Description of the study programme
Professional Bachelor's study programme "Physiotherapy"

2015/2016
academic year

1. Title of the study programme, degree, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification, aims and tasks.

Title of the study programme: professional Bachelor's study programme Physiotherapy.

Degree to be awarded: professional bachelor's degree in healthcare.

Professional qualification: physiotherapist.

The Physiotherapy study programme is implemented by the Rīga Stradiņš University since 1993. In the academic years 1995/1996 and 1997/1998, with support of the Danish government and in collaboration with the Copenhagen School of Physiotherapy in Denmark, the study programme was improved according to recommendations of the European Regional Department of WCPT (World Confederation for Physical Therapy) to correspond to physiotherapy education in Europe. The study programme was accredited in 2000, re-accredited in 2006 and in 2013 for the next 6 year until the end of 2019. The implementation of the part-time study programme "Physiotherapy" started in 2010. The RSU is an active member of ENPHE (European Network of Physiotherapy in Higher Education), the task of which is to improve physiotherapy education in Europe and to make it more transparent, to set unified requirements for it and to formulate its learning outcomes.

The **aim** of the study programme is to promote the creation of a rehabilitation system in Latvia according to the Latvian state economic and social needs providing it with qualified and competitive specialists – physiotherapists, to create professional studies in physiotherapy rooting from theoretical foundations of field sciences and corresponding to the Physiotherapist's Profession Standard and the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 512 On the State Standard of the Second Level Professional Higher Education.

The main **tasks** of the study programme are to provide professional studies in physiotherapy, which correspond to the Physiotherapist's Profession Standard and the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers and can be used in practice, implementing profound mastering of knowledge in physiotherapy; to prepare students for creative, research and pedagogical work in physiotherapy; to promote competitiveness of graduates of the programme in existing social and economic conditions in the local and international labour market.

The clarity of the set aim and tasks makes them enforceable and achievable in real life. The topicality of the aim and the tasks and the results achieved is confirmed by high competition per place in the study programme, the wish of graduates to continue studies to obtain the Master's degree, the demand for graduates of the study programme in the labour market and positive feedback from the employers.

2. Expected outcomes of the study programme.

The following is obtained, when completing studies in the professional Bachelor's Study Programme "Physiotherapy":

- knowledge and understanding of the professional area according to the physiotherapist's qualification, which correspond to the latest scientific achievements in physiotherapy, healthcare and related areas, and allow creative thinking and understanding of causal links and performing of analysis without losing critical approach;
- high level skills in physiotherapist's profession, which allow creatively performing physiotherapist's work by performing examination, evaluation, treatment, consulting and preventive work for patients/customers using physiotherapeutic technologies and are focused on the promotion, restoration and preservation of functional abilities of patients/customers in individuals or groups of different ages;
- basic and specialised knowledge in research methodology and physiotherapy to participate in research and related projects, to promote the development of the physiotherapy sector and to perform innovative activity within the scope of own profession;
- basic knowledge to act in a range of different health care areas, which are part of the rehabilitation process, when organising and implementing the rehabilitation process in local and international context;
- skills to demonstrate initiative, take decisions, assuming responsibility for their implementation and result, critically evaluating and making changes, when needed, in own activity within the scope of physiotherapist's professional activity;
- abilities to creatively deal with problems related to the improvement of patient's functional abilities in complex and unpredictable situations, working with the patient/customer and performing organisational duties within the scope of own professional activity;
- the ability to organise own and subordinates' professional improvement in the context of lifelong learning, to integrate new knowledge and skills from various areas associated with physiotherapy into work;
- the ability to work individually, in a team or leading team work, demonstrating good communication skills with patients/customers, their relatives and colleagues, understanding and respecting ethical norms;
- the ability to engage in business and organise it.

The professional bachelor's study programme in health care with the qualification in physiotherapy has been formed pursuant to the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No.512 On the State Standard of the Second Level Professional Higher Education, and its structure and contents enable to acquire the aforementioned competences, which are laid down by the Physiotherapist's Profession Standard. Recommendation documents and recommendations formed by professional associations (WCPT, WCPT ER, LFA) and also ENPHE (European Network of Physiotherapy in Higher Education), of which we are also active members, were taken into account in the process of improvement of the study programme.

The contents of the study programme are improved on a regular basis and every year the descriptions of study courses and the contents of lectures and classes are revised, including the latest scientific cognitions in them and supplementing the recommended sources of literature for students. The latest scientific literature is used and the most advanced trends in the branch are taken into account in the choice and development of Bachelor's theses.

The amount of the study programme is 160 credit points. One credit point amounts to 40-hour load for the students. Within one credit point the amount of contact hours is from 30% (in individual study courses in PT study programme) to 50% (in most of study courses, incl. professional study courses, FT programme and PT professional study courses). The remaining load is student's independent work. The description of each study course comprises the organisation, tasks and assessment criteria of independent studies. An e-environment is used for communication and information of students, submission of independent works, provision of feedback.

The clinical placement is a compulsory part of the study programme, which is organised pursuant to the legislation and normative documents of the Republic of Latvia and which provides for the advancement of the skills, required for the acquisition of the professional qualification, in an appropriate company or another organisation outside the RSU. The clinical placement in the study programme "Physiotherapy" is implemented in the 4th year of studies: in semesters 7 and 8, in the amount of 26 credit points (CP) in the leading state clinics, rehabilitation centres and outpatient medical institutions.

The aim of the clinical placement is to consolidate students' knowledge, which they have acquired in the study programme previously, to develop and improve the practical skills at dealing with different patients of different age groups and pathologies in prevention and reduction of disorders in functional abilities and to acquire the competence in the selected profession that complies with the Physiotherapist's Profession Standard.

Placement locations for the academic year 2015/2016 have been selected as a result of a procurement procedure and agreements have been concluded with: P.Stradins Clinical University Hospital, Riga East Clinical University Hospital, Children's Clinical University Hospital, Hospital of Traumatology and Orthopaedics, Riga 2nd Hospital, NRC "Vaivari", Rehabilitation Centre "Mēs esam līdzās", RC "Baltezers", "Sanare", KRC "Jaunķemeri", Rīga Health Centre. Students also have the possibility to have part of their placement in the amount of 5 CP in the medical institution at their choice, provided it meets the requirements set in the Placement Regulation and a respective gratuitous agreement is concluded with the given institution. Thus, more placement opportunities are provided in regions with the potential to get a job in the future. Each student has placement in 5 different placement places, working with children, adults and elderly people having various diseases: orthopaedic, neurological, cardiological, pulmonological, surgical, as well as with patients after injuries. The organisation of the clinical placement takes place pursuant to the placement documents: the Clinical Placement Regulation, the Clinical Placement Diary, the Clinical Placement Physiotherapy Protocol and the Clinical Placement Assessment. Students read these documents before they start their placements and they are freely available to students. Placement progress control is ensured during the entire period of placement. In the academic year 2014/2015, the Clinical Placement Regulation of the study programme was reviewed and in the academic year 2015/2016 it was improved before the procurement procedure of placement places.

At the end of the clinical placement the placement supervisor of study programme, both through individual discussions and a written survey, finds out the students' evaluation of the placement in general and the placement locations and collaboration with the placement supervisors in each placement location individually, as well as listens to the recommendations. The opinions on the

placement process of the placement supervisors are analysed and summarised and the recommendations for the improvement of the contents and course of the placement are listened to.

3. Admission requirements (specify admission requirements of the study programme). If the programme is implemented in a foreign language, applicant's language proficiency should be tested. Specify the link on RSU website with the relevant information.

Enrolment takes place pursuant to the RSU Admission Requirements, which are approved by the RSU Senate. State-budget funded places for physiotherapy studies are intended for persons with secondary education or secondary special education based on a competition and after registration for the studies, according to the admission requirements. When students are enrolled in the study programme Physiotherapy, evaluations of national centralised examinations in biology, Latvian, English and the result of OSPST (an objectively structured professional suitability test) are taken into account. The number of budget places in the study programme has been constant over the last three years – 36 budget places. The number of applicants per one state-funded study place in the study programme is large. During summer enrolment of 2013, 389 applications were received for 36 budget places in the full-time study programme, as well as 73 applications for paid studies in the part-time programme, in 2014 these numbers were 381 and 64, in 2015 – 320 and 61, in 2016 – 333 and 60 accordingly. This competition allows enrolling potentially good students.

The inclusion of the state centralised examination in Biology into the evaluation criteria will enable enrolment of interested and motivated students, who demonstrated profound interest in biology during their school years, because this subject is one of the cornerstones of health care studies.

OSPST (an objectively structured professional suitability test), on its turn, provides information that the choice of the profession was not random and was appropriate. The state centralised examination results in a foreign language are essential because mastering of study courses of the physiotherapy study programme and the development of the Bachelor's thesis involves the use of the latest professional and scientific literature of the branch in English, as well as the students have an opportunity to participate in an international student exchange programme Erasmus Plus and intensive training programmes with English as the language of instruction.

Student admission is carried out in accordance with the Admission Regulation approved by the RSU Senate for the respective academic year and external regulations. According to Paragraph 3 of Cabinet Regulations No. 846 "Regarding Requirements, Criteria and Procedure for Admission to Study Programmes" of 10 October 2006, the rules for admission to study programmes (hereinafter referred to as the admission rules) for the next academic year shall be drawn up, approved and published (also on the website) each year by 1 November.

Any citizen and permanent resident of the Republic of Latvia, citizens of European Union countries and their children have the right to master the study programme regardless of their gender, social and financial status, race and nationality, political and religious beliefs, occupation or place of residence. Studies are available to persons with special needs.

RSU applicants apply electronically using website http://www.rsu.lv/studiju-iespejas/uznemsana

Citizens of other countries are enrolled in the study programme based on an agreement on paid basic studies according to the RSU

Admission Requirements and the Instruction on RSU Studies.

The Admission Requirements are available on the RSU website: http://www.rsu.lv/studiju-iespejas/uznemsana/uznemsanas-noteikumi

The technical procedures of admission are established and described in Paragraph 7.1 of RSU Process Description No. 7 "Service Provision for Students".

According to Cabinet Regulations No. 36 "Regulations Regarding Recognition of the Study Results Achieved in Previous Education or Professional Experience", one is entitled to submit an application to Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) regarding recognition of knowledge, skills and competencies acquired in previous education or professional experience in a study programme or part thereof implemented by the University.

Decision on recognition of study results achieved in previous education or professional experience is made by the Commission on Recognition of Study Results Achieved in Previous Education or Professional Experience established by the University. Its rights, duties, rules of formation, as well as specific conditions of the procedure for recognition of study results achieved in previous education or professional experience are established in the Regulations on Recognition of Study Results Achieved in Previous Education or Professional Experience at Rīga Stradiņš University.

For the learning outcomes to start being recognised, the following should be submitted to the Commission on Recognition of Study Results Achieved: an application; documents confirming the learning outcomes in the previous education or professional experience; a bank payment order for the payment made.

The application is considered and a decision is made within a month since receipt of the application.

In the year 2015/2016, within the study direction Health Care there were 11 persons who used this option.

No applications for the recognition of prior educational or professional outcomes were submitted for the professional Bachelor's study programme "Physiotherapy" in the academic year. 2015/2016.

4. Curriculum of the study programme (list of study courses and study modules, their volume in credit points, their division into compulsory, restricted elective or free elective parts by specifying their volume in credit points, plan of their implementation).

The professional bachelor's study programme in healthcare, physiotherapist's qualification, offers four-year full-time studies and five year part-time studies. There are two semesters in each year of studies. Each of them closes with an examination period, during which knowledge and skills obtained by students are tested. During mastering of the study programme students must receive the required number of credit points.

Pursuant to the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No.512 on the state standard of the second level professional higher education, the total amount of the professional bachelor's study programme in health care with the qualification in Physiotherapy is 160 credit points. One credit point amounts to 40-hour load for the students.

The clinical placement (in the 4th year of studies) amounts to 26 CP. The amount of the clinical placement is sufficient to be able to

start professional activity in Physiotherapy according to the Physiotherapist's Profession Standard.

12 CPs are intended for the national degree examination, including the development and defence of the bachelor's thesis (in the 4th year of studies), but the remaining 122 CPs are formed by general education, field-specific theoretical, information technology, professional specialisation and free elective study courses.

General educational study courses amount to 20 CP. They include theoretical course in humanitarian and social sciences and courses that develop principal social, communication and organisation skills.

Field-specific theoretical basic courses and information technology courses amount to 36 CP. They include general principal life science courses, which balance the students' level of knowledge and provide with comprehensive knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for mastering the professional specialisation courses.

Field-specific professional specialisation courses amount to 60 CP. They provide students with profound studies for obtaining the physiotherapist's profession, provide with special skills and abilities in the profession.

Free elective study courses of the bachelor's study programme amount to 6 CP.

Study courses of the professional bachelor's study programme have been created and are constantly improved according to the Physiotherapist's Profession Standard of Latvia, as well as recommendations of European Regional Department of WCPT (World Confederation of Physical Therapy) and ENPHE (European Network of Physiotherapy in Higher Education). Learning outcomes are clearly formulated both for the study programme in general and each study course individually. The descriptions of the study courses of the study programme, which define the aim of the course, the required preliminary knowledge, the contents, as well as the examination methods and learning outcomes, i.e. what knowledge, skills and competences the students master through the acquisition of the study course, are offered to those, who wish to study. This information is freely available at RSU home page on the Internet. Students can find additional information about the contents of the study course and expected outcomes, as well as the information about the subjects of lectures, practical classes and seminars, the list of compulsory and optional literature and the requirements for the acquisition of the study course in the description of the study course, which is available at e-studies.

In academic year 2015/2016 considerable changes in the study programme affected the national degree examination's theoretical part. The oral answer to the written multiple-choice test consisting of 100 test questions was changed. All lecturers of professional study courses of the Physiotherapy were involved in its elaboration. After the national degree examination, in a survey students positively evaluated the changes made. In order to improve the evaluation of practical parts of the national degree examination, evaluation criteria were created, which enabled to create a single vision for all members of the evaluation commission, when evaluating.

See attached the curriculum of the study programme (Annex 19.), the department implementing it and heads of study courses.

5. Practical implementation of the study programme: study methods and forms, distance learning methods. Assessment system (educational criteria and assessment methods for reaching and assessment of learning outcomes, forms and assessment procedure).

The study programme plan is drawn up in accordance with the RSU strategy, aims and tasks.

The study process is organised pursuant to the Constitution of the Rīga Stradiņš University, the Law On Institutions of Higher Education and the normative documentation, which is effective in the Republic of Latvia, as well as pursuant to the regulatory documents of studies, which are adopted by the RSU Senate. The enrolment is performed pursuant to the RSU admission requirements, which are approved by the RSU Senate.

The principles of democracy are observed during the organisation and implementation of the study process. Apart from the academic staff, the students also participate in Quality Councils of the study programme, the Faculty Council and the RSU Senate performance and decision-making process. Students take active part in the assessment and improvement of the contents and implementation of the study programme.

The execution of the study programme is ensured by the RSU Dean's office of the Faculty of Rehabilitation, the Department of Rehabilitation and other RSU departments, inviting staff from different hospitals, rehabilitation centres and outpatient medical institutions into the programme. The studies take place in RSU training facilities and in clinical facilities of the university. The clinical placement is implemented in the medical institutions, which are selected according to the procurement procedure results and correspond to the requirements of the Clinical Placement Regulation: P.Stradins Clinical University Hospital, Riga East Clinical University Hospital, Children's Clinical University Hospital, Hospital of Traumatology and Orthopaedics, Riga 2nd Hospital, NRC "Vaivari", Rehabilitation Centre "Mēs esam līdzās", RC "Baltezers", "Sanare", KRC "Jaunķemeri", Rīga Health Centre. In the academic year 2015/2016, the Riga Health Centre was added as a placement place as a result of a procurement, which allows extending placement opportunities in work with outpatients. Work is ongoing on the extension of placement opportunities based on gratuitous agreements.

The establishment of programme management and its quality assurance system is an essential condition of functioning of the study programme. The quality assurance of the physiotherapy study programme is based on regular analysis of the content of the programme of study subjects and an evaluation of the structural unit implementing the programme and at the Faculty of Rehabilitation Council meetings; the analysis and control of the study process, which is performed regularly by analysing the content of programmes of study subjects, quality, student survey results and other types of indicators (for example, achievements of students); ensuring integration of the study process and the research work; strategic planning of the study process by analysing strengths and weaknesses and development opportunities of programmes of study subjects; cooperation with employers; cooperation with other institutions of higher education – ENPHE members since 2003. The Joint Study Quality Council of the bachelor and master study programme "Physiotherapy" started its activity in the academic year 2014/2015, which represents employers, the professional association, students and academic staff, and heads of study programmes. Study process related matters are discussed on a regular basis.

The professional full-time bachelor's study programme in health care with the qualification "Physiotherapist" is implemented in the Faculty of Rehabilitation of the Rīga Stradiņš University with the funding from the state budget or on the basis of an agreement with the tuition fee, which is reimbursed by individuals. The part-time study programme is paid.

The use of financial resources during the academic year is controlled at the level of RSU and the Faculty of Rehabilitation. Costs of the study programme for each following year are evaluated in detail. Upon the commencement of an academic year, the students' applications for the reduction of tuition fee are reviewed.

The execution of the study programme is ensured by the RSU Dean's office of the Faculty of Rehabilitation, the Department of Rehabilitation and other RSU departments, inviting staff from outside, who are high-level professionals in their area. The studies take place in RSU training facilities and in clinical facilities of the university. Support of administrative and technical staff, taking into account many facilities, where the study programme is implemented, is very significant and highly appreciated. In academic year 2012/2013 a significant improvement was achieved by starting work in a new Medical Education Technology Centre, where most of courses of the study programme are implemented.

During the studies the students of the programme use the services of all RSU offices. The Student Service has been formed, merging the functions of the Information Centre, the Admission Commission and the One-Stop Agency, and it provides the current and potential students with the information and services, which are related to the potential students' informing and admission, the study process and the provision of various services after the conclusion of the studies. Students can contact the RSU offices and receive the information in person, by phone or via electronic communication means.

The academic staff uses all information and communication technologies, available to RSU, to ensure the communication with students. These technologies also ensure the feedback and easy administrative and academic staff accessibility.

International students, who come to our study programme within the framework of the ERASMUS exchange programme, have the possibility to use the student hostel at Mārupes iela 17 and 17a. RSU services provide assistance in finding some other accommodation, if students want this. The same opportunities are offered to foreign visiting lecturers.

The university provides the students with a comprehensive study process and the opportunities for research within its framework: comfortable and well-equipped classrooms, laboratories (for example, the Gait Laboratory, the Rehabilitation Research Laboratory), a modern library, modern IT technologies.

The RSU library and the information resources available in it are extensive and facilitate mastering of study programmes. The library subscribes for the leading periodicals in the field of health care, and the students can access and use with their reader's card the electronic catalogues of another eight scientific libraries in Riga and the book collections of these libraries.

A range of e-books, which is supplemented periodically, is available to the students and teaching staff. Students have access to a broad range of databases.

The information is available at: http://www.rsu.lv/biblioteka/resursi

The studies are full-time studies, and the training mainly uses various teaching methods: lectures, practical classes, seminars, discussions, students' independent work (group projects, individual projects, individual research projects), presentation of prepared projects. RSU has the possibility of e-studies within the framework of the study programme, which is constantly updated.

The major part of the study programme consists of practical classes, during which the professional skills are acquired. The practical

part is implemented by working in small groups, thus ensuring the possibility of individual approach to the students. If necessary, individual consultations are provided, wishes and proposals of students are listened and taken into account. Students have the possibility to use physiotherapy classrooms for independent improvement of practical skills, which is broadly used by physiotherapy students.

During acquisition of the study programmes, system approach and issue-oriented approach are used as the guiding educational methods.

There is collaboration with the Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) to gain experience in the improvement of problem-based learning (PBL) in our study programme. Three of our teachers visited TAMK and familiarised themselves with the physiotherapy study programme of this university, which is fully based on PBL, and the head of the TAMK physiotherapy study programme visited RSU and met teachers of our study programme and familiarised them with her experience. In the academic year 2015/2016, a TAMK lecturer Hannele Anttila visited RSU within the framework of the ERASMUS Plus programme and shared her experience in problem-based learning.

Over the last years, significant work has been carried out on planning of students' independent work and improving of testing. E-study environment

is improved continuously.

The teachers involved in the programme provide methodological support in the study programme, develop methodical materials, as well as keep working on electronic methodical materials, which would be available in the university's electronic system. In the academic year 2012/2013, academic year 2013/2014 and academic year 2015/2016 the teaching and administrative staff of the study programme improved their skills in using e-studies environment and in finding and using e-resources in training courses organised by RSU, as well as other courses related to the study process regularly organised by CEG (Centre for Educational Growth). The academic staff uses all information and communication technologies, available to RSU, to ensure the communication with students. These technologies also ensure the feedback and easy administrative and academic staff accessibility.

After the acquisition of the professional higher education Bachelor's study programme, the student is granted the fifth level professional qualification — a physiotherapist and professional Bachelor's degree in health care. Upon meeting the admission requirements for respective Master's study programme, the professional Bachelor's degree allows to continue the education either in academic Master's or professional Master's study programmes. A new Master's study programme in health care named "Rehabilitation" was created in 2014/2015 in addition to the existing Master's study programmes, where graduates of the Bachelor's study programme Physiotherapy continue their studies. It extended the possibilities of the Master's study programme. When assessing acquisition of the Bachelor's study programme in health care with a physiotherapist's qualification, basic principles established in regulatory documentation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia are followed.

Transparency of the knowledge and skills assessment – in compliance with the aims and tasks of the programme, as well as aims and tasks of the study course, there is a set of requirements necessary to fulfil for a positive assessment of learning outcomes.

Principle of mandatory assessment – a positive assessment of acquisition of the mandatory content of the programme is required.

The basic forms of programme acquisition assessment are tests and exams. The examination forms such as test work, colloquia, tests, practical demonstrations and the presentations of independent learning are also used. Theoretical knowledge, practical skills, attitudes and the ability to communicate with patients, their relatives and colleagues are evaluated. The evaluation system is analysed and improved on a regular basis. Both teachers' and students' opinion is taken into consideration.

The minimum required study subject volume in order to arrange an exam is 2 credit points.

In exam and national degree examination, mastering of the programme is evaluated according to 10-grade scale:

- very high level of mastering (10 – ''with distinction'', 9 – ''excellent''),
- high level of mastering (8 – "very good", 7 – "good"),
- medium level of mastering (6 – "almost good", 5 – "satisfactory", 4 – "almost satisfactory"),
- low level of mastering (3 – "poor", 2 – "very poor", 1 – "extremely poor").

In a test, the assessment of the study subject acquisition level and clinical placement is either "passed" or "failed".

During the placement students' knowledge and skills are assessed throughout the placement and in each point of placement the placement supervisor provides a written assessment of the placement. During the placement the students also take an exam, in which they demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the evaluation and treatment of a patient in a real situation with a patient. Placement documentation is completed during the entire placement.

The national degree examination consists of a theoretical knowledge examination (a multiple-choice test) and a demonstration of practical skills (with a patient in clinical environment), which are assessed jointly with the practical part having the larger proportion (70%). The procedure of NDE is described in the National degree examination procedure, which is coordinated at a Quality Council meeting of the study programme, at the Faculty of Rehabilitation Council meeting and approved by the RSU Dean's Council.

The national degree examination is assessed by the State Examination Commission, whose head and composition for the respective academic year are approved and it operates in compliance with the instruction on the studies at RSU. More than 50% of the composition of the State Examination Commission is formed by the representatives of the employers and the professional association, who are invited to this Commission. The Chairman of the State Examination Commission must be either employers or professional association's representative.

High motivation of students to learn must be emphasised, which may be observed during the study process, especially when doing independent projects, in student surveys and talks with students. The motivation is also fostered by the growing demand for physiotherapy specialists in the labour market.

During the studies, students receive regular consultations before examinations, as well as in the course of preparation of course papers and Bachelor's theses. In the course of mastering study subjects, students receive methodical learning aids prepared by teachers, which stimulate students' independent work, or these materials are available in the e-environment.

Main directions of research related to the professional Bachelor's study programme in health care, qualification "Physiotherapist",

are physiotherapy in case of supporting-motor system damages, including, gait analysis, physiotherapy in case of peripheral and nervous system damages, motor control and its development in premature children, physiotherapy in case of rheumatological damages, meaning of physiotherapy in prevention of diseases. Scientific research work of academic staff is related to the study courses they read.

All the lecturers of physiotherapy study courses of the Physiotherapy study programme advise students in preparation of their scientific papers. During studies, each student must prepare 3 course papers and a Bachelor's thesis.

Eight teachers of the "Physiotherapy" study programme have Master's degree in health care, four have completed doctoral studies. In ac.y. 2015/2016, 2 lecturers of the study programme "Physiotherapy", who are involved in the implementation of professional study courses, continue with doctoral studies.

1 teacher in academic year 2008/2009 and also 1 teacher in academic year 2010/2011 defended their doctoral theses.

Every year lecturers of physiotherapy subjects of the Physiotherapy study programme actively participate in the RSU's scientific conference, as well as in scientific conferences and congresses in Latvia and abroad.

Scientific research results are reflected in scientific publications and reports, as well as presented at scientific conferences. Publications of lecturers of the study courses implemented by the Department of Rehabilitation of the study programme in 2013 – 3 articles (1 in an internationally cited edition), 1 book (co-author), scientific articles included in the database in 2014 – 7, theses – 15; in 2015 – 14 articles in internationally cited magazines, which are included in the databases**.** The Dean of the Faculty of Rehabilitation, asoc. prof. S.Tomsone, was elected an expert of the Latvian Scientific Council in sports medicine and rehabilitation.

In 2010-2013, the students and lecturers involved in the study were involved in the NORDPLUS project "Joint Physiotherapy Education in Bachelor Thesis module", in which 9 institutions of higher education of 7 countries and their clinical partners participated. Within the framework of this project students from different countries worked on joint Bachelor's thesis topics and teachers advised in this work and consulted students. In 2013/2014, the collaboration in the creation of a new project continued. It was developed and submitted, but failed to receive funding. Former project partners also continue collaboration within the framework of the ERASMUS plus exchange programme. In May 2013, a joint Intensive programme for students and teachers of 8 European countries within the framework of ERASMUS was organised on Haapsalu (Estonia) and six students of the first year of studies and one teacher of our study programme participated in it. In the academic year. 2013/2014, 5 students of the study programme participated in the intensive ERASMUS programme Riga Summer School for Rehabilitation Medicine, which was organised by RSU and included 14 teachers and 28 students from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Turkey, Finland, Sweden, UK and Hungary. We continue to improve the participation of students in ERASMUS mobility programmes. A project "Empowering of pneumatic strength training, determination of individualized training load in various subpopulations towards health" was prepared and submitted in the academic year 2015/2016 within the framework of the ERASMUS plus programme, which involved Palacký University (UP) Olomouc, the University of Jyväskylä JYU, The German Sport University Cologne (Deutsche Sporthochschule Köln/DSHS Köln), Ab Hur Oy (Finland) and the Rīga Stradinš University. The project was highly appreciated, but did not receive any funding in high competition

conditions. Work is ongoing on improvements to the project and its preparation for re-submission.

Teachers of the Physiotherapy study programme actively participate in the work of ENPHE (European Network of Physiotherapy in Higher Education) on a unified document, which would cover general and specific competences in physiotherapy and would be binding to European institutions of higher education, where a physiotherapist's speciality can be mastered, as well as in the work group ENPHE EU Directives (ESCO). The main issues of the ENPHE conference in autumn 2015 (Ghent, Belgium) and in April 2016 in Barcelona were related to the latest teaching methods and broader use of technologies in physiotherapy education.

6. Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the study programme:

Advantages and problems due to internal and external factors	
Strengths 1. a clear aim, tasks and implementation strategy of the programme; the opportunity for students to have their placement in Latvian rehabilitation centres and clinics; a regular evaluation of the development of the study programme and programmes of individual study subjects; 2. constant improvement of the content of the study programme; 3. search for and implementation of new and modern forms of studies and teaching; 4. a balanced amount of theory and practice; 5. highly qualified teaching staff, which constantly improves its professional and pedagogical qualification; 6. scientific activity of students and teachers, and improvement of teachers' professional level; 7. material and technical supplies (preclinical facilities), exchange of students and teachers with other EU institutions of higher education within the framework of the ERASMUS programme; 8. active participation in ENPHE; 9. close cooperation with the professional organisation of physiotherapists – the Latvian Association of Physiotherapists; 10. the wish and the ability of graduates of the study programme to continue with Master's studies; 11. the involvement of the students and employers in the study process and the improvement of contents is growing.	**Weaknesses** 1. Insufficient scientific research activity of the academic staff, who are involved in teaching of physiotherapy subjects (defended doctoral theses, publications in internationally cited editions); 2. difficulty to attract new academic staff; 3. irregular involvement of lecturers from other countries in the implementation of the study programme; 4. still insufficiently high involvement of students, graduates and employers in the improvement of the study process.
Opportunities 1. constant improvement of the programme development strategy according to	**Threats** 1. Potential reduction in the number of

changes in the labour market and the most important global developments; 2. improvement of the content of the existing study programme; 3. extension of supply of free elective study subjects and improvement of the organisation process; 4. further improvement of the student and employer survey process; further development of cooperation with different Latvian and foreign educational and scientific research institutions; 5. even closer cooperation with the Latvian professional association of physiotherapists, municipalities and private institutions; 6. further professional, scientific and pedagogical growth of lecturers involved in the study programme; 7. attraction of qualified visiting lecturers, incl. from foreign countries; 8. broader use of possibilities of the Rehabilitation Laboratory in research by students and lecturers; 9. even closer improvement of cooperation between RSU structural units involved in the study programme; 10. further improvement of material facilities; 11. improvement and preparation of training materials in the official language, their broader availability of in the e-environment; 12. creation and implementation of unified rehabilitation terminology.	students due to the demographic situation; 2. decrease in the number of state-funded study places; 3. unfavourable socially economic situation in general and changes in the branch of health care.

7. Employment prospective of programme graduates by including references to information sources to justify the statements.

The employer survey organised before the academic year 2016/2017 shows that almost all the employers involved in the survey are planning to increase the number of physiotherapists in their medical institutions both state and private. It should be noted that the private sector in the field of physiotherapy is currently fast growing.

The need for physiotherapists in the labour market is confirmed by the big number of jobs available to graduates of the study programme and these offers most frequently appear on the Latvian website of physiotherapists: http://www.fizioterapeitiem.lv/index.php/fizioterapeitiem/sludinajumi/piedava-darbu

The survey of graduates of the academic year 2015/2016 shows that most of them are planning to work as physiotherapists (out of 47 FT graduates 41 answered "yes" and 4 "I don't know", 2 did not answer, PT graduates – one is not planning to work in the profession).

The data received in early September 2016 evidence that out of 47 FT graduates 43 (92%) have started professional activities or are

planning to start them in the nearest future.

It should also be noted that Latvia has a comparatively lower number of physiotherapists per capita compared to developed EU countries, and they are unevenly distributed in different regions.

The results of NDE, the practical part of which takes place in a clinical environment with a real patient and is evaluated by field's professionals, make us judge that the graduate has acquired necessary competencies for the physiotherapist. Evaluations for the preparation and defence of a BT, and NDE are comparatively high. The average Bachelor's thesis evaluations among full-time students in the academic year 2015/2016 was 7.7 (in the previous years: 7.8 in 2015; 7.9 in 2014; 7.7 in 2013).

The average evaluation among part-time students was 8.1 (it was 6.3 among graduates of June 2015, 8.0 among graduates of January 2015). In its turn, national degree examination results were as follows: The PT average grade is 6.2 (7.2 among graduates of June 2015, 8.5 amount graduated of January 2015) and the FT average grade is 7.0 (Earlier: 8.3 in 2015, 8.3 in 2014; 7.7 in 2013). The reduction of the average grade in the national degree examination might be related to the changes in its course.

Out of 47 graduates of the academic year 2015/2016, to the question whether they received what they expected during the studies, 8 persons answered "yes, completely", 38 answered "more likely yes than no" and one answered "more likely no than yes".

Out of 47 graduates of the academic year 2015/2016, to the question whether they feel ready to start their own professional activity, 14 persons answered "yes, completely" and 33 answered "more likely yes than no".

Out of 56 (44 FT and 12 PT) graduates of the academic year 2014/2015, in a year after graduation 26 of FT and 11 of PT students have passed their physiotherapist's certification examination, therefore, they are independently practising certified professionals.

The employer survey conducted before the academic year 2016/2017 showed that they generally evaluate the professional qualification of graduates of the study programme as good or very good. The evaluation of individual professional competences is similar.

8. Introduction of proposals (if applicable) given within the framework of the licensing of the study programme during the previous accreditation (if applicable).

The study programme was accredited in 2000 and re-accredited in 2006 and 2013.

9. Information about external relations:

9.1. Cooperation with employers and professional organisations in Latvia and abroad.

Close cooperation has established with the professional Latvian Association of Physiotherapists. Students of the professional study programme in physiotherapy get involved in the work of the Latvian Association of Physiotherapists during their studies. Teachers actively participate in postgraduate education events organised by the association. With support of the Latvian Association of Physiotherapists representatives of the physiotherapy study programme participate in conferences and congresses related to physiotherapy education organised by the European Regional Department of WCPT (World Confederation of Physiotherapy). In autumn 2008, 2 teachers participated in the 2nd WCPT ER Education Congress in Stockholm; in November 2012, 3 teachers

participated in the 3rd WCPT ER Education Congress in Vienna.

One representative is involved in the work group ENPHE EU Directives (ESCO), which closely cooperates with WCPT ER in resolution of matters related to the physiotherapist's profession.

Representatives of the Latvian Association of Physiotherapists regularly participate in defence of Bachelor's theses of the study programme and in National degree examinations.

Employers are also represented in the Study Quality councils of the study programme.

The professional association and employers assess the study programme positively. This is also proven by the survey, conducted among the employers, and is indirectly attested by the large number of job offers for the graduates of the study programme.

In order to promote cooperation with employers' organizations, their involvement in the education of future specialists, as well as to increase the RSU students' competitiveness in the labour market, the annual Career Opportunity Week is being held at the University. During this week, employers' organisations give presentations where representatives of the employers tell about the career opportunities in the respective organisation, offer RSU students and alumni the current vacancies, as well as give practical advice on how to succeed in the job market. In 2015, in the RSU Career Opportunity Week between 27-29 October more than 30 employers participated. A meeting was held between students and alumni on one side and Riga medical and health care institutions on the other (for example, Pauls Stradins Clinical University Hospital, Children's Clinical University Hospital, Riga East University Hospital, Health Centre Association, Health Centre 4, MFD Health Group, Centre for Disease Prevention and Control), as well as regional health care institutions (for example, Northern Kurzeme Regional Hospital, Daugavpils Regional Hospital, Madona Hospital, Rēzekne Hospital, Tukums Hospital, national rehabilitation centre Vaivari). The event was attended by slightly more than 250 health care direction students, among them also the students of the study programme Physiotherapy. Students of different years of studies showed interest in this event.

9.2. Quantitative indicators of international exchange of students and academic staff.

Initiated collaboration with a number of the institutes of higher education of the EU Member States, aimed at the implementation of students' exchange within the framework of ERASMUS programme. In the academic year 2013/2014 12 (31%) students of the fourth year of studies participated in the ERASMUS exchange programme within the framework of their clinical placement, we welcomed 9 students, in the academic year 2014/2015, 7 (16%) 4th year students went to other EU institutions of higher education and we welcomed 12 students, in the academic year 2015/2016 these were 10 (21%) and 8, respectively.

In the academic year 2012/2013, 6 students of the first year of studies together with students from participated in the intensive ERASMUS programme "Physiotherapist as a Non Formal Educator, Patient/Client as an Active Participant – Innovative and Sustainable Ways to Promote Health and Functioning in Physiotherapy" in Haapsalu, Estonia.

In the academic year 2013/2014, 5 students of the study programme participated in the intensive ERASMUS programme Riga Summer School for Rehabilitation Medicine, which was organised by RSU and included 14 teachers and 28 students from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Turkey, Finland, Sweden, UK and Hungary.

There is collaboration with a number of the institutes of higher education of the EU Member States, aimed at the implementation of teachers' exchange within the framework of ERASMUS programme. In the academic year 2013/2014, collaboration within ERASMUS was started with the Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra (Portugal) and Athens University, whose representatives visited RSU and the possibility of teacher exchange was discussed and there is an agreement about the next academic year. In the academic year 2014/2015, students of our study programme listened lectures of the Physical Medicine study course read by lecturers (2) from Kaunas (Kaunas University of Applied Sciences), in the academic year 2015/2016, a lecturer from TAMK Hannele Anttila visited RSU within the framework of the ERASMUS plus programme.

In the academic year 2015/2016, 2 teachers of the RSU study programme "Physiotherapy" participated in the ERASMUS exchange programme and visited the Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra (Portugal). Students of this institution of higher education showed great interest in the opportunity to go to RSU.

9.3. Cooperation with local and foreign institutions of higher education and colleges that implement similar study programmes by indicating whether the institution cooperates with libraries of other institutions of higher education or colleges.

Thanks to active participation in the ENPHE, it was possible to establish close cooperation with a number of European institutions of higher education, which provide a study programme in physiotherapy.

Work is ongoing on a new joint project of Northern and Baltic countries within the framework of NORDPLUS. Education institutions of all Northern and Baltic countries (9 in total) and their clinical partners participated in the previous project, and, therefore, students and teachers of all the participating institutions were involved, also 2 students and 2 teachers per year from the RSU study programme Physiotherapy. Within the framework of this project, lecturers exchanged their experience in matters related to research papers of students. Students from different institutions of higher education worked on the same bachelor's thesis topics. 3 students and 3 teachers from our study programme participated in the project in 2011/2012. 2 students and 2 teachers continued and completed their participation, and 3 students and 3 teachers started to participate in the academic year 2011/2012. 1 student and 1 teacher continued to participate in the project in the academic year 2012/2013.

There are good results in the improvement of pedagogical knowledge with the Tampere University of Applied Sciences and further cooperation is planned in the creation of a new study course on special issues of physiotherapy.

In 2013/2014, lecturers of the study programme actively participated in seminars of the Fulbright scholarship grantee prof. Crowe about problem-based learning.

There is cooperation and exchange of information with education institutions of various European Union countries, where physiotherapy study programmes can be mastered, also within the framework of ENPHE when 1-2 teachers participated in each conference and work group Transparency, who then informed the others about the latest considerations.

In 2010, RSU organised an ENPHE conference "Transparency in Physiotherapy Education without Borders".

In Latvia, good cooperation within the framework of the Physiotherapy study programme was established with the professional study programme "Physiotherapy" of Daugavpils University. FAS teachers participate in the implementation of programmes of

individual study subjects in this study programme, as well as participate in National degree examinations. Within the framework of ERASMUS the study programme has broad opportunities for collaboration. The list of the collaborative institutes of higher education: http://www.rsu.lv/studentiem/iespejas-arvalstis/apmainas-programma-erasmus/sadarbibas-augstskolas

9.4. International certificates, accreditations etc. of the study programme.

Since 2002, Rīga Stradiņš University is certified in accordance with the international standard ISO 9001:2008 "Quality management systems. Requirements". The certified area is: higher education, lifelong learning, research, assessment of research results, assessment of knowledge and skills, issuing of documents certifying acquisition of education, professional higher education, academic degrees, scientific degrees.

At the end of 2014, recertification was carried out, certifying that Rīga Stradiņš University is constantly improving and continuing its alignment with the single European Higher Education Area, increasing the quality of education and raising the prestige of the university, so that the academic staff and students would like to work and study at Rīga Stradiņš University.

Proof of compliance with the requirements of ISO 9001:2008 is available on the website of Rīga Stradiņš University: http://www.rsu.lv/images/stories/dokumenti/sertifikati/ISO_LV_2014.pdf

In February 2016, the experts of PASCL (Peer Assessment of Student Centered Learning) visited RSU and assessed it as a centred university (see Paragraph 9.2 of the characterization of the study direction).

10. Conformity of the study programme to the needs of the labour market, employer survey results.

Graduates of the programme work in the speciality in state and private medical institutions, schools, kindergartens, sport and fitness clubs, etc. Most of graduates are satisfied with their choice of the institution of higher education and the programme, graduates consider themselves competitive in the labour market, believe that the knowledge and skills are valuable in their current work. In surveys the graduates formulate recommendations for the improvement of the programme contents, which we take into account in the improvement of the study programme. The number of those, who want to study, is fostered by the demand for physiotherapy specialists in the labour market. This demand has been sufficiently high over the years, because the number of physiotherapists in Latvia still lags far behind the number of physiotherapists in developed countries of the European Union. It is especially important to increase the number of physiotherapists in Latvian regions.

The professional study programme in physiotherapy, and the knowledge, the general and specific skills to be acquired in the profession and the common skills in the branch to be acquired within it comply with the Physiotherapist's Profession Standard and employers highly appreciate it. It is proven by the high demand for the graduates of our study programme in the labour market.

The employers' opinion on the study programme and its graduates is obtained both during the national degree examination and the defence of Bachelor's thesis and upon completing employers' survey. The Latvian Association of Physiotherapists is also represented in final examinations and thus they get a pretty broad overview of positive aspects of the study programme and what needs to be improved.

Graduates of the study programme will be able to supplement the Latvian labour market, as well as will be competitive in the

European labour market.

In the academic year 2014/2015 the Quality Council of the study programme began dealing with more active employers' involvement in the improvement of the study programme and employers' survey activation. An employer questionnaire was created in the ac.y. 2015/2016 and the survey was taken before 2016/2017. Almost all the respondents are planning to increase the number of physiotherapists in the near future. The institutions, which are not planning to increase the number of physiotherapists, have already created a service with a sufficient number of physiotherapists (for example, NCR "Vaivari" has 52 physiotherapists).

The need for physiotherapists in the labour market is confirmed by the big number of jobs available to graduates of the study programme on the Latvian website of physiotherapists, and it is supplemented on a regular basis: http://www.fizioterapeitiem.lv/index.php/fizioterapeitiem/sludinajumi/piedava-darbu

Employers are informed about the possibility to publish their job offers on the LAP website and widely use it.

Employers also use the possibility to pick potential employees during clinical placements of students. This is one of the causes of the regular increase in the number of placement places and conclusion of gratuitous agreements enables us to form a very operative cooperation.

11. Prospective evaluation of study programmes taking into account priorities specified in development planning documents at national level, Latvia's tasks in implementing the strategy of the European Union, as well as conformity of the study programme to the recommendations for the development of the European Higher Education Area.

The professional Bachelor's study programme has been established, is improved and implemented pursuant to the Law On Institutions of Higher Education of the Republic of Latvia, the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No.512 "Regulations Regarding the Standard of Second Level Professional Higher Education" and other normative documentation, which is effective in the Republic of Latvia; the knowledge to be acquired in its framework, the general and specific skills in the profession and the common skills in the branch comply with the Physiotherapist's Profession Standard in Latvia; as well as is based on recommendations of the Latvian Association of Physiotherapists (LFĀ), the European Regional Department of WCPT (World Confederation of Physical Therapy) and ENPHE (European Network of Physiotherapy in Higher Education). Constant participation in ENPHE (since 2004) makes a great contribution to the development of the study programme and allows becoming aware of strengths of the study programme and aspects, which are not so strong, also in the context of physiotherapy education in Europe. The head of study programme is involved in the ENPHE work group, which is working on documents related to physiotherapist's professional activities in collaboration with WCPT ER (World Confederation of Physical Therapy European Region).

The National Development Plan, the Society Health Policies, the WHO plan for the reduction of disability, and the EU Common Strategy "Health 2020" are the documents that are taken into account upon the implementation and improvement of all study programmes of the rehabilitation-related functional specialists, including the study programme "Physiotherapy".

Healthcare priorities of Latvia define dynamic change of the programme content to prepare highly qualified healthcare specialists who are able not only provide high quality service, but also involve actively into planning and organization of the field development,

as well as to develop research and innovative technologies.

Along with increase in proportion of chronic diseases and continuous or permanent disorders, availability of healthcare and rehabilitation services shall be improved, as well as research in the field of functional disorders and services (incl. physiotherapy) related thereto shall be advanced *(WHO global disability action plan 2014-2021).*

The number of the employees who work in physiotherapist's profession continues growing in Latvia but it still considerably lags behind the number of occupational therapists per one resident in the developed European Union countries (1 physiotherapist per 1500 residents, this number is even smaller in Northern countries).

Head of the study programme: _____/ Māra Kuļša/

Signature, full name

Date: 26.09.2016.

AGREED ON
In Riga Stradiņš University Study Quality Board
Meeting of 7 September 2016
Minutes No. 5

In Riga Stradiņš University Faculty of Rehabilitation
Meeting of 13 September 2016
Minutes No. 12.4. - 3-6