



FACULTY OF EUROPEAN STUDIES

Academic Master's study programme

“Russia and Eurasia Studies”

Code: 45312

Description of the Study Programme

APPROVED
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INCLUSION OF THE LICENSED STUDY PROGRAMME IN THE STUDY DIRECTION ACCREDITATION SHEET

Riga, 2023

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BASIC INFORMATION ON THE STUDY DIRECTION “SOCIOLOGY, POLITICS AND ANTHROPOLOGY”

Objectives and tasks of the study direction “Sociology, Politics and Anthropology”

The strategic objective of the study direction “Sociology, Politics and Anthropology” corresponds to the strategic mission of Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) – to prepare highly qualified specialists in sociology, politics and anthropology for the society of Latvia, Europe and the world, and the aim is also for the knowledge, skills, competence and attitude acquired during the studies to meet the EU requirements and humane traditions, and to build a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

Tasks of the study direction are:

- to provide students with comprehensive and detailed knowledge of social and political processes in the world and Latvia – about the role and significance of history, economics, philosophy, communication, anthropology, law, sociology, cultural studies and other sciences in the development of social and political theory;
- to improve students’ understanding of the structure, functioning and development laws of society (including Latvian society);
- to create knowledge and develop the necessary specific skills in the methodology and methods of sociology, politics, anthropology, methodology for obtaining information, data processing and scientific analysis, preparing students for independent scientific research activities;
- to provide students with comprehensive knowledge of the theoretical and practical aspects of social sciences and the possibilities for their use;
- to provide students with the opportunity to specialise and study in depth one of the directions of sociology, politics or anthropology;
- to develop the ability to approach social and political processes and developments in an analytical and contemporary way, understanding the possibilities for applying theoretical knowledge and research skills to solve specific societal, public administration problems;
- to create awareness and ability for students to choose an adequate research method for each social, political and anthropological process and phenomenon;
- to teach students to conduct both independent research and work in a team, to prepare a research plan, to develop a study design and put it into practice, to write research reports, as well as articles in the press regarding the results of research;
- to create and promote motivation for students to conduct independent research with an applied and specific or theoretical and fundamental orientation and to use the results of the research obtained in practice;
- to prepare students for work by organising placement in state administrative institutions – legislative and executive bodies, for work in other political institutions: parties, local governments, as well as media and research companies, foundations and non-governmental organisations;
- to develop in students the professional and civic conscience;
- to provide the possibility to obtain highly qualified and competitive education in sociology, politics and anthropology, fostering the introduction and implementation of lifelong learning and open university principles.

Study programmes included in the study direction “Sociology, Politics and Anthropology”:

The study direction “Sociology, Politics and Anthropology” includes 11 study programmes:

- 3 Bachelor level programmes
- 6 Master level programmes
- 2 doctoral level programmes

<i>Name of the programme</i>	<i>Level of the programme</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Status</i>
1. Politics and Political Communication	Academic Bachelor	Mārtiņš Daugulis	The programme has been suspended
2. International Relations – European Studies	Academic Bachelor	Lelde Metla-Rozentāle	Active
3. Sociology of Organisations and Management	Academic Bachelor	Sandra Pallo	It was decided not to admit new students
4. International Relations and Diplomacy	Academic Master	Elīna Vroblevska	Active
5. International Governance and Diplomacy	Academic Master	Mārtiņš Daugulis	Active
6. <u>Russia and Eurasia Studies</u>	<u>Academic Master</u>	<u>Mārtiņš Vargulis</u>	<u>Active</u>
7. Regional Politics and Public Administration	Academic Master	Ilga Kreituse/ Lelde Metla-Rozentāle	The programme has been suspended
8. Social Anthropology	Academic Master	Ieva Puzo	Active
9. Social Process Analysis and Management	Academic Master	Ritma Rungule	The programme has been suspended
10. Political Science	Doctoral studies	Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova	It was decided not to admit new students
11. Sociology	Doctoral studies	Anda Laķe	It was decided not to admit new students

Analysis of compliance of the study programme “Russia and Eurasia Studies” to be included in the accreditation sheet of the study direction “Sociology, Politics and Anthropology” with the study direction

The new study programme logically fits into the group of education programmes in political science in the study direction “Sociology, Politics and Anthropology” implemented by RSU. Currently RSU has six other study programmes in political science:

1. Academic Bachelor's study programme "Politics and Political Communication" (code – 43310) (the programme has been suspended);
2. Academic Bachelor's study programme "International Relations – European Studies"(code – 43310);
3. Academic Master's study programme "Regional Politics and Public Administration" (code – 45310) (the programme has been suspended);
4. Academic Master's study programme "International Relations and Diplomacy" (code – 45310);
5. Academic Master's study programme "International Governance and Diplomacy" (code – 45310);
6. Doctoral study programme "Political Science" (code – 51310) (it was decided not to admit new students).

The new study programme supplements the range of Master's study programmes in political sciences implemented by RSU at the same time retaining a tight functional and administrative link to other political science programmes:

- administrative support to the study programme will be provided by the administrative staff of the Faculty of European Studies (FES) and the Department of Political Science established in 1998;
- the new study programme, like existing study programmes "International Relations and Diplomacy" and "International Governance and Diplomacy" are headed by one management team (the first of these study programmes started in 2006, but the last in 2019);
- the new study programme and existing study programmes "International Relations and Diplomacy" and "International Governance and Diplomacy" have joint theoretical and methodological study courses, as well as the Master's thesis writing process. Other study courses will also be shared;
- at least 50 percent of lecturers of the new study programme and existing study programmes "International Relations and Diplomacy" and "International Governance and Diplomacy" match making it possible to share resources;
- the new study programme continues the RSU social sciences internationalisation focus and, in particular the direction taken by the study programme "International Governance and Diplomacy" started in English in 2019.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

1.1. Indicators of the study programme (specify only the indicators, which are applicable to the study programme).

1.	Title of the study programme	Russia and Eurasia Studies	
2.	Name of the study programme in English	Russia and Eurasia Studies	
3.	Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification	45312	
4.	Field of science of the study programme (applicable to the doctoral study programmes)	N/A	
5.	Type of the study programme	Academic Master's study programme	
6.	Level of qualification to be acquired (NQF/EQF)	Level 7	
7.	Amount of the study programme (CP, preferably also ECTS)	80 CP, 120 ECTS	
8.	Form, type, and duration of the study programme (in case the duration cannot be measured in full years, specify the number of months), as well as the language in which the study programme is implemented		
	full-time, intramural form	Two years	Latvian, English
	Full-time, extramural form	-	-
	Part-time, intramural form	Two years and six months	Latvian, English
		-	-
	part-time, distance learning	Two years and six months	Latvian, English
9.	Place of implementation	Rīga Stradiņš University, Dzirciema iela 16, Riga	
10.	Admission requirements	Academic or professional Bachelor's degree in an accredited study programme in the following social sciences or humanities: political science, economics and business, sociology and social work, law, social and economic geography, mass media and communication, military science, history and philosophy, ethics and religion. Students need an English level of at least B2	
11.	The degree, professional qualification to be awarded or the degree and professional qualification, the so-called specialisation, to be awarded (if applicable)	Master of Social Sciences in Political Science	
12.	Professional standard, its year of approval (if applicable)	-	

13.	Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	Defence of Master's thesis
14.	Director of the study programme	Mārtiņš Vargulis, lecturer

1.2. Aim of the study programme

To prepare specialists in international relations and diplomacy, who specialise in Russia and related Eurasia matters.

1.3. Tasks of the study programme

- To promote students' knowledge of classical and newer theories, methodologies and methods of international relations.
- To promote students' knowledge of current issues in international relations in general, as well as in Russia, Eastern European countries, Caucasus countries and Central Asian countries.
- To improve intercultural skills of students together with the development of knowledge of foreign languages and constant interaction with representatives and processes of other cultures.
- To promote students' individual work skills with an emphasis on analytical skills, critical thinking, time planning, self-learning and independent decision-making.
- To promote students' cooperation skills with an emphasis on team work and work with cooperation partners.
- To promote interdisciplinary competences of students by integrating knowledge from different fields of sciences, in particular history, economics, sociology and law.
- To promote students' creative competences or the possibility to seek new and alternative strategic and tactical solutions.
- To improve students' skills in the use of information technology opportunities by learning through doing during the entire study process.

1.4. Learning outcomes to be achieved

1. Model future scenarios and the development of empirical phenomena by writing individual research and scientific papers based on in-depth knowledge of theoretical and methodological aspects of international relations and understanding of empirical phenomena in a broader context of patterns and theoretical assumptions.
2. Find their way in the current and historical context of the most pressing issues of international relations.
3. Interpret and predict developments in Russia's internal processes and Russia's foreign policy behaviour, as well as Russia's interaction with other power centres in bilateral and multilateral cooperation formats.
4. Understand the internal and external political dynamics of Eastern European countries, South Caucasus countries and Central Asian countries, including interactions with Russia and other regional and global power centres.
5. Able to perform large-scale analytical work independently by critically selecting and evaluating to arrive at an objective and neutral solution.
6. Knows how to do a lot of individual work and make quality decisions under stress, when a range of tasks of different importance and complexity are to be done at the same time. Acquired skills include work planning, task prioritization skills, as well as stress resilience skills.
7. Knowledge of foreign languages in relation to the specialisation region – Latvian and Russian, which will help further analyse Russia and Eastern European countries, South Caucasus countries

and Central Asian countries, additionally providing a direct mechanism of understanding of sources in their original language.

8. Integrate the methods and knowledge of different sectors to develop new solutions, such as information technology solutions, in order to acquire new knowledge and solutions in other sectors.
9. Develop innovative solutions in professional work in the academic environment, public administration, the non-governmental sector and the business environment.

2. Topicality of the study programme

2.1. Brief description of the study programme, including in specifying:

2.1.1. Rationale for creating the study programme, compliance with trends in the sector in Latvia, European Union and the world.

The Russia and Eurasia specialisation niche coincides with the activity vectors of Latvian research institutions, as well as with Latvian foreign policy vectors and historical experience. Issues of Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Latvia are being studied from different perspectives, including at RSU. They are permanently on the agenda of the Latvian state institutions, mainly the diplomatic service. The war waged by Russia against Ukraine in 2022 marks important dimensions in diplomatic and practical policy, as well as in academic research – an explanation of Russian processes and actions in the context of both security and strategic policy and policy planning (what exit vectors from the war are expected in the context of European and national interests); as well as Eurasia's role in both geopolitical stability, shift of its economic development centres, as well as development cooperation. Accordingly, the military and non-military components of the Latvian defence system are primarily designed to protect against Russia. However, academic and practical policies also have equally topical exit scenarios from the war, directly linked to changes in Eurasia's power regions.

Latvia's geographical proximity to Russia, as well as its extensive cooperation with other Eurasian countries, historical experience and the leading political role of the Baltic States in assessing Russia's threats at the level of the European institutions, reinforce Latvia as a legitimate knowledge centre for Russia and related Eurasia issues, providing an advantage of gaining and maintaining knowledge and understanding of processes more easily, offering expertise on various policy sectors – information circulation policy, security and defence policy, society resilience aspects, and other areas resulting from the aggressor country's impact on neighbouring countries in the context of hybrid threats, war and exit strategies.

This set of advantages strengthens the positions of the new study programme compared to other similar study programmes in the nearby region. Those include the study programme "Eastern European and Russian Studies" of Vilnius University and the study programme "European Union – Russia Studies" of Tartu University.

The main feature of the new study programme compared to the programmes implemented in Lithuania and Estonia is specificity. If the two study programmes mentioned above implement a series of general courses on international relations, methods and methodology, but with less emphasis on Russia and other Eastern regions, then the new programme focuses much more closely on specific countries and their domestic and foreign policy issues.

The learning outcomes of the two above-mentioned study programmes, as is customary in academic study programmes of social sciences, place a strong emphasis on knowledge. Similarly,

the RSU study programme focuses on the acquisition of new knowledge, which is offered in a more detailed and comprehensive way compared to the two above-mentioned programmes, in particular in comparison with the study programme of Vilnius University; it also places little emphasis on analytical skills and skills to use methods. The study programme of Tartu University places greater emphasis on independent learning, the competence of finding alternative solutions, the ability to adapt to the environment and the ability to express thoughts in writing and orally. The RSU programme includes these elements while also placing greater emphasis on team work, cross-sectoral and cross-cultural skills and competences. Finally, only RSU offers learning the programme in distance learning.

The two above-mentioned programmes were used for comparison because they are implemented outside the regions being covered, but at the same time in the Western area and in geographically close and legitimate research centres in those regions. This, on the one hand, removes the excessive Western-centric ontological course on the regions being studied. On the other hand, being outside the regions being studied increases objectivity and allows the situation to be looked beyond the regions' own perspectives.

Compared to studies in the specialisation regions of this programme – Russia, Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia – Latvia provides the opportunity to receive higher education recognised by the EU, as well as a safer and freer academic and domestic environment. This is not of minor importance to students belonging to the races and/or holding opinions less characteristic to this region, as well as to the expression of academic freedom. Moreover, following Russia's war in Ukraine, the opportunities for Western students to study in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine are very limited.

Other regions being analysed in the study programme (Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia) will also continue to remain important in a regional and global context:

- the war in Ukraine will continue to determine the relevance of Ukraine and related issues;
- the so-called frozen conflicts at various degrees of “freeze” in Moldova (Transnistria), Georgia (South Ossetia and Abkhazia), as well as the newly resurgent conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh;
- undemocratic public administration and related potential political and economic transformation processes, in particular in Belarus after the presidential elections in August 2020, as well as in Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and elsewhere;
- the influence of Taliban-administered Afghanistan on Central Asian countries, in particular Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan;
- growing economic and political influence of the People's Republic of China in Central Asia and other countries in the region through the Belt and Road Initiative and related projects.

The description shows the justification for the creation of the study programme and the conformity with the trends in the sector in Latvia, European Union and the world.

2.1.2. Outline of the content of the study programme.

Main study courses (Part A or compulsory courses) are intended in each of the first three semesters (in part-time distance learning – also in the fourth semester). The study courses “Russia's History From the Middle Ages Towards the 20th Century” (PZK_182), “Russia, the U.S. and the Baltics – Interaction in the Past and Present” (PZK_180), “Eastern European and South Caucasus Countries Between the EU's Eastern Partnership and Other (geo)Political Projects” (PZK_169)

and “Central Asia – Domestic Dynamics and Neighbourhood Conundrum” (PZK_184) analyse the history of Russia, Russia’s interactions with U.S. and Baltic countries, as well as current issues of Eastern European, South Caucasus and Central Asian countries. In the study course “Theories and Methods in International Relations and Diplomacy” (PZK_152), students obtain knowledge on the most significant theories and concepts of international relations, as well as qualitative and quantitative analysis methods. It will also become the foundation for students in writing their Master’s thesis for the Master’s degree in Social Sciences (“Development of Master’s Thesis and Defence” (PZK_032)). In this course, students devote about one third of their work to theoretical constructs. International students also learn Latvian in Part A (“Latvian Language for International Students” (VC_124)) sharing it with other study programmes.

Other study courses are implemented in Part B or compulsory elective part. An extensive part will be devoted to studying Russia’s domestic and foreign policy, which, apart from courses of Part A, will also include study courses “Russia’s Political Culture in Transformation” (PZK_163), “Russia’s Domestic Politics – Factors and Actors” (PZK_179), “Russia’s Politics and Religions” (PZK_183), “Russian Economics – Resources vs. Modernisation” (PZK_177), “Russia’s Foreign Policy and Unconventional Approaches” (PZK_165), “Russia’s Defence Policy” (PZK_166), “Russia and International Organisations” (PZK_167), “The Russia-China Partnership – Factors and Interests” (PZK_176), “Russo-centric Institutional Governance Architecture – EEU, CSTO, CIS and Beyond” (PZK_175) and “Russian Communities in Europe” (PZK_168).

Learning of knowledge on other target regions of the study programme and their mutual interactions is organised in a similar way – “Russia, East Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and Baltics – Domestic and Foreign Politics Between Past and Present” (PZK_181), “Ukraine – the State in Between” (PZK_174), “Belarus between the East and the West” (PZK_170) and “Frozen Conflicts in the Post-Post-Soviet Space – Developments, Challenges and Perspectives” (PZK_173).

The courses with related content are taught in interaction between lecturers of respective study courses, including they exchange visiting lectures within courses, for example, PZK_167 and PZK_175 (Russia and International Organisations), as well as PZK_181, PZK_169, PZK_174, PZK_170 and PZK_173 (domestic policy and foreign policy matters of Eastern European and South Caucasus countries). If interest in part of courses is insignificant, their content can be partially integrated in the courses chosen by students that are implemented, for example, PZK_183 and PZK_163 into PZK_179 (interactions between religious policy culture and domestic policy), PZK_175 into PZK_167 (Russia and International Organisations), PZK_174 and PZK_170 into PZK_181 (or overview of Ukraine and Belarus with other countries).

Study courses focusing on interdisciplinary knowledge “Biopolitics and Biopower – Interdisciplinary Encounters in Eastern Europe and Eurasia at Large” (PZK_172), “Transitional Justice –Post-Post-Soviet Space and Beyond” (PZK_178) and “Gender and Sexuality in the Post-Post-Soviet Space” (PZK_162) are offered in the compulsory elective part or Part B. These are at the same time one of the most innovative study courses compared to those taught in similar programmes.

All the aforementioned courses for strengthening knowledge on Russia and related part of Eurasia are distributed by semesters so that students learn about Russia, Central Asia, Caucasus and Eastern Europe each semester. Such a distribution of study courses will ensure that knowledge is up-to-date throughout the learning process and that knowledge acquired between courses can be combined and supplemented.

Finally, Part B offers the study courses “Scientific Writing” (PZK_171) and “Academic Workshop” (PZK_185) strengthening students’ innovation skills and methodological knowledge.

It is proposed to improve foreign language skills in the study course “Russian Language” (VC_136). The study course “Civil Defence and Environmental Protection” (KPUMTK_012) also ensures the implementation of the mandatory requirements laid down in Latvian law.

Contact hours make up 33% of the Master’s study programme, 35% in Part A and 32% in Part B. In five credit point courses there are 50 contact hours (ten lectures, classes and tutorials), in three credit point courses – 34 contact hours (eight lectures, as well as six classes and tutorials), in two credit point courses – 24 contact hours (six lectures, as well as four classes and tutorials), in one credit point course – ten contact hours (two lectures, classes and tutorials). Latvian Language, Russian Language and Civil Defence and Environmental Protection study courses have more classes and no tutorials, and accordingly the amount of contact hours varies – 32, 64 (in the sum of three semesters) and 20, respectively.

As noted above, part of the contact hours consists of collective and individual tutorials available to every student. It is the duty of each lecturer to indicate in the course descriptions and at the department and implement tutorials at specified times, as well as to organise them upon request of students, including before and after classes. Students’ interest in tutorials varies – some participate in tutorials even two or more times in one week. During tutorials, students ask for advice on the subject of specific study courses, what was and was not told during classes; the content and form of the Master’s thesis; the study process as a whole; on the possibilities for carrying out scientific activities; advice on looking for job and receive recommendations, etc.

2.1.3. List and justification of the changes made in the study programme since licencing of the study programme.

Overall, the study programme has been revised and its planning is basically maintained as it was submitted for licensing, with some adjustments:

1. as also mentioned in Annex 11, in order to avoid the content overlap of the study courses “Russian Economy – Between Resources and Modernisation” (B; 5 CP/7.5 ECTS) and “Political Economy of the Transformation of Russia” (B; 3 CP/4.5 ECTS), the study course “Political Economy of the Transformation of Russia” (B; 3 CP/4.5 ECTS) was excluded from the study programme;
2. The study course “Russia’s History from the Middle Ages Towards the 20th Century” was transformed from Part A to Part B course (PZK_182) (B; 5 CP/7, 5 ECTS);
3. A new compulsory part study course “Power, War and Diplomacy” (PZK_138), (A; 5 CP/7, 5 ECTS), (teaching staff: Edijs Boss) was added to the programme.
4. Due to the fact that in accordance with the Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 2, sub-paragraph (c) of the Law on higher Education institutions, the study programme includes the compulsory, restricted elective and elective part, but the elective study course was initially not included in the programme, it has been avoided and the study programme plan (Annex 19) has been adjusted by reducing the amount of restricted elective (B) study courses by 2 CP/3 ECTS and by including elective (C) study course in the programme in the amount of 2 CP/3 ECTS. At present, the study programme consists of compulsory (Part) study courses of 47 CP/70.5 ECTS, restricted elective (B) study courses of 31 CP/46.5 ECTS and elective study courses (C) of 2 CP/3 ECTS.

At the same time, in the first year of approbation of the study programme (the academic year 2022/2023), including the recommendations of licensing experts, the sharing of study courses with the academic Master’s study programme “International Governance and Diplomacy” implemented

by the Faculty of European studies and the compulsory part study course “Eastern European and South Caucasus Countries Between the EU’s Eastern Partnership and Other (geo)Political Projects” (PZK_169), (A; 5 CP7,5 ECTS) (teaching staff: Elizabete Vizgunova Diana) was only replaced by the equivalent course “International Governance: Institutions and Processes” (A; 5 CP7, 5 ECTS) provided by Dr.sc.pol., Head of the ESF Department of political Science, Assistant Professor Martins Daugulis ([information in English about the results of the lecturer’s research activity is available on RSU Research Portal, RSU Research activity information system ZDIS pure](#)).

In addition, the compulsory elective study course “European Union in Global Political Economy” (PZK_127) (B; 5 CP/7.5 ECTS) was shared with the study programme “International Governance and diplomacy”.

In the experience of the programme implementation, the effectiveness of the courses was carried out in close cooperation with students and their preferences. At the end of the first year of studies, informal meetings with students were organised in order to improve the process for the following years by listening to feedback. Students recommended maintaining the content of the study programme, because it is valuable and necessary. The implemented study courses that were assessed additionally in the further implementation of the programme will give students the opportunity to choose one of the elective courses that RSU provides centrally.

2.1.4. Statistical data on students in the study programme and analysis and assessment of the comparison to the planned number of students within the licencing procedure (the analysis shall be broken down by different study forms, types, and languages).

According to the description of the study programme submitted for licensing, it was planned to reach a total number of students of at least 20 in the three years until the autumn of 2024, receiving ten students in the first study year, while in the second and third study years it was planned to reach ten to 15 students.

Ten students, including two foreign nationals, were admitted to the study programme in their first year of studies (one European Union national and one outside the European Union). One more has been admitted to the study programme but has not yet obtained a visa. Nine of the students study for state budget funds, and one for their private funds.

Although in general the results of the first year of studies achieved the aim set in the licensing, they are still behind those planned by the management of the study programme and planned by the responsible faculty and department, especially taking into account the ten state budget places allocated. Due to insufficiently good admission results, the opportunities to offer more elective study courses decreased and the remuneration of the lecturers for the work performed was also lower (this also depends on the number of students).

Admission results in the past admission fell considerably behind what was expected in most of RSU’s Master’s study programmes in social sciences. One plausible explanation is the unclarity and uncertainty created by rapid inflation, and therefore the reflections and calculations of potential students on where to better invest their financial resources. As regards more specific admission results of the new study programme, we can mention the stigma, with which Russia is associated after it waged war against Ukraine. Similarly, the war may have reduced the willingness of international students to travel to Latvia, given the generalised perception of Latvia’s proximity to Ukraine and Russia and the risks associated with this. The survey of potential students and students

marked another significant reason – the requirement to submit an English language proficiency certificate, which is considered a difficult and financially demanding measure (In accordance with the admission regulations – *a document issued by an international testing authority over the last 5 years attesting the English proficiency of the applicant at least at level B2 (for applicants whose education has been acquired in a language other than English) or the results of the English language proficiency examination of the applicant at RSU (a test in accordance with the methodology specified in regulatory enactments attesting English language proficiency at least at level B2).*

2.1.5. Employment opportunities of the graduates of the study programme.

International relations and diplomacy specialists with up-to-date knowledge about Russia, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia are expected to be needed in the future. Such a need will, first of all, be present in Latvia, one of the vectors of foreign policy specialisation of which is Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia. Potential employers – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including Latvian embassies abroad, the Ministry of Defence, higher education institutions, think tanks, international companies specialising in these Eurasia regions, as well as embassies of other countries located in Latvia. Similar forecasts are also true for Lithuania and Estonia.

The second and most significant potential employment market is North America, especially the United States, as well as the Western, Southern and Northern European markets. They are expected to remain interested in Russia, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia. Potential employers there are similar to those in the Baltics – diplomatic services, state security institutions, higher education institutions, think tanks, as well as international companies specialising in these regions.

Why would applicants and employers from North America, Western Europe, Southern and Northern European markets prefer this study programme? Compared to other EU countries with similar study programmes, this study programme will offer:

- focused, detailed and therefore more practical study courses covering a range of issues related to Russia's domestic and foreign policies and other regions;
- the focus on the wider region – not only Russia and Eastern Europe, but also the Caucasus and Central Asia;
- regions of specialisation of opportunities are easier to achieve – geographical proximity of Latvia and wider network of land and air transport connections with all target regions of the study programme. It should be mentioned though that Russia's war in Ukraine has made it very difficult to visit Russia, Belarus and Ukraine;
- Latvia as a centre of competence for these regions, taking into account the strategic specialisation of Latvia in the issues of the regions to be analysed and therefore experience-based knowledge and skills.

The market for potential applicants is also the region itself that is analysed – Russia, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia. Studying in this study programme would enable students from this region to deepen their knowledge of their countries in a wider regional context, while strengthening their knowledge of English and acquiring a Master's degree in international relations and diplomacy in the EU.

International organisations focusing on Russia, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia as a whole or their bodies could also be potential employers for all these target groups; examples include the EU (including the current civilian missions in Georgia, Moldova and

Ukraine), the Council of Europe, the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (including the current missions in Moldova and Ukraine).

3. Resources and provision

3.1. Description of the study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision and financial provision and assessment of compliance with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of the learning outcomes, and the changes made since the beginning of implementation of the study programme, their impact of the study quality.

Taking into account that most of the teaching staff involved in this study programme carry out scientific activity (publications and projects), students have the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills in scientific activity. At the beginning of the study process, students also have the opportunity to access several databases of scientific journals that help their day-to-day study courses and in-depth analysis in writing their Master's thesis. Finally, every two years RSU organises a scientific conference that not only allows to expand knowledge of issues of their interest, but also participates with their own presentation and project, which is an essential contribution of science to the further research process.

Specifically, in study programme "Russia and Eurasia Studies" should mention the benefits provided by the cooperation with the industry- students have full access to an up-to-date Library of the Latvian Institute of Foreign Policy, as well as event platforms organised by the geopolitical Research Centre in Riga and Latvian Institute of Foreign Policy. In the study courses on current issues in policy, students have access to research documents related to the sector and their outcomes.

Students fully use also the joint cooperation networks of the University, the agenda of RSU Social Sciences Research Group and research, thus starting their activities in science already during the Master's studies.

Cooperation with institutions – Saeima (parliament of the Republic of Latvia) and its deputies, the State Chancellery, Cabinet of Ministers, sectoral ministries and the European Parliament – emphasizing that this cooperation is implemented based on a network, ensuring regular access to institutions in accordance with the content of the study process is also essential.

The role of public visiting lecturers in the implementation of the study process should also be emphasized - diplomats, senior officials and sectoral experts guest lectures at the university are guest lectures in accordance with the current agenda of the sector.

RSU common infrastructure for the implementation needs of the study programme is available in full and is described in Annex No. 23 on compliance with the European education standards.

The programme is to be financed from the state budget and by private and legal entities, with tuition fees of EUR 3,000 per academic year. The programme is funded by the state for 10 study places over two academic years, where the state budget funding per study place without social security is set at EUR 2,445 per academic year. The number of students planned to be reached in the two academic years is 27, with 15 students enrolled in the first academic year and a drop-out of 3 students planned for the second academic year. This number of students is optimal to ensure

the quality of the study process and to enable the programme to cover the costs of implementation as well as development.

The funding is used for staff remuneration, recruitment of guest lecturers, taxes, maintenance of IT infrastructure, purchase of equipment and facilities and study visit expenses. In addition to the direct costs of delivering lectures and classes, the StP has to cover the costs of maintaining the infrastructure (premises, IT solutions) and costs of other common RSU resources used by the StP (Student Services, Library, organisation of the study process, grant to the Student Union and other support and administrative functions).

The StP is implemented by RSU Faculty of European Studies Department of Political Science, Faculty of Medicine Department of Clinical Skills and Medical Technologies and the Language Centre. The remuneration of academic staff for the English-taught student groups of the StP is planned at around EUR 13,000 in the first year.

Table 2. **Information about student costs**

Study programme costs for the English-taught student groups

Title	Result
Average revenue per student, EUR	2,893
Average costs per student, EUR	2,511
Academic staff, %	57
Department resources, %	1
Scholarships, %	4
Other direct costs, %	6
Fixed costs, %	3
Overheads, %	29

3.2. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff (impact on the quality of studies, implementation conditions and compliance with the requirements of regulatory enactments).

During the reporting period, the head and Assistant Professor of the programme Dr. Māris Andžāns became Associate Professor, with an in-depth involvement also in the development of future levels of education (working on the new model of doctoral studies). Lecturer Mārtiņš Daugulis obtained a doctoral degree in political science, then was elected Assistant Professor, as well as in the administratively academic context he was elected the head of the Department of Political Science. Visiting lecturer Gunda Reire was elected Assistant Professor and became a full-

fledged employee of the department, also increasing her presence and role in further development of the programme, ensuring coupling with further doctoral studies. G. Reire also ensures closer links with the sector (as the Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

These aspects are evaluated positively in a number of categories:

- 1) More effective preparation of students in the programme for further doctoral studies and scientific reproduction is ensured;
- 2) The content of the programme includes a larger scientific component, with the capacity for scientific analysis alongside the content of practical policies and diplomacy.
- 3) The link with the industry as potential and existing employers is increasing.
The changes coincide with the recommendations of accreditation experts for the long-term development of the programme (paragraphs 5 and 6 – to find an opportunity to involve more experienced RSU lecturers in the implementation of the study programme; to increase as broadly as possible the number of scientific publications of lecturers already employed by RSU in high class and indexed scientific journals).

3.3. In case of Master 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 fields of science or artistic creative work.

Obtaining of a Master's degree is clearly based on achievements and developments of the political science. Study courses are created and updated in accordance with the latest theoretical, methodological and methodical achievements in the political science, as well as in accordance with the development of empirical phenomena.

Lecturers of the study programme independently prepare scientific and popular science publications, as well as lead and implement scientific projects. For more information and the list see [RSU ZDIS Pure system](#).

4. Implementation of the recommendations received during the licensing of the study programme

4.1. Assessment of the fulfilment of the plan regarding the implementation of the recommendations provided by the study programme licencing experts and the assessment of the impact of the given recommendations on the study quality or the improvement of processes within the study programme.

An overview of the implementation of the recommendations is attached. As it states, most of the recommendations made so far have been implemented in whole or in part, including comprehensive advertising and promotion of the new study programme in Latvia and beyond; planning and re-planning of study courses has been carried out for the creation of complementary study content. The success of these processes is evidenced by the successful start of the study process in the study programme. In some cases, the implementation of recommendations, such as supplementing the library resources and developing publications of the teaching staff, finds what is a continuous and improved day-to-day work. The recommendations provided have improved the quality of both the study process and the programme. For example, by introducing a recommendation to synchronise and find contact points with other Master's programmes of the

Department of Political Science, this has allowed students to expand their outlook and gain knowledge from other RSU teaching staff. By introducing a recommendation on the improvement of methods and theories, it is expected that students will be more prepared for the forthcoming Master's thesis in the context of the following year of study. Finally, by improving and developing courses (their content), solutions have been found to reduce overlapping between the information provided in several courses. This is resolved by both the Head of the programme communicating with the teaching staff and by exchanging study course descriptions and discussing them.