

## APPLICATION

Study field "Hotel and Restaurant Service, Tourism and Recreation Organisation" for assessment

Study field	<i>Hotel and Restaurant Service, Tourism and Recreation Organisation</i>
Title of the higher education institution	<i>"HOTEL SCHOOL" Viesnīcu biznesa koledža</i>
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# **Self-evaluation report**

Study field "Hotel and Restaurant Service, Tourism and  
Recreation Organisation"

HOTEL SCHOOL Hotel Management College

<b>Self-evaluation report</b> .....	2
<b>Study field</b> .....	4
1. Information on the Higher Education Institution/College .....	4
2.1. Management of the Study Field .....	11
2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System .....	24
2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field .....	31
2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation .....	41
2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation .....	50
2.6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures .....	55
<b>Annexes</b> .....	58
<b>Other annexes</b> .....	60
<b>Hospitality Services Organization (41811)</b> .....	61
<b>Study programme</b> .....	65
3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme .....	65
3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof .....	69
3.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme .....	77
3.4. Teaching Staff .....	79
<b>Annexes</b> .....	82

# 1. Information on the Higher Education Institution/College

## 1.1. Basic information on the higher education institution/ college and its strategic development fields,.

"HOTEL SCHOOL" Hotel Management College, registration number in the Register of Educational Institutions: 3397802926 (hereinafter referred to as the College), is a professional higher education institution founded by a private commercial company "SIA "HOTEL SCHOOL" Viesnīcu biznesa koledža", registration number in the Register of Enterprises: 40103277684. The College was founded in 2013 and began implementing its study programmes in 2015. In 2017, the study field implemented by the College was accredited, and in 2020, institutional accreditation of the College was obtained.

**The strategic specialisation** of the College is hotel and restaurant service, tourism and leisure organization.

**The general mission** of the College is to promote the development of the tourism and hospitality industry at the local and international level by providing high-quality vocational secondary/higher/continuing education in the most in-demand occupations of the hospitality industry that are competitive in the international labour market, and by promoting lifelong learning for the professional development of those employed in the sector, as well as facilitating the creation and spread of industry innovations for a sustainable future.

**At the level of individuals, the College's mission** is to help unlock their inner potential and motivate professional growth, leadership and career in the tourism and hospitality industry, providing them with knowledge, skills and competences that meet the requirements of the current labour market and the basic principles of sustainable tourism and entrepreneurship.

**The vision** of the College is to become a leading vocational secondary/higher/continuing education institution in Latvia specialising in education and training in the field of tourism and hospitality, and one of the stable leaders at the regional and global level, which is manifested both in the active attraction of foreign students and teaching staff, and in close cooperation with foreign employers, their professional associations and those foreign educational institutions that are internationally recognized education providers in the tourism and hospitality industry.

### **Main tasks and areas of the College activity:**

- Implementation of short-cycle higher vocational education study programmes within its strategic specialisation, which provide a possibility to acquire the fifth level of professional qualification;
- Implementation of vocational secondary education programmes within the strategic specialisation, which provide a possibility to acquire the third level and fourth level of professional qualification;
- Implementation of continuing vocational education programmes and professional development education programmes within the strategic specialisation;
- Implementation of international education programmes ("BTEC") within the strategic specialisation;
- Implementation of non-formal education courses, seminars, conferences and other training activities in line with the strategic specialisation;
- Organisation of traineeship and work-based learning in cooperation with tourism and

hospitality industry employers in Latvia and abroad;

- Organisation of professional qualification examinations in order to assess professional competence acquired outside the formal education system in those professional qualifications, in which the College implements appropriate vocational education programmes;
- Carrying out applied research in the area of the strategic specialisation;
- Implementation of international cooperation projects (such as Erasmus, Nordplus, etc.) in the area of the strategic specialisation;
- Cooperation with higher education institutions in Latvia and abroad to provide graduates with continuing education opportunities;
- Provision of study support processes (for example, provision of library services, development and publication of educational material, etc.).

### **Basic operating principles of the College:**

- The legal basis of the College's activities is the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the Education Law, the Vocational Education Law, the Law on Scientific Activity, other laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia, and the College Regulations;
- The College respects the principles of democracy, equality and openness in its operation and management;
- The study process in the College is organised in accordance with the principles of student-centred approach, academic integrity and internal quality management;
- The College ensures the academic freedom of the academic staff and students;
- The academic staff of the College include practitioners of the hospitality industry with substantial experience in hotel management positions;
- At least 65 per cent of the elected academic staff of the College has higher education or professional qualification corresponding to the seventh level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework;
- Within the framework of the studies, the College provides internships to every student at high-level hotels in Latvia and abroad, thus allowing to gain international work experience in world-renowned hospitality brand companies brands;
- In its activities, the College exercises non-discriminatory attitude to all its students, staff and cooperation partners, and strives to avoid conflict-of-interest situations;
- The College aims to promote sustainable tourism principles in the hospitality sector.

The main function of the College is the implementation of short-cycle vocational higher education study programmes in the area of the strategic specialisation, which provide a possibility to acquire the fifth level of professional qualification. At the moment, the College implements one short-cycle vocational higher education study programme "Hospitality Services Organization", the completion of which results in acquiring the fifth level of professional qualification "Organiser Hotel Services Organizer". Currently, the College is essentially the only educational institution in Latvia where it is possible to get the professional qualification "Hotel Services Organizer" in the form of intramural studies. The other institution offering the same qualification is the Social Integration State Agency College, where the study process is organised as a social rehabilitation service for people with disabilities. While Turība University offers to get the above qualification in the form of distance learning.

In 2025, it is planned to develop and license a new short-cycle vocational higher education study programme "Catering Technology", the completion of which would result in acquiring the fifth level of professional qualification as "Catering Technician". At the moment, none of the higher education institutions or colleges in Latvia offer such an opportunity. In accordance with the College's strategic development vision, which is based on the analysis of demand and supply, as well as

considering the principle of resource sharing defined at the national level, the College plans to develop the new study programme as a joint programme with other Latvian and foreign educational institutions, thus strengthening the innovative catering technology course to be learned within the programme.

As of 1 October 2023, 60 students studied in the College's higher vocational education programme "Hospitality Services Organization", which is the highest number since 2015, when the College launched the programme (there were 11 students in the first year). The number of students gradually increased, except for the year 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world. As a result, the number of College students decreased by 37% compared to 2019. For more information on this issue, see Section 3.1.4.

The development goals of the College will be described in detail in section 2.1.1.

The Development Strategy is available on the College's website: <https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/HOTEL-SCHOOL-DEVELOPMENT-STRATEGY-FOR-2024-2029.pdf>

## **1.2. Description of the management structure of the higher education institution/ college, the main institutions involved in the decision-making process, their composition (percentage depending on the position, for instance, the academic staff, administrative staff members, students), and the powers of these institutions.**

The main representation and management bodies and decision-making bodies of the College are:

- Board;
- Director;
- Council;
- Student Parliament.

**The Board** is the College's highest governing and decision-making body on strategic, financial and economic matters, established and functioning in accordance with the founding statutes and College Regulations.

The Board shall have the following rights and obligations:

- Approve College Regulations and Development Strategy
- Provide the necessary financial and material resources for the continuous operation of the College
- Approve the cost of studies/training and other fee-based services provided by the College
- Approve the procedures for granting tuition fees discounts to College students and learners
- Draw up and approve the annual budget of the College
- Approve the annual report of the College
- Decide on the organisational structure of the College, on the establishment, reorganisation or liquidation of its structural units and branches
- Recruit and dismiss the Director, the Director of Development and the Head of Quality
- Approve the decision of the Director of the College or of the Council to recruit staff by signing relevant contracts
- Determine the arrangements for the allocation of funding for the professional development and research activities of the College staff;

- May participate in the meetings of the College Council and Convention, as well as in the work of task forces established by the College Council
- Review and approve decisions adopted by the College Council on strategic, financial and economic matters

**The Director** is the College's senior official who exercises the administrative management of the College and represents the College without special authorisation.

Rights and obligations of the Director shall be as follows:

- Responsible for the continuity of the College's operations and compliance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the Vocational Education Law, the Education Law, the Personal Data Protection Law, and other legislation, as well as with the College Regulations
- Responsible for the College's activities and performance as set out in the College Development Strategy and other related strategic planning documents
- Participate in the preparation of the annual budget of the College, control its implementation
- Decide on the use of the intellectual, financial and material resources of the College independently, within the limits of their mandate and the allocated budget
- Determine the number of staff positions in the College in accordance with the College structure and budget, organise elections of academic staff and appoint the other staff of the College
- Determine the remuneration of the College staff at a rate which is not less than the remuneration specified by the Cabinet
- Organise the assessment of the quality of the professional activities of the academic and general staff of the College
- Promote the development of the professional competence of the College staff
- Organise the drafting, licensing and accreditation of the education (study) programmes of the College
- Ensure timely preparation of mandatory orders and other strict accountability documents, examine applications, proposals and complaints in accordance with their competence, issue administrative acts
- Provide students, learners and academic staff with access to library services, information and career development support services
- Monitor the quality of the College-provided education and research by involving College students, academic staff, general staff, as well as employers in the regular self-assessment process of the College's activities
- Organise elections to the College Council and the establishment of a convention, support the activities of a student self-governance body
- Prepare reports on the activities of the College and other reports

**The Council** is the collegial governing and decision-making body of representatives of the College staff. It shall be responsible for the drafting of education (study) programmes and their compliance with internationally recognised quality standards.

The Council shall have the following functions:

- Draw up, in cooperation with the Director, the College Regulations and amendments thereto, and submit them to the Board for approval;
- Make proposals for the development of the College and coordinate the College Development Strategy
- Draw up and approve the Regulation on Academic Positions at the College
- Elect the academic staff and approve directors of the study programme
- Decide on requirements, procedures and examinations for obtaining a qualification

- Prepare proposals for tuition fees in short-cycle professional higher education programmes as well as tuition fees in other vocational education programmes and submit them to the Board for approval;
- Decide on the granting of study / tuition fee discounts to students and trainees
- Approve the College Quality Policy, the Internationalisation Strategy, the Human Resources Development Plan, the Study Process Development Plan and the Applied Research Development Plan, as set out in the College Development Strategy, and promote specific directions for the development of applied research
- Determine the procedure for the preparation, examination and approval of study programmes; decide on the opening (and closing) of short-cycle professional higher education programmes and other vocational education programmes, their content and development as set out in the College Development Strategy
- Approve the Admission Regulations, the College Study and Examination Procedure, as well as other rules governing the course of studies, examination and evaluation of the learning outcomes
- Participate in the discussion of the educational process and its outcomes and make proposals for improving the quality of education;
- Coordinate reports on the activities of the College and study direction self-assessment reports
- Approve the by-law of the student self-governance body
- Approve the composition of the Convention and the rules of procedure of the Convention

The College Council shall consist of 11 members:

- Director;
- 6 representatives of the academic staff (persons elected in academic positions);
- 1 representative of the general staff;
- 3 representatives of students.

Representatives of the academic staff, general staff and students shall be nominated for a seat on the Council by the relevant staff group at their meeting. Representatives for a seat on the Council shall be elected by secret ballot. The Director shall be included without election.

**The Student Parliament** is an elected, independent student self-governance body representing the rights and interests of students in the College. It shall act in accordance with the Student Parliament Regulations drawn up by the students and approved by the College Council. The College Council may refuse approval only on legal grounds. The decisions of the Student Parliament, once approved by the College Council, shall be binding on all students.

The Student Parliament shall organise academic, material, social support and cultural life activities at the College, as well as shall defend and represent the interests of students in the College and other state institutions.

Rights and obligations of the Student Parliament shall be as follows:

- Request and receive information and explanations from the College institutions in all issues related to the interests of students
- Have veto rights in the College Council on issues related to the interests of students. After the application of a veto, the issue shall be examined by the co-ordination committee which is formed by the relevant management body according to the parity principle. The relevant management body shall approve the decision of the co-ordination committee by a majority vote of two-thirds of the persons present
- Participate in the work of the College Council, and also have the right to participate as

observers in tests and examinations if this is provided for in documents regulating the study procedures in the College

- Represent College students in Latvia and abroad
- Establish the procedure for organising the work of the Student Parliament, including the criteria for the election of students to the College Council

Any student of the College may stand for election to the Student Parliament by filling in an application for joining the Student Parliament. The number of members of the Student Parliament shall not be limited.

### **1.3. Description of the mechanism for the implementation of the quality policy and the procedures for the assurance of the quality of higher education. Description of the stakeholders involved in the development and improvement of the quality assurance system and their role in these processes.**

The primary purpose of the quality policy at the College is to promote its progress towards continuous quality improvement in all areas of its activity – in hospitality education, applied research, innovation projects and cooperation with external stakeholders, both local and international. Quality in the College is also understood as fitness for purpose and providing value for money.

The College Council approves the quality policy. It is reviewed at least once every three years, considering the quality management system's effectiveness and the stakeholders' opinions. The document was revised in 2024 and is publicly available to anyone interested on the College website (<https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Quality-Policy-2024.pdf>).

The quality policy is binding on all College staff and partners involved in processes for which the College is responsible. Every representative of the College's staff, including students and partners, takes responsibility for quality and is involved in quality assurance, thus creating a quality culture in the College.

The founder of the College defines the vision of the College. Develops a strategy, including the stakeholders, and creates prerequisites for quality assurance and improvement. The College Council is a collegial decision-making body, with the help of which representatives of the main stakeholders are included in the management of the College. The Head of Quality is responsible for the quality management system in the College, develops the Quality Policy, and once a year (at the end of the academic year) provides an opinion on the improvement of the quality management system to the stakeholders involved in the operation of the College. The College Director is responsible for introducing, implementing, and monitoring the Quality Policy in the College.

The quality assurance mechanisms used in the College are shown in Appendix 1 of the Quality Policy (<https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Quality-Policy-2024.pdf>). Processes, regulations, and other internal documents are reviewed at least once every three years and are available on the College website (<https://hotelschool.lv/en/admission/policies/>). In 2024, the implementation of the integrated management system ISO 21001:2018 is planned to start in the college.

### **1.4. Fill in the table on the compliance of the internal quality assurance system of the**

**higher education institution/ college with the provisions of Section 5, Paragraph 2(1) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions by providing a justification for the given statement. In addition, it is also possible to refer to the respective chapter of the Self-Assessment Report, where the provided information serves as justification.**

1	The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.	The College has established a quality policy (last updated in 2024 and is publicly available to anyone interested on the College's website ( <a href="https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Quality-Policy-2024.pdf">https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Quality-Policy-2024.pdf</a> ). It is reviewed at least once every three years, considering the quality management system's effectiveness and the stakeholders' opinions. Processes, regulations, and other internal documents are reviewed at least once every three years and are available on the College website ( <a href="https://hotelschool.lv/en/admission/policies">https://hotelschool.lv/en/admission/policies</a> ).
2.	A mechanism for the creation 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.	The mechanism for developing, internal approval, monitoring, and periodic review of the College's study programs has been created. It is available in the College's internal information system (for registered users) in the procedure for study program development, expertise, and approval. The document is attached as an appendix (1-4-2 LV STUDIJU PROGRAMMU IZSTRĀDĀŠANAS, EKSPERTĪZES UN APSTIPRINĀŠANAS KĀRTĪBA.docx - available only in Latvian as the procedure is about to be reviewed) to the self-assessment report.
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.	The criteria, conditions, and procedures for assessing student performance have been created and published in the studies and examination procedure ( <a href="https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Study-and-examination-procedure-2024.pdf">https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Study-and-examination-procedure-2024.pdf</a> ). The study course descriptions indicate each course's intended learning outcomes and assessment methods.
4.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.	The procedure and mechanisms for ensuring the qualification and work quality of the academic staff are described in the self-assessment section 2.3.6.
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.	The College's collection and analysis of information is described in the: 1) study direction self-assessment section 2.2.4. 2) appropriate sections of the study program self-assessment (3.1.4, 3.2.6, 3.3.3, 3.4.2) 3) in the appendices of the description of the field of study: 3.1) analysis of student, graduate, and employer survey results (Analysis of student, graduate and employer survey results.docx); 3.2) summary of quantitative data on applied research activities corresponding to the field of study during the reporting period (Petniecibas-aktivitatu-statistika-2018-2023-eng.docx); 3.3) statistical data on international students and teaching staff (2-5-3-1 Statistical data on foreign students and academic staff.pdf); 3.4) statistical data on the outgoing and incoming mobility of students (2-5-3-2 Statistical data about incoming and outgoing student mobilities.pdf); 3.5) statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of teaching staff (2-5-3-3 Statistical data on academic staff incoming and outgoing mobilities.pdf); 4) in the study program characteristics appendix: statistics on students during the reporting period (P5-Statistika-par-studejosajiem-2018-2023_EN.docx); 5) in the College Development strategy for 2024-2029 ( <a href="https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/HOTEL-SCHOOL-DEVELOPMENT-STRATEGY-FOR-2024-2029.pdf">https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/HOTEL-SCHOOL-DEVELOPMENT-STRATEGY-FOR-2024-2029.pdf</a> ).

<p>6. The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.</p>	<p>For continuous improvement, the College determines the results to be achieved, evaluates various approaches to achieving the goals now and in the future, implements the planned activities accordingly, and evaluates and reviews them to learn and improve. The College monitors its results and adapts its activities accordingly to create greater stakeholder value.</p> <p>In addition, it should be mentioned that the College's serious commitment to continuous improvement is confirmed by the established position of Quality Manager, in which M. Dubickis, Ph.D with significant experience in internal and external quality assurance since 2010, started his work in March 2024. One of the tasks of the Quality Manager will be to annually provide an opinion on the improvement of the quality management system to the stakeholders involved in the operation of the College.</p> <p>Implementing the integrated management system ISO 21001:2018 is planned to start in the College in 2024, thereby strengthening quality management at the organizational level for the development and effectiveness of the study field.</p>
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## 2.1. Management of the Study Field

**2.1.1. Aims of the study field and their compliance with the scope of activities of the higher education institution/ college, the strategic development fields, as well as the development needs of the society and the national economy. The assessment of the interrelation of the study field and the study programmes included in it.**

**The goals of the College study direction "Hotel and restaurant service, tourism and leisure organization" are defined in the College Development Strategy for 2024-2029** (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy), which has been developed to ensure the long-term operation and competitiveness of the College in the local - Latvian, regional - European and global education area.

The Strategy analyzes the external and internal operating environment, determines the College's priority development directions in accordance with the College's mission, vision and basic operating principles, defines the tasks to be performed and the expected results, as well as includes a calendar plan for the successful implementation of the Strategy and the control of its execution in a changing environment in order to achieve the set goals or determine new goals, taking into account the opportunities created by the environment.

The goals and objectives defined in the Strategy are consistent with the Education Development Guidelines "Future skills for the future society" for 2021-2027, which have been developed based

on the country's development vision, strategic goals and priorities determined in the Latvian National Development Plan for 2021-2027 and in Latvia's sustainable development strategy until 2030. At the same time, the following European Union planning documents have also been taken into account in the development of the Strategy: "Digital Education Action Plan for the period of 2021-2027", the 2020 recommendation of the European Commission "On the creation of the European Education Area until 2025" and the 2022 recommendations on "European strategies for universities", "On learning to promote green transition and sustainable development" and "Recommendations on the European approach to microcredentials for lifelong learning and employment". Finally, for the selection of the priorities of the Strategy the recommendations of the experts in the joint report of the experts within the framework of the College's accreditation in 2020 are taken into account.

Development goals and tasks for the period of 2020 of another important College planning document, College Internationalization and Modernization Strategy 2021-2027, is integrated into the Strategy, with a slight adjustment of the expected performance indicators in accordance with the excellent achievements of the College's Project and Research Department, initiating, implementing and managing many international cooperation projects in 2022 and 2023.

In the Strategy, data for the year 2023 and in rare cases for the year 2022 are mostly taken as the reference value. It should be emphasized that the period of 2022-2023 or so-called "post-pandemic time" marked the fastest growth period in the development of the College so far. Therefore, when planning the next period, the expected performance indicators were planned in such a way as to maintain the high level already achieved so far and to prevent College staff from burning out due to excessive ambitions.

#### **The College has the following development goals for a period of 2024-2029:**

1. To improve the management and processes of the College, ensuring the achievement of the goals and needs of the interested parties.
2. To develop the academic staff by promoting the improvement of the competences of the existing academic staff, as well as by attracting new talented teachers.
3. To improve the material, technical and informational basis for the implementation of qualitative studies.
4. To enhance the study and learning experience by improving student progress indicators.
5. To increase the number of students and learners, paying special attention to attracting the most capable applicants.
6. To promote applied research and its integration in the study process for the implementation of science-based studies in the College, as well as to contribute to the creation of knowledge about tourism and hospitality.
7. Promote the internationalization of the College by ensuring productive cooperation with universities and research centers of a similar profile recognized in Europe and the world, as well as employers in the hospitality industry abroad.

The founder's vision of the College as a professional education institution, which allows preparing the highly qualified specialists needed for the economy in a relatively short time, while ensuring continuity between vocational secondary education and higher education, as well as the state's vision of the transformation of the role of educational institutions, forms the basis for the College's future development directions.

The College should offer a variety of learning opportunities in the premises of the educational institution and at employers, as well as distance and online studies, using digital solutions such as virtual reality options for this purpose. We must provide an inclusive and open environment for diverse audiences, both young people and adults, becoming a multifunctional organization of

learning and development for different groups. At the same time, the College should become a place for the creation of knowledge and innovation, an incubator of ideas, which is possible through active cooperation with other educational institutions, research centers and companies at the local and international level, thus ensuring effective management of resources and the transfer of knowledge and good practices.

**2.1.2. SWOT analysis of the study field with regard to the set aims by providing explanations on how the higher education institution/ college expects to eliminate/improve weaknesses, prevent threats, and avail themselves of the given opportunities, etc. The assessment of the plan for the development of the study field for the next six years and the procedure of the elaboration thereof. In case there is no development plan elaborated or the aims/ objectives are set for a shorter period of time, information on the elaboration of the plan for the development of the study field for the next assessment period shall be provided.**

Since its foundation, the College has been characterized by a purposeful drive towards excellence in the field of chosen strategic specialization. This is reflected in the high proportion of academic staff who are practitioners of the tourism and hospitality industry with considerable experience in management positions in hotels, restaurants and tourism companies (40% in 2023). The College is the only educational institution in Latvia that offers to learn how to use computer programs for hotel management as part of studies, as well as promotes the learning of other latest digital technologies for sustainable business in the tourism and hospitality industry. Both academic staff and students of the College are actively involved in applied research activities (64% of teaching staff and 18% of students in 2023), a large part of which is financed from EU and regional funds (59% in 2023). International mobility indicators are also high among both students (38% in 2023) and academic staff (36% in 2023). Close cooperation with industry companies at the local and international level results in high student and graduate employment rates (35% of students and 100% of surveyed graduates were employed in 2023, of which 89% worked in the hospitality industry).

At the same time, the College has been struggling for a long time with the problem of the relatively low number of students, which has had different reasons at different stages of development. They are described in detail in section 3.1.4 of the self-assessment report.

One of the possibilities for increasing the number of applicants could be the expansion of the range of short-cycle professional higher education study programs, evaluating various options both in the thematic direction of organizing tourism and catering services, and in the form of a joint study program.

Expanding the target audience by involving different age groups in education should be mentioned as an important opportunity for future development. The college has already had a successful track record of working with adults such as seniors and migrants. In the future, a regular offer for those employed in the tourism and hospitality industry should also be developed, promoting the so-called microcredentials.

The perspective is also the level of secondary vocational education, which, along with the amendments to the Law on Professional Education and the Regulations of the College, is now included in the list of offered educational services. Four-year vocational secondary education programs corresponding to strategic specialization should be licensed, thus increasing the number

of students, but in the future, vocational secondary education graduates will be offered to continue their education by studying in the College's professional higher education program.

The current practice of attracting incoming mobilities of the EU Erasmus+ program (35 learners and 5 teaching staff in 2023) should definitely be continued, thus ensuring further internationalization of the education process. Here, the advantages provided by the Erasmus+ Charter and Erasmus+ accreditations in vocational and adult education should be actively used.

Finally, the College should continue to work on raising its visibility, that one of the possibilities is to consider expressing the opinion of a public expert on various issues that affect the development of the tourism and hospitality industry, as well as the problems of vocational education. The college can take a more active role in the Association of Hotels and Restaurants, as well as consider the possibility of becoming a member of the Association of Latvian Colleges.

## **STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **STRENGTHS:**

- the College offers educational programs accredited in Latvia (EU) and Great Britain;
- "Erasmus Charter" and "Erasmus" accreditation have been obtained in professional and adult education sectors;
- good provision of the resources necessary for the implementation of the programs - laboratories, study literature, etc.;
- management experience in working with EU funds as an additional source of funding;
- high proportion of industry practitioners among academic staff;
- close cooperation with leading industry employers in Latvia and abroad;
- the majority of students and trainees are involved in paid internship mobilities, during which it is possible to earn money;
- high employment of students and graduates;
- studies are offered in English, which allows the export of educational services;
- favorable location of the college in the historical center of the EU capital;
- the College has its own dormitories for students.

### **WEAKNESSES:**

- only one short-cycle professional higher education study program;
- limited / relatively low visibility (the institution is relatively new and small);
- relatively small number of students and learners;
- relatively high study dropout rate;
- unequal competitive environment compared to state educational institutions - paid education, no "budget" places, etc.;
- relatively high turnover of academic staff and the proportion of part-time academic staff;
- relatively small number of foreign guest lecturers;
- limited opportunities for students to get involved in developing the activities of the Student Parliament due to the specifics of the institution (two-year studies);
- there is no applied research (contract work) commissioned by the industry, unwillingness to disclose internal company data;
- low level of involvement in the policy making of the tourism, hospitality and education sectors.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS PROVIDED BY THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- the rapid growth of the hospitality industry, which creates a stable demand for new

professionals in Latvia and abroad;

- a global trend for young people to study abroad, which creates an opportunity to attract foreign students;
- EU and regional structural fund support for education and training, business competitiveness as a source of attracting additional funding;
- changes in the legislation, which gives colleges the right to implement professional secondary education programs, thus significantly expanding the potential student base;
- the possibility of implementing learning based on the work environment;
- the possibility of developing distance learning;
- possibility to develop the offer of microcredentials;
- possibility to develop and offer joint study programs;
- the possibility of attracting mobile students and learners within the Erasmus+ program;
- lack of strong competitors in the region - there are no specialized higher education institutions in the field of hospitality in the Baltic States.

#### THREATS:

- unfavourable changes in the external regulatory acts regulating the College's activities;
- long-term unfavorable demographic situation in Latvia - the population is decreasing;
- threat of emergence of strong competitors;
- unstable geopolitical situation in the Baltic region and Europe, especially Russia's aggression in Ukraine as a national security risk for Latvian citizens and business, especially regarding the export of educational services (as the region is not safe in the eyes of foreign students);
- threat of global economic crisis.

In 2023, when 2016-2022 planning stage ended, the College management, involving the academic and general staff, as well as student representatives, initiated a discussion on the development of the College's development strategy for the next six-year period. For this purpose, external consultants, experts with international experience in the evaluation of higher education institutions, were also brought in and they gave advice on the achievable performance indicators and their application according to the specifics of the College and the challenges of the external environment. Industry representatives - employers also expressed their opinion, thus ensuring a multifaceted discussion of the College's priority development directions.

#### **2.1.3. The structure of the management of the study field and the relevant study programmes, and the analysis and assessment of the efficiency thereof, including the assessment of the role of the head of the study field and the heads of the study programmes, their responsibilities, and the cooperation with other heads of the study programmes, as well as the assessment of the support by the administrative and technical staff of the higher education institution/ college provided within the study field.**

The study field is managed by the College director, whose duties are described in Section 1.2. Since 2021, this position has been held by Mg. edu. Jūlija Pasnaka.

The management of the short-cycle higher vocational education study programme "Hospitality Services Organization" is conducted by the Study programme director, Mg. oec. Dzintars Priedītis, who has been holding this position since 2021.

**The Study Programme Director shall be responsible for:**

- Regularly following up on the latest developments in study programme (curriculum) design, development and management to ensure that the study programme meets educational and occupational standards, labour market requirements, the latest scientific knowledge and trends in the hospitality industry
- Managing the development and updating of study course descriptions of the study programme, providing methodological instructions and consultations to teaching staff involved in the implementation of the programme
- Compiling a project for the change of the study programme and presenting it at the meeting of the College academic staff and to the College Council
- Providing the Head of College with information about the necessary improvements in the material and technical support and information support necessary for the implementation of the study programme;
- Updating, if necessary, the description of the content of the study programme and its implementation
- Participating in the preparation of the study programme self-assessment reports and in the process of accreditation of the study programme

The Study Programme Director cooperates with other staff of the College Study Department, in particular with the Career Consultant (Mg. oec. Laura Zariņa), Study Methodologist (Nataša Stoļarova) and Computer System Administrator (Dr. oec. Konstantīns Savenkovs).

**The duties of the Career Consultant shall include:**

- Collecting information on internship options and job vacancies (and terms thereof) offered by the College cooperation partners – employers, establishing and maintaining an internship database
- Evaluating and approving potential internships for students and learners
- Informing students and learners about the internship options (practice sites) offered by the College cooperation partners, by publishing this information on the College e-learning platform [www.e-hotelschool.lv](http://www.e-hotelschool.lv), organising informative in-person workshops and online seminars, providing one-to-one advice and other information activities
- Advising students and learners on the preparation of CVs and other documentation prior to internship
- Preparing internship agreements and other documentation related to internship
- Participating in the organisation of internships for students and learners, controlling and evaluating their internship results
- Providing psychological support to students during the internship, helping to solve problems that arise
- Educating students/learners on career development matters by promoting awareness of independent career development and helping to develop skills in researching employment opportunities, career planning, decision-making, finding and keeping a job
- Advising recent graduates on the current job opportunities in the hospitality industry

**The duties of the Study Methodologist shall include:**

- Drawing up an academic schedule for the implementation of education programmes for each school year, planning introductory lectures, drawing up lists of lessons
- Evaluating and approving optional study courses chosen by students, registering those in the student's study card
- Drawing up individual study plans
- Compiling performance results of students and learners at the end of each semester
- Planning and organising the presentation of internship reports, qualification paper pre-

defence, and State examination

- Planning and organising the execution of state examinations, preparing and coordinating with the National Centre for Education (VICs) the documentation necessary for passing the professional qualification examination
- Consulting students and learners, verbally or in writing, on the issues related to the organisation of the educational process
- Preparing student-related orders
- Entering student registration data into the VIIS system in a timely manner
- Registering the protocols submitted by the academic staff, entering the grades in study cards
- Drawing up and regularly updating student/learner files, including entering data on learning outcomes (performance results) of the education programme for students and learners
- Preparing academic and other references upon the request of students
- Preparing documents certifying education (diplomas) and annexes thereto, and issuing those to students

**The duties of the Computer System Administrator shall include:**

- Installing and configuring computer hardware and software at the College, performing necessary maintenance of computer equipment and software
- Designing the College computer networks and systems
- Administering the College computer systems and networks
- Preparing the necessary user documentation and work instructions, providing technical support to users
- Introducing and implementing the information system security policy in the College

The Computer System Administrator performs their duties in cooperation with outsource service providers chosen by the College.

Every year, in order to assess the quality of the work of the above-mentioned officials, the College conducts a general student satisfaction survey. Since 2023, there is also a survey for the academic staff and the general staff. Both surveys show a high opinion on the performance of both College Director and the other staff of the Study Department.

For example, 92% of the College staff fully agree or tend to agree that there is a good level of cooperation within the College team. 100% of the staff are satisfied with the work of the College Director, 85% of whom rate Jūlija Pasnaka's performance as excellent, particularly in terms of her personal qualities (self-possession, empathy, etc.), as well as high motivation and professionalism in the performance of her duties.

Also, 100% of the staff are satisfied with the work done by the Study Programme Director, 62% of whom rate his performance as outstanding, pointing out that Dzintars Priedītis is an excellent mentor for the teaching staff, able to motivate them to improve the study process, for example, by introducing innovations such as digital simulation.

The staff gave an equally positive assessment of the performance of the Computer System Administrator Konstantīns Savenkovs, praising his prompt responses to requests and effective explanations of technical issues. In the general student satisfaction survey, 85% of the students also indicate that the Computer System Administrator provides the necessary support to users, while the rest 15% are generally satisfied with the work done by Savenkovs, but believe that some improvements are needed, for example, reducing the amount of material published in the e-learning environment to make it easier to find the most relevant information.

100% of the College staff evaluate the work done by the Study Methodologist as highly commendable, 77% of them rate Stoļarova's performance as outstanding and point out her good

planning skills, attention to detail, willingness to help in any situation. Yet even higher appreciation is evidenced from the general student satisfaction survey. 90% of respondents feel that the College Study Department staff perform their duties in a highly professional manner, providing students with necessary support.

Laura Zariņa's work has yet to be evaluated by colleagues and students, as she joined the College staff in 2024.

**2.1.4. Description and assessment of the requirements and the system for the admission of students by specifying, inter alia, the regulatory framework of the admission procedures and requirements. The assessment of options for the students to have their study period, professional experience, and the previously acquired formal and non-formal education recognised within the study field by providing specific examples of the application of these procedures.**

The requirements, criteria and procedures for admission to the College short-cycle higher vocational education programme "Hospitality Services Organization" are regulated by the internal regulation "Admission Regulations of "HOTEL SCHOOL" Hotel Management College for Short-Cycle Professional Higher Education Study Programme "Hospitality Services Organization"". For each academic year, new Admission Regulations are developed and published.

The above regulation stipulates that every citizen of Latvia, non-citizen of Latvia, citizen of the European Union, citizen of the European Economic Area or citizen of the Swiss Confederation, as well as a foreigner (third-country national), has the opportunity to obtain a short-cycle higher vocational education and a fifth-level professional qualification after completing the College's study programme "Hospitality Services Organization", observing the requirements set out in the Admission Regulations, the College's internal rules of procedure, laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia and international agreements.

For admission to the study programme, the College holds an open and equal competition to select the most suitable candidates. Students are admitted to the study programme "Hospitality Services Organization" after the acquisition of general secondary education or vocational secondary education.

Applicants who obtained secondary education before 2004 and did not take centralised exams or persons who obtained secondary education abroad, as well as persons with special needs are admitted based on the grades of a document attesting to the completion of general secondary education.

Foreign applicants submit a statement to the Academic Information Centre regarding the academic degree or diploma awarded in Latvia to which the education document obtained abroad corresponds, as well as a document issued within the last five years by an international testing institution, including Duolingo Inc., attesting that the foreign national has attained at least B2 level of English language proficiency according to the language proficiency levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Language skills (CEFR). The above document is not attached if the foreign national has completed their secondary education in English or in a country of the European Union and the European Economic Area or in the Swiss Confederation, and their secondary education certificate includes an assessment of foreign language knowledge equivalent to at least B2 level according to CEFR.

Foreign nationals who are not citizens of the European Union, the European Economic Area or the Swiss Confederation or permanent residents of the European Community are admitted by taking an additional entrance test – a video interview, the purpose of which is to find out the applicant's motivation for studies at the College. The interview is conducted by the Admissions Committee. At the beginning of the interview, the foreigner being interviewed confirms their consent to the recording of the video interview and is identified. The College stores the video recording of the interview for 1 year in its electronic data processing system. The College is entitled to make the recording of the video interview available to foreign competent authorities upon their official request.

Admission to the study programme “Hospitality Services Organization” is provided by the Admissions Committee of the College. The Admissions Committee operates in accordance with the Admission Regulations and the rules of procedure of the Admissions Committee approved by the College Council.

The Admissions Committee is a collegiate body composed of 3 members who are appointed by the Head of College from among the competent staff of the College. The order regarding the Admissions Committee indicates who among the members of the Admissions Committee will manage its work as the chairperson of the committee. Currently, the Admissions Committee consists of the Chairperson Evija Antanāviča and two members of the committee – teachers of English as a foreign language – Jekaterina Korjuhina and Nataša Stoļarova.

The Admissions Committee performs the following tasks:

- Prepare and coordinate the admission regulations for the next academic year and documents required for the organisation of the admissions process
- Publish the admission regulations for the next academic year and other information related to the admissions process on the College website
- Plan and organise the admissions process at the College premises and remotely
- Provide information to applicants regarding their rights and obligations, as well as the study programme and admission procedures
- Accept the documents required for admission and perform the necessary actions for the registration of applicants
- Run checks to verify that the applicant meets the admission requirements
- Organise the admission examination for the study programme
- Inform applicants about the results of the enrolment competition
- Prepare and conclude agreements with admitted applicants
- Draw up the matriculation orders and submit them to the Head of College for signing
- Compile a list of admitted students and submit it to the Study Department
- Submit documents of the admitted students to the Academic Registrar of the Study Department in order to prepare a student file

According to the general student satisfaction survey 2024, 95% of students rate positively the work of the Admissions Committee.

Recognition of competences acquired outside formal education or obtained by professional experience and study results achieved in previous education is regulated by the internal College regulation – “Regulation on recognition of competences acquired outside formal education or obtained by professional experience and study results achieved in previous education”, the latest version of which was drafted pursuant to the Cabinet Regulation No. 505 of August 14, 2018, “Regulations Regarding the Recognition of Competences Acquired Outside Formal Education or Obtained by Professional Experience and Study Results Achieved in Previous Education”.

Students of the College actively use the recognition of competences obtained by professional experience and the study results achieved in previous education. Typically, students submit applications for recognising their work experience in hospitality companies or study courses previously acquired in other higher education institutions. Also, students, who previously completed continuing vocational education programmes at the College, request to recognise their study results obtained within the said programme.

Students' applications are reviewed by the committee for the assessment and recognition of study results achieved in previous education or competences obtained by professional experience, the members of which are approved by the order of the Head of College. Currently, the Committee includes Mg. oec. Dzintars Priedītis, MIB, Mg. paed. Olga Zvereva and Mg. edu. Jūlija Pasnaka.

The rights and responsibilities of the Committee are as follows:

- Verify the accuracy of the information provided
- Request additional information
- If necessary, set up examinations in order to assess the study results achieved in previous education or competences obtained by professional experience
- Review the applicant's application within one month and decide on the recognition or refusal to recognise their study results obtained and inform the applicant in writing of the decision taken

In 2023, the Committee for the assessment and recognition of study results achieved in previous education or competences obtained by professional experience held 4 meetings and adopted decisions on 9 student applications, thus attesting to the effectiveness of the Committee's work.

#### **2.1.5. Assessment of the methods and procedures for the evaluation of students' achievements, as well as the principles of their selection and the analysis of the compliance of the evaluation methods and procedures with the aims of the study programmes and the needs of the students.**

The study process in the College is governed by the internal regulation "Study and Examination Procedure", the current version of which has been developed pursuant to the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Vocational Education Law and the Cabinet Regulation No. 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations regarding the state standard for higher vocational education". The Study and Examination Procedure defines the main stages of the study course and how they are organised in the study programme implemented by the College, the procedures for student examination and assessment, as well as the rights and duties of students and College staff during the study process. The document is available in Latvian on the website: [Study-and-examination-procedure-2024.pdf \(hotelschool.lv\)](https://hotelschool.lv/files/Study-and-examination-procedure-2024.pdf).

During the study programme, the following evaluations are arranged:

- Course assignments – regular interim assignments and a final course examination
- Internship report presentation;
- Qualification paper presentation within the framework of the state examination.

Interim assignments of the study course may take the form of a test, a presentation, a seminar, etc. as specified in the study course description. The form of the final examination is specified in the description of the study course. It may be a test or an exam.

Evaluation forms in the College:

- Written assignments
- Oral assignments
- Combined assignments

The following principles shall be observed in assessing the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by students:

- Aggregation of positive achievements
- Compulsory assessment
- Transparency and clarity of requirements
- Variety of evaluation methods – different types of evaluation forms are used to evaluate the academic achievements of the study programme;
- Grading conformity

The acquisition of the study programme is evaluated in 10-point scale. Where a test is required to complete a study course, the level of knowledge may be graded with “passed” or “failed”. While learning at the study programme, students are awarded credit points if the student has received a grade “passed” or his/her grade is not lower than 4 – “almost satisfactory” according to the 10-point scale.

The evaluation of the study course acquisition is carried out by the academic staff of the course or, if necessary, by another lecturer appointed by order of the of College director.

In the context of evaluation, the following responsibilities of the academic staff are defined in the Study and Examination Procedure:

- Introduce students to the content of the study course by explaining the information contained in the course description during the first lesson, specifying also the criteria for the evaluation of the study results
- When designing assignment tasks, make sure that they comply with the goal and the student’s ability to complete them
- Formulate all examination assignments of the study course in accordance with the requirements of the College and coordinate them with the Study Programme Director before giving them to students, make the required improvements, if necessary
- Evaluate students’ study results in accordance with the specified criteria, respecting the principles of academic integrity, openness and equality and avoiding any form of discrimination
- Report on students’ academic integrity violations to the Head of College
- Motivate students to achieve higher grades by providing additional counselling where necessary (during lessons and/or during the official consultation hours)
- Do not to create obstacles preventing students from submitting completed assignments or taking exams after the specified deadline, if they have made payments for receiving these services outside of the approved study plan

Presentation of an Internship Report is carried out in accordance with the internal College regulation “Internship Organisation Procedure”. Presentation procedure is organised by the College Study Department. Presentation can be organised in various forms – both as a traditional presentation in front of an audience, and as an exhibition, where a trainee sets up a stand. The Internship Supervisor shall discuss with the student the intended course of their presentation in advance and inform about the form and time of the presentation.

Presentation of training practice is assessed by a committee of 3 members from the academic and

administrative staff of the College, approved by the head of the educational institution. In addition, industry practitioners from hospitality companies may be invited to the presentation of Internship Reports.

Internship Reports are graded on a 10-point scale.

The evaluation of an Internship Report is carried out in accordance with the following criteria:

- The content, structure and layout of the Internship Report complies with the requirements;
- The content of the Internship Report certifies that the student has completed the tasks of the internship programme;
- In their presentation of the Internship Report, the student uses appropriate means of expression, presents convincingly, uses professional terminology in their speech;
- During the presentation, the student, in a consistent manner, describes the main knowledge acquired, analyses their professional performance;
- The student is able to answer additional questions about the completion of the internship programme;
- The review (feedback) provided by the representative of the internship place certifies that the trainee has demonstrated the suitability of their personal skills and professional competences for work in the hospitality industry;
- No violations of work discipline on the part of the trainee have been found during the internship.

Internship experience is awarded credit if the student receives successful evaluation during their Internship Report presentation.

Presentation of a Qualification Paper is carried out in accordance with the internal College regulation “Regulations on Writing and Defending a Qualification Paper”. Presentation procedure is organised by the College Study Department.

Presentation of a Qualification Paper is carried out at an open meeting of the State Examination Committee. Members of the State Examination Committee shall be approved by order of the Head of College. The Committee shall consist of at least five members. The Chairperson of the Committee and at least half of the members of the Committee shall be experts in the field, i.e., representatives of professional organisations or employers in the hospitality and tourism sector.

Presentation of a Qualification Paper is graded on a 10-point scale in accordance with the following criteria:

- Quality of the Qualification Paper
- Presentation
- Student’s answers to the questions of the Committee and ability to discuss the topic
- Reviews from the supervisor and the reviewer of the paper

In addition, members of the State Examination Committee evaluate the student’s answers to the additional questions asked during the state examination.

A student who does not agree with the final evaluation of the study course exam or internship is entitled to challenge it by submitting a written appeal to the College director within 3 calendar days from the date of publication of the assessment, explaining the non-compliance with the provisions of the Study and Examination Procedure. Having received a student’s appeal regarding the evaluation of the study course or internship, the College director shall assess its validity. If it is confirmed that the contested evaluation violates the terms of the Study and Examination Procedure, the College director decides on its annulment. In the event of annulment of the evaluation, the College director shall appoint a different academic staff member, who, within the

time limit set by the College director shall organise re-evaluation of the student's knowledge and skills and make a decision on allocating a new grade.

A student's appeal against the grade of the final state examination shall be considered according to the Regulations on Writing and Defending a Qualification Paper.

In the annual College student satisfaction survey, students are always asked to share their opinion on the quality of evaluation of their learning outcomes, and each year the College receives positive feedback. For instance, **in 2024, 100% of the respondents were satisfied with the evaluation methods and procedures, of whom 80% indicated that teachers explain the evaluation criteria and evaluate students' performance accordingly, the evaluation process is fair and free from any kind of discrimination.** It should be noted that there was not a single year when any student would appeal against the assessment received for completing the study course, presenting an Internship Report or defending a Qualification Paper.

#### **2.1.6. Description and assessment of the academic integrity principles, the mechanisms for compliance with these principles, and the way in which the stakeholders are informed. Specify the plagiarism detection tools used by providing examples of the use of these tools and mechanisms.**

The principles of academic integrity are defined in the internal College regulation "Study and Examination Procedure". It specifies that plagiarism is appropriation, whether intentional or not, of the work or ideas of others, including content generated by artificial intelligence, in whole or in part, by claiming it as your own without crediting the true author, source, or generative artificial intelligence tool. Plagiarism is also considered to be the case when the author of a work is unclearly or incorrectly identified or when all the necessary formal actions for exhibiting, republishing or reproducing the work have not been performed.

The students while conducting their individual work and study assignments, as well as the academic staff in the process of assessment of student knowledge and skills must follow the principles of academic integrity i.e., objectivity, accountability, mutual respect and trust, preventing misconduct and fraud.

In particular, the following actions are considered a violation of academic integrity on the part of the student:

- Offerings of any material value, property or other benefits in exchange for a certain activity in the academic interest of a student or other person
- The use of unauthorised aids in the study process or plagiarism
- Complicity in violation of academic integrity, including passing off one's individual work results to another person or submitting the results of a collective work (if it has been defined as collective work) on one's own behalf, or completing a test on another student's behalf, or signing on another student's behalf, etc.
- Giving false information about oneself and one's work
- Unauthorised acquisition of assignment questions or assignment tasks
- Other deliberate actions that delay or interfere with the study process

It is the duty of the academic staff to check the written works submitted by the students using the College's subscribed tool to combat plagiarism "Identific" (<https://identific.com>), former "Oxsico similarity checker" (<https://oxsico.com>). Check reports showing more than 25% match with content

created by other authors or generative artificial intelligence must be kept by the academic staff as an attachment to the Student Academic Integrity Misconduct Report.

An academic staff member who discovers a violation of academic integrity may express an oral remark to the student or, in a more serious case, may inform the College director by completing a report on Student's Academic Integrity Misconduct. The report shall provide the information about the infringement and shall indicate a possible decision:

- Lower the assignment grade
- Ask to re-do the assignment (on another subject or another task)
- Not qualify for taking the final exam of the study course - request to repeat the study course or part thereof
- Not qualify for presenting/defending the Internship Report or Qualification Paper - request to draft and present the work all over again
- Annul the evaluation (grade)
- Give a student a warning on exmatriculation
- Terminate the student's enrolment (exmatriculate)

The College director shall evaluate the report of the academic staff on the student's academic integrity misconduct, inviting the student to provide explanations where necessary, and take the final decision. The decision taken by the College director is not subject to appeal.

If the College director decides on repeated examination, re-acquisition of the study course, repeated elaboration and presentation of the Internship Report or Qualification Paper, the student has to pay an additional fee in accordance with the College's price list.

So far, the College has encountered only one type of breach of academic integrity on the part of students - plagiarism. **The academic staff of the College actively use the College's subscribed tool to combat plagiarism "Identific" (<https://identific.com>), former "Oxsico similarity checker"** at study courses involving the requirement for students to write course works. If plagiarism is detected in a paper submitted by a student during the course of study (most often during their first year), the teaching staff inform the student about it and present the "Oxsico similarity checker" report, offering to elaborate and resubmit the paper as soon as possible. However, at later stages of studies, cases of plagiarism are officially punished. So far, the most severe punishment applied to a student was the refusal to qualify for the presentation of their Qualification Paper, requiring them to rewrite the paper and defend it all over again.

## 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

### 2.2.1. Assessment of the efficiency of the internal quality assurance system within the study field by specifying the measures undertaken to achieve the aims and outcomes of the study programmes and to ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field and the relevant study programmes.

The College has one study direction and study program. Its strategy can also be considered the development strategy of the study direction. The current version of this planning document (College Development strategy for 2024 - 2029) is one of the examples of continuous improvement. Unlike the strategy of the previous period, it includes detailed tasks to be performed to achieve

strategic goals, as well as key performance indicators and target values.

The College has ensured compliance with European standards and guidelines (See the appendix for the self-assessment report). At the same time, it has been identified that the College currently needs to pay increased attention to the following aspects in the context of European Standards and Guidelines:

ESG 1.2 Procedure for development and approval of study programs:

Due to changes in external acts (transition to ECTS, the new state standard for professional higher education), the existing procedure does not foresee aspects for developing joint programs and the form of distance learning. Therefore, the procedure for developing study programs is planned to be updated in 2024.

ESG 1.3 Student-centered teaching and learning:

Students sometimes indicate they want more flexible learning paths (extended test deadlines and fewer tests). Still, the hospitality industry has a certain seasonality, so test times are relatively tight. In fact, in nature, it is monitored so that there is no more than one final exam of the study course in one day (it is also planned to prevent this in the internal acts).

ESG 1.3 Student-centered assessment:

There have been difficulties with the timely communication of final grades to students. To solve this, the teaching staff sends information about the final grades to the students by e-mail. Work is underway to improve the IT functionality (we expect it will be implemented in 2025).

ESG 1.8 Clear, accurate, objective, and up-to-date information:

The College website sometimes has outdated information. In 2024, more attention has been paid to it. In addition, it should be mentioned that a procedure will be established for monitoring and updating information.

ESG 1.10 External quality assurance:

Considering it is a relatively new higher education institution, the College is beginning to accumulate experience preparing for external quality assessment.

Considering the overarching goal defined in the quality policy - continuous improvement - it can be regarded that the internal quality assurance system is effective. An additional confirmation of this is the improvements made in the previous period and those planned in the future.

**2.2.2. Analysis and assessment of the system and the procedures for the development and review of the study programmes by providing specific examples of the review of the study programmes, the aims, and regularity, as well as the stakeholders and their responsibilities. If, during the reporting period, new study programmes have been developed within the study field, describe the procedures of their development (including the process of the approval of study programmes).**

The development and approval of programs at the College takes place in accordance with the following internal rules:

- Procedure for developing, examining and updating study programmes

- Procedure for developing, updating and using study course descriptions

(both published in the College's e-environment, as they are intended for internal use).

The study programme is revised once a year, taking into account the results of both internal and external evaluations, incl. if, for example, there are significant changes in industry requirements or if significant feedback is received from students and employers.

At the end of the current study year, the director of the study programme summarizes the submitted proposals for changes in the study programme and prepares a draft of the study programme changes. The compliance of the study programme change project with the requirements of regulatory acts is checked by the College director. Likewise, the director of the College, in consultation with the head of the College's Academic Department and the head of the College's Research and Projects Department, evaluates the submitted proposals for changes in the study programme and makes a decision on the usefulness and validity of the changes and recommends them for approval by the College Council. An agreed study programmes Amendments draft is forwarded to the College Council for approval. Changes to the study programme must be approved by the College Council before the beginning of the new academic year.

For example, in connection with the approval of the new professional standard "Hotel services organizer" on April 6, 2022, both the goals of the programme, the achievable results, and the content of all the programmes courses were critically evaluated. The evaluation of the programme was initiated by the director of the college Mg. edu. Jūlija Pasnaka, and it happened in the following stages:

1. Programme audit - college director Mg. edu. J. Pasnaka and in cooperation with the programme director Mg. oec. D. Priedītis conducted an audit of the programme.
2. Preparation of the Amendments draft - Head of the study programme Mg. oec. D. Priedītis prepared the Amendments draft, including recommendations for improvements.
3. Discussion - The Amendments draft was discussed at the College Council meeting with all stakeholders involved.
4. Decision-making - Based on the results of the discussion, decisions were made on the necessary improvements.
5. Implementation - The approved improvements were implemented in the study programme, involving the academic staff of the programme and controlling meeting the deadlines.
6. Evaluation - After the implementation of the improvements, an evaluation of the programme will be conducted during the 2024/25 school year to determine their effectiveness and, if necessary, make additional adjustments.

As a result, the content of the existing study courses and their compliance with the achievable results were significantly supplemented and systematized. Also, for example, in response to the additional competencies included in the professional standard in hotel revenue management, a new study course "Reservation and Revenue Management" was developed.

Electronic link to internal regulations: [Course: Rules and Policies \(e-hotelschool.lv\)](#)

**2.2.3. Description of the procedures and/or systems according to which the students are expected to submit complaints and proposals (except for the surveys to be conducted among the students). Specify whether and how the students have access to the information on the possibilities to submit complaints and proposals and how the outcomes**

**of the examination of the complaints and proposals and the improvements of the study field and the relevant study programmes are communicated by providing the respective examples.**

Students can submit complaints and proposals individually or through the students' elected representatives - the Student Parliament. These student rights are defined in the College's Internal Order and Security Regulations for students, the text of which is available here: <https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Internal-rules-2018.pdf>

Individually submitted complaints and proposals are accepted and considered in accordance with the Application submission and complaint handling policy (procedure), the text of which is available here:

<https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/APPLICATION-SUBMISSION-AND-COMPLAINT-HANDLING-POLICY-2023.pdf>

This procedure applies to applications and complaints, the consideration of which is not regulated by other internal regulations of the College (for example, internal regulations on submitting appeals) or external legal acts binding on the College, applicants, learners (students) and legal entities. In the sense of this procedure, a statement is not considered an application or a complaint, in which the first name, surname and information that allows for the unequivocal identification of a natural person, and the name and registration number for a legal person, are not indicated. Submissions and complaints can be submitted to the College by sending them to the College's legal address at Smilšu Street 3, Riga, LV-1050, Latvia or to the e-mail address [info@hotelschool.lv](mailto:info@hotelschool.lv) or by submitting them personally to the College (rooms 43, 45 or 47).

The Student Parliament has an obligation to collect the students' opinions about the work of the College and to submit proposals to the College management, which is defined in the Regulations of the Student Parliament, the text of which is available here: <https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Student-Parliament-Regulations.pdf>

College students do not actually use the official channels for submitting complaints and proposals, preferring informal communication with the College management. Students are happy to come to the Study Department to talk about issues that are important to them. They are mostly related to the study schedule. Considering the fact that a large number of students work in parallel with their studies, they perceive the changes in the study schedule quite negatively. Students come to bespoken the situation about their working schedule, asking to plan their classes in the first half of the week as much as possible. In response to student needs, the Department of Studies does not schedule classes on Fridays, when most hospitality businesses that employ College students have an increase in customer flow.

Another example of listening to student proposals is increasing the scope of foreign language learning within the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Hospitality Services Organization". Until the spring of 2023, foreign language study courses were implemented for only 1 semester, but since amendments were made to the study plan of the programme and the amount of credit points intended for foreign language learning was increased, foreign language study courses are implemented for 2 semesters. In this way, the College fulfilled the desire of many students to learn foreign languages at a better level.

#### **2.2.4. Provide information on the mechanism for collecting the statistical data, as**

**developed by the higher education institution/ college. Specify the type of data to be collected, the regularity of collection, and the way the information is used to improve the study field. Describe the mechanism for obtaining and providing feedback, including with regard to the work with the students, graduates, and employers.**

To provide a feedback mechanism, the **College conducts the following surveys:**

- Annual student satisfaction survey: annually in May
- Student survey on the performance of the Academic staff of the College during the academic year: annually at the end of the academic year
- Employer survey on the College student performance during the internship: at the end of the internship
- Graduate Employment survey: every two years
- Employee satisfaction survey: annually.

The College conducts the **Student Satisfaction Survey** online via the platform [www.visidati.lv](http://www.visidati.lv). Students receive an invitation to participate and a hyperlink to complete the survey. Given that some of the students are foreigners, the College conducts this survey in English, thus providing all students with equal opportunities to participate in the evaluation of the services provided by the College. Within the framework of the survey, students may assess the quality of studies, methodological and informative provision, material and technical resources, opportunities to engage in research and international projects, as well as opportunities for participation.

The **Student Survey on the Performance of the Academic staff** is organized in a similar way. The survey provides students with the opportunity to assess the quality of lectures by each teaching staff member according to the set criteria, for example, compliance of lectures with the study plan, adherence of theory to the realities of the labour market, methodological provision of study subjects, organization of excursions to hospitality industry companies, objective and understandable evaluation of assignments, etc.

The results of both surveys are collected and presented annually in the summer at an academic staff meeting. Such an approach allows both the College staff and faculty to get acquainted with the opinions of students, discuss the necessary improvements, and agree on the stages of their implementation.

The **Employer survey on the College student performance during the internship** is conducted in written form, asking employers to provide their opinion immediately after the end of the internship. Both employers in Latvia and foreign employers are surveyed, depending on the country where the student internship takes place. Within the framework of the survey, students' communication skills, work ethic and attitude, as well as the performance of work tasks are evaluated. The results of the survey are presented primarily to students by providing them with individual recommendations during career counselling. Also, general observations are used to prepare other students for future internships.

During the reporting period, **the Graduate Employment Survey** was conducted at the end of 2019 and at the end of 2023. In 2021, the decision was made to not conduct a survey of graduates, because, due to the measures to limit the spread of Covid-19, the work of enterprises and institutions in almost all sectors of the economy was disrupted, especially enterprises in the hospitality sector. As a result, College graduates' chances of joining the labour market during the pandemic were limited due to circumstances beyond the control of the College. The graduate employment survey was previously conducted in written form, but since 2023 it has been

conducted online via the platform [www.visidati.lv](http://www.visidati.lv). This survey is also conducted in English. Within the framework of the survey, graduates not only provide an insight into the course of their career after graduation from the College, but also give an opinion on the relevance of the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies to the international labour market.

Finally, starting in 2023, the College is also conducting **an Employee satisfaction survey**. In the framework of this survey, the College explores the views of employees on the image of the College, the effectiveness of work organization and the necessary improvements, provides an assessment of the work performance of colleagues, and offers the opportunity to initiate new activities for professional development. As with other surveys, the results of the employee satisfaction survey are presented to the College staff and faculty as part of the regular academic staff meeting.

**The College carefully analyses the data obtained within the framework of the surveys, as they are an important source of information and impetus for the improvement of the College's internal procedures.** To address the deficiencies identified within the framework of the surveys, the Director of the College, in cooperation with the Governing Board and the Department Directors, plans and implements the necessary actions. For example, in 2018, data from the Annual student satisfaction survey and the Student survey on the performance of the Academic staff indicated a low assessment of the work of some faculty members. As a result, a decision was made to terminate the employment contracts for these teaching staff.

Due to the measures to limit the spread of Covid-19, access to the College's library was limited, which made it difficult for students to fully use the available methodological materials and industry literature during the study process. In 2022, following a proposal by students to expand the range of digitally available academic literature, a decision was made to subscribe to the services of the e-book library *Perlego*, which provides access to more than 1 million units of academic literature. Access to the *Perlego* library is provided to students starting at the beginning of 2023.

The 2023 data from the Annual student satisfaction survey highlighted the need for some improvement of common areas, as well as equipment replacements. The necessary improvements were carried out in the autumn of 2023: new furniture was purchased for the college foyer area; a mobile computer class with portable computers was set up that can be easily used both in the College library and in the auditoriums; chairs and tables in the auditoriums were replaced, a large-sized smart TV was purchased for organizing online seminars and conferences. Negotiations were also held with the College's building manager for the renovation of the staircase. The renovation works were completed in the spring of 2024, thus providing an attractive and modern environment outside the doors of the College.

The results of the surveys make a significant contribution to the improvement of the study programme "Hospitality Service Organization". For example, in 2019, at the suggestion of students, the number of credits for learning foreign languages was increased from 3 CP to 4 CP, thus providing students with the opportunity to learn professional English, German, and Spanish on a more advanced level. In 2024, the Annual student satisfaction survey highlighted the need to expand the range of subjects in culinary arts or even offer a new study programme in the field of catering technologies. Considering these recommendations, the College's Development Strategy for 2024-2029 sets the development of a new study programme in culinary arts as a task to be completed by 2029.

**2.2.5. Specify the websites (e.g., the homepage) on which the information on the study field and the relevant study programmes is published (in all languages in which the study programmes are implemented) by indicating the persons responsible for the compliance of**

**the information available on the website with the information published in the official registers (State Education Information System (VIIS), E-platform).**

The College's website [www.hotelschool.lv](http://www.hotelschool.lv) is the main source of information about the College's activities. For any interested person, it provides general information about the College and current events, detailed information about the study programme, internal regulatory enactments of the College, applied research activities, and international cooperation projects.

As before, almost all sections of the website are available in three languages: Latvian, English and Russian, except for the section on the College's rules and procedures and the section on international cooperation, which are mostly available in Latvian and English. The information available on the website is constantly updated and the responsibility for the compliance of the information available on the website with the information available in the official registers (VIIS and E-platforma) lies **with the Administrator of the College's website Inna Pasnaka-Irkle**.

The content of the College's website is grouped into thematic blocks. The "**About Us**" section provides an insight into the College's mission and values, informs about current events, provides a list of academic and industry partners with whom the College has cooperation agreements, and introduces the College's staff and faculty. The section "**Admissions**" provides comprehensive information on the regulatory framework that determines the admission of applicants to the study programme and the course of the study process, informs about the study fees, provides an opportunity to apply for studies online, as well as informs existing students and potential students about practical issues: Doors Open Days organized by the College, student loans, and accommodation options. The "**Programmes**" section offers comprehensive information about the study programme, as well as other continuing vocational education and development education programmes implemented by the College. The section "**Faculty and Internship**" informs about the work of the Study Department, the course of internships, library services, and the activities of the Student Parliament. The "**Cooperation**" section of the website provides comprehensive information on the *Erasmus+* programme projects implemented by the College in higher education, vocational education and training and adult education, *Erasmus+* strategic partnership projects, *Nordplus* projects, CB-VET projects, as well as projects under EU funds such as ERDF and AMIF. The section contains a description of the projects, information about the results achieved within the framework of the projects, as well as an extensive gallery of photos from the project activities. Finally, the "**Research**" section provides information on all applied research seminars and conferences organized by the College, their agendas and materials, the article digests published by the College, as well as the collection of the published educational literature.

The College actively uses the opportunities provided by the e-environment. Since 2018, the College has been using **Moodle software** to maintain an online study platform in the e-environment [www.e-hotelschool.lv](http://www.e-hotelschool.lv). Previously, the College used the *Docebo* platform. In *Moodle*, the College's teaching staff publishes teaching materials, including those developed by the College for every study unit, as well as independent work assignments. In some study units, the *Moodle* environment is also used for testing students' knowledge. *Moodle* also provides links to the College library's collection, subscribed and open access online information databases. The e-environment is also being effectively used to inform students about the current events of the College, in which the involvement of students is expected: guest lectures and master classes by Latvian or foreign lecturers and industry professionals; calls for participation in the competition for Erasmus+ funded mobility, etc.

Information about the study programme is also available on the College's social media *Facebook*

([www.facebook.com/hotelschool.riga](http://www.facebook.com/hotelschool.riga)) and *Instagram* ([www.instagram.com/hotelschool\\_riga](http://www.instagram.com/hotelschool_riga)) accounts. The College primarily uses these information channels to inform potential students about the terms and conditions of admission and about the content of the study programme. Other users may explore current events of the study life: internship stories, updates on excursions to hospitality companies, guest lectures, applied research seminars and conferences, as well as international cooperation project activities.

## 2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

**2.3.1. Provide information on the system developed by the higher education institution/college for determining and redistribution of the financial resources required for the implementation of the study field and the relevant study programmes. Provide data on the available funding for the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities, its sources and its use for the development of the study field.**

The College carries out financial activities and provides paid services in accordance with the goals and tasks set out in College Regulations.

College Funding Sources:

- Tuition fee
- Revenue for paid services
- Grants of EU and regional funds
- State budget funding
- Donations and gifts
- Bank loans

The implementation of the short cycle professional higher education study programme “Hospitality Services Organization” is funded from the revenue of tuition fees and EU fund grants. For example, in 2023, revenue from tuition fees amounted to EUR 266,331, which exceeded the cost of the study programme by 15%. The income from tuition fees is used for the provision of study processes in accordance with the activities of the College.

At the same time, in 2023, the College received an EU grant for student and staff mobility in higher education from Erasmus+ Project no. 2023-1-LV01-KA131-Hed-Hed-000136703 61 274 EUR, as well as additional state budget funding of EUR 12 782 EUR 12 782 for students and staff in higher education form Project no. 2023-1-LV01-ka131-hed-000136703-LV.

Additionally, in 2023, the college received a state budget grant for bonuses at the amount of EUR 1700 for academic staff.

The Board is responsible for the provision and use of funding necessary for the operation of the College. The Board in cooperation with the Director and Accountant of the College draws up the budget of the College for the current academic year at the beginning of each academic year, redistributing the available funding to cover all types of obligations, including applied research activities.

For example, in 2023, funding for research and development was 61,503 EUR, of which the college co-funding was EUR 25,301, the funding from EU Structural Funds was EUR 26,266, and the funding

from foreign educational institutions - EUR 9,936. This funding was used for the remuneration of the academic staff involved in applied research activities, the organization of research results dissemination activities, as well as travel expenses for participation in foreign applied research conferences and seminars.

It should be emphasized that the amount of funding raised and allocated by the College for research activities has increased several times in recent years. Thus, in 2023, the research budget increased in comparison to 2022 for 164% and in 2022, the research budget increased in comparison to 2021 for 204%. This became possible thanks to an increase in the volume of grants of EU and regional funds within the framework of international cooperation projects implemented by College.

**2.3.2. Provide information on the infrastructure and the material and technical provisions required for the implementation of the study field and the relevant study programmes. Specify whether the required provision is available to the higher education institution/college, available to the students, and the teaching staff.**

The College building is located in Old Riga at Smilsu Street 3, it is a unique monument of Latvian and UNESCO historical heritage, the preservation of which is protected by law. The premises are owned by the founder on the basis of a long-term lease. The lease agreement is valid until 2025 and it is expected to be extended until 2030. The currently used space is 480 m<sup>2</sup>, which includes:

- rooms for lectures and seminars, each of them is equipped with tables, chairs and multimedia equipment - laptop computer, projector or large-sized television, sound equipment - and whiteboard;
- a training restaurant with tables, chairs, sideboards and professional equipment necessary for guest service, such as a coffee machine, blender, shaker, dishes, glasses, tableware, textiles, decorations, etc., where practical training is organized in the study courses "Food and Beverage Operations Management" and "Conferences and Banqueting Management";
- professional kitchen with modern equipment, such as convection oven, induction cooker, hood, stainless steel kitchen tables and shelves, cold table, dishwasher, etc. facilities where practical lessons are organized in the "Contemporary Gastronomy" study course;
- a library with a reading room, where 20 portable computers with Internet connection are available for students' independent work, as well as for use within lessons, for example, in the study course "Hotel Management Software", as well as a scanner, printer and copier;
- rooms for the work of the academic and general staff of the College, which are equipped with office furniture, computers, printers and scanners;
- auxiliary rooms - wardrobes, corridors, toilets, warehouses.

The College premises are equipped according to the specifics of the study direction "Hotel and restaurant service, tourism and leisure organization" and according to the needs of study, research, methodical and organizational work. Free Wi-Fi is available in all rooms.

In addition, the infrastructure of the College consists of student housing facilities with an area of 454 m<sup>2</sup>. These are apartments for the accommodation of College students and other guests, located in the centre of Riga - within walking distance from the College. The management of the apartments is provided by the College's subsidiary company "HS apartments" Ltd. The apartments are equipped with everything necessary for living, including household appliances, bed linen and wireless internet connection. It should be noted that on Airbnb.com College Apartments have been

rated with 4.6 of 5 points, which is considered to be a high rating.

The founder of the College pays attention to the further improvement of the College's facilities and resources. The tasks to be performed are defined in the College Development Strategy for 2024-2029, where the 3rd objective is "to improve the material, technical and informational base for the implementation of quality studies", which, among other things, envisages, along with the growth of the number of students, to expand the area of rooms necessary for lectures and practical training, by setting up new auditoriums and laboratories and by arranging additional academic staff and student individual work and rest rooms/places, as well as by implementing resource sharing with partner institutions, and to ensure a visually and functionally attractive study, work and rest environment by organizing repair works of College premises, replacement and modernization of equipment and facilities.

**2.3.3. Provide information on the system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of the methodological and informative provision. Description and assessment of the availability of the library and the databases to the students (including in digital environment) and their compliance with the needs of the study field by specifying whether the opening times of the library are appropriate for the students, as well as the number/area of the premises, their suitability for individual studies and research work, the services provided by the library, the available literature for the implementation of the study field, the databases available for the students in the respective field, the statistical data on their use, the procedures for the replenishment of the library stock, as well as the procedures and possibilities for the subscription to the databases.**

The College implements a targeted approach to the provision of educational programs with high-quality informative and methodical resources.

The College has its own library registered in the library register under the number BLB2053. The library collection includes over 1,000 items of specialized literature and periodicals, most of which are current issues published after 2015, including valuable AHLEI (American Hotel and Lodging Enterprises Education Institute) publications. They are available for use by students, educators and academic staff in the reading room during library working hours (weekdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with a break from 1:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.), as well as for taking home in accordance with the Library's rules of use. The college library has workstations for students' independent work, including laptops with Internet access. The library also offers printing, copying and scanning services.

Also, the College pays for subscription to the digital library "Perlego" ([www.perlego.com](http://www.perlego.com)), which offers a million books from more than 5,000 publishers worldwide, as well as the scientific database "Emerald Insight" with access to the following journals:

- "International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management";
- "International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research";
- "International Journal of Event and Festival Management";
- "International Journal of Tourism Cities";
- "Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology";
- "Tourism Review";
- "Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes".

An access to a digital library and scientific database for students, learners and academic staff is

available at any time and day.

It should be mentioned that the College carries out active publishing activities. In the period from 2014 to 2017, the College publishing house implemented a large-scale project for the development of teaching and methodological tools for the implementation of the College's educational programmes. As a result of the project, the teaching staff of the College developed 72 teaching and methodical materials. These are teaching aids for most study courses in the "Organization of Hospitality Services" program, dictionaries of professional terminology, as well as methodological guidelines for the formatting of study papers and the development and defence of qualification papers at the College. The methodological work carried out by the academic staff is very important for the Latvian hospitality industry, because until now no other equivalent educational literature is available in Latvian language. Taking into account the fact that College also attracts foreign students, at one time the translation of the developed materials into English and Russian was carried out. The prepared learning materials are available in both printed and digital formats. They can be also downloaded.

Since 2017, the College publishing activities have been focused on publishing the results of the College academic staff and student research, as well as issuing methodological materials. In the period from 2017 to 2023, the College published 6 collections of research articles by "Hospitality Industry: Opportunities, Challenges and Perspectives", 2 publications of applied research findings "The Hospitality & M.I.C.E. Industry Analysis" and "Business Models Post-Corona in the Hospitality Industry", as well as 2 methodological guidelines - "Sustainable Hospitality Digitization Guide for VET Students and Professionals" and "Sustainable Hospitality Digitization Pedagogy for VET Educators and Hospitality Business Field Trainers and Team Leaders".

Collections of articles published by the College are available here: [Research Activities - "HOTEL SCHOOL" Viesnīcu biznesa koledža](#)

Lists of educational literature published by the College can be viewed here: [Educational literature publishing - "HOTEL SCHOOL" Viesnīcu biznesa koledža](#)

Methodological materials published by the College are available here: [Seminars and conferences - "HOTEL SCHOOL" Viesnīcu biznesa koledža](#)

Analysing the statistics of the use of informational and library resources in the College, it should be concluded that since the Covid-19 pandemic there has been a tendency to use digital resources more and more, due to which a decision was made to invest more funds in the subscription of digital resources in contrast to the pre-pandemic period, when the main investments were in the purchase of printed publications. Thus, in 2023, the amount of the College's investment in the subscription of digital information resources was EUR 98 per 1 student. In 2023, 70% of students were active users of the digital library "Perlego", while the number of unique views of the scientific database "Emerald Insight" per 1 student was 5.76 views. In the College's Development Strategy 2024-2029. it is planned to increase these indicators significantly until 2029.

**2.3.4. Provide a description and assessment of information and communication technology solutions used in the study process (e.g., MOODLE). If the study programmes within the study field are implemented in distance learning, the tools specially adapted for this form of study must also be indicated.**

Within the framework of ICT, College provides complete information on study programs and the

organization of the study process to students. For example, the College website, <https://hotelschool.lv/> , contains the information required for studies. It is structured according to the stages of the student's life cycle in the College, starting with admission and ending with exmatriculation, as well as according to the main directions of College activity.

The digital e-learning environment is used to ensure the ICT process - the Moodle system (<https://e-hotelschool.lv/> ), which is updated every year to the latest available version, which significantly increases its functionality. Since 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic began, and the College had to launch lectures online, College has significantly improved its e-learning environment. Information on the content of the study course, the requirements for the acquisition of the study course and the evaluation criteria is available in the descriptions of the study course, which are published in the e-environment. The academic staff publish teaching materials and guidance there, as well as upload assignment briefs for students. Online video sessions are organized for college students according to the timetable. Some lecturers have developed tests in the e-learning environment. Students submit completed assignments, take tests using e-environment tools.

During the online lecture (using the BBB button), the lecturer and students actively communicate, students can present the assigned tasks, participate in seminars, discussions and group work.

By logging in to the e-learning environment - Moodle, students can receive methodological, informative and organizational support online.

College ensures the availability of information about the policies and regulations, as well as upcoming events and other College news to all staff members in e-learning environment. For example, for this purpose serves a special e-course "ACADEMIC INTRANET". It contains current college strategic documents, regulations, methodological materials, as well as information on supported scientific conferences and other professional development activities, etc.

### **2.3.5. Provide information on the procedures for attracting and/or employing the teaching staff (including the call for vacancies, employment, election procedure, etc.), and the assessment of their transparency.**

According to the Regulations on Academic Positions, the number of full-time academic staff positions in the College is determined by its director based on the need, considering available funding, and ensuring the requirements of the Higher Education Law. Election to an academic position confirms the compliance of a person's academic and professional qualifications with the requirements of the science industry, both for studies and research work in the College.

The academic staff in the College consists of:

- docents
- lecturers
- researchers

The College sets the following requirements for applicants for academic staff positions:

- A person with a master's or doctoral degree who can independently deliver lectures, lead practical classes and seminars, supervise student qualification papers, and conduct research work **can apply for the lecturer position**. Exceptionally, a person with higher education without a scientific and academic degree can apply for the position of lecturer in profile subjects if he has at least five years of practical experience in the tourism and hospitality

industry, of which at least two years have been in a managerial position.

- **The position of docent can be applied for** by a person who has a doctoral degree, scientific research publications, developed teaching aids according to the course of study to be taught, and who has research and academic work experience in total, not less than three years, of which at least one year of academic work has been worked at a university or College. Exceptionally, a person without a doctoral degree can apply for the position of docent in profile subjects if he has a master's degree and at least seven years of practical work experience in the tourism and hospitality industry, of which at least three years have been in a managerial position.
- A person who has a master's or doctoral degree, publications in peer-reviewed or indexed editions in scientific databases, or published teaching materials according to the problems of the study direction "Hotel and restaurant service, tourism and leisure organization," and also has experience in the preparation, implementation, management or supervision of scientific or applied research projects (including scientific or applied research conferences, seminars, collections of articles, etc.) **can apply for the position of researcher.**

The director of the College announces a competition for the academic positions for which the term of election expires and for the vacant academic positions. Those positions for which part-time work is planned are indicated in the advertisement. The competition cannot be announced for positions in which women who use maternity or maternity leave work and persons on childcare leave. The competition announcement for vacant positions is posted on the College's website and in the media.

The director of the College forms an evaluation commission consisting of three members, which, based on the documents submitted by the applicant, prepares an opinion on each applicant for the position of lecturer, docent, or researcher, which includes a recommendation to "advance" or "not to advance" the applicant for election to the position. The information collected in the table "Evaluation of the applicant's scientific and pedagogical qualifications, organizational competence and professional work experience" is used to prepare this assessment.

The evaluation commission decides on the need to organize an open lecture or seminar, practical lesson, laboratory work, or demonstration of other pedagogical activities for applicants for the position of assistant professor and lecturer. The director of the College organizes it. Before organizing the execution of the mentioned task, the director of the College approves the type (form) of the task and the evaluation criteria, as well as the experts for assessing the quality of the task. The opinion of the evaluation commission on the applicants for the position recommended for election to the position, together with the documents submitted by the applicants for the position, is submitted by the College director to the secretary of the College Council no later than a week before the meeting of the College Council.

The College Council meeting has the right to consider the issue of elections in academic positions if no less than six council members participate. The applicant for the relevant position is also invited to the council meeting. After getting acquainted with the submitted documents, the opinions of the evaluation commission, and discussions with all the applicants for the relevant position, the council decides on election or non-election to the academic position by secret ballot.

It should be noted that all teaching staff elected to the academic positions of the College were recruited through a competitive process by the procedure mentioned above. The College has never received complaints from applicants or other parties regarding violations in the election of academic staff.

At the same time, if there is a vacant or temporarily vacant academic position in the College, the director of the College may decide not to announce a competition but to hire a guest lecturer /

docent for up to 2 (two) years. Visiting guest lecturers / docents have the same rights, duties, and remuneration as other docents and lecturers of the College. Still, they cannot participate in the work of decision-making bodies chosen by the College. Mainly, the College offers the position of guest lecturer / docent to foreign teaching staff, whose election is impossible due to the requirement to master the Latvian language at a higher level.

In the appendix is added: "Regulations on academic positions in the "HOTEL SCHOOL" Hotel Management College (Latvian only).

**2.3.6. Specify whether there are common procedures for ensuring the qualification of the academic staff members and the work quality in place and provide the respective assessment thereof. Specify the options for all teaching staff members to improve their qualifications (including the information on the involvement of the teaching staff in different activities, the incentives for their involvement, etc.). Provide the respective examples and specify the way the added value of the possibilities used for the implementation of the study process and the improvement of the study quality is evaluated.**

The College has an Academic Staff Evaluation Procedure, which has two goals:

1. to establish clear and objective quality criteria for evaluating the performance of academic staff to identify and promote the improvement of academic staff's professional competence and opportunities for career growth;
2. introduce a system of coefficients stimulating the quality of work in determining the salary of the College's academic staff.

The Administrative Commission assesses the work quality of the academic staff at the end of each academic year. It is an institution established by order of the director, whose composition includes the director, the director of the study program, the head of the research and project department, the quality manager, and at least one other representative of the general staff of the College invited by the director (usually a representative of the Study Department).

During the evaluation of the academic staff, the performance of the docent / lecturer and guest docent / lecturer in study work, research work, professional improvement and development, methodological and administrative work is evaluated, and the evaluation of students is considered.

The evaluation of the academic staff consists of four evaluation stages - the self-evaluation of the academic staff, the assessment of the students, the evaluation of the administrative commission, and the final evaluation, as a result of which the remuneration coefficient applicable to the academic staff is determined (the maximum coefficient is 1.2 or 20%). It must be said that the proportion of academic staff in the College who receive a higher salary based on the evaluation results is increasing yearly. Thus, in 2022 and 2023, it was already 54% of all academic staff, which is the highest indicator in all years, indicating that academic staff are motivated to increase the quality of their work performance.

Based on the assessment results, the College director plans targeted personnel development activities, drawing up a Personnel Professional Development Plan for each year, which the College Council approves. In turn, the Board of the College allocates funding from the College's budget for implementing such activities and projects every year. Similarly, funding from EU and regional support programs is also targeted for personnel mobility trips and other supported activities

recognized as professional development measures.

According to the Procedure for Allocation of Funding for College staff professional development activities, when funding is allocated from the College revenue budget, the maximum amount for one employee's participation in one professional development activity is up to 100% of the participation fee, i.e., conference, seminar, lecture series, educational programme, experience exchange trip, etc. participation fees determined by event organizers, if it does not exceed EUR 100.00 (one hundred euros, 00 cents), up to 70%, if the participation fee does not exceed EUR 150.00 (one hundred fifty euros, 00 cents), and up to 50%, if the participation fee is more than EUR 150.00 (one hundred and fifty euros, 00 cents). When allocating funding from the EU and other regional funding programmes, the maximum amount for one employee's participation in one professional development activity is up to 100% of the participation fee, i.e., conference, seminar, lecture series, educational programme, experience exchange trip, etc. participation fees determined by event organizers.

In general, the College's academic staff is actively involved in professional development activities. These are university didactic courses, conferences, and seminars organized by the College, other universities, state institutions, and teaching and training mobility within the Erasmus+ programme. For example, in 2023, 8 members of the College's academic staff implemented 12 professional development activities, the total cost of which in the College's budget was EUR 12,824. In addition, the College's academic staff participated in many professional development activities for free as they were financed from the budget of other institutions and companies.

When analyzing the added value of the used opportunities for the implementation of the study process and the quality of studies, it should be pointed out the introduction of new teaching methods and technologies, especially in the field of digitalization of sustainable hospitality, and in the study process as a result of the participation of academic staff in professional development and experience exchange activities.

### **2.3.7. Provide information on the number of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study field, as well as the analysis and assessment of the academic, administrative (if applicable) and research workload.**

Academic staff working hours include:

#### 1. study work (work dedicated to the study process and its provision):

- conducting classes – lectures, seminars, practical classes in the College premises (auditory work) and study tours, demonstrations, or master classes outside the College premises
- assessment - tests, and exams, including work in the internship defense commission, qualification paper defense commission
- managing and reviewing qualification papers
- management of student internships
- consultations

#### 2. methodological work:

- development and updating of study course descriptions
- development and publication of study course content in the Moodle environment

([www.e-hotelschool.lv](http://www.e-hotelschool.lv))

- preparation for lectures, seminars, practical lessons, excursions, and master classes
- planning, organizing, and evaluating students' independent work
- development of textbooks, methodical materials, and tools
- work in methodological commissions

### 3. research:

- planned scientific, research, and innovation activities
- preparation, management, and execution of scientific research and applied projects
- compilation of research results
- preparation of conference theses, publications, monographs, and presentations at conferences
- reviewing and editing scientific publications

### 4. organizational work:

- participation in academic staff meetings
- work in the College Council
- work in committees, such as the Admissions Committee
- planning, managing, and participating in college cooperation projects
- representation of the College in other institutions and organizations
- College promotion

The workload of the College's academic staff, which corresponds to one monthly salary rate, is 100 hours per month (1000 hours per year). The College has the right to assign part-time work to the academic staff, which happens quite often in practice, as the number of students is currently not high.

Currently, among the academic staff of the short-cycle professional higher education study program "Hospitality Services Organization" of the academic staff employed at the College, there are four docents, six lecturers, one researcher and one guest docent, and three guest lecturers, of which two plan to run for the 2024 academic staff elections at the College. Of them, two academic staff work more than full-time (1.3), five academic staff work more than half-time (0.5-0.75), and the rest work quarter-time (up to 0.25). The academic staff with the most significant load performs study, methodical, research, and organizational work in different proportions.

The 3rd objective in the College Development Strategy 2024-2029, "To develop the academic staff by promoting the improvement of the competencies of the existing academic staff, as well as by attracting new talented lecturers," envisages increasing the number of academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes, ensuring that the most significant volume of study programme courses is implemented by the academic staff who have been elected to the College, at the same time also involving foreign guest lecturers in the implementation of the study programme. It is also a task to increase the number of academic staff members who work full-time at the College, offering dual career opportunities to academic staff if necessary.

**2.3.8. Assessment of the support available for the students, including the support provided during the study process, as well as career and psychological support by specifying the support to be provided to specific student groups (for instance, students from abroad, part-time students, distance-learning students, students with special needs, etc.).**

Students are provided with the following support:

- informative support in the admission process
- guardianship services for students who are minor foreign citizens
- accommodation services
- integration courses for foreign students
- methodical support during studies
- career support

Informative support during the admission process is provided by the staff of the Admissions Committee. Counseling is provided to the applicants and students, for example, on the procedure for issuing a study and student loan, on public transport discounts, etc. The competence of the admission commission is also to provide support to foreign students in matters of visa and residence permit processing.

Accommodation options for students are provided by the College's subsidiary company SIA "HS apartments". More information: [Student Accommodation - "HOTEL SCHOOL" Viesnīcu biznesa koledža](#)

Guardianship services for students who are foreign national minors are provided by representatives of the general staff of the College who agree to assume these responsibilities.

Especially for the integration of foreign students, the College wrote and implements project no. PMIF/13.3./2023/1/03 "Introductory course on life in Latvia", which is co-funded by the European Union. As part of this, free lectures on Latvian history, culture, political system, health system are organized for foreign students. Consultations are provided on renting apartments, as well as excursions to museums, the National Library, state institutions, including the Latvian Saeima etc. are organized. Participation in the integration course is voluntary. In 2023, 41% of foreign students used this opportunity, but the College's Development Strategy envisages increasing participation rates to 85%. More information about the project: [Apply for a free introductory course about life in Latvia! - "HOTEL SCHOOL" Viesnīcu biznesa koledža](#)

Study methodologist of the academic department provides consultations and advises students on the possibilities of settling academic debts, prepares reports upon request, buys insurance for students during the internship and advises on its rules.

Career support is provided by the College's career counselor, who informs students about internships offered by the College's partners by publishing information on the College's e-study platform [www.e-hotelschool.lv](http://www.e-hotelschool.lv), organizing informative face-to-face and online seminars, providing individual consultations, as well as carrying out other information activities, advises students and trainees on the preparation of CVs and other documentation before the internship, provides psychological support to students during the internship, helping to solve the problems that have arisen, as well as generally educates students on career building issues, promoting awareness of independent career development and helping to develop skills in researching employment opportunities, career planning skills, decision-making skills, job search and retention skills. Finally, the career counselor, together with other representatives of the Study Department advises recent graduates on current job offers in the hospitality industry.

**The results of the 2024 student overall satisfaction survey show that 89% of students are satisfied with the career support, integration measures and other types of assistance provided by the College.**

## 2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

**2.4.1. Description and assessment of the fields of scientific research and/or artistic creation in the study field, their compliance with the aims of the higher education institution/ college and the study field, and the development level of scientific research and artistic creation (provide a separate description of the role of the doctoral study programmes, if applicable).**

The research priority directions of the study field "Hotel and Restaurant Service, Tourism and Leisure Organization" were first defined in the internal planning document - the College Research Strategy for 2016-2022, which was drafted in accordance with the Law on Scientific Activity, the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Cabinet of Ministers Order No. 551 "On Priority Directions in Science for 2014-2017", College Regulations and College Development Strategy for 2016-2022. Between 2016 and 2017 College focused its research activities on the following research areas:

- sustainable business in hospitality
- quality and financial management in hospitality
- human resource development in hospitality
- modern gastronomy
- technological progress and innovation in hospitality
- marketing and competitiveness of hospitality companies
- didactics in professional education

In 2018, an additional research priority area was approved by the College Council:

- marketing and competitiveness of hospitality companies

The same research directions have been included in the new College Development Strategy for 2024-2029, as internal discussions have been concluded that the previously selected research directions will be topical in the next 6 years.

The 6<sup>th</sup> objective of the College Development Strategy for 2024-2029 is "to promote applied research and its integration in the study process for the implementation of science-based studies in the College, as well as to contribute to the creation of knowledge about tourism and hospitality". This includes the following tasks:

- To implement applied research relevant to the tourism and hospitality industry on a local and international scale
- To popularize the results of research carried out by the College for the further dissemination of knowledge in the academic environment, tourism and hospitality industry, as well as in the wider society
- To ensure the content of study programs based on the latest scientific knowledge, integrating the results of research work in the study process
- To motivate academic staff to conduct applied research in the College's priority research directions and publish the results
- To involve students in research work, encouraging them to conduct applied research in the College's priority research areas

The performance indicators of applied research in 2022 and 2023 show that the College has achieved good results in many positions, for example, the number of applied research in the industry, the number of seminars and conferences organized by the College, the number of

research collections published by College, the number of research articles developed and published, the proportion of students performing at the College research conference, etc. College will continue to improve these and other indicators included in the College Development Strategy for 2024-2029 to ensure the achievement of planned research results.

#### **2.4.2. The relation between scientific research and/or artistic creation and the study process, including the description and assessment of the use of the outcomes in the study process.**

The research carried out by the academic staff and students of the College is integrated into the study content and its learning methods. For example, the matrix for the analysis and quantitative comparison of business models (Business Models Analysis, BMA) developed within the framework of the Nordplus Horizontal project no.NPHZ-2021/10064 "Business Models post Corona in the Hospitality Sector" implemented by the College is currently used in the subject "Leadership and Management", "Macroeconomics", filling the matrix with financial, operational, marketing, micro- and macro-economic data about the company and its performance for comparison with other hospitality companies of a similar profile.

From 2023, the digital tools developed under Erasmus+ project no. 2021-1-LV01-KA220-VET-000033140 within the "Sustainable Hospitality Digitalisation Toolkit" are integrated at the College. The whole created course as OER consists of the three platforms: the project homepage, the Moodle course page and the Digital Guest application. The digital resources include embedded audio recordings and the entire course is geared towards 8 learner styles with the designed exercises. The course is based on a customer experience management (CRM) system for hotels and tourism companies as a digital solution embedded in this project. The developed set of resources, the toolkit differentiates sustainable digitization practices from general hospitality practices.

It is essential to emphasize that the activities of the project in 2023 involved not only those academic staff who directly participated in the development of project results, but also other academic staff and students who were involved in the project's workshops and conferences not only as listeners, but also as active participants, who developed their research and their presentations.

It is expected that the learning materials and other resources of the project "Sustainable Hospitality Digitalisation Toolkit" will be used to the greatest extent in the courses "Customer Experience Management" and "Procurement and Sustainable Resource Management". At the same time, the College recommends that students use the results of the project when developing qualification papers. For example, at the end of 2023, the student Laimonis Karlsons started working on the topic of the qualification thesis "Guest Experience Software in Emerging Technologies by the Case of Pullman Riga Old Town", in which he also examined the possibilities of using the solutions proposed by the "Sustainable Hospitality Digitalisation Toolkit" project in the hotel.

In the period from 2022 to 2023, the College participated in the implementation of the project "A World of Cuisine", where the students and learners of the College together with the students of the project coordinator Dr. Sadik Ahmet Mesleki ve Teknik Anadolu Lisesi (Turkey) and partner Colegiul Vasile Lovinescu (Romania) explored and shared national culinary traditions. During the 2022 workshop, which took place in Riga, the College held classes, master classes and a workshop on innovations in the culinary arts. As a result of the exchange of culinary experience, students created new innovative recipes, thus contributing to the development of modern "fusion" cuisine. These learner innovative recipes, learner videos and prepared dishes were entered into a

competition where innovation was one of the judging criteria at [www.aworldofcuisine.com](http://www.aworldofcuisine.com). Currently, the results of the project are used within the study course "Contemporary Gastronomy".

Speaking of the time period until 2020, it is worth mentioning the College cooperation with the leading universities in the USA. For example, in 2018 and 2019, the College participated in the "X-Culture" international project organized by the University of North Carolina Greensboro. Within this project, College students worked in virtual international collaboration teams, the total number of participants reached up to 5000 students from 148 universities in 70 countries and 6 continents. As part of the project, College students developed high-level business plans on behalf of the global corporations, thus achieving the expected study results within the study courses "Entrepreneurship" and "Record-keeping and Finance".

#### **2.4.3. Description and assessment of the international cooperation in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation by specifying any joint projects, researches, etc. Specify those study programmes, which benefit from this cooperation. Specify the future plans for the development of international cooperation in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation.**

The College runs a large portfolio of international cooperation projects, which are implemented simultaneously with the *Erasmus+* mobility projects in higher education, vocational education and training, and adult education, as well as the projects co-financed by the EU funds, PMIF and ERDF. In 2019 and 2020, the College worked especially intensively on the preparation of project proposals under the *Erasmus+* and *Nordplus* programmes, and this voluminous work resulted in several approved project applications, the implementation of which ran from 2021 to 2024.

In 2017-2019, the College implemented the *Erasmus+* strategic partnership project "**Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship**" to exchange innovations and good practices under the Key Action 2 division. During the project, the international team of researchers developed a methodology and materials for integrating the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 into the adult education and higher education curriculum. It was tested by organizing training workshops for educators and learners. As part of this project, the College collaborated with European research institutions such as **Global Learning & Skills Partnership** (UK) and **Stichting voor Educatie-, Cultuur- en Migratie** (Netherlands).

From 2022 to 2023, the College participated in the implementation of the project "**A World of Cuisine**", where students and learners of the College together with the learners of the project coordinator, **Dr. Sadık Ahmet Mesleki ve Teknik Anadolu Lisesi** (Turkey), and partner, **Colegiul Vasile Lovinescu** (Romania), researched and shared national culinary traditions. As a result of the exchange of culinary experience, new innovative recipes were created, thereby contributing to the development of modern "fusion" cuisine.

From 2021 to 2023, the College participated as a partner in the *Nordplus Horizontal* applied research project "**Business Models Post Corona in the Hospitality Sector**". During the project, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the operations of hospitality companies in Latvia, Iceland, and Denmark was researched. The project was coordinated by **Dania Academy** (Denmark), while the third partner was the Icelandic convention bureau **Meet in Reykjavík**. As a result of the project, a study was developed, "**The Hospitality and M.I.C.E. Industry Analysis Before and While the Corona Pandemic**" (2021, 60 pages.), as well as a methodological material, "**Handbook. BUSINESS MODELS Post-Corona in the Hospitality Industry**" (2023, 158 pages).

The research results were presented at the [V International Applied Research Conference "Business Models Post Corona in the Hospitality Sector"](#), which the College organized in the spring of 2023.

In 2022-2024, the College has coordinated the *Erasmus+* strategic partnership project **"Sustainable Hospitality Digitalisation Toolkit"**, dedicated to the sustainable digitalisation of the hospitality industry. Together with partners from five countries, **City Unity College Nicosia** (Cyprus), **Dania Academy** (Denmark), **DigitalGuest APS** (Sweden), **Inercia Digital SL** (Spain) and **Italian Hospitality School SRL** (Italy), were developed:

- A methodological material "Sustainable Hospitality Digitalisation Handbook" for VET learners and professionals (2023, 233 pages)
- A methodological material "Pedagogy of Sustainable Hospitality Digitalisation" (2023, 283 pages)
- A digital course "Sustainable Hospitality Digitalisation Toolkit", integrated into the College's *Moodle* e-environment, which was development involving College's students and learners
- Series of five webinars on sustainable digitalisation of hospitality.

Within the framework of the project, at the beginning of 2024, the College also organized the [VI International Methodological and Project Dissemination Conference "Sustainable Hospitality Digitalisation Toolkit"](#), which was attended by the College's students, faculty, project partners, and invited speakers.

Since 2022, the College is coordinating another *Nordplus* project: **"NO LEFTOVER Nordic/Baltic Culinary Arts: Digital Course with Training Materials and Tools for Adult Educators"**, whose implementation will end in the summer of 2024. During the project, along with partners **Step By Step Counculting** (Iceland), **Com&Train** (Denmark), **MITRA** (Estonia) and **Vilniaus kolegija** (Lithuania), traditional and modern culinary practices in the Nordic and Baltic region are being researched and compiled, with special emphasis on the waste-free (NO LEFTOVER) approach at different stages of cooking. The developed materials were presented at the [VII International Applied Research and Project Results Dissemination Conference "NO LEFTOVER Nordic/Baltic Culinary Arts"](#) in the spring of 2024.

From 2023 to 2025, the College also coordinates the CB-VET plus project **"Horizontal VET Capacity Building for internationalisation and modernisation including innovation, digitalisation and sustainability by methodology transfer and exchange of good practices"** together with partners **Italian Hospitality School SRL** (Italy), **National University of Food Technologies** (Ukraine) and **Don Bosco Youth Educational Center** (Ukraine). The project will support the development of eight methodological toolkits in Ukrainian to transfer innovative and modern methodologies across the region and create wider access to and use of the accumulated knowledge by EU VET providers.

Broad international cooperation, undertaken by the College, allows teaching staff members and students of the study programme to adopt best research practices from foreign educational institutions, to jointly develop new knowledge in the research directions supported by the College, as well as to ensure international publicity and dissemination of research results.

**2.4.4. Specify the way how the higher education institution/ college promotes the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research and/or artistic creation. Provide the description and assessment of the activities carried out by the academic staff in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation relevant to the study field by providing examples.**

**First of all, the involvement of academic staff in scientific and applied research is stimulated financially.** College has internal rules - the Procedure for granting funding for the scientific and applied research work of academic staff, which determine the types of activities to be supported, sources and amounts of funding, methodology for calculating the funding, and the funding payment procedure.

**College funds the following research activities of academic staff:**

- Publications in international scientific databases indexed or reviewed
- Preparation of teaching and methodological materials
- Participation in international scientific conferences and seminars
- Participation in local and international research, including both scientific and applied research

**The College also funds the following international cooperation and research support activities:**

- Organization of joint research activities with other educational and research institutions local and international
- Organization of applied research conferences and seminars
- Publishing the College collections of scientific and applied research articles

**Secondly, the involvement of the academic staff in scientific and applied research is promoted by providing informative and organizational support.** For example, the academic staff are informed about the invitations to participation in scientific and applied research conferences and seminars organized by other universities, which the college receives at its official email address, as well as to the emails of the management staff. The academic staff are also invited to present the research results at the applied research conferences and methodological seminars organized by College and its partner institutions within the framework of international cooperation projects. New academic staff members are given the advisory support of more experienced colleagues.

Overall, college lecturers are actively involved in research. The largest volume is undertaken by **leading researcher Mg. Philol., Mg. oec. Ekaterina Korjuhina, docents - Dr. oec. Alice Vitola, Mg. oec. Galina Bukovsky, Mg. oec. Dzintars Prieditis and Dr. Philol. Natalya Polakova**, by 2021, also docent and former director of the study program **MBA Oleg Nikadimov, but from lecturers - MIB, MG. paed. Olga Zvereva and Mg. oec. Julia Mironova** (former Head of Research and Projects Department). Similarly, some general staff representatives, such as **Dr. oec. Konstantin Savenkov**, who at the same time also performs the responsibilities of reviewer of the student's qualification works.

For example, in the last 6 years, College lecturers have had several **publications indexed in the international scientific databases:**

- **Zvereva, O.** (2019) Approaches to Embedding Global Dimension in Adult Education Curriculum by the Case Study of the Hospitality Business Toolkit. *Innovations, technologies and research in education*. 658-679. (publication indexed in a Web of Science database)
- **Korjuhina, J.**, Dehtjare, J., Gehtmane-Hofmane, I. (2019) An application of modern technological solutions in order to enhance the process of distance learning in Hospitality education. *Innovations, technologies and research in education*, 218-230. (publication indexed in a Web of Science database)
- **Vitola, A.**, Atstaja, Dz., Uvarova, I. (2019) Circular economy driven innovations within business models of rural SMEs. *INTEGRATION. EDUCATION. Proceedings of the International*

*Scientific Conference. Volume VI, May 24th -25th, 2019. 520-530. (publication indexed in Scopus database)*

- **Bukovska, G.**, Mezgaile, Klepers, A. (2021) THE PRESSURE OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS IN MEETING AND EVENT INDUSTRY UNDER THE COVID-19 INFLUENCE. *Environment. Technology. Resources. Proceedings of the 13th International Scientific and Practical Conference. Volume 2, 44-50. (publication indexed in a Web of Science database)*
- Sztorc, M., **Savenkovs, K.** (2021). BUSINESS MODEL TO CREATE VALUE FOR A CLIENT OF SPA AND WELLNESS HOTELS. *European Research Studies Journal. Volume XXIV, Issue 3B. 863-885. (publication indexed in Copernicus, Web of Science, Scopus)*

One of the most important business studies that college lecturers have implemented from 2021 to 2023 in cooperation with partners from the Danish Academy and the Icelandic Convention Bureau "Meet in Reykjavík" was devoted to the most effective recovery strategies of the Nordic and Baltic hospitality companies during and after a Covid-19 pandemic. **Olga Zvereva** - a project coordinator from Latvia and a leading researcher, researchers **Dzintars Priedītis** and **Galina Bukovska** - were involved from the College academic staff. These lecturers conducted the research of the Latvian hospitality sectors and its companies, publishing its results in 2 editions:

- [Handbook-Business-Models-Post-Corona-in-the-Hospitality-Industry.pdf \(hotelschool.lv\)](#)
- <https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Handbook-The-Hospitality-M.I.C.E.-Industry-Analysis.pdf>

College academic staff presented the results of their research at scientific and applied research conferences organized by research institutions in Latvia - **the University of Latvia, the Rezekne Academy of Technology, Vidzeme University, ISMA and the Baltic International Academy**, as well as foreign research institutions - **Dania Academy, Vilnius College**.

College academic staff also actively organize conferences and seminars themselves, both as part of international cooperation projects and outside projects - on issues topical for the tourism and hospitality industry. The full list of conferences and seminars organized by the College, as well as the programs and materials of these events are published here: <https://hotelschool.lv/en/seminars-and-conferences/>

Finally, several College academic staff members are involved in editing the **College's research articles collection "Hospitality Industry: Opportunities, Challenges and Perspectives,"** published once a year by the College. Since 2017, the editor -in -chief of the collection is **Mg. Philol., Mg. oec. Jekaterina Korjuhina. Mg. oec. Dzintars Priedītis, MIB and Mg. paed. Olga Zvereva, Dr. oec. Alice Vitola, MBA Oleg Nikadimovs** and others have been collaborating in the editorial board in different years.

#### **2.4.5. Specify how the involvement of the students in scientific research and/ or applied research and/or artistic creation activities is promoted. Provide the assessment and description of the involvement of the students of all-level study programmes in the relevant study field in scientific research and/ or applied research and/or artistic creation activities by giving examples of the opportunities offered to and used by the students.**

The College actively involves students in applied research, providing the following opportunities:

- conducting applied research while developing qualification papers;
- presenting research results at international applied research conferences organized by the

#### College

- presenting research results at student research conferences organized by other Latvian universities
- writing of research publications for the College's collection of research articles "Hospitality Industry: Opportunities, Challenges and Perspectives"
- writing of research articles for collections of research articles published by other Latvian universities

The students' research work as part of the qualification paper will be described in details in section 3.2.6. of the self-evaluation report. One of its stages is the student presentation at the annual international applied research conferences organized by the College, which were held at the end of spring in recent years. For example, 8 College students presented their research findings at the international conference organized by the College in April 29, 2024. Five Students from out of this list, have successfully defended their qualification theses in May 2024 (the deadline for defending their qualification theses for the rest of students will be in autumn 2024). The conference program has been published here: [https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Nordplus-Conference-29.04.2024\\_FINAL-AGENDA.pdf](https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Nordplus-Conference-29.04.2024_FINAL-AGENDA.pdf)

The College also informs students about the opportunity to participate in student research conferences organized by other Latvian universities. For example, on May 24, 2024, two of College students presented their research findings at the inter-university student scientific conference on tourism and hospitality organized by the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies: [Inter-university scientific student conference for tourism and hospitality | LPTF \(lbtu.lv\)](#), presenting research on the following topics: "Challenges of running a Hotel in a Small Town using the Example of the Roze Hotel Group, Liepaja, Latvia" and "Dealing with Staff Shortages and Retention on the Example of PianaVyshnia, Riga, Latvia". It should be noted that the academic staff of the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies has appreciated the performance of the College students, praising both their English language skills and the overall level of preparation comparing their background with the other participants, who were mainly the students and graduates of the 4th year of the professional bachelor's program from other universities.

Also, the College provides students with the opportunity to publish their research results, gaining valuable scientific work experience. As already mentioned above, the College publishes a collection of research articles "Hospitality Industry: Opportunities, Challenges and Perspectives" once a year, inviting students to submit articles for publication in it. The editorial board of the collection advises students on the design of articles according to the requirements, as a result of which a relatively large number of students publish the results of their research in the collection, thus increasing the final assessment (the grade) of the qualification paper.

For students who are good at writing scientific publications, the College offers the opportunity to publish articles in scientific publications of other universities. For example, in 2023 two College students submitted articles for publication in the collection of articles of the inter-university student scientific conference on tourism and hospitality organized by the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies. On the other hand, in the case of longer publications, students develop articles in cooperation with one of the academic supervisors. For instance:

- (2017) Personnel Motivation System Perfection in Baltic Beach SPA department in Baltic Beach Hotel and SPA. *Cultural Heritage and Tourist Territories*. Nr.1., BSA, Riga, ISSN 2592-8449;
- (2020) SOFT SKILLS GAP AND IMPROVING BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS BY MANAGING TALENT IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY. *Economics & Education*. 36-48.

- (2021). HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY DURING COVID-19 CRISIS: REVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION AND SUSTAINABLE POST-CRISIS RESPONSE. SOCIETY. INTEGRATION. EDUCATION. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference. 449-467.

For participating in research conferences organized by other universities and preparing publications for their collections of articles, the College rewards students with a tuition fee discount.

In the College Development Strategy for 2024-2029, under the 6th goal "to promote applied research and its integration in the study process", has been set the task "to involve students in research work, encouraging them to conduct applied research in the College's priority research areas". The indicators achieved in 2022 and 2023, such as the proportion of students who are involved in research work at the College, the number of research projects carried out by students, the number of research articles developed and published by students, the proportion of students presenting their research results at the College's research conference, are planned to increase by an average of 50% for the next 6-year period.

**2.4.6. Provide a brief description and assessment of the forms of innovation (for instance, product, process, marketing, and organisational innovation) generally used in the higher education institution, especially in study field subject to the assessment, by giving the respective examples and assessing their impact on the study process.**

According to **the College Modernization and Internationalization Strategy 2021-2027**, which is developed to ensure the long-term sustainable operation and competitiveness of the College by continuing its modernization and internationalization, and to achieve the College integration into **the European Higher Education Area**, the EEA, the College gradually develops the **College innovation**, study process, educational product and research modernization capacity annually.

According to the statement of **the Cabinet of Ministers** of the Republic of Latvia (22.11.2023) 23-TA-2286, the definition of innovation adopted in Latvia: "Innovation is a process in which new scientific, technical, social, cultural or other field ideas, developments and technologies are implemented in the demanded and competitive product or service at the market."

According to the definition adopted by **the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** in the Oslo guidelines, innovation is divided into:

- **Product innovation**
- **Process innovation**
- **Marketing innovation**
- **Organizational innovation.**

According to the statement of **the Cabinet of Ministers** of the Republic of Latvia (22.11.2023) 23-TA-2286, it is also identified

- **Social innovation**

According to the College Development Strategy 2024-2029, the general **mission of the College** is to promote the development of the tourism and hospitality industry at the local and international level, ensuring high-quality and competitive professional higher, secondary and further education in the international labor market in the most sought-after professions in the industry and promoting lifelong learning for the professional development of employees in the industry, as well as

**promoting the creation and dissemination of innovations** in the industry for a sustainable future.

Indicator according to the College Development Strategy 2024-2029 objective 4.2. Creating a diverse and motivating study and extracurricular environment is **the proportion of study courses, within the framework of which innovative work methods or technologies are studied in the profession**, that reaches at the College 20% in 2022-2023. with a planned annual growth of 5%, reaching 35% by 2029.

According to the College Modernization and Internationalization Strategy 2021-2027 the expected performance indicator IX-4 "**The number of innovations implemented in the College**, embedded in the College environment, studies, management, business processes" includes the gradual growth of the number of innovations from 1 to 10 per year in the period from 2021 to 2027. (See the attachment). The rapid growth in the years 2022 and 2023 is partly related to the participation in the international projects in which innovative educational resources were developed with EU co-funding.

Several **product innovations** have been developed within the Erasmus+ strategic partnership project 2021-1-LV01-KA220-VET-000033140 "Sustainable Hospitality Digitalisation Toolkit", including a digital course, two digital audio brochures (guidelines), as well as a digital application.

As a **product innovation**, the College identifies the analysis of innovative business models, including the matrix for the analysis of business models developed within the project in the digital book "Business Models post Corona in the Hospitality" of the Nordplus Horizontal project NPHZ-2021/10064, implemented together with Dania Academy and the convention bureau "Meet in Reykjavik".

The College considers the preparation of student video materials for the digital course within the Erasmus+ project 2021-1-TR-KA210VET-000029335 "A World of Cuisine" [www.aworldofcuisine.lv](http://www.aworldofcuisine.lv) to be **a product and process innovation**. The students conducted their own research, created innovative recipes and participated in an international cooking competition in Romania.

In 2022, the College as a project coordinator has started the work on **product innovation** in the framework of Norpdplus Adult project No. NPAD-2022/10049 with the developed project result of the the innovative digital course "NO LEFTOVER Nordic/Baltic Culinary Arts for adult educators".

The 2023 year project "CB-VET plus" No. 101129249 also includes **product innovation** regarding the development of digital eaductaional tools for the internationalization and modernization of educational institutions and study programs in Ukraine. As a product innovation, the 6 brochures in Ukrainian are being developed within the project. On the other hand, the workshops for educators from Ukraine implemented by the College and its partner institution in Europe, Italian Hospitality School, to share methodologies for the modernization and internationalization of educational institutions, study programs, can be considered a **process innovation**, as well as **a social innovation**.

**The product innovations** of the next periods are the College co-developments within the Erasmus+ KA2 cooperation partnership project applications from 2024 "**Learning culinary pre-elaboration techniques using mixed reality tools**" together with Spain's Centro Integrado De Formacion Profesional La Flora and "**Master Chef Simulator: Sustainable Gastronomy Training Through VR**" with Karabuk University (Turkiye ).

Among **the innovations of the study process**, we must mention the integration of the computer simulations "Knowledge Matters" produced in the USA into the study process, which the College started to integrate in 2021. This software is used in several study courses that allow students to

model hospitality business planning and operating scenarios in a virtual environment with visual layout and operational reports.

Considerable **process innovations** were introduced in study support processes by designing and programming the study management digital system specially adapted to the needs of the College (sms.e-hotelschool.lv). Many documents of the institution were digitized, including the orders, decisions, reports, etc. of the Admissions Commission and the Academic Department. For example, in 2022, the College implemented **a process innovation** regarding digital exam (test) protocols in the system available for the filling in by the academic staff for each course of the study programme. In 2023, the College introduced **process innovation** self-enrollment software for the learners "Introductory course about life in Latvia for foreigners" within the project PMIF/13.3./2023/1/03, which the College implements together with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia and Society Integration Fund.

**Marketing innovations** at the College are related to the creation of new marketing materials with the help of Canva software, including social media and print advertising for different audiences.

**Organizational innovation:** in 2021, the College has introduced the position of the Development Director, which was an innovative solution in the organizational structure of the College, and which is in line with the Educational Development Guidelines 2021-2027 "Future skills for future society" (Ministry of Education and Science, 2020), direction of actions 4.1. "Building the effective management of the educational system and institutions", which envisages both substantive development - the transformation of educational institutions into "learning organizations" and the strengthening of management's strategic and leadership capacity.

## 2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

**2.5.1. Provide the assessment as to how the cooperation with different institutions from Latvia (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers' organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, scientific institutes, etc.) within the study field contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field. Specify the criteria by which the cooperation partners for the study field and the relevant study programmes are selected and how the cooperation is organised by describing the cooperation with employers. In addition, specify the mechanism for the attraction of the cooperation partners.**

The College cooperates with Latvian educational institutions, employers, employers' organizations, state institutions, non-governmental organizations, etc. institutions, thus ensuring the fulfilment of its operational tasks.

Cooperation with Latvian higher education institutions and vocational education and training providers has the following goals:

- methodical support for exchange of experience
- organizational support for the implementation of joint activities in the field of studies and research, such as exchange of students and lecturers
- resource sharing in the form of provision of library services, laboratories and computer software

- informative support for the provision of Top-up degree and other further education opportunities for graduates

Basically, the College focuses on cooperation with those educational institutions in Latvia that implement study programs in the field of tourism and hospitality. They are **Turiba University, Baltic International Academy, ISMA, Vidzeme University, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies**. The College also cooperates with the **Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology of the University of Latvia**.

The College regularly invites the academic and teaching staff of the mentioned educational institutions to participate in the conferences and seminars organized by the College, especially when the College carries out activities for the dissemination of the results of international cooperation projects. Likewise, the College's academic staff, representatives of the general staff and students are invited to participate in the events organized by the mentioned universities, especially in scientific research conferences, to develop and submit research results for publication in the collections of scientific articles of partner universities.

There is an exchange of students. For example, in 2019, students of the University of Latvia from abroad took the study course "Latvian language for foreigners" at the College. In 2023 and 2024, students of several universities took the "Introductory course about life in Latvia" at the College, the description of which was given in chapter 2.3.8.

A mutual comparison of study programmes was made with Turiba University, the Baltic International Academy and ISMA, reaching conclusions about which course of the professional bachelor's study programme the mentioned universities can accept graduates of the College to continue their education to earn a degree. The college disseminates relevant information among its graduates, encouraging them to study further.

Cooperation with employers has the following objectives:

- organization of guest lectures, master classes and field trips by industry practitioners, including excursions
- provision of internship placement for students and trainees
- development of students' qualification papers and research of teaching staff
- organization of State examinations
- participation in the College's board of advisors
- provision of employment opportunities for College students and graduates;
- training of hotel employees

The college cooperates with employers in the tourism and hospitality industry. Basically, they are high-level hotels (in the 4\*-5\* category), as well as individual restaurants that have gained international recognition (included in the Michelin guide). For example, **RADISSON BLU, WELLTON and SEMMARAH brand hotels in Riga, hotels "Neiburgs", "Pullman Riga Old Town", "Grand Hotel Kempinski Riga", "AC Hotel Riga by Marriott", "Avalon Hotel & Conferences", "Baltic Beach Hotel", restaurant "Max Cekot Kitchen"** etc.

The mentioned companies provide internships for the students of the College, as well as offer job opportunities for students and graduates, invite to excursions, lectures, seminars and practical training in the premises of the companies, give interviews and fill out surveys for the research work of the students and academic team members of the College, assign company representatives with the appropriate qualifications to participate in the College Council (until 2024) and in the Board of Advisors (from 2024), as well as for participation in the State examination commissions. Certain employers cooperate with the College in the field of employee training.

The College has been a member of the **Latvian Hotel and Restaurant Association** for many years. Until 2023, the vice-president of the association, Santa Graikste, acted in the College Council as a delegated representative of employers. The College also cooperates with the **Chefs' Club**, whose cooks organized master classes for the College's students, trainees and foreign cooperation partners.

The College's main cooperation partners from the state institutions are the **State Education Development Agency**, which finances and supervises the international projects implemented by the College, the **Academic Information Centre**, which examines the educational documents of the College's foreign students, the **Ministry of Culture and the Society Integration Foundation** - provides support for the integration of foreign students, as well as the **Investment and Development Agency of Latvia** - provides support for marketing activities in foreign markets.

The criteria for choosing cooperation partners are described in detail in the College's internal strategic planning document - [Modernization and Internationalization Strategy for 2021-2027](#) (pages 30-38), which determines the selection criteria according to the interests of the College, i.e. to ensure quality measures for the implementation of the basic tasks of the College and the achievement of development goals. These criteria are used by the Colleges to structure the decision-making and management process regarding partnership, collaboration and management of the College's quality and reputation.

Cooperation is based on a mutually beneficial agreement, which in many cases is formalized by signing a written cooperation (or other type) agreement, but in some cases it remains in the form of an oral agreement. The cooperation legal form depends on the nature of cooperation and the requirements of external / internal regulations. For example, in the case of student internships, a tripartite internship agreement is always concluded in accordance with the requirements of Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 481 "Practice organization procedure in professional education programmes" published on August 29, 2023. Also, when the representatives of the employers are involved in the State examination committee, a written contract is always concluded with them, as stipulated by the Labour law. On the other hand, field trips to tourism and hospitality companies take place after verbally agreeing on such an opportunity in advance, as well as the participation of College academic staff and students in scientific and applied research conferences is based on the completed registration form.

**2.5.2. Provide the assessment as to how the cooperation with different institutions from abroad (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers' organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, scientific institutes, etc.) within the study field contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field. Specify the criteria by which the cooperation partners suitable for the study field and the relevant study programmes are selected and how the cooperation is organised by describing the cooperation with employers. In addition, specify the mechanism for the attraction of the cooperation partners.**

The college uses the same criteria in choosing both Latvian and foreign cooperation partners (see information in section 2.5.1.). The goals, types and forms of cooperation are also similar. Unlike Latvian partners, whose compliance can be checked relatively easily by the College - both by using publicly available information from state registers and also by organizing visits to partners and

meetings in other places, additional organizational measures are necessary for the establishment and maintenance of foreign partnerships. For this purpose, the College organizes both online meetings and introductory trips (preparatory visits) to foreign partners.

For example, when starting cooperation with the ATLANTICA HOTELS & RESORTS hotel chain in Greece in 2016, the College management (Board Member Jūlija Pasnaka, Konstantin Špakovs together with several employees of the Study Department) went on mobility trips to the chain hotels to observe conditions of internships offered to students, get to know the internship supervisors in the hotels, discuss practical tasks, workload and other conditions, as well as personally verify the accommodation and other living conditions provided to students. In 2017 and 2018, the member of the Board of the College, Konstantin Špakovs, made similar visits to the hotel chain ALEGRIA HOTELS in Spain, in 2019 to the hotel chain ALLEGROITALIA in Italy, and in 2020 - to the hotel chain BLU HOTELS in Italy, etc. The director of the study program Dzintars Priedītis visited the DANAIDE RESORT hotel in Italy in 2022, while the lecturer and previous career counselor Inna Kučera visited the PARKLANE RESORT & SPA resort hotel in Cyprus in 2023.

The information obtained and the agreements reached during these visits later provided the basis for the quality and safety of the College students' internships. The principle of familiarization trips is also applied to other cooperation partners. For example, for foreign universities. The members of the College Board Julija Pasnaka, Konstantins Špakovs and development director Olga Zvereva visited such institutions as the UNIVERSITY OF DERBY in Great Britain, the SWISS HOTEL MANAGEMENT SCHOOL and the BUSINESS AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT SCHOOL in Switzerland, with which cooperation agreements were later concluded on the possibilities of continuing studies (top-up degrees) for graduates of the College.

The goal of the action direction "Quality, accessible, inclusive education" of the National Development Plan of Latvia 2021-2027 is the quality of education for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that can be used in business and life for every citizen of the country. Some of the tasks of the action direction include "Strengthening universities as innovation centers for the creation, transfer and smart growth of world-class knowledge", ..." and "Implementation of modern and efficient management of universities, involving more business organizations in strategic decision-making, strengthening specialization and excellence, implementing the digitization of studies, ensuring the implementation of the education quality monitoring system, creating and improving student-centered education skills for university teaching staff, ..".

According to the College Development Strategy 2024-2029 objective no. 7.5. Develop strategic **partnerships with universities and research centers** of a similar profile recognized in Europe and the world, as well as with foreign employers for solving common problems in the tourism and hospitality industry, developing **innovative pedagogical concepts and methods**, the College has 16 valid cooperation agreements with foreign partner institutions for 2022-2023 academic year with a positive development dynamics according to the number and nature of the cooperation projects to be implemented. In the year 2022-2023 the number of international projects/activities jointly implemented within the partnership is 13, and the number of project descriptions/applications developed jointly within the partnership is 6.

College modernization and internationalization strategy 2021-2027 includes the selection criteria of cooperation partners within the framework of modernization and internationalization.

In order to get to know the technological innovations implemented in the study process of **SHMS (Swiss Hotel Management School, Montreux, Switzerland)** and the approach implemented by the university to the career support of its students and graduates, cooperation with the Swiss University of Hotel Management was started. It should be noted that this university has been awarded the status of Apple Distinguished School 2017-2019.

The college also collaborates with **the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute in the United States**, purchasing books and teaching aids published by the institute and implementing courses such as Guest Service Gold® certified by the institute.

The College should become a place for the creation of new knowledge and innovation, an incubator of ideas, which is possible through active cooperation with other educational institutions, research centers and companies at the local and international level, thus ensuring effective management of resources and the transfer of knowledge and good practices. In the years of 2024-2025, the College plans to prepare an Erasmus-EDU-2025-PEX-COVE application after the call together with Dania Academy (Denmark), a higher education institution, becoming one of the partners for the creation of the Vocational Center of Excellence, which has already been agreed upon in June 2024 Dania Academy representative and expert visit to the College, Riga, Latvia for the project development.

**2.5.3. Specify the system or mechanisms, which are used to attract the students and the teaching staff from abroad. Provide the assessment of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff in the reporting period, the mobility dynamics, and the issues which the higher education institution/ college faces with regard to the mobility of the teaching staff.**

Foreign students are attracted through two channels:

1. College representatives attending foreign education fairs;
2. By placing advertisements on the internet and social networks.

The Head of Marketing, Konstantīns Špakovs, and certain members of the academic staff, e.g., docent Dzintars Priedītis and lecturer Eduards Ādmīdiņš, are involved in attracting foreign students to the College. They plan, organise and go on business trips abroad to present the education opportunities offered by the College at exhibitions (with booths, brochures, etc.), e.g., [HOTEL SCHOOL took part in the Days of International Education - "HOTEL SCHOOL" Viesnīcu biznesa koledža.](#)

Foreign educators (these currently are Mg. oec. Ilona Beliatskaya and Mg. philol. Giulia Trojano) are invited through advertisements on the LinkedIn platform, as well as by communicating with partner institutions, for example, under the Erasmus+ programme. In the former case, the College offers to conduct the entire study course or at least some part of it (2-3 credit points). In the latter case, the College invites lecturers for the period of the Erasmus+ mobility, which involves giving separate guest lectures at a course taught by other teaching staff, or speaking at conferences and seminars organised by the College.

As regards student incoming mobility under the Erasmus+ programme, it should be noted that at the moment, the College is on its way to launch this mobility. At the same time, the College is also active in organising long-term incoming mobility of vocational trainees from Ukraine and short-term learning mobility in continuing vocational education for adults from Italy. This experience provides a good basis for initiating student incoming mobilities in the near future, in accordance with the objectives, tasks and expected result indicators set out in the College Development Strategy for 2024 - 2029.

The number of student outgoing mobilities ranged from 7 to 20 during 2018 - 2023. These statistics were significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 - 2021. Since the end of the pandemic, the number of student outgoing mobilities has increased to 20, including partner-funded

internship mobilities abroad and mobilities co-funded by the EU that are available to the College students on the basis of the Erasmus+ Charter for Higher Education and the College's annual mobility applications.

The College was awarded the Erasmus+ Charter (ECHE) in 2021, and applied for mobilities in 2022 for the first time. In summer 2022, the College signed the grant agreement No. 2022-1-LV01-KA131-HED-000055754, which enabled to organise a competition (call) for co-financed mobility places for students and teaching staff of the "HOTEL SCHOOL" Hotel Management College's short-cycle higher vocational education study programme "Hospitality Services Organization". Since 2022, European Commission has switched Erasmus+ programme project information management to the digital platform *Beneficiary Module*, and replaced *Dashboard* for signing digital interinstitutional agreements. The technical module for signing interinstitutional agreements in the system was fully activated in the College's account only in spring 2024 at the request of the College, and immediately in spring 2024, the College concluded three interinstitutional agreements with *City Unity College Nicosia* (Cyprus), *ERHVERVSAKADEMI DANIA, International Office* (Denmark), *INSTITUTO EUROPEU DE ESTUDOS SUPERIORES IEES LDA, Tourism* (Portugal). In June 2024, the College plans to sign an agreement with *Vilniaus kolegija* (Lithuania), which will enable organising academic staff mobilities for teaching in the framework of Erasmus+ programme. With the signed interinstitutional agreements, the College will have an opportunity to organise and engage in student incoming mobilities, which have not yet been organised at the College.

As to incoming mobility of foreign academics, it increased from 1 (in 2018) to 13 mobilities in 2022 and 2023, engaging teaching staff from Ukraine, Germany, Denmark, Italy, UK, Cyprus.

Pursuant to the "HOTEL SCHOOL" Hotel Management College Modernisation and Internationalisation Strategy 2021 - 2027, **Strategic Direction III: Promotion of student integration into the European and international labour markets, Objective (III-1) "Percentage of mobility students funded by EU grants who complete their internship in European and international hotels"**, there is an increase in percentage from 0% in 2021 and 20% in 2022 to 40% in 2027. For the Objective (IV-1) "Percentage of academic staff going abroad (EU-funded outgoing mobility) for teaching or training, learning mobility", there is also a gradual increase from 0% in 2021 and 20% in 2022 to 40% in 2027. Academic staff outgoing mobility changed from 8 mobilities in 2018 to 16 mobilities in 2023, including EU co-funded mobilities for teaching that were implemented at the beginning of June 2024, after the signing of interinstitutional agreements. During 2018 - 2023, and in spring 2024, the College's academic staff participated in mobilities in Lithuania, Estonia, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Great Britain, USA, Germany, Romania, Netherlands, Turkey, Denmark, Iceland, which allows integrating their acquired knowledge and experience into the College's study environment and study process.

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

**2.6.1. Assessment of the fulfilment of the plan regarding the implementation of the recommendations provided by the experts during the previous accreditation of the study field, as well as the assessment of the impact of the given recommendations on the study quality or the improvement of the study process within the study field and the relevant study programmes.**

The college has taken into account the recommendations given by experts in the previous accreditation of the field of study. Report on the work done in 2018-2019. years was provided in 2020, when the College applied for institutional accreditation. In the time period from 2020 to 2023, the College continued to improve its performance in all criteria, and also expects to do so in the next planning stage, which is reflected in the College Development strategy for 2024-2029.

The implementation of the recommendations facilitated the professional development of the College staff in the field of study methodology and research, thereby improving the quality of study and research processes in the College. The College established a tradition of organizing an annual international applied research conference and publishing its proceedings, with a strong emphasis on student involvement in research. In addition, the College improved the information provision of its study programme, especially in the field of digital resources, by purchasing digital simulation licenses "Knowledge Matters" and subscribing to the digital library "Perlego". Also, the College continued to add to its library collections, placing the main emphasis on foreign language learning resources, for example, learning Latvian in the "Latvian language for foreigners" study course, as well as on the acquisition of the latest methodological literature for teaching staff and College management, for example, on the quality management aspects of higher education institutions.

A detailed overview is provided in the appendix: P3-Studiju-Virziena-akreditācijas-rekomendāciju-izpilde-en.

### **2.6.2. Implementation of the recommendations given by the experts during the evaluation of the changes to the study programmes in the respective study field or licensed study programmes over the reporting period or recommendations received during the procedure for the inclusion of the study programme on the accreditation form of the study field (if applicable).**

In 2020, the College passed the institutional accreditation. The expert recommendations received within the procedure basically touched on issues of the institution's strategic development and quality management, internationalization goals (for example, obtaining the Erasmus Charter), as well as issues of strengthening the capacity of academic staff and students self-governance.

Taking into account the long-term restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the College could fully focus on the implementation of the recommendations from 2022.

At the moment, all expert recommendations regarding strategic planning and internationalization have been fulfilled - the College's Modernization and Internationalization Strategy for 2021-2027 has been developed and the College Development Strategy for 2024-2029; as well as Erasmus Charter for 2021-2027 has been obtained, allowing to ensure the regularity of the mobility of students and academic staff.

Also, improvements proposed by experts have been made in the study courses, introducing a greater emphasis on the learning of various digital applications, as well as correcting the lists of mandatory literature. The results of research projects implemented in cooperation with industry companies are used in the study content.

The work of building the capacity of academic staff is ongoing. Considering the personnel change, this goal remains relevant at all times.

Challenges for the College are still caused by the need to improve the performance of its students'

self-government, which depends on the composition of the self-government of the given academic year. The basis of the problem is the short cycle of studies, which is not sufficient for the accumulation of experience of self-government members, as well as the fact that almost all self-government members work in hospitality companies in parallel with their studies, therefore their free time resources outside of study activities are very minimal. The College continues to work towards this goal.

A detailed overview is provided in the appendix: P3-1-Koledžas-akreditācijas-rekomendāciju-izpildēn.

# Annexes

I - Information on the Higher Education Institution/ College		
Information on the implementation of the study field in the branches of the higher education institution/ college (if applicable)		
List of the governing regulatory enactments and regulations of the higher education institution/ college	leksejo-norm-aktu-saraksts-ENG.odt	leksejo-norm-aktu-saraksts.odt
The management structure of the higher education institution/ college	Annex-College-Structure.docx	Pielikums_Koledzas-struktura.docx
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.1. Management of the Study Field		
Plan for the development of the study field (if applicable)	DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR 2024-2029_compressed.pdf	ATTĪSTĪBAS STRATĒGIJA 2024.-2029. GADAM_compressed.pdf
The management structure of the study field	Annex-SF-Structure.docx	Pielikums-SV-struktura.docx
A document certifying that the higher education institution or college will provide students with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution/ college (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college) if the implementation of the study programme is terminated.	Cooperation-agreement-CUCN-2024.tiff	2024-Via-HotelSchool-parakstits.edoc
A document certifying that the higher education institution or college guarantees compensation for losses to students if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme license is revoked due to actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.	1-7-6-Par-zaudejumu-kompensaciju-studejosajiem-ENG-04062024.docx.edoc	1-7-6-Par-zaudejumu-kompensaciju-studejosajiem-04062024.edoc
Standard sample of study agreement	Study-Contract-HSO-Non-EU.doc	Studiju-ligums-VPO-2024.doc
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System		
Analysis of the results of surveys of students, graduates and employers	Analysis of student, graduate and employer survey results.docx	Studējošo, absolventu un darba devēju aptauju rezultātu analīze.docx
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field		
Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field	lesaistitie_macibspeki_ENG.xlsx	lesaistitie_macibspeki_LV.xlsx
Biographies of the teaching staff members (Curriculum Vitae in Europass format)	CV_ENG.zip	CV_LV.zip
A statement signed by the rector, director, head of the study programme or field that the knowledge of the state language of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes within the study field complies with the regulations on the state language knowledge and state language proficiency test for professional and official duties.	4-3n-1-Par-macibspeku-valsts-valodas-prasmi-ENG.edoc	4-3n-1-Par-macibspeku-valsts-valodas-prasmi.edoc
A statement of the higher education institution/ college on the respective foreign language skills of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme at least at B2 level according to the European Language Proficiency Assessment levels (level distribution is available on the website www.europass.lv, if the study programme or part thereof is implemented)	4-3n-2-Par-macibspeku-anglu-valodas-prasmi-ENG.edoc	4-3n-2-Par-macibspeku-anglu-valodas-prasmi.edoc
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation		
Summary of quantitative data on scientific and/ or applied research and / or artistic creation activities corresponding to the study field in the reporting period.	Petniecibas-aktivitasu-statistika-2018-2023-eng.docx	Petniecibas-aktivitasu-statistika-2018-2023.docx
List of the publications, patents, and artistic creations of the teaching staff over the reporting period.	Macibspeku-publikaciju-saraksts-eng.docx	Macibspeku-publikaciju-saraksts.docx
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation		
List of cooperation agreements, including the agreements for providing internship	P2-Sadarbibas-ligumu-saraksts-eng.docx	P2-Sadarbibas-ligumu-saraksts.docx
Statistical data on the teaching staff and the students from abroad	2-5-3-1 Statistical data on foreign students and academic staff.pdf	2-5-3-1 Statistiskas dati par ārvalstu studējošajiem un mācībspēkiem.pdf
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of students (by specifying the study programmes)	2-5-3-2 Statistical data about incoming and outgoing student mobilities.pdf	2-5-3-2 Statistiskas dati par ienākošo un izejošo studentu mobilitāti.pdf
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff	2-5-3-3 Statistical data on academic staff incoming and outgoing mobilities.pdf	2-5-3-3 Statistiskas dati par ienākošo un izejošo mācībspēku mobilitāti.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures		
Report on the implementation of the recommendations received both in the previous accreditation and in the licensing and/ or change assessment procedures and/ or the procedures for the inclusion of the study programme on the accreditation form of the study field.	P3-Studiju-Virziena-akreditācijas-rekomendāciju-izpilde_en.docx	P3-Studiju-Virziena-akreditācijas-rekomendāciju-izpilde.docx
An application for the evaluation of the study field signed with a secure electronic signature	4-3n-4-Iesniegums-studiju-virziena-novertesana-ENG-corrected.edoc	4-3n-4-Iesniegums-studiju-virziena-novertesana-labots.edoc
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme		
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard		
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme		

The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)		
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules		
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)		
<b>III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff</b>		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		

## Other annexes

Name of document	Document
2-4-6 LV Inovācijas_ilgtspējīgie risinājumi_digitalizācijas risinājumi_tabula.pdf	2-4-6 LV Inovācijas_tabula.pdf
2-4-6 EN Innovations_sustainable solutions_digital solutions_table.pdf	2-4-6 EN Innovations_table.pdf
2-4-3 Starptautiskā sadarbība un nākotnes plānu projekti.pdf	2-4-3 Starptautiskā sadarbība un nākotnes plānu projekti.pdf
1-4-2 LV STUDIJU PROGRAMMU IZSTRĀDĀŠANAS, EKSPERTĪZES UN APSTIPRINĀŠANAS KĀRTĪBA.docx	Studiju-programmas-izstradasanas-kartiba-jan2020.docx
Augstākās izglītības padomes lēmums	AIP-lemums-Nr_12_HS_pap_pras.edoc
Nolikums par akadēmiskajiem amatiem	Nolikums-par-akadem-amatiem-sept2018-grozijumi-aug2022.doc
P3-1-Koledzas-rekomendaciju-izpilde.docx	P3-1-Koledzas-rekomendaciju-izpilde.docx
P3-1-Koledzas-rekomendaciju-izpilde-en.docx	P3-1-Koledzas-rekomendaciju-izpilde-en.docx
Compliance ESG_ENG.docx	Compliance ESG_ENG.docx
Atbilstiba ESG.docx	Atbilstiba ESG.docx

# Hospitality Services Organization (41811)

Study field	<i>Hotel and Restaurant Service, Tourism and Recreation Organisation</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Hospitality Services Organization</i>
Education classification code	<i>41811</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>First level professional higher education study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Dzintars</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Priedītis</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>dzintars@hotelschool.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Mg. oec.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	<i>26825195</i>
Goal of the study programme	<i>The aim of the study programme is to provide education in accordance with international standards and to prepare competitive hotel services organizers for the labor market - specialists who are able to participate in the management of hospitality companies, plan and coordinate the operation of services, manage personnel, promote the sale of products and services and budget execution control - according to the professional standard and short-cycle professional higher education requirements.</i>

<p>Tasks of the study programme</p>	<p>1) <i>prepare students for work in hospitality companies in Latvia and abroad by acquiring the theoretical knowledge, professional skills and abilities required in today's global labor market, as well as by promoting the development of students into a mentally and physically developed, free, responsible and creative personality;</i></p> <p>2) <i>promote the acquisition of knowledge and skills (including independent learning skills), which ensure the acquisition of the fifth level professional qualification and promote competitiveness in the changing socio-economic conditions;</i></p> <p>3) <i>provide an opportunity to learn the work organization of all hotel services during the study process, observing a certain sequence - from the performance of the simplest functions to the performance of the duties of the leading staff, getting to know the specifics, standards and requirements of the work of service managers;</i></p> <p>4) <i>ensure that graduates of the short-cycle professional higher education study program are able to responsibly and safely choose and use information technologies for the performance of work duties, research and lifelong learning, as well as for the acquisition, creation and sharing of digital content;</i></p> <p>5) <i>to promote the use of theoretical knowledge in practice by organizing mandatory two teaching practices for each student; to provide students with the opportunity to do internships in leading industry companies not only in Latvia, but also abroad (mainly in high-level hotels in other European Union countries);</i></p> <p>6) <i>promote students' independent scientific research activity as a basis for participation in planning and coordinating the operation of the hospitality company, controlling and evaluating performance indicators and promoting the development of the company;</i></p> <p>7) <i>create motivation for further education and provide an opportunity to prepare for first-cycle professional higher education and sixth-level professional qualification.</i></p>
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Results of the study programme	<p><b>KNOWLEDGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knows and understands the scope of the hospitality and tourism industry, its structure, influence and development trends.</li> <li>- Knows the classification of accommodation companies, understands the differences in the work organization, structure and management models of different types of hotels; able to describe personnel duties and areas of responsibility.</li> </ul> <p><b>SKILLS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can practically perform the main activities in the Front Office according to the guidelines and quality standards set by the organization, i.e. i.e., process orders of individual customers and groups, ensure the exchange of information with guests in accordance with ethical principles, perform guest registration, implement payment procedures using hotel management, CRM and POS systems.</li> <li>- Can assess the quality of services provided by the hotel and develop proposals for improving the existing service quality in the hotel.</li> <li>- Able to evaluate the service price policy in the hotel, perform a market analysis of the services provided by the hotel, develop a service offer suitable for the hotel's target audience and customer segments.</li> </ul> <p><b>COMPETENCES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Able to organize a continuous work cycle in the Front Office and coordinate cooperation with other hotel services for guest service.</li> <li>- Able to organize systematic acquisition and processing of customer feedback on hotel services, and quality assurance processes in cooperation with hotel services.</li> <li>- Able to organize the efficient circulation of technical and technological support for the provision of Front Office, i.e. see coordinate cooperation with external service providers and organize control of payment management of cooperation partners.</li> <li>- Able to implement the activities defined in the sales and marketing plan of the hotel services - introduce new services in cooperation with the hotel services and ensure their sale.</li> </ul>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	The professional qualification exam, which includes the defense of the qualification thesis.

## Study programme forms

### Full time studies - 2 years, 3 months - latvian

Study type and form	Full time studies
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	3
Language	latvian
Amount (CP)	135
Admission requirements (in English)	secondary education
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired - and professional qualification (in english)	

Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Hotel Services Organizer</i>
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### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
HOTEL SCHOOL Hotel Management College	RĪGA	SMILŠU IELA 3, CENTRA RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1050

### Full time studies - 2 years, 3 months - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	3
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	135
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>secondary education and English proficiency at B2 level</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	-
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Hotel Services Organizer</i>

### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
HOTEL SCHOOL Hotel Management College	RĪGA	SMILŠU IELA 3, CENTRA RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1050

## 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

**3.1.1. Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study programme made since the issuance of the previous accreditation form of the study field or issuance of the study programme license, if the study programme is not included on the accreditation form of the study field, including changes planned within the evaluation procedure of the study field evaluation procedure.**

Since the last accreditation was issued, there have been no significant changes in the parameters of the study programme. The programme has retained its name, code, professional qualification to be awarded, duration and form of studies, as well as structure and objectives. Students continue to study in accordance with the approved study plan and curriculum.

The only significant change that has been made in the parameters of the study programme is the transition from credit points (CP) to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). This transition has been made to ensure the alignment of the programme with the requirements of the European higher education area and to promote student mobility. The ECTS system makes it easier for students to continue their education in other higher education institutions of the European Union and promotes international cooperation between educational institutions.

The internal regulatory act, which stipulates the amount of working hours corresponding to 1 ECTS credit point, is the Study and examination procedure. Its 2.5. clause states that "Credit - a study unit that expresses the amount of study work based on the study results defined in the study programme or part thereof and the study load related to their achievement. 60 credit points correspond to the study results acquired in full-time studies in one academic year in accordance with the European credit transfer and accumulation system. Credit points are expressed in whole numbers. One credit point corresponds to 25 hours of study work."

The full text of the current version of the Study and examination procedure is available here: [Study-and-examination-procedure-2024.pdf \(hotelschool.lv\)](#)

With the amendments to the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the College was forced to stop conducting studies in Russian. The last group for studies in Russian with a gradual transition to studies in English was admitted in 2019. The liquidation of the Russian language stream had a negative impact on the number of students at the College, as many potential applicants were unable or unwilling to study in another (non-Russian) language.

**3.1.2. Analysis and assessment of the study programme compliance with the study field. Analysis of the interrelation between the code of the study programme, the degree, professional qualification/professional qualification requirements or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements. Description of the duration and scope of the implementation of the study programme (including different options of the study programme implementation) and evaluation of its usefulness.**

The study programme "Hospitality Services Organization" is fully compatible with the study direction "Hotel and restaurant service, tourism and leisure organization". The programme has been developed based on the current requirements and trends of the hospitality industry, providing students with the necessary knowledge and skills for effective management and organization of hospitality services. The aim of the programme is to prepare qualified specialists who are able to work both locally and internationally.

The name of the program, degree to be obtained, professional qualification, goals and objectives, study results, admission requirements, study duration and scope, as well as implementation options are closely related and complement each other, creating a coherent and competitive educational offer. The use of English and face-to-face study gives students an advantage in the global hospitality industry, which is a critical factor in increasing the attractiveness and effectiveness of the program.

The college study program "Hospitality Services Organization" is unique in the Latvian context, as it is the only educational institution in Latvia where it is possible to obtain the professional qualification in person. The other institution that offers it - the College of the State Agency for Social Integration organizes the study process as a social rehabilitation service for people with disabilities. On the other hand, the Business School "Turība" offers to obtain the mentioned qualification in the form of distance learning.

In addition, the college is the only one offering this qualification face-to-face in English.

### **3.1.3. Economic and/ or social substantiation of the study programme, analysis of graduates' employment.**

The Latvian hospitality industry has experienced significant upheavals in recent years—the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–2023, as well as, starting in 2022, the war launched by Russia in Ukraine. Both events had a dramatic impact on the business operations of hospitality industry companies. Measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, such as social distancing and lockdown, paralysed the provision of services. As follows, Russia's invasion of Ukraine significantly reduced the flow of tourists to the Russian border countries, including Latvia. In 2023, the World Health Organisation declared the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ukraine's resilience in the war with Russia and the paradigm shift initiated by NATO countries towards active defence of the region both contribute to improving the security situation in our region. All this facilitates the recovery of the tourism and hospitality sectors.

According to the data of the Central Statistical Bureau, in 2022 there were 786 hotels and other accommodation establishments operating in Latvia, which is 86 units more than in 2020.<sup>[1]</sup> The opening of new hotels continued in 2023 (for example, the four-star hotel "*Rixwell Collection Seaside Hotel Jurmala*" and the art and design four-star hotel "*Aston Hotel Riga*") and in 2024 (for example, the four-star hotel "*Tribe Riga City Centre*").

In 2023, Latvian tourism exports reached EUR 1214 million, which is 15.6% more than in the previous year and 33.8% more than in 2019. In 2023, accommodation services were used in Latvia by EUR 1.4 million of foreign travellers, which is 22% more than in the previous year but 28.6% less than in 2019, before the pandemic<sup>[2]</sup>. The recovery of the industry from the pandemic and the war launched by Russia in Ukraine continues in 2024. In March 2024, 164.2 thousand foreign and local guests were served in Latvian tourist accommodation establishments, which is 18.8% more than in

March 2023, according to the data of the Central Statistical Bureau. Guests spent 279.8 thousand nights in tourist accommodations, which is 15.4% more than in March of the last year.[3]

The upward trend also reflects the overall growth of the tourism industry in the countries of the European Union. According to Eurostat data, in 2023, the estimated number of nights spent reached 2.92 billion, 1.6% above pre-pandemic levels in 2019 (2.87 billion), thus becoming a record year for the EU tourism sector. In 2023, 171 million more guest nights were spent in the European Union countries than in 2022 (+6.3%), which was mainly due to the increase in the number of nights spent by international visitors (+146 million) and, to a lesser extent, the increase in the number of nights spent by local visitors (+ 25 million).[4]

The growth of the industry means that the demand of the industry employers for the labour force, and especially for highly qualified employees who can organise and manage hospitality services in accordance with the quality standards set by the company, is also growing. However, at the moment, the supply is very limited. Employers point out that there is an acute shortage of qualified personnel for small hotels, restaurants, and SPAs in Latvia, and large players in the sector are also facing a shortage of labour.[5] Currently, employers are addressing the shortage of employees by attracting refugees from Ukraine both at the entry-level and management level, as well as by intensively focusing on the digitalization and robotization of business operations. [6]

In these circumstances, the opportunity provided by the College – to acquire short-cycle professional higher education in hotel management—can quickly and purposefully address the industry's demand for qualified specialists. This statement is also demonstrated by the data from the College's Graduate Employment Survey conducted in 2023: All graduates are employed and work in the hospitality or hospitality-related industry. 55.6% of respondents started working during their studies, and 33.3% within a year after graduation. All graduates surveyed felt prepared for the labour market (77.8% felt very prepared, 22.8% felt rather prepared). Finally, 89% of graduates agreed that the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired at the College meet the requirements of the labour market.

[1] Centrālā Statistikas pārvalde (2023). Tūrisms Latvijā 2023. Available in: [https://admin.stat.gov.lv/system/files/publication/2023-08/Nr\\_20\\_Turisms\\_Latvija\\_2023\\_%2823\\_00%29\\_LV\\_EN.pdf](https://admin.stat.gov.lv/system/files/publication/2023-08/Nr_20_Turisms_Latvija_2023_%2823_00%29_LV_EN.pdf)

[2] Centrālā Statistikas pārvalde (2024). Tūrisma statistikas aktualitātes. Available in: [https://admin.stat.gov.lv/system/files/publication/2024-04/Nr\\_20\\_Turisma\\_statistikas\\_aktualitates\\_2024\\_%2824\\_00%29\\_LV.pdf](https://admin.stat.gov.lv/system/files/publication/2024-04/Nr_20_Turisma_statistikas_aktualitates_2024_%2824_00%29_LV.pdf) (only Latvian)

[3] Oficiālais statistikas portāls (2024). Martā tūristu mītnēs par 19 % vairāk viesu nekā pirms gada. Available in: <https://stat.gov.lv/lv/statistikas-temas/noz/turisms/preses-relizes/20801-latvijas-viesnicu-un-citu-turisma-mitnu-darbibas> (only Latvian)

[4] Eurostat (2024). Tourism industry eclipses pre-pandemic levels in 2023. Available in: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20240116-1>

[5] Leščinskis P. (21.06.2023.) "Lēta, bet garlaicīga atpūta". Kas traucē Latvijai kļūt par viesnīcu biznesa līderi Baltijā? Nra.lv. Available in: <https://nra.lv/neatkariga/izpete/418700-leta-bet-garlaiciga-atputa-kas-trauce-latvijai-klut-par-viesnicu-biznesa-lideri-baltija.htm> (only Latvian)

[6] Leščinskis P. (21.06.2023.) "Lēta, bet garlaicīga atpūta". Kas traucē Latvijai kļūt par viesnīcu biznesa līderi Baltijā? Nra.lv. Available in: <https://nra.lv/neatkariga/izpete/418700-leta-bet-garlaiciga-atputa-kas-trauce-latvijai-klut-par-viesnicu-biznesa-lideri-baltija.htm>

**3.1.4. Statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down into different study forms, types, and languages.**

Several factors influenced the dynamics of student numbers in the period from 2018 to 2023:

1. Until the institutional accreditation of the College, which was obtained in 2020, the College could not issue diplomas of higher education recognized by the Latvian state, which was a significant obstacle to attracting students. Obtaining the status of an accredited educational institution in 2021 made it possible to start the export of educational services, attracting students from third countries.
2. In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic spread in Latvia and the world, which impacted the tourism and hospitality industry the most, undermining public trust in it as a prospective employer. Many students of the College, as well as potential applicants, decided to reorient themselves by getting education in other professions. At the same time, the foreign students admitted by the College could not come to Latvia due to the long-term travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. Although the College provided online classes, problems with internet quality in their countries negatively affected the ability of these students to continue their education at the College. Many informed about the decision to stop their studies.
3. Taking into account the long-term unfavourable demographic situation in Latvia - the population is decreasing - the College pays attention to attracting foreign students, gradually increasing their proportion (61% in 2023). However, the Russian aggression in Ukraine launched in 2022 made Latvia, which borders Russia, a region of high security risk in the eyes of foreigners. Prospective applicants visiting the College's booth at overseas education fairs reported misgivings due to security risks.
4. The biggest challenge in the local market since 2023 is the labour shortage in the tourism and hospitality industry, which, rapidly recovering from the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, lacks employees in almost all positions. Considering that the relevant qualifications are not a prerequisite for employment in the industry, as it is in medicine, education or many other fields, motivation to obtain education becomes a challenge. The college faces this already at the end of the first year of study, when students go to practice and later continue to work in parallel with their studies, which is why they report difficulties in attending classes and passing all tests on time.
5. The factor of paid studies (the College does not offer government paid studies) should also be mentioned. Students who find themselves in financial difficulties are forced to stop their studies at the College. Although the College encourages students to take state-guaranteed study and student loans, students are often afraid to take this step, while foreign students cannot do so at all due to legal restrictions.

The fifth goal of the College Development Strategy for 2024-2029 "to increase the number of students and learners, paying special attention to attracting the most capable applicants" includes, among others, the following tasks:

- To promote the recognition and positive reputation of the College by implementing targeted and effective advertising activities in Latvia and foreign priority markets in order to reach all

target audiences for the promotion of the educational opportunities offered by the College

- To establish long-term cooperation with Latvian professional high schools and technical colleges that have tourism and hospitality education programs, offering their graduates to continue their education while studying at the College
- To develop special offers (tuition fee discounts, College scholarships, other stimulating solutions) for applicants with high grades in their previous education, thereby motivating them to choose to study at the College
- To improve enrolment rates in all segments

The fourth goal of the College Development Strategy for 2024-2029 "to improve the study and learning experience by enhancing student progress indicators" intends to promote the acquisition of study and teaching results and the achievement of excellent results by increasing the proportion of graduates.

The full text of the College Development strategy for 2024-2029 is available here: [HOTEL-SCHOOL-DEVELOPMENT-STRATEGY-FOR-2024-2029.pdf \(hotelschool.lv\)](#)

The College is actively working towards achieving the set goals. The data of 2023 show that student dropout has decreased. It is expected that the graduation rate of the students admitted in 2022 will be in the range of 50-60%, it could be similar for the students admitted in 2023, which is more than the minimum result determined in the College Development Strategy for years 2024-2025. (at least 40%). In the long term (until 2029), the College aims to achieve at least a 50% graduation rate.

Analyzing the statistics of premature exmatriculation of students, it should be concluded that the factors of academic and financial debts prevail (the academic debt rate is from 13% to 90% of the reasons for total dropout in different years; the financial debt rate is from 0% to 25% from reasons for total dropout in different years). In order to reduce their impact, the College implements the following actions:

1. offers learning of the study programme at a slower intensity (by developing an individual academic debt settlement plan and/or individual study schedule, extending the total term of studies, etc.) - such solutions are especially in demand among students who work in parallel with their studies;
2. offers tuition fee payments in installments (per semester or month), as well as payment of tuition fees at a later date. The College also encourages students from Latvia to apply for a state-guaranteed study loan, providing practical information on how to apply for it. Finally, the College grants tuition fee discounts for good and excellent study results and/or active participation in the Student Parliament.

**3.1.5. Substantiation of the development of the joint study programme and description and evaluation of the choice of partner universities, including information on the development and implementation of the joint study programme (if applicable).**

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

**3.2.1. Analysis of the content of the study programme. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators with the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study courses/ modules and compliance with the needs of the relevant industry, labour market and with the trends in science on how and whether the content of the study courses/ modules is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science.**

1. Information included in study courses/modules, results to be achieved, goals set, etc. evaluation of the interlinking of indicators with study programme goals and achievable results

The study programme "Hospitality Services Organization" is designed to provide a comprehensive and practically oriented education that prepares students for work in the hospitality industry. The aim of the programme is to provide education in accordance with international standards and to prepare competitive hotel services organizers for the labor market - specialists who are able to participate in the management of hospitality companies, plan and coordinate the operation of services, manage personnel, promote the sale of products and services and budget execution control - in accordance with the professional standard and for short-cycle professional higher education requirements.

The content of the study courses/modules has been carefully designed to achieve this objective. For instance:

- Mandatory industry courses (for example, "The Contemporary Hospitality Industry", "Rooms Division Operations Management", "Managing The Customer Experience", "Conference and Banqueting Management", etc.) provide fundamental knowledge of the industry's operations and management principles, which are essential to achieve the programmes objectives.
- Practical courses (eg "Hotel Management Software", "Internship I and II") allow students to gain real-world experience and develop the practical skills necessary for successful operation in the industry.
- Interdisciplinary courses (for example, "Sales Management", "Hospitality Industry Marketing", "Record Keeping and Finance") integrate knowledge from different fields, which are important for the comprehensive organization of hospitality services.

All courses are interlinked with the overall objectives of the programme, ensuring that students acquire both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills required in the hospitality industry.

2. Assessment of the relevance and relevance of the content of study courses/modules to the needs of the industry, labor market and scientific trends

In order to ensure that the content of the study courses/modules is up-to-date and relevant to the needs of the industry, the program is regularly reviewed and renewed. Several aspects are taken into account in this process:

- Industry trends: Course content is adapted based on the latest trends in the hospitality industry, such as the use of technology in service delivery, sustainable practices and improving the customer experience.
- Labor market requirements: Regular cooperation with industry companies and employers allows to identify current skills and knowledge that are needed in the labor market. This ensures that graduates of the program are competitive and well prepared for work.

- Advances in Science: Course content is updated based on the latest research and scientific findings in the hospitality industry.

3. The content of the study programme "Hospitality Services Organization" is regularly revised and updated, taking into account the development trends of the industry, labor market and science. This process involves updating the content of both theoretical and practical courses to ensure that students are offered a relevant and high-quality education.

3. Updating the content of study courses/modules according to the development trends of the industry, labor market and science

In order to ensure the constant updating of the content of the study programme, the following measures are taken:

- Cooperation with industry employers: Regular consultations, surveys and interviews with managers and employees of hospitality industry companies to identify current requirements and necessary skills.
- Scientific research: Involvement of faculty and students in research projects on current topics and in the context of the latest scientific discoveries, as well as the organization of an annual scientific conference.
- Student feedback: Conducting regular student surveys on the content of study courses and their relevance to their needs and expectations.

These measures ensure that the content of study courses/modules is regularly updated and meets the development trends of the industry, the labor market and science, providing students with a high-quality and competitive education in the field of organizing hospitality services.

**3.2.2. In the case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation. In the case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels (if applicable).**

**3.2.3. Assessment of the study programme including the study course/ module implementation methods by indicating what the methods are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. In the case of a joint study programme, or in case the study programme is implemented in a foreign language or in the form of distance learning, describe in detail the methods used to deliver such a study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.**

The study programme "Hospitality Services Organization" is designed to prepare qualified specialists in the hospitality industry. The aim of the programme is to provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies that will enable them to operate successfully in the hospitality sector. This report will examine in detail the study programme delivery methods,

course/module delivery methods, as well as evaluate how these methods contribute to the achievement of study course results and programme goals.

### **Study programme delivery methods**

The study programme "Hospitality Services Organization" uses various teaching methods to ensure quality and effective education. The main delivery methods are:

#### 1. Lectures and seminars:

- Purpose: To provide a theoretical knowledge base and promote critical thinking.
- Methods: Interactive lectures, discussions, group work.
- Results: Students acquire theoretical knowledge and the ability to analyze and discuss various issues in the hospitality industry.

#### 2. Practical lessons and laboratory work

- Purpose: To develop practical skills and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge in real situations.
- Methods: Internships in hotels and restaurants, business simulations, practical lessons in laboratories.
- Outcomes: Students gain the practical skills and experience needed to work in the hospitality industry.

#### 3. Project works and research:

- Purpose: To promote creativity, problem-solving skills and scientific research.
- Methods: Individual and group projects, research, presentations.
- Results: Students develop the ability to independently conduct research, analyze data and present their findings.

### **Evaluation of Courses/Module delivery methods**

In the delivery of each course/module, specific methods are used that correspond to the goals and content of the specific course/module:

#### 1. Theoretical courses:

- Methods: Traditional lectures, guest speakers from the industry, interactive discussions.
- Promotion: These methods provide deep theoretical knowledge and understanding of current industry trends.

#### 2. Practical courses:

- Methods: Business simulations, internships, laboratory work.
- Facilitation: Provides students with practical skills and experiences critical to their future careers.

#### 3. Project courses:

- Methods: Group projects, individual studies, project management.
- Facilitation: Promotes creativity, teamwork, and planning and management skills.

### **Adherence to the principles of student-centered education**

The study process takes into account the principles of student-centered education to ensure that each student receives an individual approach and support:

#### 1. Individual consultations:

- Regular consultations with academic staff and other Study Department employees to address individual learning issues and provide feedback.

## 2. Flexibility and accessibility:

- Online materials and resources that are available anytime, anywhere, allowing learning flexibility.

## 3. Student involvement:

- Active involvement of students in the learning process through discussions, feedback and involvement in the development of learning materials.

The study programme "Hospitality Services Organization" uses various teaching methods to ensure a comprehensive and high-quality education. Using both traditional and modern teaching methods, the programme effectively achieves its objectives and provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the hospitality industry. The programme also adheres to the principles of student-centered education, ensuring that each student receives an individualized and tailored learning experience.

The study program is offered in both Latvian and English, and the only significant difference is the mandatory learning of the Latvian language for foreign students (in accordance with the requirements of the Higher Education Law). Study content, study materials, methodology and evaluation criteria are identical in both languages, thus ensuring an equally high quality of education regardless of the chosen study language. All lectures, seminars, practical classes and exams are conducted according to the same standards, which guarantees that the study results and acquired skills are equivalent in both programs.

### **3.2.4. If the study programme envisages an internship, describe the internship opportunities offered to students, provision and work organization, including whether the higher education institution/ college helps students to find an internship place. If the study programme is implemented in a foreign language, provide information on how internship opportunities are provided in a foreign language, including for foreign students. To provide analysis and evaluation of the connection of the tasks set for students during the internship included in the study programme with the learning outcomes of the study programme (if applicable).**

The College has developed internal regulations -"Internship organization procedure" with the aim to assist the parties involved in the organization of study internship by setting out each internship stage. The procedure outlines the criteria that students must fulfil in order to receive a permission to undertake the internship, it defines the internship placement, determines the arrangements for organizing the internship placements and the right and duties for each involved party. The procedure provides guidance in emergency situations and defines the requirements of the internship report development and defence. The procedure also contains the examples of documents that are necessary for the internship organization process. The text of the practice organization procedure is attached in the appendix.

In accordance with the "Internship organization procedure", the internship placement can only be an institution, merchant or association whose main activity is the organization of hospitality services (accommodation, catering and recreation organization) or an equivalent institution,

merchant or association. College provides students with placements that meet the necessary requirements from among the number of College business partners. The College internship placement coordinator is responsible for establishing and maintaining the cooperation with business partners who may become the potential internship placement partners.

In the study course self-assessment report in sections 2.5.1. and 2.5.2. the principles of the College's cooperation with those employers in the tourism and hospitality industry who provide internships for students of the short-cycle professional higher education study program "Hospitality Services Organization " are described in detail. The names of specific employers in Latvia and abroad (Spain, Italy, Greece, Cyprus) and their selection criteria are also mentioned.

In the College's E-study environment ([www.e-hotelschool.lv](http://www.e-hotelschool.lv)), a section "Internship offers" has been created, in which the College's career consultant publishes all internship offers, including information about the location of the internship, contact person, internship conditions (for example, the amount of salary offered by the employer during the internship, information on whether the employer provides a free lunch during the internship, in the case of a foreign internship - information on the place of residence offered by the employer, etc.).

The College actively uses the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme to organize internships. Every year, the amount of funding received by the College for the implementation of internship mobilities increases, for which the College organizes open competitions for the selection of Erasmus+ project participants (see additional information [here](#)), encouraging College students to apply for EU and Latvian state budget co-funding for internships abroad. College`s students highly appreciate these opportunities, as evidenced by the College's general student satisfaction survey scores on satisfaction with internship provision. 100% of the surveyed students state that they are satisfied with the internship opportunities offered by the College within the Erasmus+ programme, 75% of the surveyed students have already participated and 20% - plan to apply for mobility activities co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme.

The internship planning supposes 2 stages - Internship I in the amount of 6 CP (ECTS) at the end of the first study year and Internship II in the amount of 18 CP (ECTS) at the end of the second study year, which makes a total of 24 CP (ECTS). Each stage has its own goals and tasks, which are linked to the study results to be achieved in the study program. For example, as a result of an Internship I, the student is expected to be able to:

- understand the work organization and structure of the hospitality company, as well as the responsibilities of the staff
- apply and comply with the requirements of regulatory acts in the hospitality industry, including labor and environmental legislation, the company's internal regulations and the principles of the company's self-control system (HACCP)
- manage work-related documentation
- create and maintain positive communication, observing formal etiquette, as well as basic professional and general ethical norms. Improve communication in foreign languages and the use of professional terminology
- work independently, as well as take responsibility for the result of your work
- evaluate personal skills and competences acquired during practical work experience

As a result of an Internship II, the student is expected to be able to:

- understand the management structure, functions and main principles of the hospitality company; define and implement company goals and business plans
- evaluate the market situation, competitors, the influence of internal and external factors, financial indicators of the company's operation

- identify the hospitality company's marketing concepts, marketing strategies and understand the sales and marketing implementation process
- ensure environmentally friendly and sustainable management of the company's resources
- to understand the importance of hospitality management technologies in the company, as well as to use them practically
- provide customers with a positive service experience, evaluate the quality of their work and that of the team and take responsibility for the work result
- improve professional skills and knowledge independently

The internship reports and presentations developed by the students show that the students generally successfully achieve the mentioned study outcomes.

The programs of both internship stages are attached in the appendix: Internship-regulations. See the files INTERNSHIP I PROGRAMME and INTERNSHIP II PROGRAMME.

### **3.2.5. Evaluation and description of the promotion opportunities and the promotion process provided to the students of the doctoral study programme (if applicable).**

### **3.2.6. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the marks of the final theses.**

College students develop and defend qualification paper in accordance with the College's internal rules "Regulations on writing and defence of Qualification Paper", which are published in the e-study environment and here: <https://hotelschool.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Regulations-on-writing-and-defence-of-qualification-paper.pdf>

The regulations stipulate that the topic of the qualification paper must correspond to the specifics of the short-cycle professional higher education study program "Hospitality Services Organization" and the priority research directions defined in the College's Research Strategy:

- sustainable hospitality business
- quality and financial management in hospitality
- human resource development in hospitality
- modern gastronomy
- technological progress and innovation in hospitality
- marketing and competitiveness of hospitality companies

Also, the regulations stipulate that the topic of the qualification paper must correspond to the nature of the applied research.

**Students choose the topic of the qualification paper according to their research interests** and submit its application for approval to the College Council. If there is such a need, the student can change the topic of the qualification paper after the application is approved at the meeting of the College Council. In such a case, the student must submit a new application,

attaching a written explanation of the reasons for changing the subject of the approved qualification work.

Analysing the topics of qualification works chosen by the students of the College in recent years, it should be noted their connection with **the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the development of companies in the hospitality industry**. Students study various aspects of crisis management to overcome the negative consequences of the pandemic. For instance:

- (2021) Crisis Management in Hospitality Industry: The case of Pullman Riga Old Town Hotel;
- (2022) Crisis Management and Post Pandemic Recovery at the Radisson Blu Latvija Hotel During Economic and Energy Downturn;
- (2022) The Hospitality Sector Response to Covid-19 and Planning for a Post-crisis Period: The case of Neiburgs Hotel in Latvia;
- (2022) Crisis management Practices at European Union Ski Resorts;
- (2023) An Analysis of Business Recovery Methods After Covid-19 pandemic of Georgian Cuisine Restaurants in Riga.

Another popular topic of qualification papers is devoted to **sustainability issues**, such as:

- (2021) Staff Awareness on Sustainability Issues in Grand Hotel Kempinski Riga after 1 Year of Pandemic;
- (2021) Development of Sustainable Covid-19 Post-Crisis Response Plan by the Case study of Aberton Hotel Klaipeda;
- (2021) Sustainable Development During the COVID-19 Crisis – Experience and opportunities for McDonald’s Restaurants;
- (2021) The Impact of the EU Directive on Single-Use plastic on the Hotel “Pullman Riga Old Town” in Latvia and “Adams Beach” in Cyprus;
- (2021) Waste Management Practices in “Adams Beach Hotel” during the pandemic period in Cyprus;
- (2021) Responsible Business for a Sustainable Future – Development of Recommendations for Improving Corporate Social Responsibility in Hilton garden Inn Riga Hotel;
- (2022) Sustainability during Energy Crisis and Post-Pandemic Recovery in Radisson Blu Latvija Conference & Spa Hotel;
- (2023) Sustainability in Food and Beverage Sector in the Post-Pandemic Period by the case of Vincents Restaurant.

Students are very interested in **various aspects of personnel management in the hospitality industry**, such as:

- (2021) Personnel Training and Development as a Means of Quality Management Improvement at Radisson Blu Elizabete Hotel;
- (2022) Reality of Human Resource Hiring, Retainment and Development: Case Study of Front Office Department in Radisson Hotel Group Hotels in Riga;
- (2023) The Impact of Staff Shortages on Employee Satisfaction in the AC Hotel by Marriott Riga.

Some students conduct research on less popular but also relevant topics in the industry, such as:

- (2023) The Impact of Farm to Table Concepts on Restaurant Food Cost: A Case Study of Max Cekot Kitchen and Pavāru Māja.
- (2023) The Role of Influencer Marketing in the Marketing Strategy of Luxury Segment Hotels in Latvia.

The topics of the qualification paper chosen by the students reflect the current development

problems of the hospitality industry and the labour market - opportunities, threats and perspectives.

College students receive relatively high marks in the defence of qualification works. **In 2023, the average student grade was 7.6 points.** One student passed the state exam with 9 points (excellent). The indicators of previous years were also similar.

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

**3.3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (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 the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples.**

The following resources are in place for study purposes:

- auditoriums for lectures and seminars, each of them equipped with multimedia equipment (computer, projector, sound equipment or wide-screen TV) and whiteboard
- laptop computers for each student
- property management software "Micros Opera", as well as access to the "D-EDGE" reservation module and the digital marketing platform "Media Genius"
- "Knowledge Matters" virtual reality computer simulations of different hotel department operations - Front Office, F&B, Marketing & Sales etc.
- a library with a room for reading and individual computers with connection to Internet (over 1,000 items of specialized literature and periodicals are registered in the collection, most of them are current editions published after 2015, including valuable AHLEI of the American Hotel and Lodging Association's Education Institute publications)
- subscription to a digital library "Perlego"
- subscription to a scientific database "Emerald Insight" with access to the following journals: "International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management", "International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research", "International Journal of Event and Festival Management", "International Journal of Tourism Cities", "Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology", "Tourism Review", "Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes"
- subscription to a plagiarism checking computer software "Identific" (formerly - "OXSIKO Similarity Checker")
- printers, scanners and copying machines for study and research work of students and academic staff members
- restaurant and bar professional equipment in practical training lab, e.g., coffee machine, blenders, shakers, dishes, glasses, cutlery, textiles, decorations, etc. c. equipment
- a professionally equipped kitchen lab that fully meets the tasks of implementing the programme, for example, convection oven, hood, induction cooker, stainless steel kitchen tables and shelves, cold table, dishwasher and professionally equipped sinks, cooking utensils, etc.
- The e-study platform [www.e-hotelschool.lv](http://www.e-hotelschool.lv) (built on the basis of "Moodle" software), where the College's academic staff publishes teaching materials, as well as assignment briefs. In

some study courses, the e-study platform environment is also used for testing students' knowledge. Also, the "e-study platform" has a link to the College's library e-catalogue, the digital library "Perlego", as well as the College's subscribed scientific database "Emerald Insight" and "Open Access" online information databases

- Teaching and methodological resources created by the academic staff of the college (in total over 70 unique editions with different editions), as well as collections of student research articles (in total 6 unique collections) in print and digital versions

The resources mentioned above ensure the achievement of the expected study results of the programme. For example, the practical training in the study course "Contemporary Gastronomy" takes place in a professionally equipped kitchen lab, while the practical training in the study course "Food & Beverage Operations Management" takes place in the restaurant lab. The property management software "Micros Opera", the "D-EDGE" reservation module and the digital marketing platform "Media Genius" are used within the study courses "Hotel Management Software", "Reservations and Revenue Management". "Knowledge Matters" virtual reality computer simulations are used within the study courses "Room Division Operations Management", " Food & Beverage Operations Management ", " Conference and banqueting management ", "Sales Management".

Although many of the mentioned resources are available only in English, they can be used for studies in Latvian as well as in English, because within the study program "Hospitality Services Organization" students from Latvia learn professional terminology in English at a sufficient level.

### **3.3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific base support, including the resources provided within the framework of cooperation with other science institutes and higher education institutions (applicable to doctoral study programmes) (if applicable).**

### **3.3.3. Indicate data on the available funding for the corresponding study programme, its funding sources and their use for the development of the study programme. Provide information on the costs per one student within this study programme, indicating the items included in the cost calculation and the percentage distribution of funding between the specified items. The minimum number of students in the study programme in order to ensure the profitability of the study programme (indicating separately the information on each language, type and form of the study programme implementation).**

Information on the amount and sources of available funding for the implementation and development of the short-cycle professional higher education study program "Hospitality Services Organization" is provided in section 2.3.1 of the self-assessment report.

In the Programme Specification the College indicates the implementation costs of the study programme and calculates them. In 2023, the expenditure items and expenditure amounts included in the calculation are indicated in the appendix.

As it can be seen from the calculation, 68% of the expenses of the study programme consists of the salary of the staff involved in the implementation of the study courses, 27% - expenses for

maintaining the resources, including the costs of IT and communication services, and the remaining 5% is allocated to the advertisement purposes.

In 2023, the cost of the programme implementation per student was EUR 3,751.28 per year, which corresponds to the tuition fee set by the College in 2023 - EUR 3,200.00 per year for students from EU countries and EUR 4,000.00 for students from non-EU countries.

Taking into account the wage growth of academic staff in 2024, as well as the increasing investments of the College in digital resources and tools for achieving the study results of the program, a higher tuition fee has been set for 2024/2025 - 3500.00 EUR per year for students from EU countries and 5000.00 EUR for students from countries outside EU.

The minimum number of students in 2024 to ensure the profitability of the study programme "Hospitality services organization" is 50 in one language stream (eg English). If a second language stream is added (for example, Latvian), the minimum number of students is 60.

### 3.4. Teaching Staff

**3.4.1. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.**

In 2023/2024 there have been 15 academic staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Hospitality Services Organization". They are highly qualified and meet all the requirements of regulatory acts. The academic staff of the College includes experienced docents (4), lecturers (6), lead researcher (1), as well as guest lecturers (3) and guest docents (1) with significant experience in the hospitality industry (a total of 60% of the academic staff in the 2023/2024 academic year). All academic staff members of the College are fluent in English (at the B2-C2 level), which allows to ensure the course delivery in English.

**87% of the academic staff have at least a master's (or doctorate) degree and 13% of the academic staff have a professional bachelor's degree.** 2 academic staff (A. Vītola and N. Poļakova) have a doctorate degree, 2 academic staff (J. Korjuhina and I. Vanaga) have already graduated and 2 academic staff (G. Bukovska and I. Beliatskaya) are still continuing their doctoral studies, which allows us to predict that in the near future, the College will not only reach, but possibly even exceed, those in the Development Strategy for 2024-2029 the planned performance indicators of the proportion of academic staff with a doctorate degree.

It should be noted that **87% of the academic staff involved in delivery of the study programme have been elected to academic positions in the College.**

**Provision of theoretical knowledge and practical skills:** Highly qualified docents, lecturers and guest lecturers are able to provide in-depth knowledge and practical skills necessary for work in the hospitality industry. Their scientific and practical experience helps students gain a broad and

deep understanding of industry processes.

**Transferring the experience of industry practitioners:** Docents and lecturers who are active industry professionals provide students with current and practical knowledge. Their experience in day-to-day work in the hospitality industry companies ensures that the study programme meets real-life requirements, which are very important in preparing students for work after graduation.

**Development of scientific research:** The scientific activity of the academic staff contributes to the development of research skills in students, which is an essential component for the promotion of innovation in the hospitality industry.

### **3.4.2. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.**

The most significant change in the reporting period was **the change of the director of the study programme.** Mg. oec. Dzintars Priedītis replaced MIB Oļegs Ņikadimovs as the director of the study programme. Mg. oec. Dzintars Priedītis, is an experienced professional with more than 23 years of experience in the hospitality industry, including hotel management positions. His experience and academic knowledge are a significant contribution to the development of the study programme. Under the leadership of D. Priedītis, the study programme has continued to develop, paying attention to the latest industry trends and technologies, which are essential for increasing students' competitiveness in the labor market.

Despite the change of the director of the study programme, **the composition of the elected academic staff has generally remained unchanged since 2020**, when the College's institutional accreditation was carried out. At that time, the College submitted detailed information about the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme, confirming the adequacy of their qualifications. Ensuring this compliance has been and continues to be a priority to maintain the quality of studies. Among the newly elected academic staff members to be mentioned are docent Mg. oec. Galina Bukovska and lecturer Mg. soc. Iveta Vanaga. Both are tourism and hospitality industry practitioners with over 30 years of experience. I. Vanaga has completed her doctoral studies, while G. Bukovska is currently studying for a doctoral degree.

### **3.4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals or peer-reviewed monographs may be additionally specified. Information on the teaching staff included in the database of experts of the Latvian Council of Science in the relevant field of science (total number, name of the lecturer, field of science in which the teaching staff has the status of an expert and expiration date of the Latvian Council of Science expert) (if applicable).**

**3.4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).**

**3.4.5. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study programme and study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).**

The mutual cooperation of the academic staff is one of the most important factors that ensures the quality of the study programme "Hospitality Services Organization".

#### MECHANISMS FOR PROMOTING COOPERATION

##### **Regular meetings and working groups:**

- Regular meetings are held in which all the academic staff of the programme participate. During these meetings, issues of study programme development, student feedback, and improvement plans are developed.

##### **Digital collaboration tools:**

- Using the e-learning environment (Moodle), academic staff share materials, ideas about teaching methods and digital aids.

##### **Harmonization of assessment criteria and methodologies:**

- All College lecturers agree on common assessment criteria and methodologies that ensure consistency and fairness in student assessment and help students understand the expected requirements.

There are 15 academic staff members and 60 students in the study programme "Hospitality Services Organization" in the academic year 2023/2024. Therefore, the ratio of the number of academic staff and students is 1 academic staff for 4 students. This ratio provides a more individualized approach to students, allowing lecturers to better understand each student's needs and provide personalized support.

# Annexes

III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme	Diploma-suplement-samples-ENG.zip	Diploma-pielikuma-paraugi-LV.zip
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period	P5-Statistika-par-studejosajiem-2018-2023_EN.docx	P5-Statistika-par-studejosajiem-2018-2023_LV.docx
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard	P6_atbilstiba_izgl_standartam_ENG.docx	P6_atbilstiba_izgl_standartam_LV.docx
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable)	P7_atbilstiba_prof_standartam_ENG.docx	P7_atbilstiba_prof_standartam_LV.docx
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	P8_kartejums_ENG.docx	P8_kartejums_LV.docx
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	P9_programmas_plans_ENG.docx	P9_programmas_plans_LV.docx
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	P10_kursu_apraksti_ENG.docx	P10_kursu_apraksti_LV.docx
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)	Intership-regulations.zip	Prakses-organizācijas-apraksts.zip
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		