the study programme.

Strengths:

1. The quality of the teaching staff has increased during the assessment period.
2. Enough professional development programmes available for raising qualification of the teaching staff.

Weaknesses: not identified.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Business Studies"

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

Justification: Sample of diploma is provided in AIKA study programme evaluation platform

2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Agreement with Riga Technical University

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Confirmation 10.02.2020. No. 2.4.-6.2/14 is provided

- 4 4. The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant
Justification: Latvian is native for all teaching staff members
- 5 5. The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.
Assessment of compliance: Not relevant
Justification:
- 6 6. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts.
Assessment of compliance: Not relevant
Justification:
- 7 7. The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.
Assessment of compliance: Not relevant
Justification:
- 8 8. The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant
Justification: The provided sample of the study agreement includes all the mandatory provisions
- 9 9. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant
Justification: The study course descriptions are of good quality and include all the necessary components
- 10 10. The study programme complies with the valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided that the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification.
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant
Justification: Appendix No 14 presents the compliance of the study programme with the project of the professional standard of a business specialist. The program also complies with the professional standard of a business specialist PS-134, which was agreed at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council for Vocational Education and Employment on June 10, 2020, protocol No. 4.
- 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

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Appendix No 15 presents the compliance of the study programme with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No.512 "Regulations on the state standard of the second level professional higher education" (26.08.2014.)<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761>; The Environmental Protection Law. Latvijas Vēstnesis, 183 (3551), 15.11.2006. <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/147917> and The Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law. Latvijas Vēstnesis, 100 (5672), 25.05.2016. <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/282333>

13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Information presented in the Appendix No 6 approves that academic staff has publications

15 P5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Programme complies with all the above criteria

Requirements (R6-R8)

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The resources used for first level professional programme 'Business Studies' mostly are the same for whole study direction. LLU has good resource base.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: One associate professor; four assistant professors take part in the implementation of the programme.

3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The quality of the programme "Business Studies" is very good for the first level professional higher educational study programme. There is a concern about the number of students since it has significantly decreased during the last years. Programme has specific delivery mode (part-time; weekend) what makes it very appropriate choice for a specific target market.

Strengths:

1. The study process is well organized, executed, and maintained.
2. The quality of the teaching staff very good for first level professional higher educational programme.
3. Programme has good resource base.

Weaknesses:

1. Number of students in the study programme have significantly decreased. This may threaten the existence of the programme in future.
2. Practically no international mobility of the students (however, the programme is not targeted at international mobility).

Evaluation of the study programme "Business Studies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Business Studies"

Short-term recommendations

Improve programme marketing to attract more students.

Long-term recommendations

Since the main necessity for the programme is to attract more students, it is recommended to increase programme promotion. For example, increase cooperation with organisation (e.g. sell stand alone courses) to increase the interest about the programme.

II. "Entrepreneurship and Business Management" ASSESSMENT

II. "Entrepreneurship and Business Management" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

Entrepreneurship and Business Management study programme provide full-time studies (4 years duration) and part-time studies (4 years and 6 months duration). The programme language is the Latvian language. Students acquire professional Bachelor in Entrepreneurship and Business Management. For the admission to the programme, there is a requirement to have general secondary education or vocational secondary education. It is a logical requirement, and it is interrelated with the qualification level of the programme. Study programme goal, tasks and results are totally interrelated with management education; however, entrepreneurial competences are not foreseen. Experts recommend reviewing programme goal, tasks and learning results by introducing intentions to develop entrepreneurial skills. European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework

(EntreComp) (<https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC101581/lfna27939enn.pdf> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1317&langId=en>) can be used as a guideline for this improvement. Also, the sample diploma in the English language awards "Entrepreneurship and Business Management" specialisation and it differs from the sample diploma in the Latvian language, which awards (if translated properly) "Business and management of the company". Programme awards business manager professional qualification, which corresponds with National Professional Standard for Business Managers. This programme plays a huge role in regional development, as around 77 % of students choose it because of proximity to their place of residence and workplace. There were no noticeable changes in the number of student's during the reported period.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Programme goal, task and learning results are interrelated, however, they do not correspond with the programme name "Entrepreneurship and Business Management" (or its translation in English). The part of Entrepreneurship is not properly covered. The sample diploma in the English language differs from the sample diploma in the Latvian language.

Strengths:

1. There are no noticeable changes in the number of student's during the reported period;
2. Programme is attractive to the students from the nearby region;

Weaknesses:

1. Programme goal, tasks and learning results do not demonstrate intentions to develop entrepreneurial skills.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

Entrepreneurship and management study programme content is oriented toward achievement of named learning results. However, as mentioned in the previous section, the programme intended learning results do not foresee entrepreneurial skills development. Still, analysis of programme content shows that some course (Entrepreneurship legislation, Team management, Business planning, Professional Traineeship "Entrepreneurship and Management", Competitiveness in Entrepreneurship, Innovation management) are oriented towards the development of entrepreneurial skills. During the onsite visit, experts were informed that "Social entrepreneurship" course is available as an elective course for this programme's students. However, a deeper analysis of some of the mentioned courses (e.g. Competitiveness in Entrepreneurship) syllabus demonstrates, that it does not develop entrepreneurship skills.

There is an established process of feedback at LLU. Students, employers and graduates are surveyed every year; those surveys are analysed, and gotten suggestions are implemented. During the onsite visit, students proved that they are surveyed and can express their opinion regarding study programmes content, study process and environment. Feedback about implementing recommendations is provided in the annual study programme report (as it is stated in the self-assessment report). However, experts were not introduced with the example of such a report. Still, during the onsite visit, students gave some recommendations for content improvement. Students would like to get opportunities for the development of cross-disciplinary mindset. Graduates recommend to invite more representatives from industry as the lecturers or to invite two lecturers to teach the course, one from academia and second from the industry.

Analysis of course syllabuses reveals that student-centred learning and teaching principles are taken into account. Lectures use various teaching/learning methods, such as teaching, discussions,

teamwork, case studies, modelling, etc. They also use a wide variety of students learning results evaluation forms, which logically fit with intended learning results. Students in this programme have three traineeships during the studies which comprise 20 CP in total. Traineeships are organised according to the Traineeship regulation, which was approved by the LLU Senate in 2014 and according to the traineeship programme. Traineeship regulation clearly describes the traineeship organisation process which foresees two supervisors' appointment (one from university and second from the hosting organisation), a tripartite contract between university, host organisation and student describes student's tasks of the traineeship. Traineeship reports, provided during the onsite visit, demonstrate an adequate quality level; however, final thesis quality could be improved with the requirements to use more analytical tools, data analysis, and how statistical analysis skills are applied in practice.

For better development of entrepreneurial skills, students can be enrolled in <https://www.x-culturestartup.com/> and <https://x-culture.org/> projects. Considering that students' international mobility is deficient (eight during the analysed period), it could also be a good opportunity for international online mobility, especially during Covid-19 situation. During the onsite visit, students expressed the fear of international mobility because of risks related to Covid-19. Other reasons students are not interested in international mobility is their employability during study years and financial capabilities.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

In general, the content of the study programme correspond with the requirements, however, there is some room for improvement: there is a mismatch between Study programme name, disciplines and intended learning outcomes (or "results" as it is named by LLU). Learning outcomes do not demonstrate the intention to develop entrepreneurial skills, while programme name, some courses and representatives of LLU during the onsite meeting communicated the intention to develop entrepreneurial skills.

Strengths

1. Well developed student-centred learning and teaching principles

Weaknesses

1. programme intended learning results do not foresee the development of entrepreneurial skills
2. Weak international mobility of students

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

The higher education institution has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study direction and the relevant study programs. HEI approves the distribution of its consolidated budget revenues and expenditures annually. The system distributes the funds between faculties well enough to keep all the study programs of the study direction. There also is a well-based system for financing scientific research, and this system is efficient.

The HEI has identified the infrastructure resources and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study field. There are classrooms in the faculty equipped with audio and video equipment, Students and teaching personnel have at their disposal Technology and Knowledge Transfer Division (TEPEK), which aims to promote the protection of intellectual property of scientists and companies and the commercialization of research results at the HEI. Also, seven hostels, one sports centre, a large and modern library, as well as a few smaller libraries (3.3 of Self-

Assessment report) located in different faculties are available to students and academic personnel. The library users have an opportunity to search for information in ten subscribed foreign and national online databases (such as EBSCO, SCOPUS, Science Direct, Wiley Online Library, SciVal, CRC Press: Taylor and Francis Group, CABI). It the most popular databases for business studies which entail the highest level of the research publications relevant to the programme.

LLU has Virtual learning platform "Moodle" which is fully employed by the lectures of the programme "Entrepreneurship and Management". During the onsite visit, lecturers demonstrated platform and study content which is provided to learners the programme. Content is including different sources of material, such as readings, ppt presentations, videos, hyperlinks to relevant sources on the internet. For the online teaching LLU use, a conferencing system called BigBlueButton. Students proved that online learning goes properly during this Covid-19 period.

Students' survey results show that 6% of respondents evaluated premises as excellent, 45 % - as good and 40 % as satisfactory. So, in general, premises are good for the study process implementation, however, there is room for improvement. Development of entrepreneurial skills requires workshop-style activities, so there could be more classrooms with easily mobile furniture (e.g. just chairs and board, video).

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Resources and provision are proper for the implementation of the programme.

Strengths:

1. There is access to the main electronic databases or research publications relevant to the study field.
2. Well employed virtual learning platform "moodle" and an online conferencing system called BigBlueButton.

Weaknesses:

Not enough classrooms which are proper for workshop-style lecturing.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

The teaching staff of the programme "Entrepreneurship and Management" come from six different LLU faculties. The study programme director has to take advantage of interdisciplinary staff to develop the study content, which develops an interdisciplinary mindset of the learner. There were minor changes in teaching staff during the analysed period, which was influenced by changes in the study programme's plan and introduction of new specialization "Rural Tourism Management". Also, there were three industry professionals involved in the implementation of the study course. During the onsite visit, graduates recommended to invite even more representatives from industry as the lecturers, or to invite two lecturers to teach the course, one from academia and second from the industry. Also, students expressed the wish to have lecturers from abroad, as foreign lecturers can bring foreign experience and it is also an opportunity to rise an internationalisation of the programme.

Procedures and regularity of academic staff's professional development correspond with legal requirements and (as academic staff ensures during the onsite visit) is transparent at LLU.

During the analysed period, there was an increase in academic staff with a doctoral degree. Currently, 46% of academic staff have a doctoral degree, and 54% of academic staff have master degree.

The remuneration system of the teaching staff includes two major components: the teaching part and research part. The responses from students and graduates in the study evaluation process

influence the overall reward amount. This system supports development teaching and research activities of academic personnel, responsiveness to student enquiries and overall study programme development.

Every academic staff member attends professional development programme "Innovation in Higher Education Didactics" of 160 hours at least once in six years.

In the reference period the academic staff members of the study programme "Entrepreneurship and Management" published 238 publications, out of which 92 were integrated into the content of several study courses, such as International Economics, Economic Management Studies, Marketing, Globalization of Business, Business Information Management, Tax Accounting, Rural Tourism Business and other.

LLU has established system when colleagues attend classes of the colleagues and give feedback/support for the lecturer regarding class quality. During the onsite visit, lecturers reported that it is a very effective tool. It allows experience sharing and helps to the new lecturers to get advice from more experienced colleagues.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme.

Strengths:

1. High quality academic staff
2. There is a platform for didactic experience sharing between academic staff: attendance of the classes, didactic courses.

Weaknesses

1. not enough teachers from the industry invited.
2. there is no teachers from abroad

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship and Business Management"

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Sample of the Diploma for awarding Professional Bachelor Degree in Entrepreneurship and Business Management and qualification of Business Manager is provided and it complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued.

- 2 2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Document No 10.02.2020. No. 2.4.-6.2/15 provided in the Appendix states that students are provided with opportunities to enrol on the LLU academic bachelor programme Economics or Riga Technical University (RTU) programmes in accordance with the agreement of 7 January 2020 or Liepaja University (LiepU) professional bachelor study program Business and Organizational Management in accordance with the agreement of 22 January 2020. Agreement with Liepaja university and Riga Technical university are provided.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Document No 10.02.2020. No. 2.4.-6.2/15 provided in the Appendix states that if the programme is discontinued and students do not wish to continue their studies at LLU or RTU or LiepU, they are reimbursed their tuition fees.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: According to the teaching staff CVs, Latvian is either native language or they are proficient in the official language.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Sample of the study agreement provided in AIKA study programme evaluation platform include all the necessary components.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Description of the study courses provided in AIKA study programme evaluation platform include all the necessary parts.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The study programme complies with professional standard – Business manager, 18 September 2019 meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-council for Professional Education and Employment; Protocol No. 6) and compliance is presented in the Appendix No 15

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

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Appendix No 14 presents the compliance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No.512 "Regulations on the state standard of the second level professional higher education"; Law on Institutions of Higher Education; The Environmental Protection Law and The Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law.

13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Information provided in Annex 6 indicates that practically all academic staff members of the bachelor programme have publications published in reviewed editions within the last six year, or a five-year practical work experience, thus programme complies with the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

15 P5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Study programme complies will all the above mentioned criteria.

Requirements (R6-R8)

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Assessment report Part 3

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Information provided in Annex 6

- 3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Programme goal, task and learning results are interrelated, however, they do not correspond with the programme name. Also, the sample diploma in the English language awards "Entrepreneurship and Business Management" specialisation and it differs from the sample diploma in the Latvian language, which awards (if translated properly) "Business and management of the company". In general, the content of the study programme corresponds with the requirements, however, there is some room for improvement. Resources and provision are proper for the implementation of the programme. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme. Since the minor deficiencies can be allocated to the translation of the word 'Komercdarbība', in English, which is questionable, still it caused discussions between the experts. The programme is evaluated as good as it is well managed and delivered.

Strengths:

1. There are no noticeable changes in the number of student's during the reported period;
2. Programme is attractive to the students from the nearby region;
3. Well developed student-centred learning and teaching principles.
4. There is access to the main electronic databases or research publications relevant to the study field.
5. Well employed virtual learning platform "moodle" and an online conferencing system called BigBlueButton.
6. High-quality academic staff
7. There is a platform for didactic experience sharing between academic staff: attendance of the classes, didactic courses.

Weaknesses:

1. Programme goal, tasks and learning results do not demonstrate intentions to develop entrepreneurial skills
2. programme intended learning results do not foresee the development of entrepreneurial skills
3. Weak international mobility of students
4. Not enough classrooms which are proper for workshop-style lecturing.
5. not enough teachers from the industry invited.
6. there are no teachers from abroad

Evaluation of the study programme "Entrepreneurship and Business Management"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship and Business Management"

Short-term recommendations

to review programme goal, tasks and learning results by introducing intentions to develop entrepreneurial skills. European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp) can be used as a guideline for this improvement.

To decide which direction to prioritize, "management of the company" or "entrepreneurship" and change learning outcomes and diploma sample accordingly.

Long-term recommendations

Review learning results and courses in the context of entrepreneurial skill development

Implement cross-disciplinary learning methods

Invite more lecturers from industry

Use different online tools for international online mobility of the students

To set up more classrooms suitable for workshop-style lecturing.

Better use an opportunity of lecturers from different LLU faculties for the development of interdisciplinary content for the learners

Invite more teachers from industry

Invite teachers from abroad

II. "Agri-food business management" ASSESSMENT

II. "Agri-food business management" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

The joint academic master study programme 'Agri-food business Management' envisages acquisition of the degree Master of Social Science in Management. The name of the programme and the degree are logically interrelated.

Programme is delivered jointly with partners: Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), Lithuania and Estonian University of Life Sciences (EMU). Students spend first semester in Estonia, second in Lithuania and the third semester in Latvia. The first intake was spring 2019, the second was autumn 2019, consequently the first graduates are expected in 2021.

Aim of the programme and its four objectives are logically linked with the name and degree. Programme admission requirements are corresponding to master programme in management field and are in line with Articles 46 and 47 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 846 of October 10, 2006 on Requirements, Criteria and Procedures for

Admission to Study Programs. English language skills of at least B2 level are required – document confirming this, or entrance examination is required.

Programme Intended learning outcomes are formulated as knowledge, skills and competences which are in line with Latvian and European qualification framework (LQF and EQF) Level 7. The number of learning outcomes (six) seems appropriate.

Study programme from the beginning of its delivery (spring semester 2018/2019) has been delivered in English language only and in full time form. Currently there are 15 full-time students.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The professional master study programme ‘Agri-food business Management’ name and the degree to be acquired, the aims, objectives, and admission requirements are interrelated and can be regarded as programme strengths.

Strengths:

1. Programme learning outcomes are clear, precise, and related to LQF and EQF Level 7.

Weaknesses: not identified,

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

The descriptions of the study courses are of good quality and include all the required information e.g. course aims, learning outcomes, course content and planned hours, recommended literature and additional sources of information, organisation of the independent studies, assessment structure and course value in credit points and ECTS.

This ensures that the content of study courses meets the needs of the programme. The programme is academic, it seems to have a strong research focus - study course “Research methods” credit value is 7,5 ECTS, the course is delivered in the first semester. All study courses are relevant and complementary, they comply with the aims of the study programme and ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The study implementation methods are diverse. Students mentioned Project based learning, case analyses, field visits. Students also approved that 100% lecturers use the MOODLE in a variety of ways and pedagogical methods are diverse and interesting.

Assessment methods mentioned are mainly tested with mark and examination. For study courses ensuring the acquisition of knowledge related learning outcomes., tests are used, but for study courses ensuring the acquisition of skills and competences, examinations are used. According to the information provided in the course syllabuses, assessment methods include both: individual and group work, presentations, case studies, written assignments.

Student diverse needs seem to be taken into consideration and student opinion is valued. Students approve that they can speak openly about any problem and problems, if they occur, are solved.

The programme has no graduates yet; therefore the quality of master Theses can not be evaluated. Students confirmed that they are surveys about the quality of the study courses after the completion of the course. There are no graduates yet and therefore no information about graduate surveys related to the programme, however, University has a practice to conduct graduate surveys. Employer survey was conducted in 2017 and resulted in identification of the skills needed for managers of agri-food companies. This information was used to design the content of the study courses.

The programme students confirmed that they are informed about the incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities, and the learning outcomes achieved during such mobility are recognised. However, programme “Agri-food business management” is joint programme and students spend one semester in Estonia and one in Lithuania and one in Latvia, therefore the mobility is already ensured

by the design of the programme.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The Content of Study programme and its Implementation correspond to the requirement.

Strengths :

1. Joint programme delivered equally by 3 partner Universities.
2. International nature and student mobility is part of the programme design

Weaknesses:

1. Low number of local students in the programme
2. Marketing of the programme could be stronger especially in Baltic market.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

Resources used for the study programme "Agri-food Business Management" mostly are the same as for the whole study direction. The study infrastructure, information sources and facilities have been improved on yearly basis, students have access to ESAF Information Centre of Studies and Research which contains the latest information sources, books, periodicals, also in English. Other faculties are involved in the implementation of the programme (Faculty of Agriculture and Faculty of Food Technology) ensure the availability of programme specific resources necessary for laboratory works. During the visit commission had a possibility to visit the Technology and Knowledge Transfer Division (TEPEK), which is available for programme students.

The students of the programme also have access to the university's infrastructure, which includes dormitories, the LLU Fundamental Library and premises for learning.

Availability of the resources in the partner Universities in Estonia and Lithuania are described in the report and seem to be sufficient.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Resource base at LLU ensure the prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes of programme "Agri-food business management" and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process also in the future.

Strengths:

1. Strong material and technical resource base which include laboratories and applied software systems.
2. Modern library, wide reading room, which is available for students' individual work.
3. Students have the possibility to use resources from 3 Universities: LLU, EMU and VMU.

Weaknesses: not identified.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

The programme "Agri-food business Management" is new and there were no changes in the composition of the Teaching staff yet. Programme is delivered by highly professional academic and professional teaching staff.

Six professors, six associate professors take part in the implementation of the study programme. 78% of academic staff members have a PhD degree.

The total number of academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme was 18, including eight academic staff members (45%) from LLU, four academic staff members (22%) from VMU, and six academic staff members (33%) from EMU.

Academic staff members are involved in research projects related to their subjects and they take part in research projects (examples provided in SAR page 214-215) and were mentioned during the visit. The scientific activity has resulted in the impressive number of publications. For example, one of the professors involved in the realisation of the programme has 56 publications in the assessment period; other faculty member in her CV indicated 34 publications, etc. Faculty research and publications are linked to the topics of delivered study courses and used in the teaching process. Mechanisms of cooperation include Programme committee, participation in BOVA network and personal cooperation between programme directors from 3 partner Universities. The academic staff members have visited partner universities in the framework of the ERASMUS+ staff mobility or teaching exchange.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The qualification of the academic staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Agri-food Business management" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the master level study programme and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

Mechanism for collaboration between the teaching staff members exist and collaboration happens both - at the programme management and faculty level. Teaching staff is active in research related to the study programme.

Strengths:

1. High qualification of the teaching staff, high percentage of PhD.
2. Scientific research of the programme faculty.
3. Enthusiasm about the programme and motivation of the teaching staff.

Weaknesses: not Identified.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Agri-food business management"

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

Justification: The joint study programme is realised by 3 partner Universities and each University issues their own diploma. In the diploma supplement the names of all partner universities are indicated as well as their concluded agreement, its date and place, parts of the study programme and the partner university, in which each of the parts is accomplished is indicated.

This complies with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 202 "Procedures by which state recognised education documents certifying higher education are issued" (16 April 2013), article 14.

2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Agreement with Riga Technical University is provided.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Document 10.02.2020. No. 2.4.-6.2/16 is provided, which states that, if the programme is discontinued and students do not wish to continue their studies at LLU or RTU, they are reimbursed their tuition fees.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: According to the information provided in teaching staff CVs, they are proficient in the official language.

- 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: Fully compliant

Justification: Document 10.02.2020. No. 2.4.-6.2/16 is provided which states that all the teaching personnel participating in the delivery of the programme in English have a foreign language proficiency level of at least B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (www.europass.lv).

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

- 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: Fully compliant

Justification: Six professors, six associate professors take part in the implementation of the study programme

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The study agreement provided in the annexes is in two languages (English and Latvian) and it complies with provisions.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Descriptions of the study courses are provided in English and include all the necessary components.

- 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: Not relevant

Justification:

- 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: Fully compliant

Justification: The Council's of Higher Education conclusion on the delivery of academic programmes with less than 250 full-time students from 11 November 2019.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Annex No. 14 presents the compliance of the study programme with Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No 240 "Regulations on the state academic education standard" (13 May 2014) - <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187>

- 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: Fully compliant

Justification: The 'Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Joint Study Programme International Master in Agri-Food Business Management made by the partner institutions: LLU, EMU and VMU (formerly ASU), which is registered by the LLU International Cooperation Centre on 24 October 2016, No. 2.5-7/16'; all HEI are Universities; each partner implement 1/3 part of the programme; requirements are unified; jointly developed a quality assurance system is in place; students and academic staff mobility takes place.

The annex No 12 contains certifications issued for EMU and VMU concerning the recognition of the programme in Estonia and Lithuania in accordance with the procedures laid down in the States.

The requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education are met.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Number of publications of the academic staff significantly exceeds the required amount.

- 15 P5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The study programme complies with the above-mentioned requirements.

Requirements (R6-R8)

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Based on analysis presented in parts 3 and 4 of the assessment

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Based on analysis presented in parts 3, 4 and 5 of the assessment

- 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: Fully compliant

Justification: Study course description and the Master Thesis provided for the assessment include latest sources.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The professional master study programme 'Agri-food Business Management' name, the degree and the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, and admission requirements are interrelated and can be regarded as programme strengths.

Programme design and content of the study courses correspond to the industry requirements.

Strong material and technical resource base which include cooperation with the Faculty of Food Technology, laboratories and applied software systems; modern library, wide reading room, which is available for students' individual work.

Strengths:

1. Unique programme in the Baltic market
2. Programme is well positioned and has no direct competition
3. International partners and equal distribution of programme delivery.
4. Student mobility ensured by the design of the programme.

Weaknesses:

1. Low number of students so far, especially lack of the local students from Latvia and Baltic states
2. Programme marketing especially in Baltic market

Evaluation of the study programme "Agri-food business management"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Agri-food business management"

Short-term recommendations

Long-term recommendations

1. Expand the Erasmus+ partnership agreements with schools having similar study programmes that could offer the students more opportunities for programme specific international exchange.

2. Improve marketing activities for student attraction in Baltic markets.

II. "Project Management" ASSESSMENT

II. "Project Management" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

The Professional Masters Study programme 'Project Management' envisages acquisition of the degree "Professional Master's degree in project management" and professional qualification "project manager". So it is evident that the name of the programme and the degree and professional qualification are logically interrelated.

The programme aims 'to educate highly qualified project managers to work on local, national and international projects in the public, private and non-governmental sectors'. Aim of the programme and its objectives are logically linked with the programme name, degree and professional qualification. Programme admission requirements are corresponding to professional master programme in management field and are in line with Articles 46 and 47 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 846 of October 10, 2006 on Requirements, Criteria and Procedures for Admission to Study Programs.

Programme Intended learning outcomes are formulated as knowledge, skills and competences which are in line with Latvian and European qualification framework (LQF and EQF) Level 7. The number of learning outcomes seems appropriate.

Currently there are 33 full-time students.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The name, the degree and the professional qualification of the professional master programme in Project management are well aligned and the aims, the objectives and the admission requirements are interrelated.

Strengths:

1. Well targeted and specific professional master programme.

Weaknesses:

not identified.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

The courses are well described and intended learning outcomes are stipulated for each study course and complies with the regulations (annex with course descriptions). The mapping of the courses and how they contribute to the overall intended learning outcomes of the programme shows a well-designed programme with relevant and up-to-date project management courses.

The study programme meets the needs of the industry - that was confirmed during the site visit. The industry representatives and employers confirmed that students from this programme possess relevant competences which are needed in the companies. The alumni and the students furthermore confirmed that the courses in the programme are valuable and relevant.

The study programme includes the traineeship with 6 CP for the duration of 1.5 year and the traineeship 26 CP for the duration of 2 years, thus it complies with "Regulations on the State Standard of Second Level Professional Higher Education" of the Cabinet of Ministers. According to SAR (p.185) for 1,5 year programme there is traineeship "Project Management" (6 CP) and three traineeships for 2 year programme "Project Development", "Project Management" and "Project Evaluation" (26 CP). SAR (p. 185) presents a list of institutions, municipalities and companies

providing traineeships. Students acknowledged that the places for internships are offered and are relevant to the programme.

The Master Thesis topics (as presented in SAR page 187) are up-to-date and relevant to the project management field. The research part of the Master Thesis is the best among the assessed study direction programmes (examples presented of the review include relevant subchapter with well described research methodology).

In line with the overall LLU vision, a suggestion for the programme is to incorporate social responsibility more explicit in the programme and in the course learning objectives, in order to ensure a clear focus on social responsibility in project management.

Courses are in general well designed and the chosen teaching methods are well aligned to intended learning outcomes for the courses (as evident from the course descriptions). There are mainly 2 methods stated in the study plans (test and examination), however in reality there can be variety of assessment methods. The methods of assessment are described in the course syllabuses and explained to the students during the first class of the study course.

At the site visit meeting with students, they confirmed that the teaching methods in general were helpful and well chosen. They pointed in particular to student presentations as very inspiring and motivating and asked for more room for knowledge sharing between the students. A suggestion for the programme is to increase the use of such peer-to-peer activities in the courses to make the programme even more student-centred.

Overall, it is concluded that the study and assessment methods for assessment of students' learning outcomes are varied and valid.

Student-centred learning and teaching principles are followed because the study process considers the students' needs by providing different learning pathways in the study programme, using a variety of teaching methods, providing a fair and transparent assessment procedure, and providing feedback on the acquired knowledge, skills, and competences. It was confirmed during the meeting with programme students.

The programme seems to be well embedded in the QA-procedures of LLU and student surveys are done regularly and used for further development (confirmed during the site visit meetings with academic staff and with students). Graduate surveys are used according to the self-assessment report, but it was not possible to confirm this in the meetings with graduates and employer representatives.

The students only to a very limited degree use the opportunities for outgoing mobility (only four outgoing students in the accreditation period) and this is a challenge for creating an international learning experience. It could be suggested that the programme management looks more carefully into the reasons for why the students do not use this opportunity and offer more support.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Well-designed specialised master programme with balanced content and good focus on social research methods.

Strength:

1. Courses, learning objectives and assessment methods are well described and supports the overall goals of the programme.

2. The content in the courses are relevant and useful.
3. Teaching methods are in general helpful for the students.
4. The outcomes of the student surveys' are used to improve quality.

Weaknesses:

1. The low number of outbound students on exchange. Outgoing mobility is very limited.
2. Few peer to peer student activities.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

Resources are mostly the same for the whole study direction, including Program Management. The academic study support and the facilities to support student learning are adequate. At the site visit we experienced up-to-date classrooms for classic lecture types of teaching and informal settings for social activities and workshop types of teaching. Classrooms are designed flexible and can be used in several ways.

One course, "Information Technology in Project Management", is held at another faculty in order to provide access to computer facilities with the necessary software.

Students in the programme have access to LLUs library facilities and a smaller selection of literature on project management is available locally.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Resource base at LLU ensure the prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes of programme "Project management" and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process also in the future.

Strengths:

1. Strong material and technical resource base which include laboratories and applied software systems.
2. Modern library, wide the reading room, which is available for students` individual work.

Weaknesses: not identified

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

The qualification of the lecturers involved in the programme's implementation corresponded to the requirements of the programme and the profile of the respective study courses, because study courses providing knowledge and skills in project management methodology, standards and practical project management are taught by academic staff with theoretical and practical experience and project management education; whereas the study courses providing an understanding of the context in which project management takes pace, are delivered by the professionals from the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, other ESAF institutes and other faculties (ITF).

The institution and the programme have detailed information of the composition of the teaching staff based on the payroll. Senior academic staff (full professors and associate professors) accounted for nearly one load out of 3.39 in total which is satisfactory. The number of associate professors and assistant professors teaching in the programme has increased since the last accreditation which makes research-based teaching prominent in the programme (self-assessment report page 191).

The teaching staff is in general well qualified for teaching the courses in the programme and the ratio of lecturers to students is high, both compared to national and international measures. Moreover, it is above the average LLU ratio (SAR page 195). The teaching staff is offered opportunities for continuous pedagogical upskilling.

The permanent academic staff is involved in research activities, in particular on a national level (SAR page 193). All examples provided in the self-assessment report of research activities engaging permanent academic staff, is on a national level. Whereas the examples of the international research activities include two visiting lecturers and one example which is really not a research project (drafting a new professional standard). It is not evident from neither the self-assessment report or from the teaching staff CVs that other examples exist.

There is cooperation between teaching staff in the programme and mechanisms are in place to promote and foster continuous cooperation (self-assessment report mentions methodological seminars and discussions, events, personal contacts). The academic staff during the visit confirmed that these mechanisms are in place and works in order for ensure coordination and mutual collaboration (site visit meeting with academic staff).

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The composition of the teaching staff and the qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme is well suited the program specifics, it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. The academic staff is involved in scientific research and mutual collaboration between the teaching staff members contributes to the quality of the study courses/ and their correlation.

Strengths:

1. High ratio of lecturers to students.
2. Well qualified teaching staff.
3. Cooperation between teaching staff works well.

Weaknesses:

1. Academic staff is only to a very limited degree involved in international research activities.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Project Management"

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
Justification: The degree to be issued by acquisition of the programme is "Professional Master's degree in project management" and professional qualification is "project manager".
2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.
Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant
Justification: Agreement with Riga Technical University is provided.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Document 10.02.2020. No. 2.4.-6.2/17 is provided.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Latvian is native language of the faculty members

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The study agreement provided in the annexes complies with provisions.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The descriptions of the study course are provided and complies with legal requirements.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The programme complies with the professional standard for a Project manager as evident from Appnedix No 15.

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

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Appendix No 15 presents the compliance with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No.512 "Regulations on the state standard of the second level professional higher education" (26.08.2014.)<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761>; Law on Institutions of Higher Education. Latvijas Vēstnesis, 179, 17.11.1995. <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=37967>; The Environmental Protection Law. Latvijas Vēstnesis, 183 (3551), 15.11.2006. <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/147917>; The Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law. Latvijas Vēstnesis, 100 (5672), 25.05.2016. <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/282333>

13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Number of publications fulfils the requirements, evident from Cvs.

15 P5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: study programme is fully compliant with all the above criteria

Requirements (R6-R8)

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The study provision complies with conditions for implementation of the study programme.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The teaching staff's qualifications complies with implementation of the programme and regulatory requirements.

- 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: Fully compliant

Justification: Course descriptions indicate use of the latest books and research articles as recommended literature sources.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Overall, this a well designed, well organised and well delivered study programme. The quality of the courses is high and the content is relevant. The teaching staff is well qualified and resources are generally sufficient.

Strengths:

1. The name, the degree and the professional qualification of the professional master programme in Project management are well aligned and the aims, the objectives and the admission requirements are interrelated.
2. Courses, learning objectives and assessment methods are well described and supports the overall goals of the programme.
3. The content in the courses are relevant and useful.
4. Teaching methods are in general helpful for the students.
5. The necessary resources for supporting the students are in compliance with requirements.
6. High ratio of lecturers to students.
7. Well qualified teaching staff.
8. Mutual cooperation between teaching staff works well.

Weaknesses:

1. The low number of outbound students on exchange. Outgoing mobility is very limited.
2. Few peer to peer student activities.
3. Academic staff publications are mainly conference proceedings, there is low number of journal articles. Faculty is only to a limited degree involved in international research activities.

Evaluation of the study programme "Project Management"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Project Management"

Short-term recommendations

Long-term recommendations

- | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Incorporate social responsibility more explicit in the programme and in the course learning objectives |
| 2. Increase the use of student peer-to-peer activities in the courses. |
| 3. Increase outgoing mobility among the students. |

4. Encourage and motivate the permanent academic staff to publish in peer reviewed international journals (instead of conference proceedings).

II. "Business Management" ASSESSMENT

II. "Business Management" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

The study programme Business Management is professional master study programme, at the end of which students receive Professional Master`s degree in business management (MBA) and professional qualification General manager of Organisations. The study programme is held in Latvian language and since academic year 2016/2017 also in English language. The duration of the programme, depending from the students qualification, is 1,5 or 2 years.

The programme complies with regulatory documents and professional standard – General Manager of organizations, the studies include theoretical study courses with 54 Credit points and professional traineeship part with 6 and 20 Credit points respectively.

The vision of LLU – to be one of the leading universities of science and technologies in the Baltic Sea region, specializing in the sustainable use of natural resources aimed at the enhancement of quality of life for society, is incorporated in to the study process and present in many courses, e.g. Economic Resources, Human resource management and others.

The indicators of the aim, tasks and admission requirements of the programme are consistent and mutually related. For the foreign students and courses in English language the skills are tested with minimum requirement to have at least B2 level. Students are exempted from the test if they can provide English language certificate (IELTS, TOEFL or equivalent). It might be considered in the future to ask all the students to have those certificates for admission as mandatory.

The overall number of students in the programme is slowly and steadily increasing from 28 students in academic year 2013/2014 to 52 students in academic year 2019/2020 (Annex 13), which is creating good growth trend percentage wise, but the total number remains to be improved. It has to be admitted that number of students with private financing is basically not changing – staying at the same level. The increase is managed by adding students who are financed from state subsidies and foreign students, who are in total 14 in academic year 2019/2020. 80 % of students are entering the programme from own ESAF programmes and other LLU faculties programmes. For development, it is advisable to attract more foreign students and seek for possibilities to involve students from other educational institutions outside LLU.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The programme in general is contributing to overall LLU vision, the acquired degree, qualification, learning outcomes and admission requirements are consistent and mutually related.

Strengths:

1. The total number of students in the programme is increasing.
2. The programme corresponds to the current profession standard.

Weaknesses: not identified.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

The study programme consists of 14 compulsory study courses, 4 elective study courses, professional traineeship and final examination/master thesis (Annex 18). These courses in general comply with the regulatory enactments and profession standard. The content of the courses address all necessary and basic competencies for General Manager of Organization. However the profession standard requires to master competencies in corporate governance and strategic management. It could be considered to set up separate course for corporate governance and move strategic management course from elective courses to compulsory courses. The research “Study on labour demand trends” results showed increasing need for digital competencies. Currently study programme does not content any specific course on digitalization issues, which could be considered as opportunity for further development.

The study implementation methods include lectures (including with guest lecturers), practical works, case analysis, professional traineeships, discussions and field trips. Students can benefit from Alumni Week, where graduates of the faculty are giving lectures on specific and currently actual topics. Although extensively present, the practical aspect of the study process is subject for improvement. During the onsite visit it was identified, that there is still demand for increase of practical part of whole learning process, the employers, graduates and other professionals should be more involved in the study process - e.g. workshop type learning, which is based on practical cases, practical life situations could be developed.

The traineeship is an important part of the studies, where practical aspect is developed. There are 3 types of traineeships in the programme: for 60CP programme ‘Enterprise management’ and for 80CP programme students ‘Resources Management’ and ‘Entrepreneurship’ (SAR page 101, 102). Students referred, that places for traineeships are available, there are agreements concluded with enterprises and organizations for internships. Students are searching for traineeship places, but also faculty staff is helpful in this process. Also, places for internships in the English language are available for foreign students. Students also use ERASMUS + funding for internships abroad and examples in Netherland, France and Spain are mentioned. Still, closer collaboration with business enterprises and deeper development of internship programme would be only advisable.

Each teaching staff member chooses appropriate assessment methods for particular study courses. Assessment of skills constitutes 58% of whole amount and professional skills assessment proportion is sufficient. Students are provided with necessary information on evaluation criteria, which could be found online in the extended programme of the course. Various assessment methods are used in courses.

The students-centred learning principles are implemented in the study process (Table 5.1. Self-evaluation report). During the onsite visit it was concluded that students can address necessary questions to study programme management and academic staff, they are discussed and to possible extend solved. There is good cooperation between faculty staff and students.

The LLU has ordered the research “Study on labour demand trends”, started in Year 2018. The outcome of this research is used to adjust content of the courses.

Another project - “Industry expert services for evaluating the content of study programmes and making recommendations” started in Year 2018, where study programmes were evaluated from employer’s perspective. Results of this research again were used to adjust study courses.

For another study process development perspective once a year surveys among students, alumni’s and employers are conducted. It is easier to survey student opinion then alumni’s and employer`s opinion, but nevertheless, the outcomes of those surveys in line with traineeship reports are used for improvement of the quality of studies.

There are positive activities, like Summer schools, Entrepreneur DNA, which help to develop students learning outcomes and those activities should be performed also in the future.

The university arranges annual international scientific conference “Students on their Way to Science”. This event helps to enhance student involvement in scientific activities; however this involvement currently is not sufficient.

Students has opportunities to participate in mobility programmes like Erasmus+ and BOVA, though limited number of students participate in those programmes (Annex 9). As few of the reasons were identifies during onsite visit – hesitation and uncertainty of the possible visiting place and programme. The LLU has sufficient amount of cooperation partners for mobility programmes, it is advisable for the ESAF to select and focus on few of them and further develop information about placements, including very practical issues.

The descriptions of the study courses are explicit, provided in two languages. The traineeship procedures comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. Final thesis are of high quality, however empirical research part of the Master thesis is quite weak, and the thesis presented for review does not include subchapter “Research methodology”.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Content and implementation study courses, modules, organizations of traineeships, evaluation methods and final thesis, corresponds to necessary learning outcomes. Students are provided with possibility to participate in mobility programmes. Every year the surveys for evaluation of study process are conducted and used for programme improvement. There are possible improvements in study course arrangements and closer collaboration with employers and graduates.

Strengths

1. There are various research projects on current trends in labour markets and employers involvement in study process evaluation.
2. Student surveys are conducted for evaluation of study programmes, types of examinations, organizational matters, availability of information recourses and other issues, which helps for overall study development.
3. The various events, like Alumni Week, Summer schools, Entrepreneur DNA and others are very helpful for differentiation of study process.

Weaknesses

1. Limited number of students participates in mobility programmes.
2. The engagement of students in scientific projects and activities is on low level.
3. Even though present in various forms, learning process is still partially missing practicality in study process, connections with practical management case analysis.
4. The study programme could be more targeted towards bio economy, sustainability, green economy, addressing climate change and other CSR related contemporary challenges.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

The study provision is sufficient for the achievement of the learning outcomes. Lectures are held in good quality auditoriums, equipped also with monitors and modern technological infrastructure.

There are two basic information systems currently used in study process and it`s management: LLU IS (https://lais.llu.lv/lluis/personal_data) and MOODLE (LLU e-studies system <https://estudijas.llu.lv/?lang=en>). Those platforms are covering the basic necessary information for the students in the study process and for the academic staff for study and general management issues. There is possible development for further virtual integration of those platforms. During the onsite visit it was noticed that not all information on those information systems is equally available in Latvian and English languages in some parts only Latvian language version is available. It was not discovered as disturbing obstacle for English speaking students, but could be considered as room for improvement.

Students have good access to LLU Fundamental Library and there is also information centre in ESAF,

where students can get necessary books and periodicals. Besides physical information sources, students have access to databases, search engines and other online resources.

LLU has developed research strategy that supports overall LLU vision and mission. Students are encouraged to participate in research activities and 64% of the topics of the all master thesis corresponded to the directions of LLU strategy: Sustainable economics of the bio resource industries, Sustainable development of territories, Efficiency of manufacturing processes and competitiveness of companies. However the general involvement level in research activities remains to be improved. Above mentioned resources are equally utilized in other study programmes and are similar for whole study direction.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The necessary study provision, like material, technical and financial provision comply with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and reaching aimed learning outcomes. Informational sources are available and sufficient, information systems are in place and used in the study process management.

Strengths:

1. Good access to physical information sources like books (however need to be updated as information source in course descriptions) and periodicals and at the same time good availability of online information sources.

Weaknesses:

1. There is still place for improvement for integrity of information systems and information availability in both languages: Latvian and English.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

Teaching staff, involved in the programme, consists of 10 professors, 13 associate and assistant professors and 7 lecturers, making up in total 30 persons (Table 5.5 in Self-evaluation report). The academic balance is well maintained. There is also good cooperation with institutes within the ESAF and also with Faculty of Information Technology, who provide relevant teaching of the study courses. LLU has all together eight faculties and Business Management could be considered as inter-branch subject. Therefore implementation of activities with involvement of teaching staff from other faculties would be an advantage for further development.

The remuneration system of the teaching staff includes two major components: the teaching part and research part. In addition the responses from students and graduates in study evaluation process are influencing overall reward amount. This system is supporting development teaching and research activities of academic personnel, responsiveness to student enquiries and overall study programme development.

Academic staff is developing their professional qualification. In the year 2019, ESAF teaching staff has participated in 81 different trips abroad, including 18 lectures presentations abroad and 5 experience exchange trips within the ERASMUS programme framework (ESAF work plan for year 2019). In 33% of those cases participated lecturers form Business Management master programme. It could be admitted that one`s names appear more frequently than others, some of the lecturers did not participate in trips abroad. Those activities in general indicate good internationalization level of academic staff, improvement of professional qualification and help to achieve the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme.

Members of teaching staff participated in various seminars organized by professional organizations

(e.g. LZRA Education Centre, Business Information Service and others) and have obtained certificates of other professional development courses.

In the year 2019 four books has been published, where for one of the book "Sociālā inovācija: izaicinājumi un risinājumi Latvijā. Zinātniskā monogrāfija" co-authors are two persons from academic staff from this particular programme (ESAF work plan for year 2019).

In the Self-evaluation report in the description of this particular programme, chapter 4, no information indicated about involvement of foreign professors, lecturers. The participation of teaching staff from abroad would help increase of internationalization of the programme, expand students and academic staff experience and probably lead to increase of number of students.

Teaching staff has prepared 222 publications, 21 study courses integrated with research results and 9 course books and scientific monographs from academic year 2013/2014 till 2018/2019. This shows good interrelation between scientific and pedagogical work and also good involvement in publications of research outcomes.

There is possibility for students to participate in the international conference "Students on their Way to Science".

During the onsite visit it was found that, teaching staff has mentored new colleagues to help to start their academic careers, also monitoring of colleagues lesions has been performed.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

ESAF undertakes measures to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme. Teaching staff is well structured, participates in research work, publishes articles and books and is involved professional development activities. International aspect is present, however overall international cooperation could be developed.

Strengths

1. Good amount of international activities, including foreign lectures and experience exchange activities.
2. Good amount of co-operation among teaching staff within the faculty.

Weaknesses

1. The cooperation with larger number of other faculties would be an advantage.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Business Management"

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

Justification: Sample of Professional Master diploma in Business Management with Qualification "General Management of Organisations" is provided

2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Agreement with Liepaja university and Riga Technical university provided in AIKA study programme evaluation platform

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Included paragraph in study agreement between student and LLU and LLU conformation document 10.02.2020. No. 2.4.-6.2/13.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Latvian is native language of all the faculty members.

- 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: Fully compliant

Justification: LLU conformation document 10.02.2020. No. 2.4.-6.2/13 provided in AIKA study programme evaluation platform

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Sample of the study agreement provided in AIKA study programme evaluation platform include all the necessary components.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Description of the study courses provided in AIKA study programme evaluation platform

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The study programme complies with professional standard – General Manager of Organizations, issued 18.09.2019 (Self-evaluation report, page 92) and compliance presented in the Appendix No 15

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

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Appendix No 14 presents the compliance with

1) Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No.512 "Regulations on the state standard of the second level professional higher education" (26.08.2014.)<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761>

2) Law on Institutions of Higher Education. Latvijas Vēstnesis, 179, 17.11.1995.
<https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=37967>

3) The Environmental Protection Law. Latvijas Vēstnesis, 183 (3551), 15.11.2006.
<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/147917>

4) The Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law. Latvijas Vēstnesis, 100 (5672), 25.05.2016. <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/282333>

13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Information provided in Annex 6 indicates that all academic staff members have at least 1 publication, majority have more publication within the assessment period.

15 P5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Study programme complies with all the above mentioned criteria.

Requirements (R6-R8)

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Assessment report Part 3

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Information provided in Annex 6

- 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: Fully compliant

Justification: Thesis presented for review include new sources.

Annex 18, only few books, mentioned as information source in course syllabus are issued after year 2015, most of them before year 2010, except for periodicals and online sources.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The master study programme "Business Management" meets the necessary requirements for study process, faculty staff has sufficient proficiency to present and manage the course, students are provided with information and safeguarded in case of lost accreditation. Broader involvement in international activities would help for the programmes development.

Strengths:

1. Programme delivered in 2 languages with good international perspectives
2. The study programme and academic staff complies with the State Academic Education Standard and Law on Higher Education Institutions, teaching personnel is well structured and motivated.

Weaknesses:

1. Empirical research part of the Master thesis is quite weak, and the thesis presented for review does not include subchapter "Research methodology"
2. Limited number of students participates in mobility programmes.

Evaluation of the study programme "Business Management"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Business Management"

Short-term recommendations

1. To improve the quality of final thesis particularly to enrich thesis with broader empirical research instruments and description of research methodology (include subchapter).

Long-term recommendations

1. To increase the cooperation in various fields: with other faculties, employers and other institutions, perhaps not in number of activities, but more in quality and different approaches.
2. Continue to develop course content focusing on sustainability and bioeconomics and continue to address contemporary issues like circular economy, digitalization of society and economics, corporate social responsibility like integral approach in entrepreneurship, corporate governance and others.
3. Continue to develop practical part of the study process, apart from traineeships, like - workshops, case analysis based in real life situations. Enhance learning versus teaching approach.
4. Continue to promote students self-organized initiatives, e.g. Entrepreneurs DNA.

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

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Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:	Fully compliant		Systems and policies, as well as quality assurance system in LLU contribute to continuous improvement and development, efficient performance of the study direction.
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.	Fully compliant		Generally, well developed and established good cooperation with different institutions and other HEI in Latvia.
R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).	Fully compliant		Level of scientific research complies with need for bachelor and master level studies.
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		All shortcomings and deficiencies are eliminated. Recommendations provided by previous assessment commission are generally implemented, still some are in progress.

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

No.	Study programme	R5	R6	R7	R8	Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
1	Business Studies (41341)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Good

No.	Study programme	R5	R6	R7	R8	Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
2	Entrepreneurship and Business Management (42345)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Good
3	Agri-food business management (45345)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
4	Project Management (47345)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
5	Business Management (47345)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

There was no disagreement between the experts