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of the Foundation “Academic Information Centre”,
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in Riga, on 4 March 2019

The Guidelines for the Preparation of the Joint Report by the Experts Group on the Assessment of a Study Direction

The guidelines for the preparation of the joint report by the experts group on the assessment of a study direction (hereinafter - the guidelines) have been developed in accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 793 of 11 December 2018 “Regulations on Opening and Accreditation of a Study Direction”.

The purpose of the guidelines is to provide the experts with a structured framework for the preparation of the joint report on the assessment of a study direction. Within the assessment of the study direction, the experts shall prepare a joint report in English.

The joint report by the experts group shall be prepared as follows:

- in accordance with the sequence set forth in the guidelines, justifying the made statements and providing references and examples;
- in accordance with Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG);
- in accordance with the literary and grammar rules of the language, legal and academic terminology; and
- providing recommendations for the elimination of the deficiencies identified (on a short-term basis) and for improving the study direction and the relevant study programmes (on a long-term basis).

Preparing the joint report by the experts group on the assessment of a study direction and the relevant study programmes, the experts shall agree upon the evaluation of the relevant requirements and the criteria. If the opinion of the experts regarding any requirement or criteria differs, it shall be specified in the joint report by the experts group.

The report is divided into four parts, where Parts I and II deal with the evaluation of the criteria and the prescribed requirements regarding the study direction, whereas Parts III and IV give the evaluation of the criteria and the prescribed requirements regarding the study programmes.

Each part includes chapters, which specify the criteria according to which the experts shall carry out the assessment. The experts may, additionally and at their own discretion, assess also other issues related to the relevant chapter.

Evaluating each criterion, the experts shall analyse the available information by providing specific examples and references to the self-assessment report of the higher education

institution/ college¹ and the information obtained during the visit. In case the relevant study programmes of the study direction are implemented in form of distance learning or in branches, the criteria shall be analysed in view of the specific features of the form of distance learning and/or branches. The experts shall analyse each criterion and make conclusions, by specifying the strengths and weaknesses of the higher education institution/ college in meeting the relevant criterion as to the implementation of the study direction and the relevant study programmes.

The experts' evaluation on compliance is provided for each requirement according to the following grading: "fully compliant", "partially compliant" or "non-compliant", by taking into account the evaluation given to the relevant criteria.

Evaluation	Explanation of the evaluation
Fully compliant	The study direction or the study programme complies with the prescribed requirements.
Partially compliant	Whilst assessing the compliance of the study direction and the study programmes with the prescribed requirements, shortcomings and deficiencies have been identified, but they can be eliminated by the day on which the Study Quality Committee (hereinafter - the SQC) in its meeting is supposed to review the application on the accreditation of the study direction, or within the accreditation term of the study direction.
Non-compliant	Whilst assessing the compliance of the study direction and the study programmes with the prescribed requirements, significant deficiencies have been identified, and the identified shortcomings and deficiencies regarding the implementation of the study programme cannot be eliminated within the two-year accreditation term of the study direction.

Whilst preparing the joint report by the experts group on the relevant study programmes of the study direction, the experts shall agree upon the evaluation of the study programmes by specifying whether the study programme shall be evaluated as excellent, good, average or poor.

Evaluation	Explanation of the evaluation
Excellent	The study programme complies with the prescribed requirements.
Good	Whilst assessing the compliance of the study programme with the prescribed requirements, minor deficiencies have been identified.
Average	Whilst assessing the compliance of the study programme with the prescribed requirements, shortcomings and deficiencies have been identified, but they can be eliminated within the accreditation term of the study direction.
Poor	Whilst assessing the compliance of the study programme with the prescribed requirements, significant deficiencies have been identified, and

¹ The term "higher education institution/ college" used herein is applicable to all higher education and science institutions mentioned in the Law on Institutions of Higher Education which implement academic and professional study programmes, as well as deal with science, research activities, and artistic creation (universities, higher education institutions, academies, institutes, and colleges).

	the identified shortcomings and deficiencies regarding the implementation of the study programme cannot be eliminated within the two-year accreditation term of the study direction.
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In the chapter dealing with the recommendations, the experts shall specify the conditions which must be met by the date the decision on the accreditation of the study direction is made (if applicable), as well as short-term recommendations for the elimination of the minor deficiencies identified and long-term recommendations for further improvement of the study direction and the relevant study programmes.

The joint report by the experts group shall be prepared in computer readable form and submitted electronically.

After the procedure for the assessment of the study direction of the higher education institution/college is completed, the joint report by the experts group shall be published in the Study Direction Register.

The structure of the joint report by the experts group

The Summary of the Assessment of the Study Direction and the Relevant Study Programmes, as Carried Out by the Experts

Part I. Assessment of the Study Direction

1. Management of the Study Direction
2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System
3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction
4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation
5. Cooperation and Internationalisation
6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures
7. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Direction
8. Recommendations for the Study Direction

Part II. Assessment of the Study Programme “...”

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme
2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof
3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme
4. Teaching Staff
5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme “...”
6. Recommendations for the Study Programme “...”

Part III. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Direction and the Relevant Study Programmes

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts (If Applicable)

JOINT REPORT BY THE EXPERTS GROUP ON THE ASSESSMENT OF A
STUDY DIRECTION

STUDY DIRECTION

(Name)

Name of the Higher Education Institution/ College

Experts:

1. Expert, degree/ professional qualification, name, surname _____
2. Expert, degree/ professional qualification, name, surname _____
3. Expert, degree/ professional qualification, name, surname _____
4. Expert delegated by the Employers' Confederation of Latvia, name, surname /
expert delegated by the Sectoral Expert Council, name, surname _____
5. Expert delegated by the Student Union of Latvia, name, surname _____

_____ (Date)

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Summary of the Assessment of the Study Direction and the Relevant Study Programmes, as Carried Out by the Experts

Please, provide a concise summary of the assessment of the study direction and the relevant study programmes, as carried out by the experts. Specify the positive and negative aspects identified.

I. Assessment of the Study Direction

1. Management of the Study Direction

Criteria:

- 1.1. The aims of the study direction are clearly defined and attainable. The study direction and the relevant study programmes comply with the main directions of the strategic development of the higher education institution/ college and meet the needs and the development trends of the society and national economy.
- 1.2. The structure of the management (administration) of the study direction and the relevant study programmes is oriented towards the development of the study direction. Decision-taking is efficient. The support provided by the administrative and technical staff contributes to meeting all needs with regard to the relevant study programmes of the study direction.
- 1.3. The higher education institution/ college has established a system and developed/ implemented procedures for the admission of students, the recognition of the study period, professional experience, and the previously acquired formal and non-formal education, as well as for the evaluation of the achievements and learning outcomes of the students, and these procedures are logical and efficient.
- 1.4. The higher education institution/ college has set certain academic integrity principles and mechanisms, and it uses appropriate plagiarism detection tools which are effective and contribute to the development of the internal culture of the higher education institution/ college, and the stakeholders are aware of such tools and mechanisms.
- 1.5. The information published on the website of the higher education institution/ college 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.

Analysis

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Criteria:

- 2.1. The higher education institution/ college has established a quality policy (which is publicly available). The higher education institution/ college has developed and maintains a quality assurance system, which contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction and the relevant study programmes. The system ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction and the relevant study programmes.
- 2.2. The procedures for the development and review of the relevant study programmes of the study direction and the feedback mechanisms (including feedbacks to students, employers, and graduates) have been defined and they are logical, efficient, and available for all stakeholders.
- 2.3. The higher education institution/ college collects and analyses the information (statistics) on the relevant study programmes of the study direction on a regular basis and efficiently uses it to improve the study direction.
- 2.4. The higher education institution/ college has identified the standards set forth in Part 1 of the ESG, which require special attention. In order to improve the performance of the relevant study programmes of the study direction, the higher education institution/ college has determined aims and measures, which are integrated in a joint quality assurance system.

Analysis

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction

Criteria:

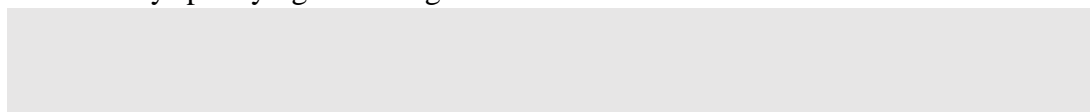
- 3.1. The higher education institution/ college has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study direction and the relevant study programmes. There is a system for financing the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities in place, and this system is efficient.
- 3.2. The higher education institution/ college has identified the infrastructure resources and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study direction, and they are available for the higher education institution/ college. The students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources. There is a common system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of the material, technical, methodological, and informative provision, etc. in place.

- 3.3. The higher education institution/ college has developed and it implements and complies with the procedures for attracting highly skilled teaching staff (for the study direction and the relevant study programmes). The academic and research workload of the teaching staff is balanced. The needs of the teaching staff for professional and didactic improvement are identified in a target-oriented manner. Appropriate improvement measures are undertaken, and the outcome and efficiency of the implemented measures are assessed. The teaching staff members take part both in outgoing and incoming mobility, which brings added value to the implementation of the study process and the study quality.
- 3.4. The higher education institution/ college has identified the support necessary for the students and established a well-functioning support system, based on the needs of the students.

Analysis



Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses



4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Scientific research and, if the study direction “Arts” is assessed, also artistic creation

Criteria:

- 4.1. The directions of scientific research and/or artistic creation in the study direction comply with the development aims of the higher education institution/ college and they are relevant to the study direction and the relevant industry (provide a separate analysis of the role of the doctoral study programmes, if applicable).
- 4.2. The relation between scientific research and/or artistic creation in the study direction and the study process has been defined and ensured, and it is efficient. Scientific research and/or artistic creation and the outcomes thereof are integrated in the study process in the study programmes of all levels.
- 4.3. International cooperation in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation within the study direction and the relevant study programmes is ensured and improved in a target-oriented manner.
- 4.4. The higher education institution/ college has developed mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research and/or artistic creation. They are well-functioning and efficient.
- 4.5. The higher education institution/ college has developed mechanisms to promote the involvement of the students in scientific research and/or artistic creation. They are well-functioning and efficient. The students of the study programmes of all levels are involved in scientific research and/or artistic creation.

4.6. Innovative solutions in the study process.

Analysis

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Criteria:

- 5.1. The higher education institution/ college cooperates with the institutions from Latvia and abroad (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers' organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, scientific institutes, etc.) within the study direction, and such cooperation contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction and the relevant study programmes. The cooperation partners are selected in view of the specific features of the study direction and the relevant study programmes.
- 5.2. The higher education institution/ college has developed a system and procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study direction. They are efficient and contribute to the improvement of the study process.
- 5.3. A common system for the provision of traineeships and the organisation thereof (if applicable) has been developed within the study direction.
- 5.4. The justification of the development of the joint study programmes and the selection of the partnering higher education institutions complies with the aims and the specific features of the study direction and the strategy of the higher education institution/ college. The procedures for the development and implementation of the joint study programmes are defined and efficient (if applicable).

Analysis

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

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

Criterion:

- 6.1. The recommendations provided during the previous procedures for the assessment of the study direction (accreditation, licensing of the study programmes, evaluation of the changes in the relevant study programmes of the study direction, inclusion of the study programmes in the accreditation form of the study direction (if applicable)) have been fully or partially implemented. The higher education institution/ college has contributed to the analysis of the recommendations and their implementation in view of the specific features of the study direction and the relevant study programmes.

Analysis

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

7. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Direction

Each requirement shall be evaluated as “fully compliant”, “partially compliant” or “non-compliant” with the higher education institution/ college and the study direction by providing a justification. In addition, it is also possible to refer to the respective part of the report or the information provided by the higher education institution/ college, which serves as evidence for the full compliance, partial compliance or non-compliance, as indicated herein.

No.	Requirements	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	Justification
R1	Pursuant to <u>Section 5, Paragraph 2¹ of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education</u> , the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:				
1.1.	The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.				
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.				
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.				
1.4.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.				
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.				
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.				
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.				
R3	Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).				
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.				

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Provide conclusions as to whether the related requirements for the study direction have been met. Specify any identified deficiencies, which cannot be eliminated within the two-year accreditation term.

8. Recommendations for the Study Direction

Recommendations, which apply to the study direction as a whole. The recommendations shall be provided in two parts:

- *Recommendations for the elimination of the deficiencies identified (on a short-term basis).*
- *Recommendations for the improvement of the study direction (on a long-term basis).*

II. ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME “..”

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Criterion:

- 1.1. The name of the study programme, 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.

Analysis

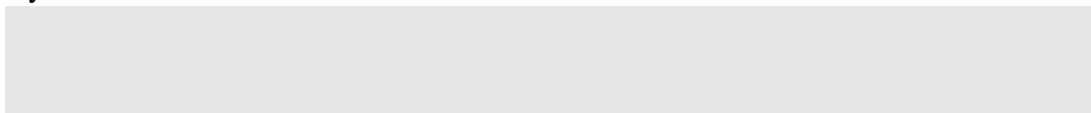
Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

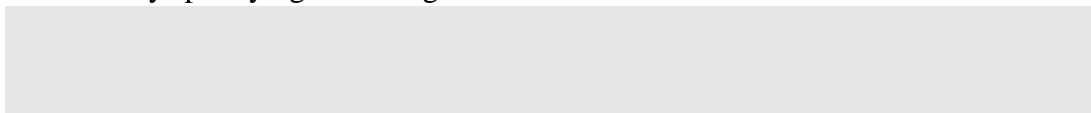
Criteria:

- 2.1. The descriptions of the study courses/ modules, the traineeship, and the final thesis are of high quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The content is relevant and complementary, and it complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the scientific trends.
- 2.2. The study implementation methods, including the evaluation methods, contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are taken into account.
- 2.3. The outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies.
- 2.4. The students avail themselves of the incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities, and the learning outcomes achieved during such mobility are recognised.

Analysis



Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

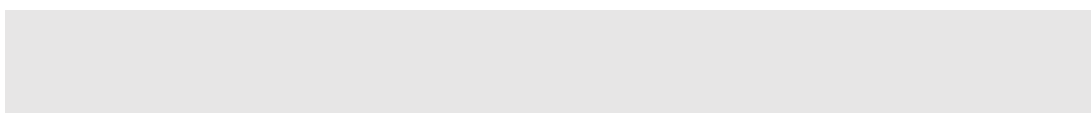


3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

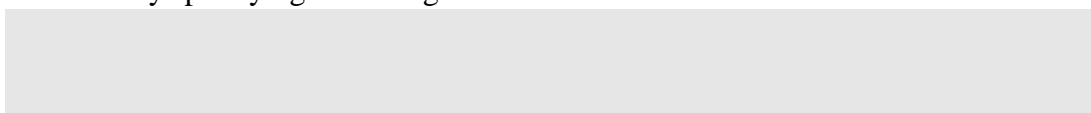
Criteria:

- 3.1. The study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, 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.
- 3.2. The study provision and the scientific support, including the resources provided within the cooperation with other scientific institutions and institutions of higher education, comply with the requirements for the implementation of the doctoral study programme, create the prerequisites for the achievement of learning and research outcomes, and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process also in the future (if applicable).

Analysis



Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses



4. Teaching Staff

Criteria:

- 4.1. The higher education institution/ college undertakes measures in a target-oriented manner to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff.
- 4.2. 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 and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

- 4.3. The scientific publications of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programmes and the involvement of the academic staff in research-related projects contribute to the implementation of a high-quality doctoral study programme (if applicable).
- 4.4. The academic staff is involved in scientific research and/or artistic creation (in the fields related to the content of the study programme) both at national and international level. The obtained information is used in the study process.
- 4.5. There is a mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff members in place, which contributes to the improvement of the study courses/ modules and their correlation.

Analysis

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme “...”

The table contains key points, which facilitate the assessment of the compliance of the study programme with the requirements prescribed in the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and other regulatory enactments.

Specify in the table whether the provided statements are “fully compliant”, “partially compliant” or “non-compliant” with the study programme by providing a justification thereof. In addition, it is also possible to refer to the respective part of the joint report by the experts group or the information provided by the higher education institution/ college, which serves as evidence for the full compliance, partial compliance or non-compliance, as indicated herein.

If applicable, the table may be complemented with other requirements set forth in the Law on Institutions of Higher Education or other regulatory enactments applicable to the study programme subject to the assessment.

No.	Key points	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	Justification
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.				
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.				
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.				
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.				

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.				
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.				
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.				
8.	The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.				
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.				
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.				
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.				
12.	The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard.				
13.	The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 55 ¹ , Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).				
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.				
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	Requirements	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	Justification
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.				
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.				
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.				

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Provide conclusions as to whether the related requirements for the study programme have been met. Specify any identified deficiencies, which cannot be eliminated within the two-year accreditation term.

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
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6. Recommendations for the Study Programme “...”

Recommendations, which apply to the relevant study programme. The recommendations shall be provided in two parts:

- *Recommendations for the elimination of the deficiencies identified (on a short-term basis).*
- *Recommendations for the improvement of the study direction (on a long-term basis).*

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

Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Direction

	Requirements	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant
R1	Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 2 ¹ 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.			
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.			
R3	Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).			
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 the Requirements for the Relevant Study Programmes of the Study Direction

No.	Name and code of the study programme	R5*			R6*			R7*			R8*			Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
		Fully compliant	Non-compliant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Non-compliant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Non-compliant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Non-compliant	Partially compliant	

*R5 Compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the [Law on Institutions of Higher Education](#) and other regulatory enactments.

*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 achievement of the learning outcomes.

**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.*

**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.*

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

In the event that the opinions of the experts regarding any of the criteria or the applicable requirements differ, please indicate the name and surname of the expert, the dissenting opinion, the relevant criterion or requirement, and a justification of the dissenting opinion.