

## APPLICATION

Study field "Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology" for assessment

Study field	<i>Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology</i>
Title of the higher education institution	<i>Latvijas Biozinātņu un tehnoloģiju universitāte</i>
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## **Self-evaluation report**

Study field "Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology"

Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies

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# 1. Information on the Higher Education Institution/College

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

Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBTU) is one of the four universities of sciences in Latvia (established in 1936 as an independent higher education institution) which implements studies and research for various industries of the national economy and which has developed relevant educational and research competence and expertise in:

- the following unique fields: agriculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, food technology and landscape architecture;
- the following universal fields: information technology, economics and social sciences, agricultural engineering, environmental sciences and civil engineering.

On 18 May 2022, the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies Council adopted a decision to change the name of the university, and starting from 1 September 2022, its name in Latvian will be “**Latvijas Biozinātņu un tehnoloģiju universitāte**” (LBTU). The 2022/2023 study year was set as a transition period for the new name of the university. All regulatory documents approved by the university's previous name “Latvijas Lauksaimniecības universitāte” are valid at LBTU.

LBTU:

**Vision** - Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies is a modern, nationally and internationally recognized science university - a leader in the innovations of bioeconomy and related industries and the sustainability of natural resources.

**Mission** - creation of an internationally competitive, innovative, creative and sustainable future for the development of society.

### **LBTU long-term goals:**

1. Excellence in research that promotes technology and innovation and is integrated into the study process.
2. High-quality studies that provide the development of internationally competitive specialists.
3. Effective university management that ensures the targeted and efficient use of resources for high-quality studies and excellence-focused research.

**LBTU medium-term objectives** are subordinated to the vision, the mission and the long-term goals and are as follows:

1. Excellence in research.
2. Application of research results in the national economy (research results are understood to mean the university's knowledge, technology and innovation accumulated and generated).
3. Integration of studies and research.
4. Internationalisation of studies and lifelong education.
5. High quality and competitive studies that meet the current demand.
6. Diversified supply of lifelong education that meets the current demand.
7. Effective university management at all the levels.

The LBTU Development Strategy for 2023-2027 (<https://www.llu.lv/index.php/en/mission-and-vision>) prescribes three action programmes with relevant targets to achieve the long-term goals:

1. Research Programme;
2. Study and Lifelong Learning Programme;
3. Management Programme.

Starting from 01.09.2023, LBTU has 5 faculties and the Doctoral School (DS):

1. **LPTF** – Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology (combining the previous Faculty of Agriculture (established in 1863) and Faculty of Food Technology (established in 1948));
2. **VMF** – the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (established in 1919);
3. **MVZF** – Faculty of Forest and Environmental Sciences (combining the previous Forest Faculty (established in 1920) and Faculty of Environment and Civil Engineering (established in 1947));
4. **IITF** – Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies (combining the previous Faculty of Engineering (established in 1944) and Faculty of Information Technologies (established in 2001));
5. **ESAF** – the Faculty of Economics and Social Development (established in 1968 as the Faculty of Agricultural Economics; in 2013, the Faculty of Economics merged with the Faculty of Social Sciences).

Totally, the Faculties of LBTU implement 55 study programmes within **14** study directions (as of October 1, 2023).

#### Number of students and programmes in LBTU study directions

B – bachelor programmes; M – master programmes; D – doctoral programmes

No	Study direction	Number of programmes				Number of students (01/10/2023)	Faculties
		Total	B	M	D		
1	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery, and Food Hygiene	9	5	2	2	811	LPTF, MVZF, DS
2	Veterinary Medicine	2	1		1	462	VMF, DS
3	Architecture and civil engineering	10	5	3	2	459	MVZF, DS
4	Production and processing	8	4	2	2	404	LPTF, MVZF, IITF, DS
5	Information technology, computer engineering, electronics, telecommunications, computer management and computer science	4	2	1	1	388	IITF, DS
6	Environmental protection	3	1	1	1	89	MVZF, DS
7	Health care – a joint programme with LU and RSU	1		1		22	LPTF

No	Study direction	Number of programmes				Number of students (01/10/2023)	Faculties
		Total	B	M	D		
8	Mechanics and metal working, heat power engineering, heat engineering and mechanical engineering	5	3	1	1	191	IITF, DS
9	Power industry, electrical engineering and electrical technologies	1	1			77	IITF
10	Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology	2	1	1		90	ESAF
11	Economics	3	1	1	1	344	ESAF, DS
12	Management, administration and real estate management	5	1	4		284	ESAF
13	Hotel and restaurant service, tourism and recreation organisation	1	1			1110	LPTF
14	Internal security and civil defence	1		1		35	MVZF
	<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	3766	

LBTU personnel, job positions and age group statistics information are in the table.

#### **LBTU personnel, job position and age group statistics** (as of October 1, 2023)

	<b>Total</b>	incl. women
<b>University personnel</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>660</b>
incl. academic staff members who have been elected at LBTU	<b>303</b>	<b>197</b>
professors	54	35
associate professors	57	36
assistant professors	82	62
lecturers	46	33
assistants	0	0
leading researchers and researchers	64	31

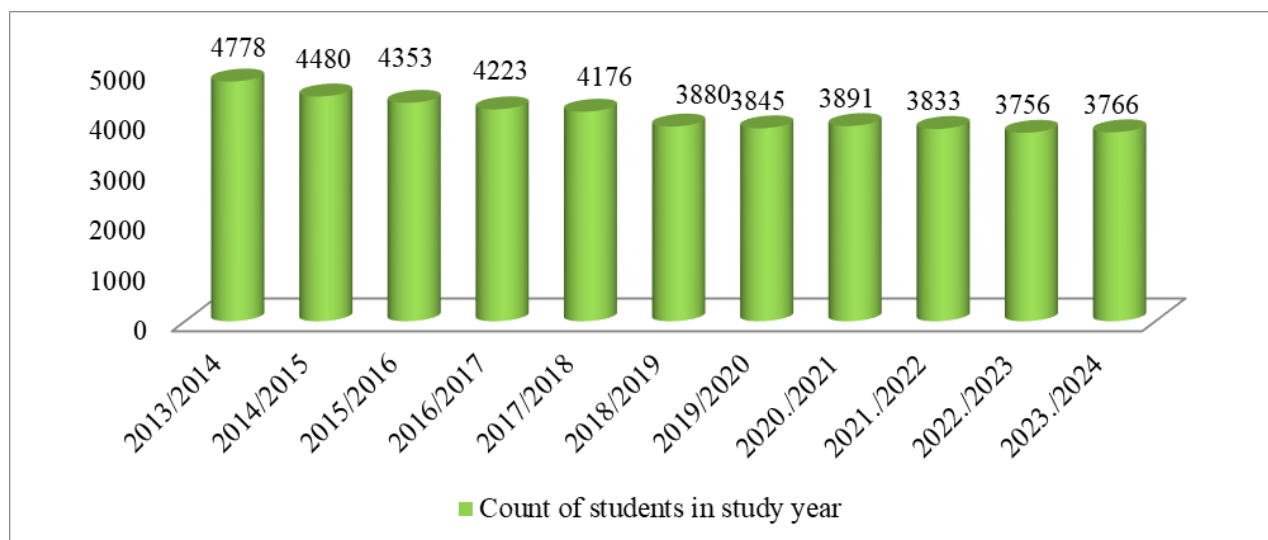
Academic staff members – professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers or assistants – who are also elected as leading researchers and researchers	159	110
<b>Other personnel</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>408</b>
Academic staff who have not been elected at LBTU (visiting professors, visiting assistant professors, visiting lecturers)	258	154
of which foreign visiting professors, visiting assistant professors, visiting lecturers	7	3
Distribution of <i>academic staff members</i> by age:		
under 25 years	0	0
25–29 years	2	2
30–34 years	16	10
35–39 years	36	24
40–44 years	56	31
45–49 years	44	34
50–54 years	42	30
55–59 years	25	18
60–64 years	31	23
65 years and over	51	25

230 members of the total academic staff have a scientific degree (75.91%).

LBTU promotes and supports the engagement of young teaching staff in academic work. Of the current academic staff, 51% are less than 50 years old, 32% are from 50 to 65 years old and only 17% are over 65 years old.

### **Changes in the number of students at LBTU in the period 2013-2023 (October 1 of each year)**

In the period from the academic year 2013/2014 to the academic year 2023/2024, the total number of students accounted for average 4,000. The decrease in the number of students over the six-year period reflects overall negative demographic trends concerning natural increase of population and migration. The total number of students at LBTU decreased by 23% over the six-year period, yet a positive fact is that the number of students tends to remain stable in last years. Overall, the total number of students was affected by the processes occurring in the country: 1) the number of individuals who finished the secondary school decreased; 2) the number of individuals who finished their secondary school and continued their education at university in Latvia was very volatile with a tendency to decrease. Currently (in 2023), the number of students in LBTU has levelled off, and there has even been a slight increase or very minimal decrease in the total number of students studying at LBTU compared with the previous year.



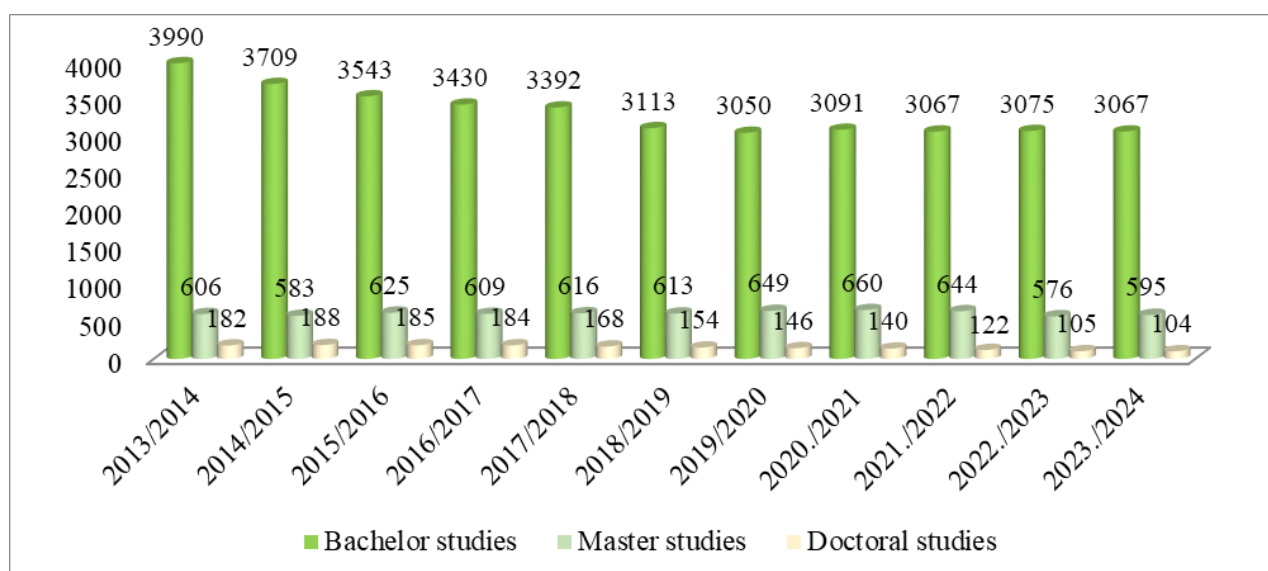
After the university had succeeded in tackling with the external factors affecting the number of students, a number of reasons for the decrease in the number of students were established; the reasons were identified from the analysis of the matriculation of students.

The major reasons are as follows:

1. There was a considerable increase in the amount of students who discontinued their studies during the first semesters owing to the wrong study programme or study direction chosen, their jobs, due to the limitations of COVID-19 or private life problems;
2. Some students could not continue their studies because of financial problems or due to the schedule requirements (especially working part-time students), since they could not combine studies with their working hours;
3. Master's degree students were unable to combine studies with their jobs;
4. Interest in doctoral studies tended to decrease because financial support for doctoral students was insufficient (a monthly scholarship determined by the state was EUR 113.83, since January, 2022 – EUR 140), and the availability of funding for research was limited.

The distribution of the number of students by level of studies at LBTU in the reference period was as follows:

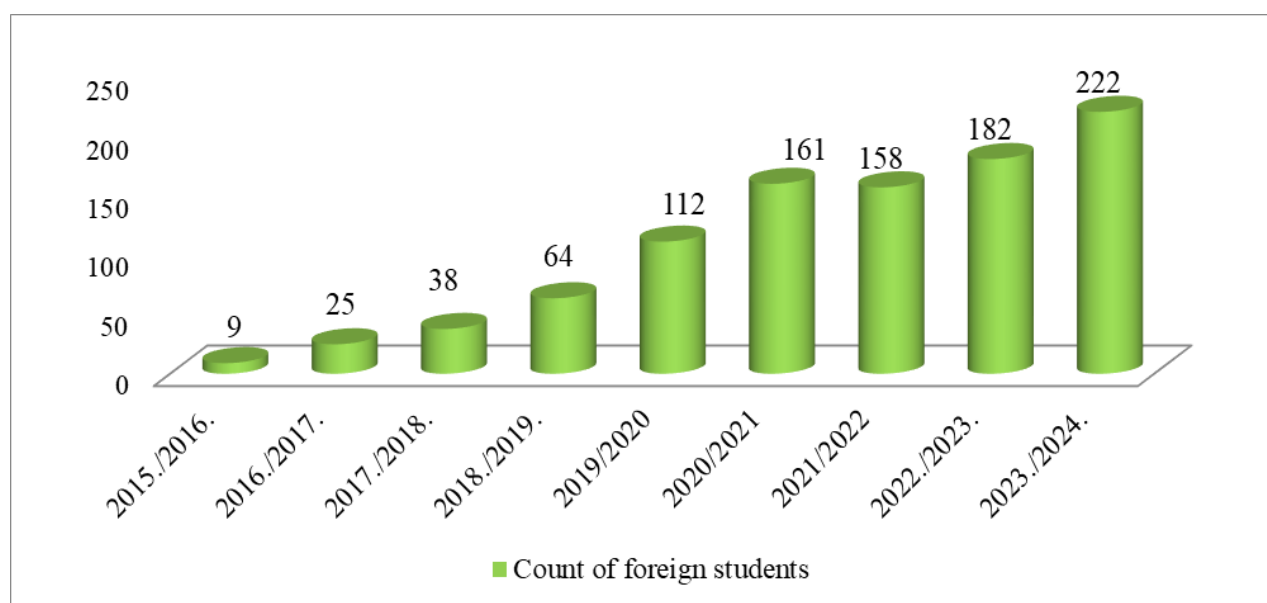
1. Bachelor's degree studies: 79-84%;
2. Master's degree studies: 13-17%;
3. Doctoral studies: 3-4%.



The analysis of changes in the number of students distributed by level of studies allows concluding that the numbers of undergraduate and doctoral students were the most volatile (a negative trend). The decrease in the number of undergraduate students could be rationally explained as follows: over the six-year period, several study programmes were consolidated, the regional affiliates of LBTU were closed, the decrease in numbers of part-time students was observed in particular. The decrease in the number of doctoral students could be explained by the insufficient amount of funding allocated to science and research as well as the fragmented nature of that funding.

Main activities implemented by LBTU to increase its number of students:

1. In the academic year 2015/2016, LBTU began admitting international students for studying in English. Thus 222 international students studied at LBTU in 12 study programmes (bachelor, master and doctoral level studies) in the academic year 2023/2024.
2. Students are given an opportunity to acquire a bachelor's and master's degree of social sciences in sociology in the form of e-studies.
3. As regards the conventional study process, teaching staff members use the Moodle online system intensively as a support tool for e-studies (learning materials, multiple choice tests, tests, homework etc.);
4. Infrastructure for studies and research has been improved and modernised.
5. Opportunities to receive scholarships funded by patrons tend to increase.
6. LBTU provides doctoral students with internal research grants.



Research activities and motivation measures for the academic staff are defined in the LBTU Development Strategy, the relevant targets set have to be achieved by the Faculties, administrative centres and scientific institutes and laboratories. Each organisational unit of LBTU approves these plans for an annual period. The decision-making bodies of the organisational units have to approve the targets set and the procedure to achieve the targets. Each organisational unit collegially reports on the progress to the LBTU Rectorate.

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

The following key (collegial) institutions are involved in making **strategic decisions** at LBTU:

The **Council** is a supreme collegial representation, management and decision-making body authorised by the personnel of LBTU.

The **Council**:

- approves and amends the Constitution of LBTU;
- elects and dismisses the members of the Senate of LBTU;
- elects the rector of LBTU;
- may encourage the removal of the Rector;
- elects the Academic Arbitration Court of LBTU and dismisses its members;
- listens to the annual report on the activities of LBTU prepared by the Rector.

The Council is composed of 200 members who are elected by the organisational units of LBTU by secret ballot for three-year terms in the following composition:

- academic staff - 140;
- students - 40;
- other personnel – 20.

The Council functions in accordance with its Statute <https://www.llu.lv/lv/konvents> (only in Latvian).

**LBTU Supervisory Board** is a collegial highest decision-making institution of LBTU (<https://www.llu.lv/lv/llu-padome> only in Latvian). The LBTU Supervisory Board is responsible for the sustainable development, strategic and financial supervision of LBTU, as well as ensures the operation of LBTU in accordance with the goals set in the LBTU strategy, protects the autonomy of LBTU, as well as respects the academic freedom of academic staff and students and promotes its implementation.

The LBTU Supervisory Board consists of 11 members (<https://www.llu.lv/lv/llu-padome>), of whom:

- five are nominated by the Senate;
- one is an outstanding representative of the academic environment not related to the activities of LBTU and is nominated by the President;
- five are representatives of the public in accordance with the procedures specified by the Cabinet, and shall be appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture and nominated by the Cabinet.

The main responsibilities of the LBTU Supervisory Board are:

- approves the Constitution of LBTU and its amendments;
- approves the development strategy of LBTU and monitors the progress of its implementation;
- approves the budget and financial plan of LBTU;
- monitors the operation of the internal control and risk management systems, reviews their adequacy and effectiveness;
- upon the proposal of the Rector, decides on:
  - LBTU structure,
  - LBTU staff remuneration policy,
  - Adoption of LBTU real estate development plan.
- nominates candidates for the post of Rector for the election of the Rector to the Council;
- determines the duties and remuneration of the Rector, evaluates the work of the Rector.

LBTU Supervisory Board functions in accordance with its Statute

(<https://www.llu.lv/lv/llu-pamatdokumenti> only in Latvian).

**The Senate** is a collegial higher academic decision-making institution of LBTU, which is responsible for the excellence, development and compliance of the education and research of LBTU with internationally recognised quality standards. The Senate determines the areas of academic and scientific activity of LBTU.

The Senate is approved by the Council for a period of three years. The Senate consists of 50 senators, of which:

- 38 are representatives of academic staff who represent all the Faculties (75%);
- 10 representatives of students who have been nominated by the Student Self-government (20%);
- the Rector of LBTU;
- 1 other personnel.

The Senate functions in accordance with its Statute <https://www.llu.lv/lv/senats> (only in Latvian)

Regulations, decisions and procedures in relation to the matters pertaining to the basic activity of LBTU are also passed, within the scope of competence, by:

1. Rector;
2. Vice-Rectors for studies and science;
3. Vice-Rectors for Financial;
4. Deans of the Faculties

*Annex 1 – List of main internal documents of LBTU.*

*Annex 2 – LBTU Management Structure.*

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

#### **Quality management system at the University**

The quality management of study processes is part of the overall quality management system of LBTU. Since 2016, the quality management system of LBTU has been based on the international standards for excellence (see Investors in Excellence Standard, [www.investorsinexcellence.com](http://www.investorsinexcellence.com)).

The quality management system of LBTU is externally audited every two years (audits may be done by the organisations recognised by the Investors in Excellence organisation, which either grant or do not grant an Investors in Excellence certificate to the organisation audited). Such a certificate was granted to LBTU both in 2016 (the first audit) and in 2018., 2020. and 2022. (the repeated audit). The audit takes place every 2 years.

The quality management system of LBTU is part of the overall LBTU Development Strategy and covers a broad spectrum of matters. A short general description of the LBTU Quality Management System and the Quality Assurance Plan is available at <https://www.llu.lv/index.php/en/mission-and-vision>

LBTU Quality Management System is described in the Quality Management Manual (file available in the Other annexes of the report, only in Latvian).

### **Quality management system in the context of studies**

LBTU has developed a detailed joint scheme of study processes that includes 90 major study processes, their sequence and interaction. Each of the 90 processes is described and arranged sequentially. The description contains the following parts: activities; responsible organisational units and employees; reference to the legislative or regulatory framework governing the activities. The detailed joint scheme of study processes provides a common approach to study processes across all the organisational units.

The descriptions of quality of studies at LBTU are restricted access documents and are intended for internal use at LBTU as well as are part of the management and strategic documents of LBTU. The detailed information on the internal quality management system and its effectiveness is contained in Section 2.2 of the self-assessment report where the quality management system is described, assessed and defined in the context of a particular study direction.

### **The characteristics of stakeholders and their role in the development and improvement of quality assurance system**

The quality management system of LBTU covers all the spheres of LBTU activity. The academic staff and other personnel of LBTU are involved in the quality management system. The coordinating body of the quality management system is the Administrative Centre of LBTU, which is subordinate to the Rector.

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

1.	The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.	Investor in Excellence certificate issued in 2016 Detailed information is provided in Section 1.3 of the report
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2.	A mechanism for the creation and internal approval of the study programmes of the higher education institution/ college, as well as the supervision of their performance and periodic inspection thereof, has been developed.	<p>New study programmes are developed in accordance with the Regulation on Study programme Development, Approval and Amendment at LBTU (No. 11-133 as of 11 October 2023) approved by the Senate.</p> <p>The Regulation stipulates that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A programme shall be developed by a Faculty, discussed by the Methodological Commission of the Faculty and approved by the Board of the Faculty;</li> <li>2. The programme developed shall be discussed by the Board of Studies and recommended for approval by the Senate;</li> <li>3. The Senate shall approve the programme and a director for the programme;</li> <li>4. Relevant documents shall be submitted to the Academic Information Centre for being licensed;</li> <li>5. New students shall be admitted to LBTU and enrolled in the programme after the licence has been granted.</li> </ol> <p>Every year, annual reports are drawn up for all study programmes; the reports are approved by the Senate and published on the LBTU website  <a href="https://www.llu.lv/lv/studiju-virzieni-parskati-un-pasnovertejuma-zinojumi">https://www.llu.lv/lv/studiju-virzieni-parskati-un-pasnovertejuma-zinojumi</a> (only in Latvian)</p>
3.	The criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, have been developed and made public.	<p>The students' learning outcome assessment system is described in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation of Studies (bachelor's and master's degree studies).</li> <li>• Regulation of Doctoral Studies.</li> </ul> <p>Both regulations are available in the section of the report "Other annexes" in the "LLU Documents in English"</p> <p>The requirements for assessing students' learning outcomes for each particular course are given in the descriptions of course study programmes available in Latvian and English in the LBTU IS course register at - <a href="https://lais.llu.lv/pls/pub/kursi.startup?l=1">https://lais.llu.lv/pls/pub/kursi.startup?l=1</a> (language change is possible using a flag at text "Main Menu").</p>
4.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.	<p>LBTU has developed procedures and regulations (approved by the Senate) to guarantee the qualifications and work quality of academic staff:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The LBTU Regulations on Academic Positions (File available in the attachments section in the folder "LBTU Documents in English").</li> <li>2. The Regulation regarding the Calculation of Academic Workload (File in the attachments section in the folder "LBTU Documents in English").</li> <li>3. The Motivation System for LBTU Academic Staff (File available in the attachments section in the folder "LBTU Documents in English").</li> <li>4. Classes for students are scheduled in accordance with the procedures approved by the Rector: classes are scheduled in a centralised way for full-time studies, while for part-time studies it is done by each Faculty. The schedules are publicly available two weeks before the beginning of a semester (for part-time studies - before the beginning of the examination period) - <a href="https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/nodarbibu-grafiki">https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/nodarbibu-grafiki</a> (only in Latvian)</li> </ol>

5.	The higher education institution/ college ensures the collection and analysis of the information on the study achievements of the students, employment of the graduates, satisfaction of the students with the study programme, efficiency of the work of the academic staff, the study funds available, and the disbursements thereof, as well as the key performance indicators of the higher education institution/ college.	<p>LBTU uses an information system that aggregates information about the entire study process of each student (decisions regarding the student, grades earned, payments made). Every semester, a survey of students is conducted to find out students' opinion regarding the courses taken, satisfaction with the way the courses are organised, the content of the courses, the teaching staff delivering the courses (an electronic questionnaire). The survey results are available to each teaching staff member, directors of study programmes, department/institute directors, deans of the Faculties and the Vice-Rector for studies.</p> <p>For financial planning and accounting, LBTU employs the accounting system Horizont that is a single system connected with the Ministry of Agriculture.</p> <p>The achievement of the goals and targets set by the LBTU Development Strategy is reported each year at different levels:</p> <p>Faculties – during the dean's office meetings;  Administrative units – at the Board of Studies;  The Vice-Rectors – during the Rectorate meetings;  The Rector – during the Council meetings.</p> <p>Annex - screenshots from LBTU IS and LBTU intranet MansLBTU</p>
6.	The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.	<p>Reports of the study directions are produced every year, reviewed by the Board of Studies and approved by the Senate. Once approved, the reports are made public on the LBTU website <a href="https://www.llu.lv/lv/studiju-virzienu-parskati-un-pasnovertejumazinojumi">https://www.llu.lv/lv/studiju-virzienu-parskati-un-pasnovertejumazinojumi</a> (Only in Latvian).</p>

## 2.1. Management of the Study Field

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

The study direction "Sociology, Politology and Anthropology" (hereinafter – the study direction) is implemented by Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (hereinafter LBTU) in accordance with the LBTU Constitution (approved by the Council of LBTU on 31 August 2022), which stipulates that LBTU is a science university with three strategic fields of specialization: 1) agriculture, forestry and veterinary sciences; 2) engineering and technology; 3) **social sciences**. These strategic fields of specialization fully comply with Cabinet decree No. 449 (21 June 2022,

Riga) On the Strategic Specializations of State Universities, which specifies the strategic specializations of universities in the fields of science.

The study direction is fully consistent with the mission of LBTU – to create an internationally competitive, innovative, creative and sustainable future for the development of society. The goal of the study direction is to prepare internationally competitive specialists through delivering bachelor and master' programmes and building up an appropriate set of research skills and competences in the field of organizations and public administration in order to solve problems related to the sustainability of society.

The goal of the academic bachelor programme “Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration” (SOPA) is to develop highly qualified specialists, providing the students with knowledge of and skills and competences in analysis of activities of public, private and non-governmental organizations and in creating reasonable proposals for solving problems in the field of organizations and public administration. The goal of the academic master's programme “Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration” (SOPA) is to prepare specialists who meet the requirements of the labour market of the European Union in the field of sociology of organizations and public administration for leading jobs in public and private sector organizations in the regions and rural areas of Latvia, as well as for scientific research work.

The programmes within the study direction are delivered in accordance with the LBTU Development Strategy for 2023-2027 (approved on 09/12/2022 at a meeting of the LBTU Supervisory Board) and subordinate annual operational plans of the Faculty of Economics and Social Development (hereinafter - ESAF) for the implementation of the strategy. The strategy states that LBTU is a leading science university in innovation in the bioeconomy and related industries and in a sustainable use of natural resources in the Baltic Sea region, contributing to the introduction of innovations into the national economy to promote balanced development of the regions of Latvia and increase the quality of life. In accordance with the LBTU Development Strategy for 2023-2027, the following research priorities are set for the research programme for the social sciences: 1) strategic effects of a knowledge-intensive bioeconomy; 2) opportunities for sustainable and smart territorial development; 3) interaction between the competitiveness of environmentally responsible businesses and the development of society. The teaching personnel engaged in the study direction and also the students play a significant role in the development and implementation of the mentioned research priorities. The learning and lifelong education programme of the LBTU Development Strategy emphasizes that the acquisition of research-based knowledge in the strategic fields of specialization is ensured by implementing a student-centred learning process, building up the capacity of teaching personnel, promoting cooperation and increasing the academic competitiveness of LBTU both in Latvia and internationally.

The study direction “Sociology, Politology and Anthropology” is also associated with other study directions of LBTU, which allows application of an interdisciplinary approach to scientific research and to finding practical solutions to complex problems of the modern economy of Latvia, which is impossible without a modern, socially oriented perspective of decision-making. This is achieved, for example, by involving students in joint research projects, as well as summer schools with students from other study directions.

The programmes delivered within the study direction are closely aligned with the strategic goals defined by the National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027 (NDP 2027) ([https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027_ENG.pdf)) that emphasize the roles of productivity, economic stability and social and civic activities, including regional balance, in the country. The NDP 2027 emphasizes the role of an individual and society in the long-term growth of the country; therefore, social and human behaviour sciences play an essential role in the formation

of, research on and process analysis of society. The Regional Policy Guidelines for 2021-2027 (Cabinet decree No. 587 <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/310954-par-regionalas-politikas-pamatnostadnem-2021-2027-gadam> (in Latvian)), approved on 26 November 2019, also emphasize the involvement of the public and the capacity building of civil society groups by educating them and building up their skills in planning the development of a territory, seeking creative solutions, sharing opinions about their visions of development processes, improving their technical knowledge about project preparation and technological solutions etc. Therefore, specialists with competences in the field of organizations and public administration who know how to analyse data, understand social development regularities and are familiar with the principles of functioning of an organization, will be increasingly needed at the local, regional and national levels. A study "The Future of Work in Europe" by the McKinsey Global Institute (<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/future%20of%20organizations/the%20future%20of%20work%20in%20europe/mgi-the-future-of-work-in-europe-discussion-paper.pdf>) found that the geography of employment in Europe has changed, and individuals looking for jobs in other EU regions represent a high-quality and well-paid workforce. In the period until 2030, employment in STEM-related occupations, as well as in business and legal occupations is projected to increase by 20%, while an employment increase in social and humanitarian occupations is expected to be more than 30%.

According to an informative report by the Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia and a mid- and long-term forecast for the labour market (<https://www.em.gov.lv/lv/media/14720/download?attachment> (in Latvian)), in 2021 compared with 2019, the demand for skilled labour significantly increased, and the number of employees with higher education increased by 8.5 thousand. The report states that, overall, residents with a higher level of education are less exposed to the risk of unemployment. According to the labour forecast for 2030-2040, the largest share of new job opportunities will be available for various senior specialists (senior specialists in information and communication technologies, senior specialists in science and engineering, senior specialists in business and administration, senior specialists in legal, social and cultural matters) and specialists (specialists in legal, social and cultural matters and related matters and specialists in business and administration) and for the category of managers (administrative managers and commercial directors), which is fully consistent with the profile of the study direction and the goals of the programmes contained therein.

Two programmes (Table 2.1) are delivered within the study direction, and the linkage between them was designed to ensure their succession and give an opportunity for students to develop learning strategies, as well as to deepen the knowledge and skills acquired. Such an approach gives an opportunity to sequentially raise the level of one's competence in the same field.

Table 2.1

#### Programmes delivered within the study direction

No.	Title	Type of studies	CP/ECTS	Degree and/or qualification to be acquired
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1.	Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration	Full-time studies (in Latvian and English)	120/180	Bachelor of Social Sciences in Sociology (Bc.sc.soc.)
		Part-time distance learning (in Latvian)	120/180	
2.	Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration	Full-time studies (in Latvian and English)	80/120	Master of Social Sciences in Sociology (Mg.sc.soc.)
		Part-time distance learning (in Latvian)	80/120	

On 17 May 2023, a new international joint master's programme "Rural Community Development" was licensed, which was developed as part of the Erasmus+ (KA2) project "Joint Master's Curriculum in Rural Community Development" (RuralCOM) together with partners from Estonia (Estonian University of Life Sciences), Lithuania (Vytautas Magnus University), Finland (Ruralia Institute of the University of Helsinki) and Romania (Bucharest University of Economic Studies). The implementation of the master's programme has not yet started, and the programme is not included in the evaluation of the study direction.

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

The study direction as a whole and the accredited programmes contained therein have been analysed in the contexts of the social, economic and political situation in Latvia, specific policies implemented by the government and labour market forecasts. A concise SWOT analysis is presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

**SWOT analysis of the study direction "Sociology, Politology and Anthropology"**

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### **Strengths**

- 1) The programmes delivered by LBTU have their own specifics (sociology of organizations and public administration) compared with other programmes within the study direction in Latvia
- 2) research and studies in the study direction have been in place at LBTU for about 25 years; therefore, the teaching personnel and researchers involved in delivering the programmes have a lot of relevant experience in implementing research programmes and projects on a national and international scale
- 3) graduates from the programmes have ample opportunities in the labour market, as the content of the programmes is regularly updated; consequently, students acquire knowledge of and skills and competences in analysing the activities of organizations and problems in public administration, with special emphasis put on the regional aspect
- 4) a student-centred approach, as well as interactive learning methods, the e-studies system, distance learning, creative teaching methods, summer schools are applied in the study process
- 5) national and foreign visiting lecturers are regularly involved in the study process, as well as there are study tours, discussions and guest lectures by industry professionals and employers
- 6) both programmes are also implemented in the form of part-time distance learning
- 7) scientific research done by teaching personnel and students is associated with the study direction, the students participate in research studies and research projects, as well as in international scientific conferences, seminars, summer schools, etc.
- 8) ample opportunities to associate the problems researched by students in their term papers and graduate theses with current problems faced by private, NGO and public sector organizations, emphasizing the regional and rural development context
- 9) programmes are delivered in Latvian and English, involving experienced teaching personnel who also work with international exchange students

### **Weaknesses**

- 1) the number of students enrolled on the programmes fluctuates, influenced by several external and internal factors
- 2) limited opportunities to do scientific research because of changes in research programmes and of variable funding
- 3) an insufficient number of students are involved in scientific research
- 4) limited funding for involving foreign academic personnel in delivering the programmes
- 5) heavy workloads of academic personnel and difficulty in involving the personnel in producing instructional aids and textbooks
- 6) insufficient international competitiveness for attracting foreign students
- 7) limited marketing activities that emphasize the relevance and importance of choosing a career in sociology

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### **Opportunities**

- 1) to ensure continuous connections with alumni from the programmes, involving them in delivering and enhancing the programmes
- 2) to enhance and develop material and technical resources necessary for the study process (sociological data processing software) in cooperation with other LBTU faculties and their study directions
- 3) to enhance methodological work done by teaching personnel involved in delivering the programmes
- 4) to attract and enrol professionals from various fields on the master's programme, thereby increasing their social competence in their fields of activity
- 5) to involve more teaching personnel and students in interdisciplinary research and research projects in Latvia and abroad, increasing the role and influence of social sciences
- 6) to produce and publish new teaching materials and textbooks
- 7) to involve more students in scientific research and present their research papers at student scientific conferences
- 8) to provide opportunities to continue establishing interdisciplinary summer schools, attracting cooperation partners from the public, private and NGO sectors in Latvia and abroad
- 9) to purposefully attract potential students from foreign countries, especially Western countries, by more actively implementing the Internationalization Plan

### **Threats**

- 1) uncertainty and a lack of successiveness in higher education policies in Latvia; consequently, it is difficult to predict the opportunities for and development of social sciences in the future
- 2) the overall low prestige of many social sciences in Latvia, which decreases the interest of potential students in the study direction; therefore, the number of students tends to decrease
- 3) higher tuition fees
- 4) decrease in the number of teaching personnel and part-time academic personnel

Based on the SWOT analysis, we can draw the following main conclusions:

- the study direction has several competitive advantages both in terms of content of the programmes and methods for delivering the programmes;
- the programmes represent the unique fields of LBTU and ESAF for developing social science-based skills and competencies;
- most of the weaknesses relate to problems with funding, including the attraction of funding, as well as factors in the overall development capacity of the programmes;
- opportunities for the study direction should be assessed in the context of threats and weaknesses, which also impose restrictions and limits on the quantitative development of the programmes and the study direction, for example, opportunities for cooperation, mobility and an increase in the number of state-funded study places;
- most of the threats represent the aspect of funding (lack of state funding and other funding for fee-paying students), yet there are also threats related to opportunities for attracting teaching personnel and external factors in the practical delivery of the programmes;
- to eliminate the weaknesses and threats, changes were implemented in 2013 and two

faculties were merged (Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Social Sciences) into one, thereby establishing ESAF, as well as in 2023 when LBTU began to implement broader structural changes throughout the university with the aim of introducing best management principles and promoting interdisciplinary learning and research priorities.

As part of the LBTU ESF project “Enhancement of the Governance of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies” (No. 8.2.3.0/18/A/009, 2018-2021), enhancement plans were designed for both the bachelor and the master’s programme, considering assessments and recommendations by industry and foreign experts as well as by LLC Dynamic University. The enhancement involved several aspects, which were implemented in the period 2021-2023:

- the enhancement of the programmes in the study direction involves delivering the programmes in the form of distance learning, and from the academic year 2022/2023 part-time distance learning is offered in both programmes; accordingly, all the courses have been designed for distance learning and placed on the MOODLE platform;
- before licensing changes in the master’s programme in 2021 and in the bachelor programme in 2022, the learning outcomes to be achieved in the programmes were updated by including transversal skills, and new restricted elective courses were designed and delivered (Part B).
- the development of the study direction involves continuous work on a more active use of MOODLE and other online platforms and digital tools in delivering the courses. ESAF supports the purchase of educational literature on the topics of public administration and the latest research methods, software programs for data analysis (SPSS) are available both at the ESAF building and at the palace at 2 Liela Street. Efforts are also underway to motivate students to use scholarship and mobility opportunities.

The tasks objectives for the next period - the next 6 years - can be seen in the appendix.

The development of the study direction is aligned with implementation plans for the ESAF Development Strategy for 2023-2027, which in turn is subordinated to the LBTU Development Strategy for 2023-2027. The ESAF Development Strategy focuses on various activities related to:

- **performance of the research programme;**
- **performance indicators of the educational programme;**
- **internationalization.**

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

The study direction is implemented by the LBTU Faculty of Economics and Social Development (Annex 2.1). The **administrative personnel** ensuring the functioning of the study direction include the dean, vice-deans, programme directors and ESAF institute directors. To deliver the programmes contained in the study direction, ESAF office specialists (3) are employed as auxiliary personnel who supervise student matters and are responsible for office work at ESAF, inform students and are responsible for internal and external document flows and record-keeping.

The delivery of the study direction by ESAF is fully consistent with the goal defined by the ESAF

Statute - to provide students with academic and professional education, as well as conduct scientific research in economics, philosophy, sociology and management sciences. All ESAF institutes participate in delivering the study direction: the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, and the Language Centre included in it, the Institute of Economics and Finance, and the Institute of Business and Management Science. Other LBTU Faculties (Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology, Faculty of Forest and Environmental Sciences, Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies), LBTU centres (Lifelong Education Centre, Sports Centre) and the training and research farm Vecauce also participate in delivering the study direction.

The **programme director is responsible** for the delivery of the programme in accordance with the *LBTU Regulations on Programme Directors* (LBTU Senate decision No. 11-111, 14 June 2023). The programme director is appointed by the LBTU Senate based on a decision of the LBTU Board of Studies (Annex 2.2). The main responsibilities of a programme director are as follows:

- organize and manage the delivery and enhancement of a programme;
- prepare information on the programme for an annual self-assessment report on the respective study direction and a self-assessment report for programme accreditation;
- cooperate with the dean of the Faculty, heads of organizational units of faculties, teaching personnel and students with the aim of enhancing the programme;
- hold surveys of alumni, employers and students, analyse the results of the surveys and propose eliminating the shortcomings identified;
- follow the evaluations of teaching personnel involved in delivering the programme on the LBTU IS platform, analyse the results and encourage a change of teaching personnel;
- cooperate with the Centre for Studies and the Communication and Marketing Centre of LBTU in advertising the programme and preparing information for applicants and others interested in the programme to be published in booklets, on the LBTU portal, on the website of the Faculty and elsewhere;
- receive and consider appeals in accordance with the Regulation of Studies and the Academic Integrity Regulations of LBTU.

The rights of a programme director are as follows:

- propose changes to the programme, informing the head of the organizational unit and the dean of the Faculty about them;
- propose to the dean of the Faculty to approve a working group for licensing and accrediting the programme;
- request information related to the programme from LBTU organizational units;
- put forward proposals on drawing up LBTU internal legal documents and the enhancement of current ones;
- refuse to administer the programme by submitting an application to the head of the organizational unit.

The programme directors and responsible institutes are involved in the work of the **methodical commissions of the Faculty**, thus cooperating in linking the programmes and in practically delivering the programmes (*Statute of the Methodology Commission*, LBTU Senate decision No. 6-107 of 9 April 2008). The Board of Faculty approves the composition of any methodology commission. The main objectives of a methodology commission are as follows: reviewing and approving study programme plans in accordance with the legal enactments of the Republic of Latvia in force and the internal legal documents of LBTU; reviewing and evaluating new courses and plans; reviewing self-assessment reports on programme licensing and accreditation; reviewing and approving study plans; reviewing and evaluating course programmes and content in accordance with the guidelines on the programme/specialization. Methodology commissions are established for

each level of studies (undergraduate and master studies). Students are also involved in the work of methodology commissions.

In the implementation of the study direction, the programme directors have established good cooperation with the administrative and technical staff of LBTU of various levels. For example, the specialists of the ESAF dean's office and SOHU promptly provide support by solving many practical issues related to studies and other aspects of work. Cooperation with the LBTU Study Center is especially good. There is a regular exchange of information and involvement in solving important situations for students in cases of study difficulties, for example, which affects the planning and practical implementation of the study process for foreign students. LBTU and ESAF computer specialists, as well as the e-study methodologist, are always available to solve technical issues related to conducting classes and working in the MOODLE system.

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

The admission rules for all LBTU programmes are approved by the Senate in October and November every year and published on the LBTU website. For those interested, the admission rules in Latvian are available at <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/uznemsana>, for studies in English at <https://www.lbtu.lv/en/degree-programmes>.

Applicants to bachelor, master and doctoral programmes are admitted on a competitive basis in accordance with the competition criteria set out in the admission rules.

Applicants with **secondary education** may be enrolled on the bachelor programme "Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration". Applicants are admitted on a competitive basis based on their scores in centralized examinations in Latvian, a foreign language (English, German, French or Russian) and mathematics. Applicants can apply for the programme using the e-service portal ([latvija.lv](http://latvija.lv)) and a unified admission system that processes their applications simultaneously for 11 Latvian universities. The unified admission system provides several advantages:

- for universities – to predict the number of potential applicants who will sign a study contract;
- for applicants – to submit their applications for university studies at their places of residence, follow their opportunities to enrol on the programme chosen, as well as promptly receive the results of the applicant competition.

Since 2021, the following admission requirements were approved for the master's programme "Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration": the programme admits persons who have a first cycle higher education in Social Sciences, Business and Law. If first cycle higher education is obtained in Education Sciences, an entrance exam must be taken. Students, who want to study in English (international students), must have at least B2 level of English language skills. Applicants are admitted on a competitive basis based on the average weighted mark in their bachelor-level education or higher professional education. Graduates from LBTU can apply for the master's programme electronically, using the LBTU Information System, while graduates from other universities need to apply in person at LBTU.

Students enrolled on the programmes contained in the study direction may also begin their studies in later phases if they have acquired necessary knowledge, skills and competences, completing a formal or informal education. LBTU has approved rules and procedures for starting studies in later phases and for recognizing knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside of formal education or through professional experience (<https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/pariesana-no-citas-augstskolas>, <https://www.mc.lbtu.lv/pakalpojumi/pieredzes-atzisana> (in Latvian)).

In the reporting period, the bachelor programme SOPA had a total of 44 students who started their studies in later phases (Table 2.3), among them those who came from other universities and colleges, as well as those who started their studies in the programme but did not finish it.

Table 2.3

**Number of students who started their studies in the bachelor programme SOPA in later phases during the reporting period**

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>Total</b>
2012/2013	0
2013/2014	0
2014/2015	0
2015/2016	4
2016/2017	2
2017/2018	9
2018/2019	5
2019/2020	4
2020/2021	9
2021/2022	3
2022/2023	8

In the academic year 2022/2023, there was great interest in distance learning, which allowed students to balance their studies with their employment and private life. Significant individual support was provided to students who started their studies in later phases directly by the director of the programme, as well as ESAF office specialists, advising and supporting them in various issues related to their learning.

No non-formal education course credits of a student were transferred to the bachelor programme during the reporting period.

In the academic year 2022/2023 in the master's programme SOPA, there were 2 students who started their studies in later phases, yet no non-formal course credits were transferred to the

master's programme during the reporting period.

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

Achieving the goals of a programme is assessed considering a number of criteria: the level of student satisfaction, employer reviews, competitiveness of alumni in the labour market (application of knowledge, skills and competence in professional activities), national and international accreditation, admission/graduation rates, financial performance etc.

However, the basic principles and procedures for evaluating students' knowledge are prescribed by *the Regulations regarding the State Academic Education Standard* (Cabinet Regulation No. 240 of 13/05/2014), as well as internal regulatory documents of LBTU. Evaluation criteria for LBTU students are specified in *the Regulations of Studies*. An evaluation of student learning outcomes is based on the following principles:

- 1) the principle of openness of evaluation; in accordance with the goals and objectives of the programmes, courses have a set of requirements for evaluating learning outcomes that are aligned with the goals and objectives of the courses. Students' knowledge is evaluated both **qualitatively** (with a mark on a 10-point scale, individual tests with pass or fail) and **quantitatively** with credit points (CP), which indicate the amount of work assigned to the student in hours (contact hours and independent work). The total number of credit points to be earned is specified in the study plan;
- 2) the principle of mandatory evaluation; it is necessary to earn a pass mark for the entire content of the programme;
- 3) the principle of re-evaluation; LBTU prescribes the procedure for re-evaluation of learning outcomes;
- 4) the principle of diversity of evaluation methods; various evaluation methods are employed to evaluate learning outcomes.

Evaluation criteria and requirements for completing a course and achieving expected learning outcomes are specified in detail in each course programme (see in annex, descriptions of study courses). **In a course programme**, the lecturer responsible for the development of the course defines the **knowledge, skills and competence to be acquired** as well as the **way and level of implementation** and prescribes **learning techniques** according to the programme mapping and the goal of the programme. Course descriptions specify testing and examination methods, evaluation criteria and techniques, as well as criteria for awarding marks. Any course description (programme) is placed on the MOODLE platform, and every lecturer introduces it to students at the beginning of the course. An evaluation of student learning outcomes is based on the principle of a summation of positive performance, which gives the student an opportunity to demonstrate to what extent s/he has achieved the expected learning outcomes. The principles of evaluation **of a graduate thesis** are specified in *the Regulations regarding Final Examinations*, adopted based on the decision of the Senate of LBTU, and subordinate decisions of the Rector and the Vice-Rector of Studies, as well as *the ESAF Guidelines for Writing and Defending a Thesis*. The LBTU Rector's regulation (No. 4.3.-8/227 28/11/2022) *On Academic Integrity Violations in Students' Theses/Doctoral Theses* specifies all activities for a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of

student graduate theses. The total evaluation on a 10-point scale consists of an evaluation of the thesis, the review/reviews and the defence of the thesis before the Thesis Defence Committee.

The procedure, criteria and principles for evaluating student learning outcomes at different levels contribute to achieving the goal of the programme and evaluating **student-centred learning**.

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

**Academic integrity** means doing academic work in compliance with the highest standards of professionalism and accuracy, objectivity and truthfulness, moral and ethical principles, fairness, including the prevention of plagiarism, truthful reporting and accuracy in academic papers, as well as in communication and publicity activities that shape the image of the academic community. The **purposes** of university academic integrity are as follows:

- to adhere to a high academic and scientific culture,
- to promote public trust in the quality of education and the results and findings of scientific research,
- to prevent and avoid violations of the principles of academic integrity,
- to set liability for unfair and unauthorized activities.

Students and LBTU employees, academic, general and administrative personnel are equally responsible for adhering to the principles of academic integrity and responsible for the consequences of violating academic integrity. *The LBTU Code of Ethics, Academic Integrity Policies and Regulations on Academic Integrity Violations in Students' Theses/Doctoral Theses* are available on the LBTU website in Latvian at <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/llu-pamatdokumenti> and in English at <https://www.lbtu.lv/en/study-guide-documents>.

LBTU has developed and applies certain procedures for checking plagiarism for graduate theses and takes actions if it is detected:

- *Rector regulation On Submission Procedure of Electronic Copies of Theses and their Control in the Online Plagiarism Control System;*
- *Rector regulation On Academic Integrity Violations in Students' Theses/Doctoral Theses.*

In 2014, LBTU concluded an agreement on the use of the inter-university computerized plagiarism control system (hereinafter the System) and began checking all graduate theses of both bachelor and master students for plagiarism. In the academic year 2017/2018, LBTU decided that mandatory checks for plagiarism must also be carried out for doctoral theses. The procedure provides that if the System detects a 10% resemblance of the graduate thesis to another thesis, the LBTU graduate thesis are reviewed by the Faculty's Methodology Commission/Sectoral Doctoral Council, and a decision is made on the presence or absence of plagiarism before receiving explanations from the author and the supervisor of the graduate thesis in person.

In the reporting period from 2013 to 2023, 167 graduate theses in the study direction "Sociology, Politology and Anthropology" were checked for plagiarism. Of the total, one was recognized as plagiarized (bachelor programme in 2021) (Table 2.1.6 Number of graduate theses checked in the plagiarism control system in the reporting period is available in Annex). Considering the results of

plagiarism control in 2021, the student was expelled for dishonest actions according to the procedure established by LBTU. According to the procedure established by LBTU, a student may rewrite the graduate thesis no sooner than after a year, and the research must be done on a different topic.

Taking care to respect the principles of academic integrity, from the academic year 2021/2022 at LBTU potential plagiarism is checked for all pieces of writing produced and submitted by students during their studies (reports, term papers, other student papers). The plagiarism control tool Ouriginal by Turnitin is used by the LBTU e-studies system. The LBTU e-studies system contains information on "Academic Integrity", which is available to all LBTU students and employees. All LBTU internal regulatory documents on academic integrity, seminar materials and other literature sources on academic integrity are available in the System.

Students from the study direction (both full-time students and part-time distance learning students) are introduced to the principles of academic integrity and professional ethics in research in several subject courses, for example, in the bachelor programme: Introduction to Studies, Professional Ethics, Basics of Research, Quantitative Research Methods, Qualitative Research Methods, Sociology (study project) and when producing a bachelor thesis. In the master's programme, research ethics is discussed in the following courses: Principles of Scientific Research, Social Research Methods, Processing of Sociological Information, Philosophy of Science and when elaborating a master's thesis. In addition to the mentioned courses, each lecturer adheres to the requirements of academic integrity while teaching his/her courses. It must be recognized that compliance with the principles of academic integrity in distance learning studies is a special challenge that requires extra attention from teaching personnel. All study papers and assignments developed by students in each study course, when they are uploaded to MOODLE, are automatically checked in the plagiarism control system, indicating the percentage of text matches. If the coincidence is large (more than 10%), then the lecturer informs the student about it. Depending on the situation, the further steps are made in accordance with the internal regulations of the LBTU. For example, a student may be instructed to resubmit a paper. In order to avoid such situations as much as possible, special attention is paid to the topic of academic integrity in the already mentioned study courses, analysing potential risks and explaining how to avoid violations (emphasis on student's independent work, correct reference to the used sources, etc.).

## **2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System**

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

**A quality assurance system** is a continuous cyclical process, the purpose of which is the continuous improvement and development of the study direction and the programmes contained therein. An internal quality assurance system is based on E. Deming's Cycle (plan-do-check-act). Indicators to be regularly monitored, persons responsible for achieving the targets set, as well as persons responsible for collecting and aggregating information are selected to ensure that decision-making is based on facts (data) (stage "plan") as well as to assess effectiveness of the enhancement and improvement measures implemented, i.e. the effectiveness of the internal

quality assurance system (stage “check”). Effectiveness indicators for the internal quality assurance system are classified into three categories:

- indicators of quality of the learning process,
- indicators of qualifications and work quality of teaching personnel,
- indicators of quality of the learning environment.

The targets or expected performance are set by the ESAF Operational Plan for implementing the LBTU Development Strategy for 2023-2027 and by the LBTU Development Strategy for 2023-2027 ([https://www.lbtu.lv/sites/default/files/2023-11/Strategija\\_2023\\_ENG\\_1.pdf](https://www.lbtu.lv/sites/default/files/2023-11/Strategija_2023_ENG_1.pdf)).

The internal quality assurance system and the indicators of effectiveness thereof are summarized in Table 2.4. Some of the indicators are aggregated and available to programme directors in the e-studies system „Support for Programme Directors at LBTU”.

Table 2.4

<b>Indicators of performance of the internal quality assurance system</b>		
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Data collection frequency</b>	<b>Data collection mechanism</b>
<b>Indicators of quality of the learning process</b>		
Number of matriculated first-year students	Once a year before 1 October	The data collected by the LBTU Centre for Studies are sent to the dean of ESAF and programme directors for preparation of annual self-assessment reports and execution of the ESAF Operational Plan as well as for analysis of the data
Applicant to place ratio	Once a year before 1 September	The data collected by the LBTU Admission Committee are sent to the dean and discussed at an ESAF Board meeting
Number of students enrolled on a programme	Once a month	The data collected by the LBTU Centre for Studies are sent to the dean of ESAF and the programme director for preparation of an annual self-assessment report and implementation of the ESAF Operational Plan as well as for monthly analysis of the data
Number of occupied state-funded study places	Once a semester	The data collected by the LBTU Centre for Studies are sent to the administration of LBTU and the deans and vice-deans of the Faculties

Number of drop-out students	Constantly	The programme director, the ESAF Dean's Office, data collected by the LBTU Centre for Studies are sent to the administration and the Council of LBTU
Number of students matriculated in later phases	Once a semester	The programme director collects the data for an annual self-assessment report
Student mobility	Once a semester	The data collected by the programme director and the LBTU International Cooperation Centre are sent to the dean of ESAF and other programme directors for preparation of annual self-assessment reports and implementation of the ESAF Operational Plan as well as for analysis of the data
Change in the number of students	Once a month	The data collected by the LBTU Centre for Studies are sent to the programme director for analysis and identification of further actions
Number of graduates	After defence of graduate theses	The Dean's Office of the ESAF for organizing the learning completion process. The data collected by the LBTU Centre for Studies are sent to the dean of ESAF and programme directors for preparation of annual self-assessment reports and execution of the ESAF Operational Plan as well as for analysis of the data
Average mark for graduate theses	After defence of graduate theses	The Thesis Defence Committee collects the data for a report on the Committee's work
Number of graduate theses to be used in practice	After defence of graduate theses	The Thesis Defence Committee collects the data for a report on the Committee's work
Number of best graduate theses	After defence of graduate theses	The Thesis Defence Committee collects the data for a report on the Committee's work
Alumni employment	Once a year/Once every five years/continuously	Alumni monitoring data from the State Education Information System. The LBTU Centre for Studies and the programme director conduct a survey of alumni before an alumni gathering. Alumni Week. The organizers of the Alumni Week are the responsible organizational unit.

Quality of the learning process (student average ratings on a 5-point scale)	Once a semester/once a year	The ESAF Institutes analyse learning outcomes in the previous semester and the student ratings of lecturers. The LBTU Centre for Studies collects the data for implementation of the ESAF Operational Plan
Student satisfaction with a programme, student expectations	Once a year	The programme director conducts a survey of students
Alumni assessment of a programme	Once a year	The programme director conducts a survey of students
Number of proposals and complaints submitted	If necessary	The responsible person collects the data and reports at an ESAF administration meeting, and/or analyses the data individually.

### **Indicators of qualifications and work quality of teaching personnel**

Ratings of teaching personnel members, conformity of the qualifications of teaching personnel with the requirements of the regulatory framework	Once a year	LBTU Personnel Department
Teaching personnel to student ratio	Once a year	The programme director collects the data for an annual self-assessment report
Turnover of teaching personnel involved in delivering courses, cooperation among the teaching personnel to deliver the courses	Once a year	The programme director collects the data for an annual self-assessment report in cooperation with the heads of organisational units
Teaching personnel's participation in professional development courses, seminars etc.	Once a year	The heads of organisational units collect the data for an annual self-assessment report and for implementation of the ESAF Operational Plan

Number of research papers produced by teaching personnel	Once a year	The heads of organisational units collect the data for an annual self-assessment report, a report Performance in Research and for implementation of the ESAF Operational Plan
Teaching personnel's participation in research projects	Once a year	The heads of organisational units collect the data for an annual self-assessment report, a report Performance in Research and for implementation of the ESAF Operational Plan
Teaching personnel's participation in mobility programmes	Once a year	The LBTU International Cooperation Centre collects the data for an annual self-assessment report and for implementation of the ESAF Operational Plan
Number of learning aids produced by teaching personnel	Once a year	The heads of organisational units collect the data for an annual self-assessment report and for implementation of the ESAF Operational Plan. A contest of learning aids
Ratings of teaching personnel members	Twice a year	The LBTU IS administrator, the heads of organisational units and the programme director
Cooperation between teaching personnel and students in research activities	Once a year	The programme director collects the data for an annual self-assessment report
Number of teaching personnel hospitalised	Once a year	The heads of organisational units collect the data on hospitalisation
Number of course programmes enhanced	Once a year	Programme directors collect the data for an annual self-assessment report in cooperation with the heads of organisational units
Teaching personnel's participation and representation of ESAF in public organisations, public activities and opinion-shaping events	Once a year	The heads of organisational units collect the data for an annual self-assessment report and for implementation of the ESAF Operational Plan
Number of visiting lecturers from foreign universities	Once a year	The heads of organisational units collect the data for an annual self-assessment report and for implementation of the ESAF Operational Plan

Number of visiting lecturers with whom LBTU has concluded a contract for delivering a course	Once a year	The LBTU Personnel Department collects the data for implementation of the ESAF Operational Plan
Number of industry professionals involved in the learning process	Twice a year	The heads of organisational units collect the data for an annual self-assessment report and for implementation of the ESAF Operational Plan

### Indicators of the environment for learning

Numbers of books purchased and databases subscribed	Once a year	Programme directors collect the data for an annual self-assessment report in cooperation with the head of the LBTU Library and the head of the ESAF Centre for Studies and Scientific Information
Material and technological resources	Once a year	Programme directors collect the data for an annual self-assessment report in cooperation with the heads of organisational units

The data collected are analysed, assessed and interpreted to:

- prepare an annual report and a self-assessment report on the study direction, which are reviewed by the LBTU Centre for Studies, the ESAF Board, the LBTU Board of Studies and approved by the LBTU Senate;
- prepare a report on the execution of the ESAF Operational Plan for implementing the LBTU Development Strategy for 2023-2027, which is reviewed by the ESAF Board, and afterwards the ESAF dean reports on the performance at an LBTU Rector Office meeting. Based on the collected performance data on the Operational Plans of the Faculties, the LBTU rector reports to the LBTU Council on the results of implementation of the LBTU Development Strategy for 2023-2027;
- prepare reports on work of thesis defence committees, which are reviewed and approved by the ESAF Board;
- use the performance results to assess, review and enhance the study direction and the programmes contained therein.

An analysis of the indicators of effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system included in the self-assessment report is presented in Chapter 3, see the description of the respective programme.

The study direction involves carrying out the following **quality assurance activities**:

- preparing an annual self-assessment report for the study direction (responsible: programme directors, the Methodology Commission);
- enhancing and developing the programmes (responsible: programme directors, the Methodology Commission, the ESAF Board);
- planning and controlling the delivery of the programmes (responsible: the LBTU Centre for

Studies, programme directors, heads of organisational units);

- enhancing and revising a study plan (responsible: programme directors, the Methodology Commission, the ESAF Board);
- enhancing course programmes (responsible: teaching personnel, programme directors, the Methodology Commission, the ESAF Board);
- analysing the learning outcomes and attendance of students (responsible: programme directors);
- hospitation of teaching personnel (responsible: heads of organisational units, programme directors, teaching personnel);
- provision of material and technological resources (responsible: the dean);
- provision of methodologies and information for the study process (responsible: LBTU Library personnel, teaching personnel, the head of the ESAF Centre for Studies and Scientific Information).

The content of the programmes and the delivery of the content contribute to sustainable development of the programmes and the study direction, as it is based on cooperation and responsible action, involving students, teaching personnel, alumni and employers. Student ratings play a significant role in enhancing the content of courses, supplementing the courses and selecting teaching personnel for delivering the programmes. Every year, a student survey is conducted at the end of each semester, and a survey of alumni of a particular academic year is conducted at the end of the academic year. The survey results, including employer opinions, are aggregated, discussed and used for the enhancement of the field study, the programmes and courses contained therein. Cooperation with employers is maintained by inviting them to participate in the work of the State Examination Committee (SEC) and the Master Examination Committee (MEC), encouraging them to suggest research problems for graduate theses and inviting them to be advisors.

Twice an academic year after the defence of graduate theses, the results of the defence are discussed at the Institute of Social Science and Humanities (hereinafter SOHU) responsible for the delivery of the study direction and by the ESAF Board, approving reports on the work of the examination committees (SEC and MEC). After the reports have been approved, the programme director reviews *The Guidelines for Writing and Defending a Final Thesis*, making amendments if necessary. The amendments to the guidelines are reviewed by SOHU, the Methodology Commission and approved by the ESAF Board.

To increase the quality of the study process, guest lectures are delivered both during the ESAF Alumni Week and within subject courses. As part of the ESAF International Week, guest lectures are also delivered by teaching personnel from LBTU partner universities.

Study tours are also held for students to visit industry specialists, local governments and non-governmental sector organizations, businesspersons and research institutions. Alumni from the programmes are regularly invited to deliver guest lectures as industry professionals.

The quality of work of teaching personnel engaged in delivering courses in the study direction is also regularly assessed. A survey of students on the subject courses taken and the quality of work of teaching personnel delivering the courses is conducted at the end of each semester. Students rate the work of teaching personnel on a 5-point scale, evaluating both the work of the lecturer and the content of the course. Students have an opportunity to record their comments and suggestions for enhancing the course. The survey is conducted electronically in the LBTU Information System. The survey results are available in a summarized form to the director of the programme (for all subject courses and lecturers who are engaged in the particular study programme), heads of organizational units (for all lecturers of the organizational unit and their courses delivered) and each lecturer (for his/her courses delivered). The summary of the survey results gives the lecturer

an opportunity to evaluate and enhance his/her performance, as well as provides programme directors with valuable recommendations for increasing the quality of the programme. The administration of LBTU and the heads of organizational units use the information obtained for taking measures aimed at raising teaching quality at university level. The survey results are one of the criteria in the teaching personnel motivation system. The student survey questionnaire is revised by involving representatives of the LBTU Student Self-Government.

Starting from the academic year 2018/2019, LBTU has introduced the hospitation of classes by the director of the programme, heads of organizational units or other teaching personnel (*LBTU Board of Studies decision on the Procedure of Hospitation of Classes at LBTU*). The hospitation of classes delivered by teaching personnel is carried out at least once every six years, and for teaching personnel with 0-3 years of teaching experience at the university – at least once per academic year. The classes of a teaching personnel member are hospitated no more than once or twice an academic year. In case of unsatisfactory student ratings, the hospitation of classes could be held more frequently to ascertain whether the students' ratings are unbiased. The total results of class hospitation are examined once an academic year at meetings of LBTU organisational units. The teaching personnel who had been given suggestions/recommendations for enhancing their classes in a completed hospitation form have to provide information about the way they have improved their classes.

The resources of the LBTU Fundamental Library and the ESAF Centre for Studies and Scientific Information are constantly replenished with specialist literature recommended by teaching personnel both in Latvian and in English. The teaching personnel themselves also write textbooks and monographs. The administration of ESAF and other organizational units of LBTU continuously monitor the conformity of the quality of classrooms and material and technical resources to the needs of learning.

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

At LBTU, new programmes are developed in accordance with the regulation approved by the Senate: *Regulations regarding Developing, Approving and Changing Programmes at LBTU*. The regulations provide that before a programme is approved by the Senate, it is discussed and analysed by the ESAF Methodology Commission, the ESAF Board and the LBTU Board of Studies. Documents pertaining to the development of a programme are available for LBTU teaching personnel and potential programme directors on the LBTU intranet MansLBTU. The regulations governing the development of a new programme, as well as the development and enhancement of courses, have been added to the intranet section Other Annexes in the folder "LBTU Documents in Latvian".

The current programmes are reviewed every academic year, resulting in an annual report on the study direction. The reports are available on the LBTU website <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/studiju-virzieni-parskati-un-pasnovertejuma-zinojumi> (in Latvian). The reports are analysed by the ESAF Methodology Commissions, the ESAF Board, the LBTU Centre for Studies

and the LBTU Board of Studies and approved by the Senate.

In the period from 2018 to 2021, all the programmes were evaluated in detail as part of the LBTU ESF project “Enhancement of the Governance of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies”. Foreign experts and representatives of the respective field (employers) participated in the evaluation of the programmes. Based on the recommendations of the experts, programme enhancement plans were designed and implemented.

Enhancing the programmes of the study direction is associated with the delivery of the programmes in the form of e-studies, which has already been implemented. From the academic year 2022/2023, part-time distance learning is available, and courses have been designed and placed on the MOODLE platform accordingly.

Before licensing changes in the master’s programme in 2021 and in the bachelor programme in 2022, the learning outcomes to be achieved in the programmes were updated by including transversal skills, and new restricted elective courses were designed and delivered (part B in the study plan of the study programme). For example, in the bachelor programme subject courses Economic Sociology, Media Literacy and Platform Society, as well as Environmental Sociology were introduced. A new subject course Digital Media in Modern Society was designed for the master’s programme.

Developing the study direction involves continuous work on more use of MOODLE, BigBlueButton, Zoom and other online platforms and tools in the delivery of subject courses. ESAF supports the purchase of educational literature on the topics of public administration and the latest research methods as well as software for data analysis methods (SPSS) (both in the ESAF building and in the central building (Palace) at 2 Liela Street). Efforts are also made to motivate students to use scholarship and mobility opportunities.

**2.2.3. Description of the procedures and/or systems according to which the students are expected to submit complaints and proposals (except for the surveys to be conducted among the students). Specify whether and how the students have access to the information on the possibilities to submit complaints and proposals and how the outcomes of the examination of the complaints and proposals and the improvements of the study field and the relevant study programmes are communicated by providing the respective examples.**

During their studies, students have an opportunity and the right to submit proposals and complaints about the study process and related matters. Students may submit proposals:

- in written form or orally at the faculty level: to the curator, the programme director, the vice dean or dean;
- in written form or orally at the university level: to the LBTU Centre for Studies, the Vice-Rector of Studies, the LBTU Board of Studies and the Senate for reviewing and approving various internal regulatory documents;
- anonymously, using an opportunity of whistleblowing at LBTU <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/trauksmes-celsana> (in Latvian).

The LBTU Regulations of Studies, which are available to all students on the platform Mans LBTU, prescribe the procedure for submitting and processing complaints (appeals). If the student has submitted a written complaint, after the consideration s/he receives a written response if the

complaint was considered without the presence of the student. The student may also submit a complaint to the LBTU Academic Arbitration Court, which functions in accordance with its Statute.

ESAF has developed and established, based on the dean's decision, a procedure for handling proposals and complaints ([https://www.esaf.lbtu.lv/sites/esaf/files/2019-10/lerosin%C4%81jumu%20un%20s%C5%ABdz%C4%ABbu%20izskat%C4%AB%C5%A1anas%20proced%C5%ABra%20ESAF\\_2019.pdf](https://www.esaf.lbtu.lv/sites/esaf/files/2019-10/lerosin%C4%81jumu%20un%20s%C5%ABdz%C4%ABbu%20izskat%C4%AB%C5%A1anas%20proced%C5%ABra%20ESAF_2019.pdf)) (in Latvian). The need for a proposal and complaint handling procedure is determined by the LBTU Quality Management System, which is based on the basic principles and requirements of the international Investors in Excellence standard.

The procedure for handling proposals and complaints applies to the quality of:

- the study process;
- infrastructure and material and technical resources;
- methodological and informative materials;
- services (functions).

A proposal or complaint may be submitted to ESAF by:

- a student,
- a group of students,
- academic and administrative personnel,
- as well as a personnel group or an organizational unit.

The procedure prescribes the way of submitting and handling proposals and complaints. Students from the study direction have not submitted any written complaints regarding their studies. All complaints about their situations have been resolved through oral negotiations, or in negotiations involving the student/s, the programme director/s and the lecturer/s.

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

LBTU collects various statistical data centrally and with varying regularity.

**Once a month:**

1. The number of students by programme, type and form of studies, study direction and by faculty – the statistics collected are sent to the LBTU administration and the deans of the Faculties. The statistical data are used to identify changes in the number of students at LBTU.
2. The number of state-funded study places – the data are collected by programme to identify the number of occupied state-funded study places occupied. The data are used to project the number of students to be admitted to fill in vacant state-funded study places and for the rotation of students each semester (state-funded study places are filled on a competitive basis) - the statistics are sent to the administration of LBTU and the deans of the Faculties, as well as to the vice-deans of the Faculties if needed.

**Once an academic year**

1. The number of graduates by programme, study direction, faculty and kind of funding – the data are used to prepare various reports (e.g. an annual report on LBTU <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/llu-pamatdokumenti> (only in Latvian))
2. The number of admitted students by various categories. The number of students admitted is used to project and plan admission limits for the next year.
3. An LBTU statistical data summary, Augstskola-1 (University-1), is prepared for the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) based on the forms supplied by the CSB. The data summarised are sent to the Ministry of Education and Science and are available to the public (<https://izm.gov.lv/lv/publikacijas-un-statistika/statistika-par-izglitiba/statistika-par-augstako-izglitiba> (in Latvian)). The data are also used to draw up various reports (e.g. an annual report on LBTU <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/llu-pamatdokumenti> (in Latvian)).

#### **Once a calendar year:**

1. Data are collected on the study directions – a statistical summary is based on data for the previous year: the number of students by programme, type and form of studies, the number of graduates and drop-out students and the reasons of drop-out and the number of international students. The data are given to all of the programme directors, and the data are used for analysis and to prepare an annual report on the study direction (available at <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/studiju-virzenu-parskati-un-pasnovertejuma-zinojumi> (only in Latvian)).
2. The number of occupied state-funded study places on an annual basis – the data are used to prepare reports on compliance with the terms and conditions of an agreement among LBTU, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Education and Science.
3. The performance of the programmes in accordance with the LBTU Development Strategy for 2023-2027 – the data are used to prepare annual reports on achieving the targets set by the strategy and to set new targets for the next year. The reports are presented and discussed at in-person meetings at each Faculty.

The programmes of the study direction are regularly evaluated and revised to ensure the maintenance of appropriate performance and the creation of a supportive and effective learning environment for students. Students, alumni from the programmes, representatives of employers, industry experts and other stakeholders are involved in the process of enhancing the programmes contained in the study direction.

Students from the programmes are involved in evaluating the programmes in different ways. At the end of the academic year, the programme director asks students to fill in a survey questionnaire (available on the LBTU IS platform) to identify the students':

- satisfaction with the content delivered and the way their studies is organised;
- ratings of the work of teaching personnel and mutual communication;
- opinions about whether the resources available for learning meet the standards defined by the programme.

Besides, students are given an opportunity to express their objections, suggestions as well as their wishes for the necessary improvements in the programme. In accordance with *the LBTU Regulations on Programme Directors* (Senate decision No. 11-111 of 14 June 2023), the programme director summarizes the data from student survey questionnaires, the students' objections, suggestions and wishes and designs measures for improvement. The programme director reports on the survey results at the responsible institute as well as at a meeting of the ESAF Board when discussing an annual self-assessment report. Students are informed about the survey results at meetings with the programme director. In addition, students get feedback by attending ESAF Board meetings as student representatives.

As regards programmes with a small number of students, the students are involved in enhancing the programmes during focus group meetings with the programme director. During such meetings, the study process and the way it is organised, the content to be learnt, the work of teaching personnel, communication between students and teaching personnel and the availability of material and technological resources are discussed. Students are given also an opportunity to express their opinions and suggestions. During focus group meetings, students get feedback on the matters being important to them. If solving a problem requires additional activities and time, students are informed about the activities after having been implemented. The programme director summarises the results of focus group meetings and reports on the results to the institute responsible for implementing the programme as well as at a meeting of the ESAF Board when discussing an annual self-assessment report, in which students also take part.

The programme directors regularly meet with their students, ensuring information exchange and feedback during the meetings. In assessing a programme, alumni are involved by means of surveys (available on the LBTU IS platform) to identify their:

- satisfaction with the programme and its content;
- ratings of the work of teaching personnel and mutual communication;
- satisfaction with the learning environment and the performance of university support services;
- future plans in the context of the programme.

In their questionnaires, alumni are provided with an opportunity to give their recommendations regarding the content of the programme in order to update it so that it meets labour market needs, as well as recommendations on the way the learning process is organised. The programme director summarises the survey results and reports on the results to the institute responsible for implementing the programme as well as at a meeting of the ESAF Board when discussing an annual self-assessment report.

Alumni get feedback by:

- participating in the ESAF Alumni Week;
- participating in organizing study tours after their graduation for current students;
- representing employers in the State Examination Committee;
- taking part in alumni gatherings (once every five years) when it is reported on what has been achieved over the past five years.

The assessment of a programme (especially in the context of learning outcomes achieved) through graduate theses and their defence is done also during the work sessions of final examination committees, in which employers are also included. After a final examination committee has completed its work session, a report is prepared on the work of the committee. Before preparing a report at the end of the session, the quality of graduate theses, the learning outcomes demonstrated by the students during their defences and suggestions for enhancing the learning process and the programme are discussed. The marks for graduate theses also reflect the level of learning outcomes achieved in the programme.

In accordance with the above-mentioned procedure, when approving a report at an ESAF Board meeting, its content is reported by either the chair of the final examination committee or the vice-chair of the committee, i.e. the programme director. The report is also delivered at the ESAF graduation ceremony, thereby providing feedback.

The programmes contained in the study direction were assessed by also industry professionals within project No. 8.2.3.0/1/A/009 "Enhancement of the Governance of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies". The project intended to:

- assess the programmes;
- draw up a modernisation plan for the programmes;
- improve the programmes;
- build up the programme directors' knowledge of and skills and competences in content development of the study programme, management of quality of the study process and learning outcomes as well as in development and introduction of innovative curriculum and forms of teaching, etc.

During the assessment of the programmes, industry professionals meet with the programme directors and discuss the content of the programmes and its conformity with labour market needs.

Any programme director follows the learning outcomes of students in the courses contained in the programme, which is an indicator of the level of expected learning outcomes achieved. The programme director meets with the teaching personnel members delivering courses in which learning outcomes are poor to discuss the reasons of it and find solutions to this problem. The students are also heard in relation to the reasons of poor learning outcomes.

LBTU has developed a *Procedure of Preparation of an Annual Report on the Study Direction*, which prescribes activities for the preparation and review of an annual report on the study direction according to Vice-Rector for Studies decision No. 2.4.- 8/45 of 21 September 2022 *Procedure of Preparation of a Self-assessment Report and an Annual Report on the Study Direction*. In accordance with the procedure, reports on the study direction are discussed at a meeting of the ESAF Board, then reviewed at a meeting of the LBTU Board of Studies, approved at a meeting of the LBTU Senate and published on the LBTU website.

**2.2.5. Specify the websites (e.g., the homepage) on which the information on the study field and the relevant study programmes is published (in all languages in which the study programmes are implemented) by indicating the persons responsible for the compliance of the information available on the website with the information published in the official registers (State Education Information System (VIIS), E-platform).**

Information on the study direction and respective programmes is posted on the website of LBTU at [www.lbtu.lv](http://www.lbtu.lv), including on current developments in the respective programmes, as well as basic information about each programme. Detailed information (descriptions of the programmes) is available in the section: *Studijas / Studiju programmas* -> <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/studiju-programmas> (in Latvian) and in the section *Nāc studēt / Ko studēt? Palīgs studiju programmu izvēlē* -> <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/studiju-programmas> (in Latvian)

Information in **English** on the programmes is available on the LBTU website: *Studies / Degree Studies / Degree Programmes* -> <https://www.lbtu.lv/en/degree-programmes>

The descriptions of all the programmes are available on the website of LBTU ESAF at <https://www.esaf.lbtu.lv/lv>: *Studijas / Studiju iespējas* -> <https://www.esaf.lbtu.lv/lv/studiju-iespejas> (in Latvian).

Information about the programmes is also available in **electronic informative materials** (booklets), incl. information on each particular programme and alumni reviews:

- a booklet for bachelor programmes available at: <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/buklets/llu-pamatstudiju-buklets> (in Latvian) is renewed every academic

year;

- a booklet for master's programmes at: <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/buklets/llu-magistra-studijas-buklets> (in Latvian) is renewed every academic year;

Up-to-date information on all of the main programmes is also available on the electronic platform of the Academic Information Centre at <https://eplatforma.aika.lv/> (in Latvian).

The **organisational units responsible** for ensuring that the information available on the LBTU website is the same as that available in official registers are as follows:

- the Centre for Studies for professional higher education, bachelor and master's programmes,
- the Doctoral School for doctoral programmes,
- the International Cooperation Centre for programmes delivered in English.

Information on the LBTU website is prepared in cooperation with the director of each programme. The person responsible for posting information is a project manager from the LBTU Lifelong Learning Centre.

The LBTU website provides information on academic mobility eligibility criteria and procedures in accordance with the Erasmus+ University Charter and the programme guidelines at:

- <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/starptautiska-mobilitate> - in Latvian;
- <https://www.llu.lv/en/exchange-studies> - in English.

LBTU has subscribed to the following e-marketing websites:

- <https://www.masterstudies.com/universities/Latvia/LLU/>
- <https://www.educations.com/search/jelgava>

The LBTU website provides comprehensive and detailed information for potential and current full-time students from abroad on:

- LBTU programmes delivered in English at <https://www.lbtu.lv/en/degree-programmes>, and a description of each programme gives details even about the study plan;
- a step by step admission process at <https://www.lbtu.lv/en/how-to-apply> ;
- immigration procedures at <https://www.lbtu.lv/en/immigration>;
- conditions for learning and living at <https://www.lbtu.lv/en/before-arrival> (<https://www.lbtu.lv/sites/default/files/2018-11/LLU-Celvedis-EN-2018-17.10.pdf> );
- foreign student testimonials at - <https://www.lbtu.lv/en/student-testimonials-7>.

Responsibility for ensuring that the content available on the websites or changes therein are the same as official information lies with the programme director or the external relations coordinator of ESAF, while the external communication coordinators of the LBTU International Cooperation Centre (ICC) are responsible for posting the information on the websites. The LBTU ICC has produced and published informative booklets: *The Erasmus+ Mobility Information Handbook and Degree Studies*, leaflets and other materials that are used for advertising the programmes and international student exchange at marketing events.

**Mobility for students** at <https://www.lbtu.lv/en/exchange-studies>

## 2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

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

The number of state-funded study places is agreed and specified in a tripartite agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBTU). Every year, the LBTU Senate approves the distribution of revenues and expenses specified in the LBTU budget and financial plan, which are drawn up in accordance with the Law on the State Budget adopted annually by the Parliament and an annual decision on LBTU Consolidated Budgeting by the LBTU Rector. From 2023, after the distribution of revenues and expenses in the LBTU budget and financial plan has been approved by the LBTU Senate, the documents are forwarded for consideration and approval by the LBTU Supervisory Board. The consolidated budget is controlled and audited by an independent sworn auditor whose opinion and report are considered and approved by the LBTU Senate, while from 2023, after the consideration by the LBTU Senate, they are forwarded for consideration and approval by the LBTU Supervisory Board.

Before the LBTU consolidated budget and financial plan are approved by the LBTU Senate, they are considered, discussed and approved by a Working Group on Resource Use and Development, which consists of the rector, the vice-rectors, the deans of all of the Faculties, the head/chief accountant of the Resource Accounting Centre, the head of the Financial Planning Centre, chief economists, chief specialists in real property and legal matters.

The distribution of revenues and expenses approved by the LBTU Senate determines that the funding allocated by the government represents 80% remuneration costs and 20% other costs. The total tuition fee revenue is distributed as follows: 60% remuneration costs and 40% other costs, of which 20% are at the direct disposal of the Faculty that implements the respective programme. The amount of basic funding for science is annually estimated and allocated from research projects. Of the total basic funding for science, 50% is at the direct disposal of the Faculty and 50% is for covering centralized costs. Funding for science consists of funding earmarked for the implementation of research projects.

A breakdown of the LBTU consolidated budget and financial plan consists of organizational unit/Faculty estimates, where costs are broken down by kind of expense. The tuition fees for the programmes contained in the study direction are shown in Table 2.5.

In 2022, the percentages of costs for the bachelor programme SOPA were as follows:

- Remuneration – 73%.
- Scholarships – 7%.
- Goods and services 19%, incl. utilities 10%.
- Fixed capital formation – 1%.

In 2022, the percentages of costs for the master's programme SOPA were as follows:

- Remuneration – 75%.
- Scholarships – 5%.
- Goods and services 19%, incl. utilities – 10%.
- Fixed capital formation – 1%.

### Annual tuition fees for the programmes of the study direction in 2022

Programme title	Type of studies	Tuition fee, EUR
Academic bachelor programme “Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration”	Full-time studies in Latvian	1600
	Full-time studies in English	2500
	Part-time distance learning in Latvian	1400
Academic master’s programme “Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration”	Full-time studies in Latvian	2000
	Part-time distance learning in Latvian	1600
	Full-time studies in English	3000

For comparison, annual state funding for **the bachelor programme SOPA** for 2023 has been allocated based on the following: the basic cost of one study place is EUR 1630.11, the study-level factor for bachelor programmes is 1.0 and the social security cost of a study place for bachelor programmes is EUR 265.50, the cost factor related to thematic areas of education for the bachelor programme SOPA is 1.03 (cost factors for each thematic area of education are different, as prescribed by the Ministry of Culture regulation Procedures for Financing Institutions of Higher Education and Colleges from the Funds of the State Budget), the cost per student in the bachelor programme Sociology of organizations and public administration amounts to EUR 1940.88.

Compared with 2014 when the basic cost of one study place was set at EUR 1333.11, the study-level factor for bachelor programmes was 1.0 and the social security cost of a study place for bachelor programmes was EUR 164.34, the cost factor related to thematic areas of education for the bachelor programme SOPA was 1.0 (cost factors for each thematic area of education are different, as prescribed by the Ministry of Culture regulation Procedures for Financing Institutions of Higher Education and Colleges from the Funds of the State Budget), the cost per student in the bachelor programme SOPA amounted to EUR 1280.54.

It should be noted that in the period 2018-2020, there were no state-funded study places in the bachelor programme.

For comparison, annual state funding for **the master’s programme SOPA** for 2023 has been allocated based on the following: the basic cost of one study place is EUR 1630.11, the study-level factor for master’s programmes is 1.5 and the social security cost of a study place for master’s programmes is EUR 265.50, the cost factor related to thematic areas of education for the master’s programme SOPA is 1.03 (cost factors for each thematic area of education are different, as prescribed by the Ministry of Culture regulation Procedures for Financing Institutions of Higher Education and Colleges from the Funds of the State Budget), the cost per student in the master’s programme SOPA amounts to EUR 2778.62.

Compared with the year 2014 when the basic cost of one study place was set at EUR 1333.11, the study-level factor for master’s programmes was 1.5 and the social security cost of a study place for

master's programmes was EUR 164.34, the cost factor related to thematic areas of education for the master's programme SOPA was 1.0 (cost factors for each thematic area of education are different, as prescribed by the Ministry of Culture regulation Procedures for Financing Institutions of Higher Education and Colleges from the Funds of the State Budget), the cost per student in the master's programme SOPA was EUR 1838.67.

**Funding for science** is composed of research project funding, allocated for the implementation of science and research projects, the remuneration of researchers and leading researchers involved in the research projects, as well as for the achievement of specific project objectives. However, basic funding for science, which is allocated from scientific research projects, is distributed according to the performance of leading researchers and researchers in science. In accordance with LBTU Board of Science decision No. 22-11 of 26 October 2022 on the *Procedure for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Scientific Activity of LBTU Academic Personnel*, the basic funding for science is allocated for: 1) remuneration for the contribution of each leading researcher and researcher, which is measured in points, and their research performance, in points; 2) co-funding for research projects implemented; 3) development of research infrastructure; 4) co-funding for research activities; 5) financial support for leading researchers and researchers for conference attendance, conference fees, participation in scientific symposia, etc. The amount of basic funding for science for ESAF is shown in Figure 2.1.

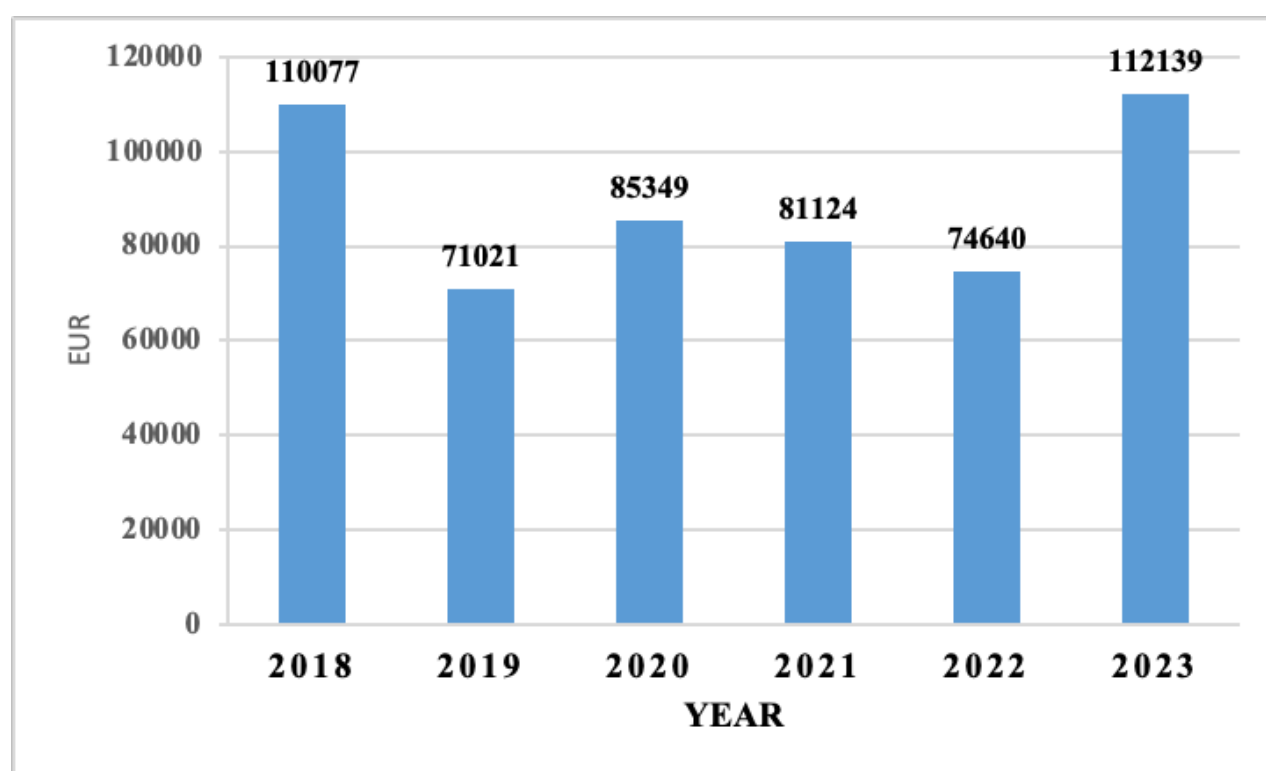


Fig. 2.1. Basic funding for science for ESAF in 2018-2023, EUR

Spending the basic funding for science is planned in accordance with the purpose, which is agreed with and approved by the LBTU Research and Project Development Centre. The expense items for basic funding for science and the percentage distribution thereof are shown in an **estimate of basic funding expenses**: remuneration of elected scientific personnel, based on their scientific performance - **10%**; remuneration of research technical and/or research service personnel - **4%**; development of and co-funding for European Union (hereinafter - EU) research and innovation support programmes (Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe etc.), other international and national scientific research projects, as well as research and development contracts - **25%**; anonymously peer-reviewed scientific publications having a Source Normalized Impact per Paper (SNIP) or Impact Factor (IP) - **34%**; participation in international conferences whose proceedings are indexed in

SCOPUS, the Web of Science or included in the database ERIH+ **15%**; development of EU research and innovation support programmes (Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe etc.) or equivalent scientific research projects **4%**; other expenses, as stipulated in the legal acts of the Republic of Latvia regarding the use of basic funding for scientific activity - **10%** (data from the 2022 estimate).

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

The study process in the study direction is organized mostly in the building of the Faculty of Economics and Social Development (ESAF) at 18 Svetes Street, where there are 19 classrooms with a total floor area of 4123 m<sup>2</sup>, and at the LBTU main building at 2 Liela Street, where five classrooms are available, as one of the organisational units of ESAF – the Institute of Social Science and Humanities – is located there. There are 21 classrooms equipped with desktop computers and projectors or TV sets, and 4 classrooms with projectors. There are 36 printers and 19 copiers, 33 portable computers with built-in cameras and microphones and MS Office and Tilde available at ESAF. Three computer classrooms with 64 places are at the disposal of students. The material and technical resources are supplemented each year, for example, 20 more computers with MS Office and Tilde and 20 stationary computer monitors were purchased in 2021. For the needs of learning, computer programs for project management and SPSS data analysis are available. The material and technical resources of the ESAF classrooms are modernised and supplemented each year within the financial means available, scientific and educational literature is regularly purchased, especially in English, which is available to students at the Centre for Studies and Scientific Information at 18 Svetes Street. Students, including foreign ones, have access to a variety of databases and resources provided by the LBTU Fundamental Library at <https://llufb.llu.lv/en>.

The delivery of the programmes contained in the study direction requires using the common material and technical resources of LBTU and those of the other Faculties or facilities, which are as follows:

- Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology;
- Faculty of Forest and Environmental Sciences;
- Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies;
- LBTU Sports Centre, where a swimming pool is also available, etc.

Classrooms in all of the Faculties are equipped with audio and video equipment (e.g. computers, projectors, screens, interactive whiteboards and chalkboards). Students and teaching personnel have at their disposal the Technology and Knowledge Transfer Division (TEPEK), which aims to promote the protection of intellectual property of scientists and companies and the commercialization of research results at LBTU.

Hostels are available to students and academic personnel. LBTU offers the services of seven hostels – at 1 Liela Street, 7 J. Cakstes Boulevard, 4 Akademijas Street, 26 J. Matera Street, 1 Petera Street, 19 Liela Street and 2 K. Helmana Street. The LBTU Sports Centre is available to students and academic personnel, at 1 Raina Street, Jelgava. LBTU has a modern and large library; for the opportunities and services provided by it, see Section 2.3.3. Access to the wireless (Wi-Fi) Internet is provided to students, academic personnel and guests in all the LBTU Faculties and other LBTU buildings.

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

### **System of methodological and information resources**

When replenishing the resources of the library, the main goal of LBTU is to provide study programmes with literature and learning materials. The Fundamental Library of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (hereinafter - LBTU FB) is an accredited library of national significance, which provides users with information resources. The goal of the LBTU FB is to provide library users with the information resources and services needed for the learning process and scientific activity. A system of information and methodological resources has been established to ensure student-focused and modern access of students, academic and scientific personnel to the library resources.

The Statute of the LBTU Fundamental Library specifies the principles of functioning of the LBTU FB as well as the obligations, rights and liability (<https://llufb.llu.lv/lv/informacija-par-biblioteku/latvijas-lauksaimniecibas-universitates-fundamentala-las-bibliotekas> (in Latvian)).

The LBTU FB Terms of Use specify the general principles of functioning of the library, how to obtain the status of library user, and the user's rights, obligations, etc.

([https://llufb.llu.lv/sites/llufb/files/dokumenti/LLU\\_bibliot\\_lietos\\_noteik.pdf](https://llufb.llu.lv/sites/llufb/files/dokumenti/LLU_bibliot_lietos_noteik.pdf) in Latvian, <https://llufb.llu.lv/en/general-information/how-become-library-user> in English).

Information, research and communication contact points have been established in some of the Faculties to ensure a student-centred and more accessible study process. The electronic catalogues of the contact points are available on the library website: <https://lbtufb.lbtu.lv/lv/datubazes-un-katalogi/lbtu-informacijas-centru-un-informacijas-kabinetu-elektroniskie-katalogi> (in Latvian); <https://lbtufb.lbtu.lv/en/catalogues-and-databases> (in English).

The library collection is supplemented based mostly on recommendations from teaching personnel. The Book Request Form is available on the library website (<https://llufb.llu.lv/lv/pakalpojumi/gramatu-iegade-llu-fb-krajumam> (in Latvian)).

Based on the requests of teaching personnel and other users of the library, the LBTU FB purchases the publications requested. The LBTU FB has developed a Collection Supplementation Policy, which states that the main priority is the programmes delivered at and the research fields of LBTU. In accordance with the Legal Deposit Law, the LBTU FB, as a library of national significance, receives one copy from each printed and electronic publication in the LBTU profile fields.

### **Accessibility of the library online**

The LBTU FB provides library users with the literature or information necessary for studies, research, scientific and advisory activities. The library collection is constantly supplemented to meet the needs of the study direction. Industry publications for learning and research are available:

- at the Lending point;
- at the Textbook Lending point;
- in the library reading room;
- in the depository library of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Factual and bibliographic references on various matters could be obtained from the Bibliographic Information Division.

The sources of information that are not available in the library collection could be searched for through LBTU network-subscribed databases or outside the LBTU network through the LBTU Information System, at the LBTU Fundamental Library Reference and Information Centre, or interlibrary loan services could be used. A breakdown of the library's collection by science (% of the total collection) is available at (<https://ilufb.ltu.lv/lv/informacija-par-biblioteku/bibliotekas-krajums> (in Latvian)).

The library's opening hours are tailored to the needs of the library's main users – students and teaching personnel. On weekdays, the library is open to its users from 8.30 to 19.00, on Fridays – from 8.30 to 17.00. The library is also open to the public on the first Saturday of every month, from 9.00 to 14.00. The working hours of the library's reading room and Reference and Information Centre during the period of individual studies and examinations are extended to 24.00. The catalogue and online databases are accessible 24/7.

To make the library suitable for studies and research work, the LBTU FB reader service total area is 787.1 m<sup>2</sup>. The reading room has comfortable workspaces both in the hall and on the balcony. The Internet and Wi-Fi are available. The reading room has also a lounge with comfortable sofas. There is also the quiet reading room. The Reference and Information Centre has desktop computers and provide qualified consultant services. The LBTU FB has the accessibility elements for any student and persons with disabilities: signs with a schematic layout of the building and the location of a lift are available on the building wall, a lift, specially equipped amenities for persons with reduced mobility, signs for finding a room, marked stairs as well as the building could be entered with a guide dog.

### **Library in the digital environment - databases and search engines**

The LBTU FB offers its users various online databases and databases on other data carriers. Before being offered to users, databases are analysed for search capabilities, thematic coverage, chronological coverage, and access capabilities to meet the needs of the fields of study. Information on the databases and their descriptions are placed on the LBTU FB website.

The library has purchased the search engine PRIMO DISCOVERY, which enables users to simultaneously search for information in subscribed and open access online databases, in the Electronic Joint Catalogue of libraries of national significance and in the databases created by the LBTU FB (research papers by LBTU teaching personnel and researchers, LBTU master theses etc.). Registering with an LBTU IS user account allows the users to view their user accounts and extend expiration dates for borrowed items, order publications, access full texts in subscribed online databases and save the search results. The library's website provides the unified search tool PRIMO DISCOVERY and a video tutorial.

Access to online databases is provided 24/7. The *EzProxy* tool is available, which gives an

opportunity to connect to e-journal and e-book databases subscribed outside the LBTU network, as well as trial databases by using the LBTU IS user account.

The LBTU FB users have an opportunity to search for information in the following subscribed foreign and national online databases:

- *CAB Abstracts*,
- *CRC Press e-books*,
- *EBSCO eBook Academic Collection database covering a wide range of multidisciplinary topics in the EBSCO host databases, Academic Search Ultimate etc.*,
- *ScienceDirect Journals*,
- *Scopus*,
- *SciVal*,
- *Web of Science*,
- *Wiley Online Library*,
- *Letonika*,
- *Newspaper library (Lursoft)*,

The intensity of use of foreign databases subscribed by the LBTU FB has been identified by analysing the databases available to students, academic and research personnel in the relevant field and their usage statistics. In 2022, the number of connection sessions was 107302, the number of searches was 229031, the total number of downloaded content items was 112992. The most popular database for users in terms of number of sessions was EBSCO and ScienceDirect Journal, while in terms of number of searches: EBSCO, ScienceDirect Journal, in terms of number of downloaded content items: ScienceDirect Journal, EBSCO and EBSCO e-book. In cooperation with the Cultural Information System Centre as well as at the request of LBTU, various online databases are periodically available for trial for information search purposes.

Every user of the library is given an opportunity to receive professional help and advice at a time, manner and form acceptable to them. Advice and training are provided both individually and in groups. They are provided in person, by email or by phone. One of the most important tasks performed by the library is the training of users in the use of databases. New or revised informational, methodological and technical assistance materials are regularly developed. The library offers more than 30 various assistance materials, which are available on the library website.

The databases created by the personnel of the LBTU FB are also available to readers (<https://lbtufb.lbtu.lv/lv/datubazes-un-katalogi/lbtu-fundamentalas-bibliotekas-veidotas-datubazes-un-katalogi>):

- an electronic catalogue of the LBTU Fundamental Library,
- research papers by LBTU teaching and research personnel,
- doctoral theses defended at LBTU,
- LBTU journals and conference proceedings,
- patent research papers by LBTU teaching and research personnel,
- publications on LBTU,
- LBTU master theses,
- LBTU publications.

The unified search engine of the LBTU Fundamental Library (PRIMO DISCOVERY) allows individuals to search for information in the electronic joint catalogue, subscribed and open-access online databases, databases created by the LBTU FB (research papers by LBTU teaching and research personnel, LBTU publications, LBTU master theses). Table 2.6 summarizes data on the use of foreign databases in 2022. Information on the study direction is indicated in parentheses.

Table 2.6

**Use of foreign databases subscribed by the LBTU FB in 2022**

<b>Database</b>	<b>Number of connection sessions in social sciences</b>	Total number of connection sessions at LBTU	<b>Number of searches in social sciences</b>	Total number of searches at LBTU	<b>Total number of downloaded content items in social sciences</b>	Total number of downloaded content items
<i>CABI CAB Abstracts</i>	750	2251	2074	6223	212	636
<i>CRCPress Taylor&amp;Francis Group</i>	1078 (359)	3021	2000 (667)	5620	322(128)	904
<i>EBSCO</i>	9237(7097)	35458	24426(20203)	92821	1088(966)	2872
<i>EBSCO e-book</i>	2872 (2833)	8051	7586 (7102)	21243	957(940)	2664
<i>ScienceDirect Journal</i>	2561 (2103)	10246	6729 (4856)	26918	7657 (6858)	38287
<i>Scopus</i>	5553 (4480)	18400	6358 (5500)	20980	3867	11603
<i>Web of Science</i>	4271	16230	5110	19421	2495	6986
<i>Wiley Online Journals</i>	622	1868	763	2289	1822	5466

The LBTU FB as a depository library of the FAO and the national AGRIS centre participates in developing the international AGRIS database.

### **Services offered by the library**

The following **free-of-charge** services are available at the LBTU FB:

- use of computers with access to the Internet and Wi-Fi,
- an opportunity to use the following computer applications *Autodesk EDU Master suite 2018 (AutoCAD, AutoCAD Structural Detailing, Autodesk Robot Structural Analysis professional etc.), CorelDRAW X7, SPSS Statistics v21, VISIO 2013,*
- 24/7 access to library-based, subscribed and free online databases,
- borrowing of books, periodicals and other documents,
- training in and advice on working with full-text and bibliographic databases, digital resources, using e-services, working with computers and the Internet,
- training for LBTU teaching personnel in how to search for and retrieve information, add research papers from the LBTU database of teaching personnel and researcher research papers to the LBTU IS personal account, as well as create a researcher identification number ORCID and research ID, etc.,

- classes for doctoral, master and bachelor students, including in English,
- instructional aids for each target audience (scientists, students, other users) that are sent them on request,
- provision of references and advice on the library and its use,
- editing of bibliographies, a delivery of examples of a bibliographical description on request via e-mail,
- tailor-made exhibitions.

The following paid services are offered by the LBTU FB:

- copying (coloured, black and white),
- printing (coloured, black and white),
- scanning,
- written thematic references,
- SBA and SSBA services (costs of postal services must be covered),
- delivery of copies of documents (at the supplier's price),
- spiral binding.

The library offers the following **e-services**:

- use of the electronic catalogue 24/7,
- electronic book reservation,
- expiration date extension for borrowed items 24/7,
- use of the unified search engine PRIMO DISCOVERY,
- 24/7 access to library-based, subscribed and free online databases (both full-text and bibliographic),
- opportunity to connect to e-journal and e-book databases subscribed outside the LBTU network by using EZproxy and the LBTU IS user account 24/7,
- use of Mendeley – a scientific information search application, an opportunity to use other online information resources from the library website,
- access to the electronic catalogues of the LBTU Information Centres and Information Offices (BIS ALEPH500),
- opportunity to use instructional materials on information resources, available on the library website, that have been prepared either by the LBTU FB or by database maintainers,
- electronic delivery of documents,
- opportunity to use a service Ask a Librarian,
- a Book Request Form on the library website.

### **Financing of information and methodological resources and the number of publications available**

The funds of the LBTU FB are an independent component of the LBTU budget. The property of the LBTU FB is the property of LBTU and the LBTU FB is directly subordinated to the vice rector for studies. The funds invested in the development of the LBTU FB increased every year. In 2022, the total expenses reached EUR **343517**, of which EUR 75682 were spent on inventory, incl. on electronic resources EUR 66050, and on information technologies EUR 21572. As at 1 January 2023, the total collection of the LBTU FB reached **410 644** copies and **126 001** titles. There are available 25 subscribed databases and 8 databases created by library personnel.

For delivering the study direction and the programmes contained therein, the LBTU FB collection contains 99582 **various publications**: scientific monographs, books, conference proceedings, results of scientific research etc. In the reporting period (2013-2023) the number of titles of publications has increased by 794, of which 336 are in foreign languages.

**ESAF Centre for Studies and Scientific Information.** The Centre for Studies and Scientific Information (hereinafter – the Centre) has been operating at ESAF since 1973. Originally known as the Economic Information Office, the purpose of its establishment pertained to the availability of subject-specific literature to 54 ESAF students, so that the bibliographical collection would be closer to the place where students study. The Centre has grown into a Centre for Studies and Scientific Information whose primary role is to provide students and academic personnel with an environment where diverse and up-to-date student-centred approaches could be applied: there is an opportunity to find subject-specific literature: books, newspapers and magazines, digitally work with all the available databases and search engines and receive services: printing, scanning and copying.

The Centre is a place for studies, research and communication for national and foreign students, academic personnel and researchers. Students have four desktop computer workstations with Internet access for their competence development. The Centre's interior design is modern and creates a sense of an informal atmosphere; in a student-focused atmosphere, visitors have an opportunity to find an informative, scientific and creative solution to the problem by communicating, taking over other students' experience, creating a broader worldview, learning and exploring by doing. The collections of books and periodicals of the Centre are available to students and academic personnel of the other Faculties by visiting the library in person and using the unified LBTU FB electronic catalogue for remote selection (<https://lufb.ltu.lv/lv/datubazes-un-katalogi/llu-informacijas-centru-un-informacijas-kabinetu-elektro-niskie-katalogi> (in Latvian)).

The working hours of the ESAF Centre are suitable for full-time and part-time students – on weekdays from 8.15 to 17.00, on Saturdays from 8.15 to 15.00.

To make the Centre suitable for individual and research work, its total reader service area is 84.7 m<sup>2</sup>. The reading room has comfortable workstations both in the communication and service room and in the separate quiet room with four desktop computer workstations. The Internet is available as well. There is a qualified advisor available at the Centre. The communication and service room has a lounge with comfortable sofas and rocking chairs, where periodically discussions between academic personnel and guest scientists occur.

For the Centre, books and other sources are purchased from the budget of ESAF. The Centre (2013-2023) has purchased books worth EUR 13 251, of which 88% of the total were in foreign languages. The Centre has a wide range of *Dienas Bizness* (Daily Business) manuals covering all the areas of the study direction. At present, the *Dienas Bizness* manuals are updated in their digital editions. The *Dienas Bizness* manuals are available only at the Centre of ESAF, and the volumes purchased are also used by students and academic personnel from the other Faculties. The Centre offers a wide range of periodicals that provide information necessary for the study direction. These periodicals are only available at the Centre of ESAF. In the reporting period, the Centre has purchased 833 books from the budget of ESAF, the collection of books is also made up of gifts and donations.

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

In the study process at LBTU, the MOODLE platform is used in almost all courses in full-time and part-time studies, including part-time distance learning. It is a support system for the traditional study process for posting instructional materials, submitting homework, taking tests, as well as for communication with teaching personnel/students, remote online classes and other activities. The use of the LBTU e-studies system is governed by the decision of the vice-rector of studies Procedure for Using the LBTU E-studies System (document is added to the section Other Annexes in the folder LBTU Documents (in Latvian)).

According to the definition given in the Education Law, students of part-time distance learning study the content of the programme independently in an individual way, using specially structured study materials, provided by the educational institution, and various technical and electronic means of communication (<https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/50759-education-law>). At LBTU, part-time distance learning and remote studies is governed by Rector decision No. 4.3.-8/105 *Procedure for Organizing Distance Learning at LBTU* (document is added to the section Other Annexes in the folder LBTU Documents (in Latvian)). The procedure stipulates that remote studies is implemented as an effective, high-quality, complete and inclusive part of full-time studies to give an opportunity for the student to achieve the expected learning outcomes and develop transversal skills, as well as provide the student with a differentiated, personalized and interdisciplinary study process. In both full-time and part-time studies, remote studies may be implemented to an extent of up to 50% of the total number of contact hours set for the implementation of the respective programme, which is specified in a study plan for the respective programme. In part-time distance learning, students are provided with two to four contact hours per credit. The contact hours include introductory lectures, individual consultations, discussions with lecturers, final examinations and sometimes also joining online lectures for the full-time students (for example, if the online remote lectures are held in accordance with the Procedure for Organizing Distance Learning at LBTU because of an emergency, which was in the case of Covid-19).

Study materials posted on the MOODLE platform and intended for full-time studies and especially for part-time distance learning are designed extensively and comprehensively, with a series of additional materials to ensure that the students can take distance learning courses according to the study plan. At the beginning of each semester, programme directors agree with teaching personnel about the number of contact hours for the current semester and inform students of the part-time distance learning about the schedule for the semester; the classes are delivered on the MOODLE platform by using the online BigBlueButton tool, which could also be recorded, and those who, for objective reasons, cannot connect at the time set can watch a recording later.

University, ESAF, programme directors and teaching personnel develop part-time distance learning and align it with strategic trends in higher education development in the world, which require significant efforts to develop this type of education. From the beginning of the reporting period, teaching personnel purposefully raised their qualification, as well as developed subject courses in the MOODLE platform. Experience sharing among LBTU teaching personnel, professional development at individual level or courses on providing distance learning – all these activities had a positive effect on licensing changes in the programme and on expert ratings of the readiness of academic personnel involved in delivering the programme to implement part-time distance learning, which is delivered in the study direction and began to be implemented in the bachelor programme from the academic year 2022/2023.

Teaching personnel have regularly updated their knowledge of distance learning practices as part of the LBTU professional development programme for higher education educators Innovations in University Didactics (120 h), in which special modules are taught on adult education and e-studies. An e-studies module is delivered by an LBTU e-studies methodologist, and she offers individual and group consultations and is always available for both teaching personnel and students.

At the beginning of each academic year, the programme director delivers face-to-face introductory classes (as part of the course Introduction to Studies), in which also guest lectures are invited to students of both full-time and part-time distance learning, as well as the e-studies methodologist participates, introducing the students with the specifics of the MOODLE platform and how to use it. Students are introduced with how to use library resources at the LBTU Fundamental Library and remotely, as well as how they can access the resources of the LBTU Fundamental Library.

Experience in e-studies is also regularly analysed at LBTU annual academic conferences, in which any LBTU teaching personnel member can participate, for example, on 29 January 2021, an online academic conference *Study Quality: Experience and Improvement* was held at LBTU ([https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnE4xrZk5FB5WcQHOalk0S\\_qx2OSIDY\\_J](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnE4xrZk5FB5WcQHOalk0S_qx2OSIDY_J)), where several presentations were devoted to various technological solutions to learning, including distance learning.

Teaching personnel regularly participates in training related to use of digital solutions in teaching, for example, in 2020 some of the teaching personnel of the ESAF Institute of Social Science and Humanities, who are involved in implementation of the study direction, took an 8-hour course *Online Tools for Creating Interactive Presentations and Communicating and Creating Surveys Online* at the Zemgale Region Competence Development Centre, a 4-hour course *MS Cloud Services for Data Storage and Sharing*, and an 8-hour course *Dynamic and Active Presentation (PowerPoint options and additional plugins)*. These courses were part of LBTU project NO. 8.2.2.0/ 18/A/014 "LLU Academic Personnel Development". There are lecturers who have completed professional development courses, including on e-studies and the English language, also at other universities in Latvia, for example, at Riga Stradins University.

Various projects are implemented at LBTU, e.g. "Digitalization Initiatives for Enhancing the Quality of the Learning Process in the Fields of Strategic Specialization of Universities" (ES34) (Project number 8.2.3.0/22/A/005). The goal of the project is to increase digital capacity and introduce digital initiatives at six universities in Latvia in their strategic areas of specialization, integrating technological solutions into the content and delivery of courses. From the autumn of 2023, LBTU students can take 42 courses developed by 37 lecturers and based on various digitalization solutions, which allow new technologies in all LBTU programmes to be learnt, thereby helping to build up the students' digital competences and increasing their competitiveness in the labour market. Some of these courses were already tested also by the bachelor and master's students of the study direction.

LBTU as a cooperation partner is involved in the ESF project "Digitization initiatives for the involvement of students and the improvement of the quality of studies at the University of Latvia and the partner universities of the project" (ES35) (project No. 8.2.3.0/22/A/006) implemented by the University of Latvia aimed at increasing the digital capacity of leading universities in Latvia. The goal of the project is to increase the digital capacity of leading universities in Latvia by introducing joint initiatives for digitalization in five universities in Latvia to increase the quality of the learning process through involving also students, thereby taking over the experience of world universities and the global and the Latvian ICT industry, incl. that of three leading companies operating in the field of information and communication technology, which have more than 20 years of experience in the development of digital competences. This would increase the level of students' digital skills, bringing them closer to the needs and requirements of the future labour market and transforming the learning environment, thereby temporarily increasing the competitiveness of universities in the international environment.

Overall, it could be concluded that LBTU has extensive information resources of scientific and methodological literature available to both lecturers and students. The lecturers engaged in the

study direction ensure control over the acquisition and development of knowledge by students. LBTU holds scientific seminars, conferences (including international), where students of full-time and part-time distance learning can demonstrate their knowledge development on selected research topics. The academic staff delivering the programme regularly work on improvement of their knowledge, skills and competence, which allows students in the programmes of the study direction to take their courses in a more complete way.

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

The recruitment and employment process of teaching personnel at LBTU (including the announcement of vacancies, recruitment, election procedure, etc.) is governed by the Law on Higher Education Institutions and the Statute of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies on Academic Positions approved by the LBTU Senate. The Statute is available on the LBTU website (<https://www.llu.lv/lv/llu-pamatdokumenti>) (in Latvian).

The number of positions of professors, associate professors and assistant professors in the respective branches and sub-branches of science is determined based on funding possibilities, the need for research activities and study programmes as well as plans for academic personnel development. The number of academic positions and position groups are approved by the ESAF Board, the LBTU Board of Science, the LBTU Board of Studies and the LBTU Senate. The recruitment of an academic personnel member is made on a competitive basis.

Based on proposals on vacant academic positions received from the LBTU organizational units, the LBTU Personnel Department prepares a draft advertisement and submits it to the Academic Personnel and Structural Policy Committee of LBTU for consideration (hereinafter the Committee). Following a decision made at a Committee meeting, the Personnel Department prepares a draft proposal on vacant academic positions and submits it to the LBTU Senate for approval. After a positive decision has been made by the LBTU Senate, the LBTU Personnel Department announces an open competition for vacant academic positions by publishing an advertisement in the newspaper *Latvijas Vēstnesis* (Latvian Herald) and on the LBTU website.

Academic personnel elections are held by open voting: professors and associate professors are elected by the Board of Professors of the relevant branch of science not later than four months from the date of announcement of the competition; assistant professors, leading researchers, researchers, lecturers, assistants and research assistants are elected by the Board of each Faculty not later than three months from the date of announcement of the competition; leading researchers, researchers and research assistants are elected by the Board of Science of the respective research institute not later than two months from the date of announcement of the competition.

From 2021, LBTU began evaluating professors every six years, and there is no longer a re-election procedure applied if the professor wants to continue working. From 2022, a periodic evaluation of professors is held every two years at LBTU. It is governed by the rector's decision on *Procedure for Evaluating the Scientific and Pedagogical Qualifications and Organizational Competence of LBTU Professors and Associate Professors*.

Based on the rector's decision, LBTU has developed a *Procedure for Recruitment of Foreign Visiting*

*Lecturers.* The procedure stipulates that a visiting lecturer may be invited by the responsible Faculty, or a foreign visiting lecturer may express a wish to carry out pedagogical /scientific activity at LBTU. The responsible Faculty assigns a course or research and pedagogical tasks to the foreign visiting lecturer that are aligned with his/her competences. A legal employment relationship is established with the foreign visiting lecturer.

The **individual academic workloads** of academic personnel are planned for each academic year in accordance with the *LBTU Statute on Academic Workloads* and the rector's decision on the *Planning, Accounting for and Control of Individual Workloads of Academic Personnel*, which defines the components of a workload of academic personnel, workload rates and the procedures of accounting for and control of the workload.

## **Remuneration**

At LBTU, the remuneration of an academic personnel member consists of 3 components:

- *a salary*, based on the Cabinet regulation *Regulations regarding Remuneration of Pedagogues* (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/283667>) the rector decision *On Remuneration of Pedagogues*;
- *a bonus paid based on the motivation system*, as LBTU has developed and introduced a motivation system that allows the university to collect and evaluate the academic work activities of each teaching personnel member, which are not included in the workload. The system provides a point system based on 16 criteria;
- *a bonus for scientific performance* - every year LBTU collects and evaluates the performance of LBTU academic personnel, leading researchers, researchers and researcher assistants in terms of efficiency of scientific activity based on 7 criteria.

**Professional development of academic personnel** involves participation in appropriate professional development programmes, experience sharing and participation in conferences and seminars, as evidenced by the documents issued upon the completion. Every six years, academic personnel are entitled to six-month paid academic leave for research or for research activities outside their workplace.

The procedure for professional development to be performed is stipulated by the Cabinet Regulation regarding the *Education Required for Teachers and the Procedure for Development of Professional Qualifications of Teachers* (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/301572> (in Latvian)). The regulation stipulates that the teaching personnel of a university have to complete professional development programmes on innovations in the higher education system, university didactics or educational work management, 160 academic hours in length (including at least 60 contact hours), prior to the end of the term of office. The professional development could involve international mobility, as well as participation in conferences and seminars, as evidenced by documents submitted by the academic personnel. LBTU implements the professional development programme for higher education pedagogues *Innovations in University Didactics*. The aim of the programme is to build up higher education pedagogues' knowledge of university didactics and possibilities of its application in pedagogical activity. Upon completion of this programme, a certificate is awarded.

The employment of teaching personnel is based on academic personnel development plans adopted by the faculty, considering the need for elected academic personnel for teaching and research work. Personnel development plans and any announcement of a competition for academic personnel positions at the university level are assessed at a Personnel Development Policy meeting. Workloads for teaching personnel are calculated based on the LBTU Statute on Academic Workloads. Job categories and salaries are set at LBTU based on the rector's decision No. 4.3.-13/108 *Remuneration of Teaching Personnel*. Employment contracts are concluded with

elected teaching personnel for the term of election, while with visiting teaching personnel – for a certain period according to the amount of work and the workload.

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

Requirements for academic positions are prescribed by the *Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia* (<https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/37967-law-on-higher-education-institutions>). Qualifications of teaching personnel are stipulated by the Statute of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies on Academic Positions. The statute prescribes the qualifications to be possessed by elected academic personnel for each kind of positions. However, the teaching personnel who are not elected at the respective organisational unit need to meet the same requirements and have the same qualifications as those of the same academic level. The mentioned requirements are in accordance with the current regulatory framework of the Republic of Latvia that clearly specifies criteria for teaching personnel holding a particular academic position.

LBTU has identified and described processes that contribute to the qualifications and work quality of teaching personnel. One of them is the **election and re-election of academic personnel**. It allows an assessment of the work quality of teaching personnel in the previous period and determining their eligibility for the positions for which they are applying (lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor or professor). The criteria for work quality are prescribed by the regulatory frameworks of the Republic of Latvia and LBTU.

Professors and associate professors have to meet the unified national requirements for evaluating their scientific and pedagogical qualifications based on the criteria set by Cabinet Regulation No. 129 of 25 February 2021 *Procedures for Evaluating the Scientific and Teaching Qualifications or Results of Artistic Creation Work of an Applicant for the Position of Professor or Associate Professor and of a Professor or Associate Professor Holding the Position*.

To contribute to continuous professional development in higher education didactics, LBTU delivers the **professional development programme for higher education pedagogues** Innovations in University Didactics (160 h) that has to be taken by the academic personnel of LBTU every six years. Since 2017, LBTU has introduced a **motivation system for teaching personnel** (LBTU rector decision No. 2.4.-12.2/6 of 30 November 2022 *On the Motivation System for LBTU Academic Personnel*).

The motivation system evaluates teaching personnel according to 16 criteria, which are divided into 5 categories: student assessment; preparation of teaching aids; organisational work; professional development and scientific activity. The motivation system allows teaching personnel to earn an extra bonus for high-quality work. The quality assessment points earned by a teaching personnel member are added up, and each criterion is assigned a weight. The LBTU Financial Planning Centre calculates the size of a bonus for each teaching personnel member based on the total score earned. This system allows the quality of teaching personnel to be assessed and the personnel to be

rewarded according to uniform and comparable criteria. Teaching personnel are very positive about this system, which motivates them to raise the quality of their work. Another very important assessment of teaching personnel's work quality is **student surveys**. At the end of each semester, each teaching personnel member's work is assessed by students. Students make this assessment anonymously, electronically in the LBTU IS system (<https://lais.ltu.lv/>). Students assess the work of their teaching personnel by answering six questions and giving ratings on a 5-point scale, with 5 points being very high and one point – very low. The ratings given by students are electronically available to each teaching personnel member who delivers a course, as well as to the director of the respective programme and the director of the institute involved in the delivery of the programme. The programme director and the director of the institute take the ratings into account as far as possible when planning the work of teaching personnel for the next year. Based on the ratings, any teaching personnel member is encouraged to improve the performance and eliminate shortcomings in his/her work.

Since February 2019, in accordance with Board of Studies decision No. 2.4-14/2, LBTU has introduced a unified **class hospitation procedure**, which is intended for the control of delivery of classes and for experience sharing. Hospitation is carried out by the programme director, the director of the institute or other LBTU teaching personnel members. The teaching personnel who had been given suggestions or recommendations for improvement of their classes after the hospitation have to provide information about the improvement activities done (or planned). The hospitation practice introduced allows an assessment of and improvement in the work quality of academic personnel, making suggestions for the improvement and controlling the progress.

The opportunities provided for LBTU teaching personnel to raise their qualifications are implemented through several measures: 1) **ERASMUS + mobility programme**, which allows for experience sharing; 2) **participation in international scientific conferences and seminars** is funded within financial possibilities; 3) the annual **LBTU Academic Conference** aiming to encourage teaching personnel to systematically develop their didactic competence and share their success with their colleagues has been held (since 1981). The LBTU Language Centre offers an **English language course** (32 h) to university teaching personnel. Since 2010, LBTU has been providing a professional development course "MOODLE e-Course Creation Management System".

Since 1998, LBTU has been holding an annual contest of textbooks and instructional aids to promote the publication of new, original textbooks and instructional aids needed for the delivery of courses at LBTU. Textbooks and instructional aids for the contest are submitted by LBTU teaching personnel to the Assessment Committee approved by the rector. In the reporting period (2013-2023), 128 works were submitted to the contest. Teaching personnel have an opportunity to participate in international **scholarship contests and EU-funded projects** aimed at raising their qualifications through acquiring new knowledge and skills.

LBTU implemented the following ESF projects: No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/014 "Development of LBTU Academic Personnel", with the aim of raising the quality of the learning process through enhancing the competencies of personnel and collaboration with industry and engaging doctoral students as well as foreign academic personnel, and project No. 8.2.3.0/18/A/009 "Enhancement of the Governance of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies", which intends to enhance the quality of content of LBTU programmes and, by making effective use of the resources available, to ensure better governance of the university and build up the competencies and skills of administrative personnel. The personnel engaged in the study direction are involved in implementing these projects. For example, in the academic year 2019/2020, within project No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/014, professional English was mastered by 8 teaching personnel members, two SOHU teaching personnel members underwent professional development at RAIT Ltd (100h), one SOHU member at Latvijas Mobilais Telefons Ltd (100h) and one SOHU member at the foundation Latvian

Rural Forum (100h).

One teaching personnel member used an opportunity to spend a month at the University of Helsinki and participate in the Ruralia Institute Visiting Scholars Programme 2018/2019, thereby gaining experience and cooperation contacts in Finland.

The teaching personnel delivering the programmes contained in the study direction actively use and appreciate the opportunities offered by the university and ESAF to build up their qualifications. The opportunities used result in updated course programmes and enhanced delivery of the courses technically, as the teaching personnel incorporate new techniques in their courses and apply them in their work. They learn the latest scientific findings, which are used to build up their professional skills and competences, and the overall quality of the programmes increases. Most of the teaching personnel participate in the decision-making body of ESAF – the Board of Faculty – and in the Methodology Commissions of the LBTU Faculties, thereby applying their experience in achieving the overall strategy of ESAF and organising the work process. Skills development provides an opportunity for teaching personnel to progress in their academic and research careers, be engaged in higher-level programmes and receive higher remuneration for higher-quality work.

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

Twenty-nine teaching personnel are engaged in implementing the study direction. Most of the teaching personnel are employed by the three institutes of ESAF: the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities (SOHU), including the Language Centre (ValC) - 20 teaching personnel; the Institute of Economics and Finance (EKFI) and the Institute of Business and Management Science (UZVA) have a total of 5 teaching personnel, yet teaching personnel from other LBTU faculties are also involved in delivering certain courses (for example, the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology, the Faculty of Forest and Environmental Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies – a total of 4 teaching personnel).

The workloads of the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction are calculated in hours, in accordance with the LBTU Statute on Academic Workloads approved by the LBTU Senate. An analysis of the situation in the academic year 2022/2023 reveals that the total number of full-time equivalents in the bachelor programme was 5.97 (a total of 31 lecturers were involved), while in the master's programme it was 1.28 FTE (a total of 15 lecturers were involved). The total number of full-time equivalent jobs broken down by level of academic position in the academic year 2022/2023 is shown in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7

**Number of full-time equivalent jobs by level of academic position in the programmes contained in the study direction (academic year 2022/2023)**

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**Number of teaching personnel by level of academic position**

Programme title	Level of studies	Professor	Associate professor	Associate professor	Lecturer	Visiting lecturer
Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration	Bachelor	1	5	7	5	13
<i>Workload, FTE</i>		<i>0,03</i>	<i>1,59</i>	<i>2,75</i>	<i>0,54</i>	<i>1,06</i>
Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration	Master	0	5	6	1	3
<i>Workload, FTE</i>		<i>0</i>	<i>0,57</i>	<i>0,5</i>	<i>0.06</i>	<i>0,15</i>

The pedagogical workload is made up of delivery of classes, as well as student work correction and supervision of graduate theses. A relatively low percentage of workloads is comprised of work in thesis defence committees, supervision/defence of practice and supervision of doctoral theses. For a more detailed breakdown of workloads by programme, see Section 3.4.1. In addition to academic work, the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction do research.

It should be remarked, that cases of disproportionate workload for a teaching personnel member, do not occur because the workload is planned according to the LBTU Statute on Academic Workloads.

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

LBTU Student Self-government plays a major role in organising support events for the students. In 2023, for example, a psycho-emotional health survey was conducted among LBTU students (the survey was led by the physician in psychotherapy), which found out students' views and self-esteem around anxiety and depression. When analysing the results of the survey, the physician recommended that psycho-emotional support measures should be implemented in LBTU. In spring 2024, a lecture cycle is organised on topics identified by the survey as significant for the students. Once a month, the physician remotely provides professional consultations on depression, anxiety, and burnout to both Latvian and international students. Attendance at remote lectures is increasing with each time, with an average of 60 listeners connecting. The number of listeners may be higher because multiple students can listen to a lecture from one device.

LBTU Student Self-government conducts student welfare surveys annually in LBTU faculties and student hotels, which collect information about problems and recommendations to address them. The results of the surveys are presented to LBTU management to look for solutions. In parallel with various surveys, the head of the social direction of self-government, in co-operation with the heads of social direction of faculty student self-governments, also solves other types of short-term problems, which are stressed by students. Directors of the study programmes also participate in

solving various issues of concern to students, for example by listening to students' needs and recommending where to seek support. This is particularly important in the case of foreign students, who often have issues related to practical life, healthcare, cultural differences, emotional support, etc. when they come to Latvia and stay here. Alongside the Student self-government activities in providing psychological support, LBTU has also done so, such as providing psychologist counselling to students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As regards career support measures, it should be noted that currently students do not have access to a career counsellor at university, but in study programmes with compulsory traineeships they contribute to the integration of students into the labour market already during their studies. Career support activities are mostly at faculty level (including ESAF): training tours and guest lectures of professionals in the sector are organised. Directors and teaching personnel of OSPS study programmes who have trained in research institutions, for example, are able to talk about current developments and job opportunities in the sector, thus stimulating greater interest and understanding among students. In this way, several students in the OSPS Bachelor and Master's study programmes have found job opportunities already during their studies or soon after graduating from the study programme.

### **Financial support**

Financial support in the form of scholarships is available to students during their studies (<https://www.llu.lv/stipendijas>(in Latvian)). On a complete basis, students may apply for:

1. State scholarship – monthly bachelor and master scholarships is EUR 140;
2. One-time scholarship – during the semester, students may apply for one-time scholarship in the amount of two minimum scholarships;
3. Social scholarship “Studēt gods” (Proud to Study) for students from large families – EUR 175 per month;
4. LBTU Development Fund (LBTU AF) scholarship – the fund offers students a total of 18 scholarship programmes (from EUR 40 to 1500). Scholarships are monthly and one-time.

### **Tuition fee relief for students**

LBTU grants (50-100%) relief to the following categories of non-failing students:

1. working employees of LBTU who are enrolled on a doctoral programme,
2. LBTU employees' children,
3. Persons with Group I or Group II disability,
4. Orphans or persons without parental care,
5. Students being sportspersons.

### **Scholarships**

Bachelor and master students of the study direction “Sociology, Politology and Anthropology” may participate in the following scholarship contests administered by the LBTU Development Fund:

- bachelor students in 7 scholarship programmes (the Senate scholarship, the Student Self-government scholarship and scholarships named after Ulmanis, Senate, Čakste, Jānis and Millija Kāvuši, Mirdza Oškalne, Jānis Rūvalds);
- master students in 5 scholarship programmes (the Senate scholarship and scholarships named after Ulmanis, Čakste, Jānis and Millija Kāvuši, Mirdza Oškalne).

In addition, students may apply for a state scholarship, a social scholarship “Studēt gods” and a scholarship named after Peteris Birkerts. Of course, scholarship opportunities are also provided by the RTU Development Fund, the LU Foundation and the Vitoli Foundation.

## Sport classes

The LBTU Sport Hall provides the following sport facilities **free of charge** to any student:

- a gymnasium;
- a fitness gymnasium;
- a sport hall;
- a swimming pool.

Students are offered several class times a week, more details are available at <https://www.llu.lv/en/sport-for-students>.

LBTU provides the following kinds of support to international students:

- international students apply for studies via the e-admission system Dream Apply, which provides partially formalized admission procedures, thereby significantly facilitating communication with LBTU; coordinators of the International Cooperation Centre (SSC) individually answer specific questions of the applicants;
- any international student is provided with a room in a well-equipped student hostel;
- to introduce international students to LBTU and the learning and living environments and the Latvian cultural environment, a Welcome Week is held for consolidation events in the first week of each semester;
- the LBTU SSC provides technical support regarding acquiring/extending visas, residence permits as well as insurance;
- the LBTU SSC and foreign relations coordinators of the Faculties, as well as programme directors inform students from abroad about the internal rules of procedure of LBTU and the respective practices, give advice on learning and everyday life issues, help with paperwork and help to solve various problems etc.
- there is an Erasmus Student Network group at LBTU, as well as the LBTU Student Self-government, which organise leisure and cultural activities for students.
- LBTU foreign relations coordinators inform foreign students about available health care by family physicians and at the Jelgava Polyclinic and, if necessary, perform the functions of an attendant;

from the academic year 2019/2020, a survey of international students on the courses delivered is conducted every semester. The survey reveals their satisfaction with the quality of the courses. An example of the survey is included in Annex .

## 2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

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

The teaching personnel engaged in the study direction do research on diverse and interdisciplinary problems, in which it is essential to analyse, for example, the social and sustainability aspects of the research problem, aspects of the quality of life and living space for various population groups

and communities in regions and rural areas, as well as issues of culture and identity; therefore, the research studies mostly represent the following branches of social science (Group 5): economics and business (5.2), sociology (5.4), political science (5.6) as well as social and economic geography (5.7). Strategic and long-term research goals for the study direction are specified in the Research Programme included in the LBTU Development Strategy for 2023-2027 ([https://www.lbtu.lv/sites/default/files/2023-01/LBTU\\_Attistibas\\_Strategija\\_2023-2027\\_gala.pdf](https://www.lbtu.lv/sites/default/files/2023-01/LBTU_Attistibas_Strategija_2023-2027_gala.pdf) (in Latvian); [https://www.lbtu.lv/sites/default/files/2023-11/Strategija\\_2023\\_ENG\\_1.pdf](https://www.lbtu.lv/sites/default/files/2023-11/Strategija_2023_ENG_1.pdf) (in English), which stipulates the need to ensure excellence in research, thereby enhancing technology and innovation, and is incorporated into the study process. According to the strategy, the strategic research priorities in social sciences for LBTU are as follows: opportunities for sustainable and smart territorial development, strategic development and socio-economic effects of a knowledge-intensive bioeconomy, as well as interaction between the competitiveness of environmentally responsible businesses and the development of society (<https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/petijumu-virzieni> (in Latvian); <https://socialsciences.lbtu.lv/en>). The mentioned priorities were selected based on scientific competence and aligned with the Smart Specialization Strategy of Latvia. The research activity is focused on two directions – fundamental and applied research. The LBTU Research Programme defines specific, measurable targets to be achieved, e.g. the number of research papers published in SCOPUS and WoS-indexed publications, the number of research papers published in journals, participation in EU Framework Programme projects, the number of research papers co-authored by representatives of private sector companies and (private) funding for research. To achieve the targets, several operational plans have been developed at LBTU level: 1) a plan for participation in calls for project proposals under the EU research and innovation framework programme Horizon Europe and other research and innovation support programmes and technology initiatives; 2) a plan for raising the quality of international research papers, which involves taking measures and monitoring the achievement of the target of increasing the number of internationally recognized research papers included in the Scopus and Web of Science databases. According to the LBTU Development Strategy, progress in science and research activities and the achievement of the targets are assessed according to the following objectives of the operational plans: 1) increasing international cooperation in the fields of strategic specialization; 2) producing research papers for journals with a high citation impact factor; 3) increasing competition among researchers to be hired; 4) attracting funding for the strategic research priorities.

In relation to the study direction, good cooperation has been established with Vytautas Magnus University, the Estonian University of Life Sciences, the University of Helsinki (Ruralia Institute), Wageningen University, the Nordic Council of Ministers, etc. Teaching personnel are regularly involved in commissioned research done in Latvia, e.g. a study “Survey of Sampled Persons Crossing the Border” commissioned by the CSB; a study “Identification of an Airport Passenger Profile” commissioned by the State JSC Riga Airport; a study “Active Youth Council for Supporting Work with Youth” commissioned by a municipality; a study “Training and Involvement of Forest Owners in the Management of Protected Areas” commissioned by the Latvian Environmental Protection Fund; an OECD study “Intellectual Services Relative to Preparing a Background Report on the Agricultural Innovation System of Latvia”. LBTU holds annual international conferences “Economic Science for Rural Development”, “Research for Rural Development”, “Bioeconomy and Rural Development”, which gather representatives of research institutions of the relevant field, specialists from the Ministry of Agriculture, members of associations, representatives of companies and future specialists, while the international student conference “Students on their Way to Science” is an opportunity for students to present their research findings. All of the above has a positive effect on the international visibility of LBTU, contribute to high-level research and allow for the making of internationally recognized research findings. Progress in the study direction leads to an increase in FTE positions, funding for scientific projects and the number of international research

papers produced (indexed by SCOPUS and Web of Science) in the reporting period. Information about the most significant achievements in the social sciences can be found at: <https://socialsciences.lbtu.lv/en>; <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/nozimigakie-zinatnes-rezultati> (in Latvian). For the purpose of conducting and advancing fundamental research at LBTU, an internal grant competition Conducting Fundamental Research at LBTU has been developed and announced; project proposals may be submitted to the competition by leading researchers elected at LBTU or elected researchers with a doctor degree together with their doctoral students. Total funding for one research project is up to EUR 10 000, the implementation period – up to two years.

LBTU conducts research in its priority fields, including the social sciences (<https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/petijumu-virzieni>, <https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/llu-fakultasu-petniecibas-virzieni> (in Latvian)) in connection with sustainable territorial development, community involvement in the promotion and development of local life, food systems, culture and identity, educational issues, etc. ESAF researchers and teaching personnel offer their expertise in researching specific problems, and their fields of expertise are available for potential cooperation partners on the LBTU website (<https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/ekonomika-un-reģionala-attistiba> (in Latvian)).

The teaching personnel engaged in the study direction participate in scientific conferences and publish their research findings in journals, monographs, conference proceedings and other publications, participate in research projects and do commissioned research, participate in holding international conferences and chairing conference sections, review the papers submitted, for example, the ESAF international conference “Economic Science for Rural Development”, the LBTU international conference “Research for Rural Development”, the Riga Technical University international conference, etc. Information about ESAF, including the scientific activities of the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction, is available on the LBTU ESAF website (<https://socialsciences.lbtu.lv/en>).

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

The teaching personnel engaged in the study direction participate in national and international research projects, in which bachelor and master students are also involved. Thus, the transfer of knowledge from research projects to students occurs in a direct way. Moreover, the students themselves participate in creating a new knowledge, developing research skills and competence, producing their master theses and sharing new experiences gained at their workplaces. Some master theses were produced within two projects implemented under the National Research Programme (NRP).

The teaching personnel participate in research projects in their fields of competence, which closely relate to the subject courses they deliver. Publications based on their research findings can be well integrated into specific subject courses. Most of the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction perform the functions of both academic and scientific research personnel; therefore, the findings of the most current and latest research are integrated into the study process. In the reporting period, the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction have produced more than 20 various teaching materials, scientific monographs (they wrote the chapters) and entries for the Latvian National Encyclopaedia, which included the results and findings of scientific projects and were integrated into the study process. For example, the following monographs were produced as

part of research projects implemented under the NRP: a monograph “Ad Locum: Place, Identity and Capability” under the NRP “National Identity”, a collective monograph “Beyond a Century. The Smart Latvia” under the NRP in the social sciences “Economic Transformation, Smart Growth, Governance and the Legal Framework for Sustainable Development of the State and Society – New Approaches to Building a Sustainable Knowledge Society (EKOSOC-LV)” (2014-2018) and a monograph “Knowledge Economy for the Viability of Rural and Rural Areas of Latvia” produced as part of the project 5.2.3 implemented under the same programme, a monograph “Restructuring of Local Agricultural and Food Supply Chains and Strengthening of Resilience in Crisis and Post-crisis Conditions in Latvia” produced as part of project VP42 “Towards the Post-pandemic Recovery: Economic, Political and Legal Framework for Preservation of Latvia’s Growth Potential and Increasing Competitiveness (reCOVery-LV)” (2020-2021). A book entitled “Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas through the Production and Exploitation of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Manual” produced as part of the Erasmus+ Programme Key Action 2 project “Education in rural entrepreneurship through producing and valorizing of medicinal and aromatic plants” (2016-2018) <https://ilufb.ltu.lv/LLUgramatas/LLU-Entrepreneurship-in-Rural-Areas-WEB.pdf> could be used in some courses, as well as a guidebook “How to be Innovative in The Equine Sector? A Guidebook on Practices and Inspiration from Central-Baltic” [https://pub.epsilon.slu.se/11376/11/Korpa%20et%20al\\_140712.pdf](https://pub.epsilon.slu.se/11376/11/Korpa%20et%20al_140712.pdf) produced as part of the Interreg project “Equine Industries Promoting Economically Competitive and Innovative Regions (INNOEQUINE)” (2011-2013).

Study materials produced as part of the Erasmus+ K2 project “Joint Master’s Curriculum in Rural Community Development (RuralCOM)” (2020-2023) were tested, inviting students (both Latvian and international students) from bachelor and master’s programmes to participate in online classes.

A book entitled “Pēteris Birkerts: I Release my Works into the World”, published in 2016 by SOHU lecturer I. Leikuma, is particularly important for sociology students and a wider academic community. An assistant professor of ESAF SOHU participated in producing a monograph “Tourism Development in the Regions of Latvia”, which was produced in cooperation with Turība University and tourism organizations. In cooperation with the University of Latvia, a Social Work Dictionary was prepared and published as part of the Ministry of Welfare project Professional Social Work Development in Municipalities (2015-2023); an associate professor of ESAF SOHU was a member of the editorial board.

A motivation system has been established at the LBTU level to motivate teaching personnel to produce instructional aids and integrate their experience gained in research projects and applied research into the study process, and the preparation of instructional aids and the scientific research dimension are the elements evaluated, and the personnel receives financial support for this purpose.

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

The geographical location of LBTU, the interaction with foreign universities and research institutions, including those located in the Baltic Sea region, have contributed to the fact that the

leading researchers engaged in the study direction conduct research on modern and current problems in the field of social sustainability, as well on rural development and the life of communities, education, the quality of working life, availability of social services in the regions and many other problems at both the national and the international level. It is, to a large extent, determined by niche research conducted in the study direction, which relates to smart development, social innovations, transformation processes in the economy and society, as well as business development. The main scientific research activities in which the leading researchers and researchers interact with the international scientific community are as follows: participation in COST activities; participation in Horizon2020 projects; participation in European Commission Erasmus+ (KA2) projects (e.g. REMAP, SKILLED UP, RuralCOM), which contributed to the transfer of experience and knowledge of the scientists engaged in the study direction to the international level and, as a result, several educational materials had been created, public educational events had been held, and interactive e-training tools had been created. The participation in projects under the Interreg Central Baltic Programme (e.g. InnoEquine, RESTinBSR) has promoted cooperation between the researchers and the tourism industry and the horse breeding industry, recognizing innovative and competitive business development opportunities in rural areas; research papers had been published in highly cited and open access journals.

In the reporting period (2013-2023), the main international projects implemented by the teaching personnel and researchers engaged in the study direction are as follows:

- 2020-2023 – Erasmus+ K2 project “Joint Master’s Curriculum in Rural Community Development” (RuralCOM), 2020-1-EE01-KA203-077886
- 2021- Interreg Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 project “Unlocking Transformative Ecotourism Potential for Sustainable Regional Development” (RESTinBSR), No. ETS2021/42 (University of Latvia, Institute of Social and Political Studies)
- 2020 – Module Human Resource Management, Erasmus+ K2 project Skills for the Baltic Wood industry – European Quality in Vocational Education and Training (SKILLED UP) (project No. 601123-EPP-1-2018-1-DE-EPPKA2-SSA)
- 2017-2019 – European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (Contract No. VC/2017/0091), a research study “Up-date of the Mapping of Social Enterprises and their Eco-systems in Europe” (finance – a European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation EASI 2014-2020)
- 2017-2018 – an OECD study “Intellectual Services Relative to Preparing a Background Report on the Agricultural Innovation System of Latvia” (No. 3.2-10/2017/LLU/82)
- 2017 – 2018 – Interreg project “Social Empowerment in Rural Areas”
- 2016 – 2018 – Erasmus+K2 project “Education in Rural Entrepreneurship through Producing and Valorising of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants” (REMAP) No. 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024635.
- 2015-2017 – International project No. DCI-NSEAD/2012/280-524 „Solidarity Schools in Baltic States” in cooperation with the association „Humana People to People in Latvia”
- 2015-2017 – International project „Looking at Learning”, Erasmus+ Youth in Action KA2 programme, No.2014-2-LV02KA205-000575
- 2014-2016 – Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development, project “Youth in Transition Countries - Innovative Potential, New Context, New Challenges and New Problems”
- 2015-2016 – NORDPLUS Junior project “NO HATE”
- 2014-2016 – International project „Wake - Up call: Volunteer Manager Role!”, ERASMUS+ programme, No. 2014-1-RO01-KA205-002734
- 2013-2015 – International project NCN No. UMO-2013/08M/HS6/00430 “Youth in Transition Countries – Innovative Potential, New Context, New Challenges and New Problems”
- 2014-2015 – Time to Keep Growing (SIforAGE), Providing Innovative Solutions for an Active

and Healthy Ageing (EU 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme and University of Latvia funding)

- 2013-2015 – RURAGRI ERA-NET European Commission's 7th Framework Programme "Rethinking the links between farm modernization, rural development and resilience in a world of increasing demands and finite resources (RETHINK)"
- 2013 – project CAP: Back to Countryside AGRI-2013-0086, research study Urban Youth Perceptions on Farmer Portrait, EC
- 2011-2013 – Interreg III project „Equine industries promoting economically competitive and innovative regions” (INNOEQUINE)

In addition to the active research work, the academic personnel engaged in the study direction actively participates and is involved in various international organizations, e.g. Veterinary and Agricultural University (BOVA), the EU Rural Networks' Assembly, the European Observatory on Homelessness, the European Society for Rural Sociology, the European Economic and Social Committee.

Further international cooperation in developing science is based on:

1. closer integration of science and research into the learning process;
2. promotion of science and research both in the international and in the national environment (using [www.sciencelatvia.lv](http://www.sciencelatvia.lv));
3. use of internal LBTU grants to support young scientists and attract young scientists from abroad;
4. publication of master students' research findings in international publications;
5. preparation of international project proposals by developing a more targeted motivation system and performance funding for science.

All of the study programmes benefit from the aforementioned cooperation: 1) delivering courses involves materials created as part of the projects: educational materials, educational events, interactive e-training tools; 2) developing research fields and themes resonating with in-depth research and potential participation in project activities; 3) linking graduate theses and research papers with a targeted and directed learning process in combination with science and research; 4) involving students of all levels in research and science (as target audiences, researchers and research assistants).

The teaching personnel engaged in the study direction participate in scientific conferences and publish their research findings in journals, monographs, conference proceedings and other publications, participate in research projects and do commissioned research, participate in holding international conferences and chairing conference sections, review the papers submitted, for example, the ESAF international conference "Economic Science for Rural Development", the LBTU international conference "Research for Rural Development", the Riga Technical University international conference. **As part of the current international projects, new project proposals are prepared together with cooperation partners, for example, under various EU research programmes (Horizon Europe, Interreg).**

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

LBTU has designed and introduced a motivation system based on an annual assessment of scientific performance. The motivation system considers the number and quality of research papers (whether the research papers have been published in publications with high citation impact), participation in research projects and commissioned research and the management thereof at the national and the international level, the number of patents, participation in sectoral organizations, peer review of research papers, etc. This procedure for evaluating scientific performance is applied to elected teaching staff, researchers and leading researchers. For their performance, they receive a bonus to their salary in the next academic year. Having co-funding, ESAF supports the production of high-level research papers (to be published in international Q1 and Q2 publications) and participation in research projects of various levels. This support is available to any researcher and lecturer, including guest lecturers (non-elected staff). The teaching personnel involved in implementation of the study direction engage in interdisciplinary research, thereby using the findings of social sciences and sociology in researching complex problems. Opportunities to participate in research projects are equally available to both elected and guest lecturers. In the reporting period, the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction have been involved in research projects implemented under the National Research Programme, fundamental and applied research projects commissioned by the Latvian Council of Science, Erasmus+ projects, ESF projects, Interreg, OECD and other research studies. The research problems closely related to the priorities set for the study direction and especially the specifics of particular courses, thereby creating a new knowledge and competence that could be integrated into the study process and subject course teaching.

In the period 2013-2023, the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction have been involved in implementing approximately 40 research and commissioned research projects. The most important international projects are mentioned in subsection 2.4.3. An ERA-NET project “Rethinking the Links between Farm Modernization, Rural Development and Resilience in a World of Increasing Demands and Finite Resources” (RETHINK) was important for promoting the international visibility of LBTU and networking. In the reporting period, the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction were involved in several projects of the European Commission’s Erasmus+ (KA2) programme, e.g. “Education in Rural Entrepreneurship through Producing and Valorising of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants” (REMAP), which contributed to the transfer of experience and knowledge of the scientists involved in delivering the study direction to the international level and, as a result, several educational materials had been created, public educational events had been held, and interactive e-training tools had been created. Together with partners from Estonia (Estonian University of Life Sciences), Lithuania (Vytautas Magnus University), Finland (Ruralia Institute of the University of Helsinki) and Romania (Bucharest University of Economic Studies), work is underway to create an international master’s programme in community development, implementing the project “Joint Master’s Curriculum in Rural Community Development” under the Erasmus+ (KA2) programme. Adult training materials and MOOC courses for community leaders and representatives of the non-governmental sector on rural sociology and community development have been developed as part of the project, thereby giving an opportunity to gain international experience and knowledge, while the participation in two Interreg projects under the Central Baltic programme has promoted cooperation between the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction and the tourism industry.

SOHU researchers actively participated in implementing the project “National Identity and Capability” (Y3-26464-960) under the NRP “National identity” (2010-2014), which resulted in participation in conferences and the publication of research papers and monographs. As regards the most important national-level projects and the results thereof, it should be noted that the period from 2014 to 2018 marked very high scientific activity both in the entire Latvia and among the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction, which was promoted by the priorities in

science approved by the Government of the Republic of Latvia at the end of 2013. The national research programmes were subordinated to the priorities, and the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction were involved in two projects under the programme “Economic Transformation, Smart Growth, Governance” and “The Legal Framework for Sustainable Development of the State and Society – New Approaches to Building a Sustainable Knowledge Society” (EKOSOC-LV). The participation in research projects under this programme provided an opportunity to increase the production of research papers by the academic personnel to be published in international journals or conference proceedings indexed by ScienceDirect (Elsevier), Scopus, Thomson Reuter Web of Science (WoS), Springer Open, ERIH etc. Consequently, the cooperation increased at the national and the international level, while at the same time making it possible to inform the world-wide community of scientists about processes in Latvia. Overall, the NRP has contributed to the development of social sciences in Latvia in the aspect of interdisciplinarity. The implementation of the above-mentioned national research programme enabled the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction to continue to participate also in two projects – INTERFRAME-LV and DemoMig – in the next NRP period (2018-2021). To identify the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, project VP42 “Towards the Post-pandemic Recovery: Economic, Political and Legal Framework for Preservation of Latvia’s Growth Potential and Increasing Competitiveness” (reCOVery-LV) No. VPP-COVID-2020/1-0010” was implemented (2020-2021). The teaching personnel also conducted research funded by the Latvian Council of Science (LCS), for example, within LCS fundamental and applied research projects (FARP), an individual project “Resilient and Sustainable Rural Communities: the Multiplier Effect of Local Food Systems” (No. Lzp-2020/2-0409, tenure grant, 2020-2021) was implemented; based on the results, a new FARP project proposal was prepared, which was highly evaluated. Accordingly, the research work is continued by implementing an LSC FARP project “Bio-regions as an Integrated Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Rural Areas in Latvia” (No. lzp-2022/1-0519, 2023-2025).

Research commissioned by municipalities and the non-governmental sector is also important for the scientific development of teaching personnel engaged in the study direction, which is purposefully conducted to achieve the specific goals of local development policy, e.g. a research study “Increasing the Market Share of Local Producers in Municipal Procurement of Food: the Socio-economic Benefits and Potential Risks. An Analysis of the Situation in Tukums Municipality” (2013-2014) commissioned by the Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre; a study “Analysis of the Situation of Families Exposed to Social Risk in Latvia” (2012 - 2013) commissioned by the Association of SOS Children’s Villages in Latvia; EU project No. 9.2.4.2/16/I/066 “Illness Prevention and Health Promotion Measures in Ozolnieki Municipality” (2017-2020). An ex-post assessment of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 was also performed (specifically – an assessment of the National Rural Network and the Technical Assistance).

Overall, LBTU has a system in place that accurately prescribes the use of basic funding, redistributing a certain amount of it to the organisational units (depending on their performance); each researcher receives remuneration for individual research performance, the amount of which depends directly on his/her research performance. To increase the research capacity of LBTU and encourage the involvement of new scientists, an internal grant programme “Implementation of the LBTU Research Programme” has been established, thereby funding projects on a competitive basis. To contribute to the development of new projects, a project “Promotion of International Cooperation Projects in Research and Innovation at LLU and its Supervised Research Institutions” was implemented from 2018 to 2022. The project provides funding for preparing and submitting project proposals. The performance of the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction demonstrates a constant increase in the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) researchers employed, the amount of research project funding and the number of international research papers produced (indexed by SCOPUS and Web of Science) in the reporting period. The scientific research activities of teaching

personnel are summarized both before designing an ESAF strategy and when preparing a report on scientific performance. All information about the research papers, projects and other kinds of scientific research activity is collected and stored in an electronic database in the LBTU Information System. A summary of the scientific research activities of teaching personnel (research papers, projects) is also available on the LBTU ESAF website (<https://socialsciences.lbtu.lv/en>). For detailed information about the involvement of teaching personnel in research projects and the scientific/research performance, see the CVs.

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

Involving students in research is important for increasing the research capacity of the study direction. Students from both the bachelor and the master's programme are regularly involved in research activities. In cooperation with the LETA news agency, students have had an opportunity to conduct exit polls of several parliamentary and other elections. To date, students were involved in research within research projects, concluding contracts to work in the project as assistants of the leading researcher (3 contracts). One bachelor student was involved in a research project under the NRP EKOSOC-LV, sub-programme 5.2.8 "Processes of Cultural Environment Development, Preservation of Environmental Diversity and Urbanization in the Context of Sustainable Development in Latvia". Master students were involved in several research projects under the national research programme, producing their master theses (for example, project VPP-IZM-2018/1-0015 "Development of a Sustainable and Cohesive Society in Latvia: Solutions to Demographic and Migration Challenges" (DemoMig) under the NRP "Latvian Heritage and Future Challenges for the Sustainability of the State" (2018-2021) and the project "Cutting-edge Knowledge and Solutions to Study Demographic and Migration Processes for the Development of Latvian and European Society" (DemoMigPro) (project No. VPP-LETONIKA-2021/3-00)) under the NRP "Letonics for the Development of Latvian and European Society" (2021-2024). The master's theses produced represented the performance indicator of the project, and there were two master theses produced in the reporting period. Master students were also involved in LCS fundamental and applied research projects, e.g. an individual project "Resilient and Sustainable Rural Communities: The Multiplier Effect of Local Food Systems" (No. LZP-2020/2-0409, tenure grant) was implemented.

The teaching personnel engaged in the study direction have an opportunity to use the LBTU internal grant programmes "Implementation of the LBTU Research Programme and Strengthening Scientific Research Capacity at LBTU"; the programmes aim to promote the involvement of master students, doctoral students and new scientists in scientific research. To arouse students' interest in science, various student scientific conferences are held every year, e.g. the international student scientific conference "Students on their Way to Science", for which the students, together with their advisors, prepare their scientific research papers. Both bachelor and master students present the findings of their research and graduate theses at scientific conferences, publishing the abstracts and research papers. Together with their advisors for graduate theses, research papers are prepared for publication in international scientific conference proceedings and international journals included in the Web of Science and Scopus databases.

Several graduates from the master's programme have started doctoral studies at various

universities in Latvia, many of them have already acquired doctoral degrees.

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

The teaching personnel engaged in the study direction and some organisational units of LBTU implement a number of activities that promote the introduction of various forms of innovation in the learning process. *Social, strategic, cooperative and value-focused innovations* are implemented in summer schools organised by the teaching personnel engaged in the study direction. Each summer school had its own theme, purpose and objectives. For example, the 2017 summer school called “Building a Community. Its Social, Economic and Cultural Aspects in Practice” was held in Kaldabruna village, Rubene parish, Jekabpils municipality. The school was held in cooperation with the local association Udenszimes (Watermarks) and gathered students from various programmes delivered by ESAF. The activities involved theoretical workshops on community building and local resources, as well as practical application of various social research methods. As a result, students presented their vision for the future development of that place. The 2019 summer school, however, called “What to do with the Place?” was held in Aizkalne parish, Preili municipality, and was organised in cooperation with the local association Public Centre Aizkalne and was part of the national research programme project DemoMig; it gathered bachelor and master students from various LBTU Faculties (ESAF, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and the Faculty of Environment and Civil Engineering), as well as various universities of Latvia (LBTU and the University of Latvia), thereby allowing for an interdisciplinary view of local development scenarios. In view of the wide repercussions of the summer school and the range of participants involved, the summer school is viewed as a successful social innovation. *Management, planning, marketing and organizational innovations* are implemented at an event “Sociologist Microscope”, which was implemented several times a year before the Covid-19 pandemic in cooperation with various schools in Zemgale and Riga regions. The purpose of the event was to promote cooperation with schools, creatively introduce senior students to the sociologist profession and various research methods.

*New operational methods and approaches* are constantly integrated into the implementation of the study direction. Since the beginning of the reporting period for the bachelor programme, new courses have been designed also for e-studies and placed on the MOODLE platform, thus considering future opportunities for the introduction of distance learning into the study direction. Since 2020, MOODLE courses were also designed for the master’s programme. By integrating elements of e-studies into full-time studies and increasingly using various online platforms and digital solutions, the teaching personnel have gained rich experience in employing more diverse study materials, tests and teaching methods, which were developed and especially useful during the Covid-19 pandemic when the country shifted to remote learning for many months. This experience allows the teaching personnel to organize the study process more flexibly and adapt to various current challenges. Both students and teaching personnel appreciate the advantages of distance learning and remote studies, while being aware of the risks and areas for improvement. Risks and opportunities for improvement are analysed and solutions are sought to eliminate disadvantages, focusing on both raising the quality of the study process, higher-quality student papers (including graduate theses) and the achievement of higher learning outcomes, especially in distance learning. The form of part-time distance learning has particularly aroused great interest in

the bachelor programme, and also potential master students are starting to seek opportunities for distance learning to be able to successfully reconcile their working lives with university studies.

## **2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation**

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

Cooperation with national institutions in relation to the study direction occurs in several ways:

- cooperation with non-governmental organisations for dissemination of project results and communication with the public (e.g. the Latvian Association of Sociologists, the Latvian Agricultural Organisation Cooperation Council (LAOCC), community organizations and partnerships);
- participation in executive boards of non-governmental organisations (e.g. the Latvian Association of Sociologists);
- joint research papers and popular science articles with researchers and teaching personnel from other universities;
- research contracts commissioned by local governments (e.g. Jelgava municipality, Ozolnieki municipality);
- research contracts commissioned by employers and the involvement of employers in the study process and research (e.g. SKDS, RAIT);
- involvement in the Doctoral Councils of other universities (e.g. the professors engaged in the study direction are members of the University of Latvia Doctoral Council for Sociology, the Riga Stradins University Doctoral Council for Sociology).

The content and delivery of the programmes ensure the sustainable development of the programmes and the study direction, as it is based on cooperation and responsible action involving students, teaching personnel, alumni and employers. Student ratings are of great importance for enhancing the content of courses, supplementing the courses and selecting teaching personnel to deliver the programmes. Student recommendations are discussed at SOHU meetings and the ESAF Methodology Commissions. Students participate in the work of the ESAF Board and the Methodology Commissions. To raise the quality of the study process, ESAF regularly delivers guest lectures to students. Traditionally, guest lectures for all ESAF bachelor and master students are delivered during the Alumni Week in the fall semester. During this week, students meet with ESAF alumni – industry specialists – who introduce students to their professional experience and current developments in the industry. The lecturers engaged in the study direction also give guest lectures at other HEIs and schools in connection with the development of R&D.

Cooperation with the industry and employers emerges during study tours, visiting public, non-governmental and private sector organizations as well as research companies. In cooperation with

experts from sectoral organizations, the programmes were evaluated as part of the LBTU project “Enhancement of the Governance of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies” (No. 8.2.3.0/18/A009).

SOHU lecturers have established excellent cooperation with associations of rural communities, e.g. the association Public Centre Aizkalne, which operates in Preiļi municipality. In 2019, the association was nominated by LBTU for an award Contribution of the Year to the Social Sciences. Cooperation also takes place with the Craft Centre Rūme in Zasa parish, as well as the association Watermarks in Kaldabruna village. Two summer schools were organized in cooperation with the associations, in which students participated in different study directions.

For the SOPA programmes, direct cooperation with employers is implemented through the participation of employers in classes as guest lecturers, holding study tours to institutions and companies, doing work shadowing, as well as conducting commissioned research. Cooperation with employers is maintained by inviting them to participate in the work of the MEC, encouraging them to suggest topics or research problems for graduate theses and inviting them to be student advisors. A representative of the administration of Zemgale Planning Region regularly participates in the MEC, while in the SEC – a specialist from the Social Integration Department of the Jelgava City Council and a representative of the LAOCC. As far as possible, employers are identified and, based on express interviews, their opinions on the programmes delivered, the skills and competences of students and alumni, as well as the necessary programme enhancements are determined. In the future, it is planned to develop and expand closer cooperation with several groups of employers and organizations representing employers to strengthen the linkage between education and the labour market. One of the successful cooperation solutions was the professional development of lecturers at the research company “RAIT”.

As regards **cooperation with professional organizations**, it should be noted that professional organizations in the field of sociology should primarily be perceived as industry associations. The Latvian Association of Sociologists operates in Latvia, its members (and also board members) are lecturers engaged in the study direction, and so are the Latvian Association of Geographers and the Latvian Association of Professors. Some lecturers have been involved and participate in the work of European-level professional organizations, for example, in the activities held by the European Association of Sociologists as well as the European Association of Rural Sociologists. Cooperation takes the form of information and resource sharing, as well as involves holding and participating in joint conferences, congresses and seminars.

SOHU lecturers participate in evaluating scientific research papers written by secondary school students from Zemgale region in sociology, history, philosophy, culturology, politology etc. It takes place at the conference for student scientific research papers, which was initially held by the Competence Development Centre of Zemgale region, yet in recent years by the LBTU Lifelong Education Centre.

In general, several criteria should be noted when evaluating the choice of cooperation partners in Latvia that is appropriate for the study direction and study programs. First, cooperation in research takes place with those scientific and research institutions (for example, other Latvian universities, market research companies) that conduct research in sociology and other social sciences to gain interdisciplinary experience that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the study programmes. The participation of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction in the Latvian Sociological Association and other professional associations related to the scientific interests of the academic personnel and the study courses they teach is important. The community of sociologists in Latvia is not large, therefore cooperation in research and exchange of experience is essential to promote students’ deeper understanding of the field of sociology, as well

as the role of sociology in the wider society.

Secondly, cooperation with local municipalities and the non-governmental sector takes place in accordance with the orientation of the study programmes to practically study current problems in Latvian regions, public and non-governmental sector organizations. Many of these organizations and municipal structures are staffed by both students and graduates of the study programmes; they are invited as guest lecturers. As part of the study courses, the teaching staff provides thematic study tours to those organizations that are most able to demonstrate the connection between theoretical knowledge and practical aspects of the organizational performance. Sometimes municipalities and associations themselves seek contacts with LBTU, thus strengthening cooperation in applied research.

Finally, cooperation with general education institutions is essential to promote young people's interest in social sciences and their deeper understanding of research. Cooperation takes place with the schools of Zemgale region, especially in the city of Jelgava; the cooperation is often initiated by the schools themselves, inviting SOHU teaching staff to advise teachers and students in the development of their research papers.

For cooperation with foreign institutions, LBTU has developed and implemented an Internationalization Plan, which defines the goals, priorities and performance targets of LBTU international cooperation in the areas of student exchange, full-time studies for foreigners and living conditions for foreigners. The Internationalization Plan defines the following key priorities and cooperation activities: priority cooperation with higher education institutions of similar study and research profile in the EU Member States and partner countries, whose fields of study correspond to those implemented by LBTU; priority cooperation with the international associations of universities in which LBTU is an active member: the European Association of Life Sciences Universities (ICA), the Baltic University Programme (BUP), the Baltic-Nordic Agricultural University Network (BOVA - NOVA), the Nordic Association of Agricultural Scientists (NJF) etc. and that pursue their academic activities in similar study directions and research; international cooperation with foreign universities/colleges at the level of fields of study, focusing on foreign partner universities/colleges with regular exchange of students and lecturers (Erasmus + programme, etc.), as well as participation in joint projects (e.g. SSO 8.2.3), research, mutual cooperation in scientific and methodological conferences etc.

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

In 2023, the LBTU Supervisory Board approved the LBTU Internationalization Policy (see [https://www.lbtu.lv/sites/default/files/2023-03/LBTU\\_Internacionalizacijas\\_politika\\_2023.pdf](https://www.lbtu.lv/sites/default/files/2023-03/LBTU_Internacionalizacijas_politika_2023.pdf) (in Latvian)), which defines the goals and priorities of the university's international cooperation. The purpose of the internationalization of LBTU is to ensure internationally competitive learning and research at LBTU by attracting the resources available in the higher education sector for achieving

the strategic objectives of LBTU based on the international visibility, quality learning and innovative research opportunities and on building relations with foreign institutions based on mutual interest and benefit. However, the LBTU Development Strategy for 2023-2027 ([https://www.lbtu.lv/sites/default/files/2023-11/Strategija\\_2023\\_ENG\\_1.pdf](https://www.lbtu.lv/sites/default/files/2023-11/Strategija_2023_ENG_1.pdf)) defines the social sciences as one of the fields of strategic specialization for the university. Therefore, learning and research in the field of sociology are included in the internationalization priorities of LBTU. To implement the internationalization policy, LBTU designed the Internationalization Plan 2023, which specifies specific measures and the performance indicators for promoting the international visibility of LBTU as a science university, attracting full-time foreign students, implementing exchange student programmes as well as improving learning and living conditions for foreign students.

1) The Internationalization Plan 2023 prescribes priority cooperation with universities of a similar learning and scientific research profile in EU member and partner countries, the study directions of which correspond to those implemented by LBTU.

2) The plan envisages priority cooperation with international university associations in which LBTU is an active member: the European Association of Life Sciences Universities (ICA), the Baltic University Programme (BUP), Baltic-Nordic Agricultural University Network (BOVA-NOVA), the Nordic Association of Agricultural Scientists (NJF) etc. and which implement academic activity in similar study directions and research.

3) Since there are ample opportunities for international cooperation with foreign universities, LBTU focuses its activities on the partners with whom such cooperation took place for a long period and was productive. Besides, at the level of LBTU fields of study, there is regular exchange of students and lecturers (Erasmus+ programme etc.) with foreign partner universities or their faculties, LBTU participates in joint projects pertaining to its study directions and research, and there is mutual participation in scientific and methodological conferences etc.

To attract foreign students, the key sociology programmes are marketed in various ways:

- at international education exhibitions (9 exhibitions in 2023);
  - e-marketing,
1. <https://www.bachelorstudies.com/institutions/llu/bachelor-in-sociology-of-organizations-and-public-administration> ;  
<https://www.masterstudies.com/institutions/llu/master-in-sociology-of-organizations-and-public-administration>;
  2. <https://www.educations.com/study-abroad/latvia-university-of-life-sciences-and-technologies/bachelor-in-sociology-of-organizations-and-public-administration-526966>
  3. <https://www.educations.com/study-abroad/latvia-university-of-life-sciences-and-technologies/masters-in-sociology-of-organizations-and-public-administration-527967>;
- agreements with student recruitment agents in the United Kingdom, Azerbaijan, India, the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Vietnam;
  - participation in “Study in Latvia” activities <https://www.studyinlatvia.lv/studies?university=latvia-university-of-life-sciences-and-technologies>
  - information available on the LBTU website: <https://www.lbtu.lv/en/degree-studies>

During their Erasmus+ exchange visits, LBTU lecturers get familiarized with the specifics of the respective programmes of partner universities, assess the quality of the implementation and establish academic contacts, which create prerequisites for both effective student exchange visits and academic cooperation in the field of research projects. Sharing experience during the mobility period has helped to raise the quality of implementation of the programmes as well as gain

experience in international cooperation. LBTU has received the Erasmus+ University Charter and signed the Erasmus+ Policy Declaration (<https://www.lbtu.lv/lv/noderiga-informacija> (in Latvian)).

LBTU has obtained the right to sign the document “Agreement on Best Practices for Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Degree Programmes” with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economics, the Ministry of the Interior and other universities. With this agreement and within its competence, LBTU undertakes to promote a positive image of the country, the international reputation of higher education and positive experience for foreign students. The agreement essentially defines the quality standard for working with foreign students. LBTU has concluded many Erasmus+ inter-institutional agreements, see at [https://www.llu.lv/sites/default/files/2018-10/LLU%20ligumi%20\\_Erasmus%2B%20partneraugstskolas\\_HEIs%2027.03.18.xls](https://www.llu.lv/sites/default/files/2018-10/LLU%20ligumi%20_Erasmus%2B%20partneraugstskolas_HEIs%2027.03.18.xls) (in Latvian)

LBTU is a member of the Latvian Association of Higher Education Export (AHEE) and participates in its activities.

In the reporting period, work was started on the establishment of an international master’s programme in community development together with partner universities from Estonia (Estonian University of Life Sciences), Lithuania (Vilniaus Magnus University), Finland (Ruralia Institute of the University of Helsinki) and Romania (Bucharest University of Economic Studies) to promote the development and internationalization of the study direction. As a result of cooperation in the period 2020-2023, the project “Joint Master’s Curriculum in Rural Community Development” (RuralCOM) aimed at the creation and approval of joint study materials (leading partner was the Estonian University of Life Sciences) was implemented under the ERASMUS+ programme (KA2 – Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, KA203 – Strategic Partnerships for higher education).

International cooperation partners corresponding to the study direction and study programmes are selected according to the following criteria:

- at the level of LBTU, cooperation agreements are concluded with those universities that have a similar profile in studies and research in social sciences (for example, issues of rural and regional development are studied);
- cooperation partners for the promotion of internationalization of studies are selected according to the interests and needs of students and teaching staff (for example, if a student expresses the desire to go to a university abroad on Erasmus+ mobility, then a cooperation agreement is concluded);
- new cooperation partners are found by networking at scientific conferences and projects related to the orientation of the study direction in the field of organizations and public administration.

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

To attract foreign students, first LBTU provides information about its programmes, which is available on the Internet (see the section **Information on the study direction**). To attract international students, LBTU implements various marketing activities: contracts are concluded with

recruitment agents that are assessed for their work effectiveness, as well as e-marketing, participation in international education fairs and agent forums, webinars etc. LBTU is a member of the Latvian Association of Higher Education Export (AHEE) and participates in its activities (See also subsection 2.5.2).

In the reporting period, the lecturers engaged in the study direction regularly worked with incoming Erasmus+ students from the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Turkey, Russia, France, Romania, Poland, Norway, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Belarus, the Netherlands, etc. Compared with master students, bachelor students have more actively used Erasmus+ opportunities, going on study mobility to Portugal, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. Master students have been on Erasmus+ mobility to Malta, Turkey and Portugal, yet their more active involvement in the mobility programme was hindered by the fact that the absolute majority of students worked for pay alongside their studies (including in management positions), as well as because of family considerations. Some lecturers have also used an opportunity to deliver lectures as part of Erasmus+ mobility or go on an experience sharing trip to Sweden, Turkey, Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Portugal, Italy and the Netherlands.

As part of the ESAF International Week, which usually is held every spring during the ESAF international scientific conference, students are offered guest lectures by conference participants from various European countries.

In general, LBTU has good experience in promoting and organizing Erasmus+ mobilities: students have access to extensive information about mobility opportunities, there is a sufficiently wide offer of cooperation universities, within the framework of study courses, meetings are organized with students who share their Erasmus+ experience. Mobility opportunities are used both by Latvian stream students and full-time international students from both study programmes. The biggest challenge is the low interest of master's students and their availability to use mobility opportunities because of their work schedules and family circumstances. It must be admitted that LBTU cannot help in such cases.

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

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

The previous accreditation of the study direction was in 2012, where the summary of recommendations given by experts and their implementation can be found in the annex.

In general, it can be concluded that the recommendations have been implemented in the bachelor's and master's study program.

Part-time distance learning studies are licensed and part-time distance learning in the bachelor's program is implemented from 2022/2023. of the study year, students show an ever-increasing interest in this form of study, which allows balancing work, study and private life.

Study plans have been enhanced and teaching staff develop and improve study courses according to teaching personnel's areas of expertise, especially with regard to the use of digital tools in ensuring the study process, with regular professional development.

Licensed changes have been made and internationalization is being implemented in the direction of studies, currently there are foreign students in both the bachelor's and master's programs and their number is slowly increasing every year.

Every year, ESAF engages guest lecturers in the spring semester as part of the international week, during which lectures are given by a number of foreign guest lecturers, guest lecturers and representatives of industries, graduates are also attracted, so that full-time, part-time distance learning and international students can be provided with quality studies.

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

In the reporting period, changes in the current programmes contained in the study direction were licensed. On 28 June 2021, expert recommendations were made for the master's programme "Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration", and an expert recommended approving the following changes recommended for the academic master's programme "Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration":

- to deliver the programme also in English;
- to change the programme code from 45310 to 45314;
- to specify the admission requirements more clearly for: 1) bachelor's degree or 2<sup>nd</sup> level professional higher education (or equivalent higher education) in social and human sciences or commercial sciences and administration, imposing no additional requirements; 2) bachelor's degree or 2<sup>nd</sup> level professional higher education (or equivalent higher education) in other fields of education, imposing additional requirements; 3) knowledge of the English language at least at Level B2 if studies are conducted in English. For detailed admission requirements for the master's programme, see section 2.1.4.

An expert recommended considering the programme declared to be delivered in the form of full-time distance learning to be implemented in the form of **part-time distance learning**.

Given the recommendations given by the expert, the work on enhancing the master and bachelor programmes is continued to implement part-time distance learning at the master and the bachelor level.

On 19 April 2022, the expert recommended approving the following changes:

1) in the academic master's programme SOPA: changes in the type and form of studies – the programme will be implemented also in the form of part-time distance learning;

2) in the academic bachelor programme SOPA:

- change in the education classification code from 43310 to 43314 in accordance with Cabinet

Regulation No. 322 Regulations regarding the Education Classification in Latvia;

- change in the workload from 124 CP to 120 CP for full-time studies according to the requirements of the national academic education standard;
- implementation of the programme also in English;
- change in the duration of studies – the duration is extended to 3 years and 6 months (7 semesters) to provide part-time distance learning.

Expert recommendations from both change licensing occasions in 2021 and 2022 relate to the following tasks that have been completed:

1) The course descriptions have been supplemented with information on course delivery through distance learning;

2) Students are informed about progress in distance learning and the way it is organized when starting their studies in the academic bachelor or master's programme Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration;

3) The characteristics of the achievement and assessment of learning outcomes have been enhanced by the lecturers delivering the course;

4) At the beginning of each semester, a plan is designed by the programme director in cooperation with the lecturers; the plan includes information about lecturer office hours and lectures available on the MOODLE platform (lecturer of each course specifies the topics that are available on the Moodle platform for lectures within the respective course).

5) Remuneration for an academic position at LBTU consists of three components:

- a *salary* set in accordance with the Cabinet regulation Regulations regarding Remuneration of Pedagogues and the rector decision On Remuneration of Pedagogues;
- a *bonus* paid based on the motivation system, as LBTU has developed and introduced a motivation system that allows the university to collect and evaluate the academic work activities of each teaching personnel member, which are not included in the workload;
- a *bonus for scientific performance* - every year LBTU collects and evaluates the performance of LBTU academic personnel, leading researchers, researchers and researcher assistants in terms of efficiency of scientific activity.

6) Certificates of English language knowledge at least B2 level for teaching personnel working with international students.

More details on the implementation of expert recommendations can be found in the annex.



# Annexes

I - Information on the Higher Education Institution/ College		
Information on the implementation of the study field in the branches of the higher education institution/ college (if applicable)		
List of the governing regulatory enactments and regulations of the higher education institution/ college	1_dala_1_pielikums_EN_Main internal legal acts and regulations.docx	1_dala_1_pielikums_Galveno_normativo_dokumentu_saraksts.docx
The management structure of the higher education institution/ college	1_dala_2_Pielikums_LBTU_management_structure_EN.docx	1_dala_2_Pielikums_LBTU_parvaldibas_shema_LV.docx
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.1. Management of the Study Field		
Plan for the development of the study field (if applicable)	Study_direction_development_plan_corrected.docx	Studiju_virziena_attistibas_plans_precizets.docx
The management structure of the study field	Annex 2.1 Administration of the study direction and the organizational units involved .docx	2.1. pielikums LV stud virziena parvaldiba.docx
A document certifying that the higher education institution or college will provide students with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution/ college (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college) if the implementation of the study programme is terminated.	Agreements_with_LU.zip	Vienosanas ar LU SZF par OSPS studiju programmu istenošanu.docx
A document certifying that the higher education institution or college guarantees compensation for losses to students if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme license is revoked due to actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.	LBTU_apliecinajumu_studiju_virzienam_Sociologij_politologija_un_antropologija_EN.docx	LBTU_apliecinajumu_studiju_virzienam_Sociologij_politologija_un_antropologija.edoc
Standard sample of study agreement	18_Study_Agreement_LV_EN_2023.pdf	18_Studiju_ligums_2023.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System		
Analysis of the results of surveys of students, graduates and employers	Annex 2.2 Surveys_of_students_alumni_employers_corrected.docx	2.2. Pielikums_Studejoso_absolventu_darba_deveju_aptaujas_precizets.docx
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field		
Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field	List of teaching personnel clarified.xlsx	Macibspeku_saraksts OSPS precizets.xlsx
Biographies of the teaching staff members (Curriculum Vitae in Europass format)	CV_EN 4.zip	CV_LV_zip.zip
A statement signed by the rector, director, head of the study programme or field that the knowledge of the state language of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes within the study field complies with the regulations on the state language knowledge and state language proficiency test for professional and official duties.	LBTU_apliecinajumu_studiju_virzienam_Sociologij_politologija_un_antropologija_EN.docx	LBTU_apliecinajumu_studiju_virzienam_Sociologij_politologija_un_antropologija.edoc
A statement of the higher education institution/ college on the respective foreign language skills of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme at least at B2 level according to the European Language Proficiency Assessment levels (level distribution is available on the website www.europass.lv, if the study programme or part thereof is implemented)	LBTU_apliecinajumu_studiju_virzienam_Sociologij_politologija_un_antropologija_EN.docx	LBTU_apliecinajumu_studiju_virzienam_Sociologij_politologija_un_antropologija.edoc
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation		
Summary of quantitative data on scientific and/ or applied research and / or artistic creation activities corresponding to the study field in the reporting period.	Study_direction_academic_personnel_scientific_activities_ENG.docx	Studiju_virziena_macibspeku_zinatniskas_aktivitates_LV.docx
List of the publications, patents, and artistic creations of the teaching staff over the reporting period.	Teaching_personnel_publications_2017-2023.xlsx	Macibspeku_publicaciju_saraksts_2017-2023.xlsx
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation		
List of cooperation agreements, including the agreements for providing internship	2.5.1 Cooperation agreements_corrected.xlsx	2.5.1. Sadarbības līgumi_precizets.xlsx
Statistical data on the teaching staff and the students from abroad	Annex 2.5.2 Internationals students.docx	2.5.2. pielikums Statistikas dati par ārvalstu studejosajiem OSPS.docx
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of students (by specifying the study programmes)	Annex 2.5.3. Students mobility clarified .docx	2.5.3. Studejoso mobilitāte precizēts.docx
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff	Annex 2.5.4_mobility_of_academic_personnel_corrected.pdf	2.5.4. pielikums_macibspeku_mobilitate_precizets.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures		
Report on the implementation of the recommendations received both in the previous accreditation and in the licensing and/ or change assessment procedures and/ or the procedures for the inclusion of the study programme on the accreditation form of the study field.	Expert_recommendations_corrected.docx	Ekspertu_komisijas_rekomendacijas_precizets.docx
An application for the evaluation of the study field signed with a secure electronic signature	IESNIEGUMS_Studiju_virziena_novertesana_Sociologi_EN_precizets.docx	Iesniegums studiju virziena _Sociologija, politologija un antropologija _novertesana_precizets.edoc
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme		
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard		
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme		
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)		
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules		
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		

Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
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## Other annexes

Name of document	Document
lekstikla_mansLBTU_ekransavini_LV.pdf	lekstikla_mansLBTU_ekransavini_LV.pdf
Intranet_mansLBTU_screenshots_EN.pdf	Intranet_mansLBTU_screenshots_EN.pdf
LBTU dokumenti latviešu valodā	LBTU_dokumenti_latviesu_valoda-20240102.zip
LBTU documents in English	LBTU documents in English-20240102.zip
Ekspertu grupas rekomendācijas un to izpilde.docx	Ekspertu grupas rekomendācijas un to izpilde.docx
Expert group recommendations and the implementation thereof.docx	Expert group recommendations and the implementation thereof.docx
Tālmācības kārtība LBTU	Talmacibas_kartibaLBTU_2022_.docx
Distance Learning regulation in LBTU (only in Latvian)	Talmacibas_kartibaLBTU_2022_.docx
LBTU pārāpstinātais rīkojums par studiju kursu izstrādi	Studiju_kursu_izstradasanas_un_atjaunosanas_kartiba_2024.pdf
LBTU re-approved regulation on the Development of Study Courses	Studiju_kursu_izstradasanas_un_atjaunosanas_kartiba_2024_EN2.pdf
LBTU Studiju virziena pašnovērtējuma ziņojuma precizējumu skaidrojumi	Precizejumi_zinojumam_Sociologija.docx

# Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration (45314)

Study field	<i>Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration</i>
Education classification code	<i>45314</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic master study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Līga</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Paula</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>liga.paula@lbtu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Dr.sc.soc.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>The goal of the academic master's study programme Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration is to train specialists in the sociology of organisations and public administration who meet the requirements of the European Union labour market for managerial work in public and private sector organisations in Latvian regions and rural territories, as well as for scientific research work.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<i>1. To provide a student-centred study process appropriate to the master's level for the preparation of academically educated specialists with the skills to work in the interfaces between sociology and other disciplines</i> <i>2. To develop, on the basis of sociological knowledge, the professional skills and personality traits of master's students necessary for managerial positions in public and private sector organisations in the regions and rural areas of Latvia</i> <i>3. To develop theoretical and research competence for in-depth analysis of social processes in different fields and at different levels</i> <i>4. To provide theoretical and empirical knowledge and skills in sociology, which will open opportunities for further doctoral studies</i>

Results of the study programme	<p><b>Knowledge:</b></p> <p>1) in-depth knowledge of the latest theoretical approaches to the structure of society, changes in social processes, institutional activities, and the development trends of organisations at national, municipal, and non-governmental levels;</p> <p>2) knowledge of the principles of public policies within the context of public administration and sustainable spatial social development;</p> <p>3) in-depth knowledge of the development trends in sociology and related sciences, as well as methodologies and organisational principles of sociological research.</p> <p><b>Skills:</b></p> <p>1) to identify a research problem and select relevant sociological concepts, research methods, and independently conduct sociological research in order to analyse and solve problems related to organisations and public administration;</p> <p>2) to apply sociological knowledge independently to make arguments and justify opinions in decision-making and implementation processes, including multidisciplinary problem-solving;</p> <p>3) to evaluate changes and trends in social processes related to the development of society critically, identify the causes and possible consequences of social problems in the strategic development directions of society.</p> <p><b>Competence:</b></p> <p>1) ability to organise and conduct sociological research independently in public and private sector institutions, to give constructive feedback on research results and apply the results in designing and planning public policy measures, as well in decision-making and implementation processes;</p> <p>2) ability to apply social science research independently in planning, decision-making and implementation processes for analysing and solving problems in the sphere of organisation and public administration;</p> <p>3) ability to competently assess social processes in the context of sustainable development of society in cooperation with specialists from different spheres;</p> <p>4) ability to conduct scientific research on current social life issues and organisational performance both independently and in multidisciplinary teams adhering to professional standards.</p>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	Master's Thesis

## Study programme forms

### Full time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	Full time studies
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	latvian

Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>First cycle higher education in Social Sciences, Business and Law. If first cycle higher education obtained in Education Sciences an entrance exam must be taken</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master Degree of Social Sciences in Sociology</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies	JELGAVA	LIELĀ IELA 2, JELGAVA, LV-3001

#### Part time extramural studies distance education - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time extramural studies distance education</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>First cycle higher education in Social Sciences, Business and Law. If first cycle higher education obtained in Education Sciences an entrance exam must be taken</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master Degree of Social Sciences in Sociology</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies	JELGAVA	LIELĀ IELA 2, JELGAVA, LV-3001

#### Full time studies - 2 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>First cycle higher education in Social Sciences, Business and Law. If first cycle higher education obtained in Education Sciences an entrance exam must be taken. At least B2 level of English language skills</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master Degree of Social Sciences in Sociology</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
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### 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

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

Changes since the previous accreditation of the study direction on 22 May 2013 in the academic Master's study programme "Sociology of Organisations and Public Administration" (SOPA) are related to the implementation of the expert committee's recommendations on the improvement of the study programme, changes in the documents regulating higher education in Latvia, as well as the development plans of the study direction, which were planned and implemented in accordance with the strategic goals and objectives of the study direction. During the reporting period, they were initially reviewed and approved by the ESAF Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities (SOHU) already in 2013, and later regularly updated. As a result, intensive efforts were made during the reporting period to launch the Master's programme in distance learning (e-studies on the MOODLE platform) and in English. The changes approved at the meeting of the Study Quality Committee on 27 April 2022 are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

#### Changes to the Master's study programme SOPA licensed during the reporting period

General characteristics of the programme	Situation before the change	Current situation
* <i>Education classification code</i>	45310	45314
* <i>Programme delivery languages:</i>	Latvian	Latvian and English
** <i>Type and form of study programme implementation</i>	Full-time, intramural form Part-time extramural form	Full-time and part-time distance learning
** <i>Duration of the study programme</i>	2 years	2 years –full-time 2 years and 6 months – part-time distance learning

\* *Decision No. 2021/03-I made at a meeting of the Study Quality Committee on 30/06/2021*

\*\* *Decision No. 2022/08-I made at a meeting of the Study Quality Committee on 27/04/2022*

The change of the education classification code from 45310 to 45314 was made in accordance with

the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education". The admission requirements were clarified, stating that the study programme admits persons who have:

- bachelor's degree or second level professional higher education (or equivalent higher education) in social and behavioural sciences or in business administration without additional requirements;
- a bachelor's degree or a second-level professional higher education qualification (or equivalent higher education qualification) in other fields of education with additional requirements;
- a minimum level of B2 in English, if the studies are conducted in English.

In 2024, LBTU transitioned to the ECTS credit system, thus minor changes took place in the annual study plan for the 2024/2025 academic year in order to adjust the volume of two study courses. There have been no significant changes in the content of the study programme, the volume of the study courses in the study plan was mathematically recalculated to the new credit points (the annex to the report contains study plans in which the amounts of all study courses are indicated in the new credit points (1 CP=1 ECTS). According to the new procedure, 3 ECTS in master's studies corresponds to 81 hours (of which 24 are contact hours), 4 ECTS corresponds to 100 hours (of which 32 are contact hours), 5 ECTS corresponds to 135 hours (of which 40 are contact hours), 6 ECTS corresponds to 162 hours (of which 48 are contact hours).

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

The design and implementation of the programme is based on the normative documents (the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia, the Cabinet of Ministers regulations "*Regulations on Opening and Accreditation of Study Directions*", the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations "*Regulations on the national academic standard of education*", as well as the internal normative documents of the Latvian University of Life Sciences and Technologies). Admission requirements are appropriate and sufficient for the achievement of study results of the appropriate quality and duration; admission of the master students is carried out in accordance with the procedures and criteria approved by LBTU. If a person who wants to study in the OSPS master's programme has a bachelor's degree or a first-cycle professional higher education in educational sciences, he/she must take an entrance exam during admission - write an essay on a topic related to social research. This is to ensure that the applicant has a basic knowledge of social sciences and research. The study results to be achieved correspond to the aim and objectives of the study programme and the content of the programme. The degree to be awarded is subordinate to the achievable study results and the content of the study programme. The programme is developed in accordance with the strategic objectives of LBTU and ESAF in sustainable development of territories.

Based on the recommendations given by the Accreditation Committee (2013), at a meeting of the

Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities (SOHU) of the Faculty of Economics and Social Development (ESAF), six strategic goals for the development of the study direction “Sociology, Politology and Anthropology” were approved on 19 November 2013, which could be achieved during the programme delivery period until the next accreditation of the study direction (initially planned for 2019, later postponed to 2024):

- enhancement and development of programmes at all the levels of study, focusing on the preparation of specialists based on needs for rural areas and regions of Latvia;
- recruitment of applicants at all the levels of study,
- internationalization of studies;
- development and implementation of e-learning (distance learning);
- promotion of research activities implemented by students and teaching personnel;
- strengthening and development of cooperation with public, non-governmental and private sector organizations.

During the reporting period, intensive work has been carried out to achieve the above-mentioned goals, and within the study direction the academic Master’s study programme SOPA is currently implemented in full-time studies (2 years or 4 semesters) in Latvian and English and in part-time distance learning studies (2 years and 6 months or 5 semesters) in Latvian. The programme is 120 ECTS and the degree awarded is a Master of Social Sciences in Sociology.

The goal of the academic Master’s study programme Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration (SOPA) is to train specialists in the sociology of organisations and public administration who meet the requirements of the European Union labour market for managerial work in public and private sector organisations in Latvian regions and rural territories, as well as for scientific research work. The study results to be achieved correspond to the goal and tasks of the programme, as well as the content of the study programme (see the mapping in the appendix). The awarded degree is subordinate to the achievable study results and the content of the study programme, which fully corresponds to study direction.

The study programme is implemented and developed in accordance with the strategic goals of LBTU and ESAF, as well as the recommendations of experts received in the previous accreditation. The content of the study courses allows to achieve the programme tasks and the defined study results. The study process is student-centered, which can be well implemented in small student groups. The knowledge and experience gained during face-to-face classes, guest lectures and study tours allow master's students to deepen their knowledge of the latest theoretical insights in the analysis of social processes as well as performance of public and non-governmental sector institutions. The expected knowledge is sufficient to develop the defined skills and acquire the competence to conduct research independently, use its results and work professionally in interdisciplinary teams. The achievement of study results is evidenced by the further successful studies of several master's students in doctoral studies, which is also one of the tasks of the study program.

Part-time distance learning offers opportunities to make the study programme more attractive, modern and accessible for master students who find face-to-face studies difficult or impossible, thus allowing them to reconcile studies with work and private life (e.g. Latvian nationals living and working abroad, shift workers, parents with young children, people working in specific sectors (e.g. soldiers or athletes)). Internationalisation of studies means implementation of the study programme in English, thus developing the programme and attracting international students, in line with the LBTU Strategy 2023-2027.

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

Master's studies in sociology are offered at only two universities in Latvia, including LBTU. Only LBTU offers a Master's degree programme with an orientation in organisations and public administration, which focuses on the study of rural and regional social processes, the analysis of the activities of different levels of government and private sector organisations, and the study of current problems. Master's theses are often developed in cooperation with the state institutions, NGOs and municipalities, planning regions and other organisations in Latvian regions, therefore empirical results of the most important theses are tested in practice, thus providing real solutions and situational analysis. The absolute majority of Masters students are already employed in public or non-governmental organisations when they start their studies in the SOPA programme, some of them work in the private sector. Many of them hold positions of responsibility as managers or specialists in public or private sector institutions in rural and urban areas in different regions and cities of Latvia, so they have chosen to study in the SOPA Master's programme very purposefully in order to improve their knowledge and competences in areas related to the management of organisations and society. Training such specialists with knowledge of public administration processes and their analysis, who understand not only the decision-making process, but also their practical implementation, contributes not only to public administration, but also to the development of various areas of the economy. The Master's programme is considered as an opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the functioning of organisations, social processes, their research and evaluation. The qualification, knowledge and competence of the graduates of the Master's study programme allow them to successfully continue their studies in doctoral programmes (e.g. at the University of Latvia, Riga Stradiņš University, Turība University) and gain doctoral degrees.

The results of the study on labour demand trends published by "Dynamic University Ltd" (LLU project No 8.2.3.0/18/A/009) in autumn 2019 showed that managers at various levels in the European Union are among the TOP 25 occupations for which demand continues to grow, and the majority of companies in Latvia have experienced a shortage of highly qualified middle and senior managers at least once in the last couple of years. In particular, functional managers, who have interdisciplinary skills in addition to management, are in high demand in the sectors. In the future, the panellists foresee a further increase in labour demand, supported by economic growth and increasing entrepreneurial activity. Highly skilled professionals are more in demand.

Using the graduate monitoring data available in the National Education Information System, the employment rate of SOPA graduates has been assessed according to the available information on the thematic groups of education. The study direction "Sociology, Politology, Anthropology" is included in the thematic group "Social Sciences, Business and Law". 2020 data show that this thematic group accounted for 36.57% of all graduates from higher education in Latvia in that year; including the thematic area "Social and Human Sciences" - 5.55%. In total, 86.46% of all LBTU graduates in 2020 are employed, which is the highest indicator among all universities, while 88.2% of master's level graduates from LBTU are employed, which is higher than the national average (80.9%). According to the monitoring data, employment in the Social Sciences, Business and Law thematic group grew by 4% between 2018 and 2021, reaching 81% directly in higher qualifications (including holders of Master's degrees), although employment in this group remained relatively stable at 86.2% on average in 2021. The average annual income for all graduates increased by €6,834 over the period 2018-2021, while the Social Sciences, Business and Law thematic group increased by around €5,215, reaching €21,428 in 2021, which is slightly below the average income compared to all higher education graduates in the country. There is a significant difference in

employment rates in higher skilled occupations between private and public higher education institutions graduates (73% of private and 85% of public higher education graduates are employed in higher skilled occupations in the 2021 monitoring year, taking into account unique graduates in all years). Both employment and employment in higher qualifications among PhD and master’s graduates are significantly higher than among bachelor and college graduates in all monitoring and graduation years, with trends and dynamics showing and confirming a hierarchy of study level.

The Master’s study programme SOPA is aimed at educating professionals who are able to adapt to changing labour market conditions and analyse processes in society and organisations based on the latest scientific knowledge. Therefore, the study programme is regularly updated to include new developments in EU policies, ensuring their relevance to both Latvian and EU labour market forecasts in perspective.

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

The SOPA Master’s programme is chosen by a wide variety of students, who are aware of the need to build on their existing knowledge and skills, or to acquire completely new ones, in order to be more successful in their profession. These include young people who are continuing their studies immediately after their undergraduate studies or after a break of a few years, as well as people who already have a relatively high level of life and work experience. Most masters students combine their studies with work, being employed in public, non-governmental or private sector organisations. Some masters students consider studies in SOPA programme as an opportunity to obtain a second master’s degree.

Masters students come from different regions of Latvia, both urban and rural. They have a variety of backgrounds: academic or professional training in sociology, economics, pedagogy, management, education, health, etc. Master’s students have received their undergraduate education at LBTU, University of Latvia, Riga Technical University, Riga Stradiņš University, Vidzeme University of Applied Science, Transport and Telecommunication Institute, Riga Teacher Training and Educational Management Academy, Latvian Academy of Sport Education, Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration, Latvian Academy of Culture and University of West London. In their surveys, students indicate that they have made a very conscious choice to study in the SOPA study programme because of its orientation and content offer when exploring master’s study opportunities in Latvia.

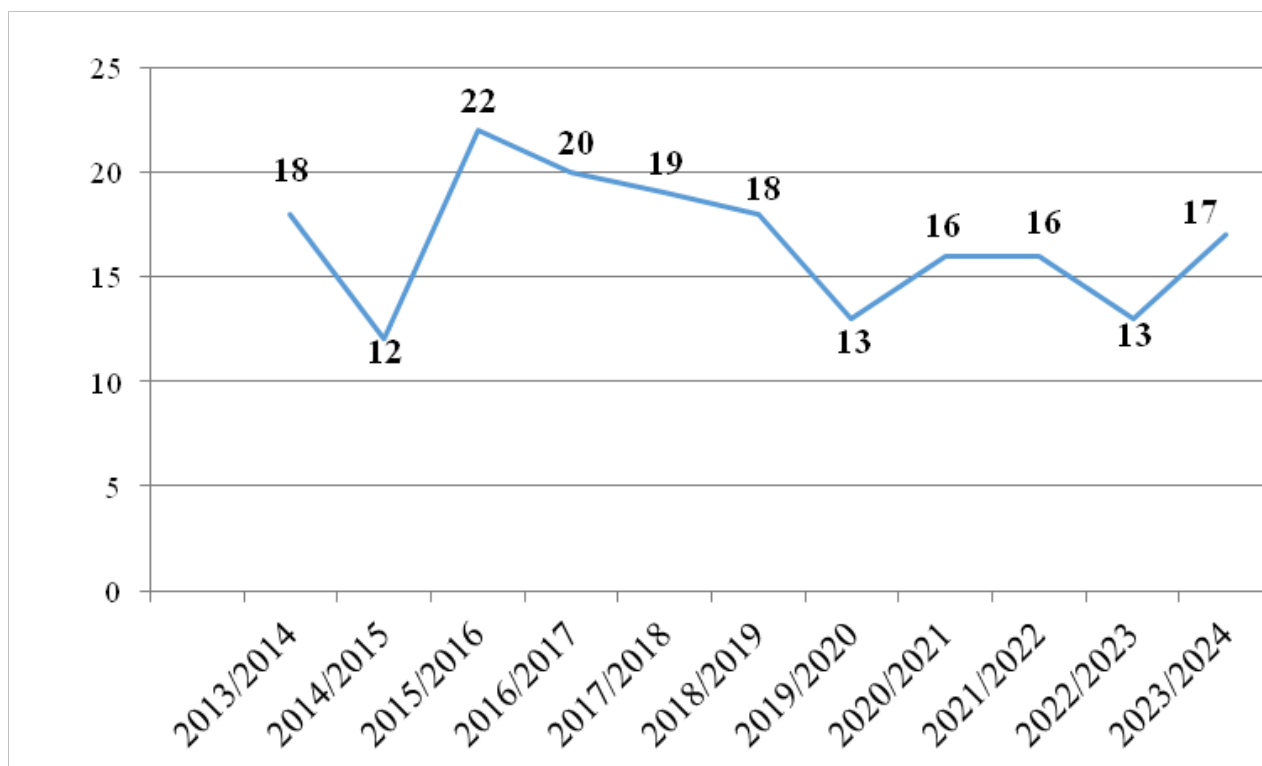
The number of students enrolled in the SOPA programme has been variable but relatively stable over the reporting period 2013/2014 - 2023/2024 (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

**Number of students enrolled in the SOPA Master’s programme during the reporting period**

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>Full-time students</b>	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Including international students</b>
2013/2014	18	0
2014/2015	12	0
2015/2016	22	1
2016/2017	20	1
2017/2018	19	0
2018/2019	18	1
2019/2020	13	1
2020/2021	16	0
2021/2022	16	3
2022/2023	13	5
2023/2024	17	8

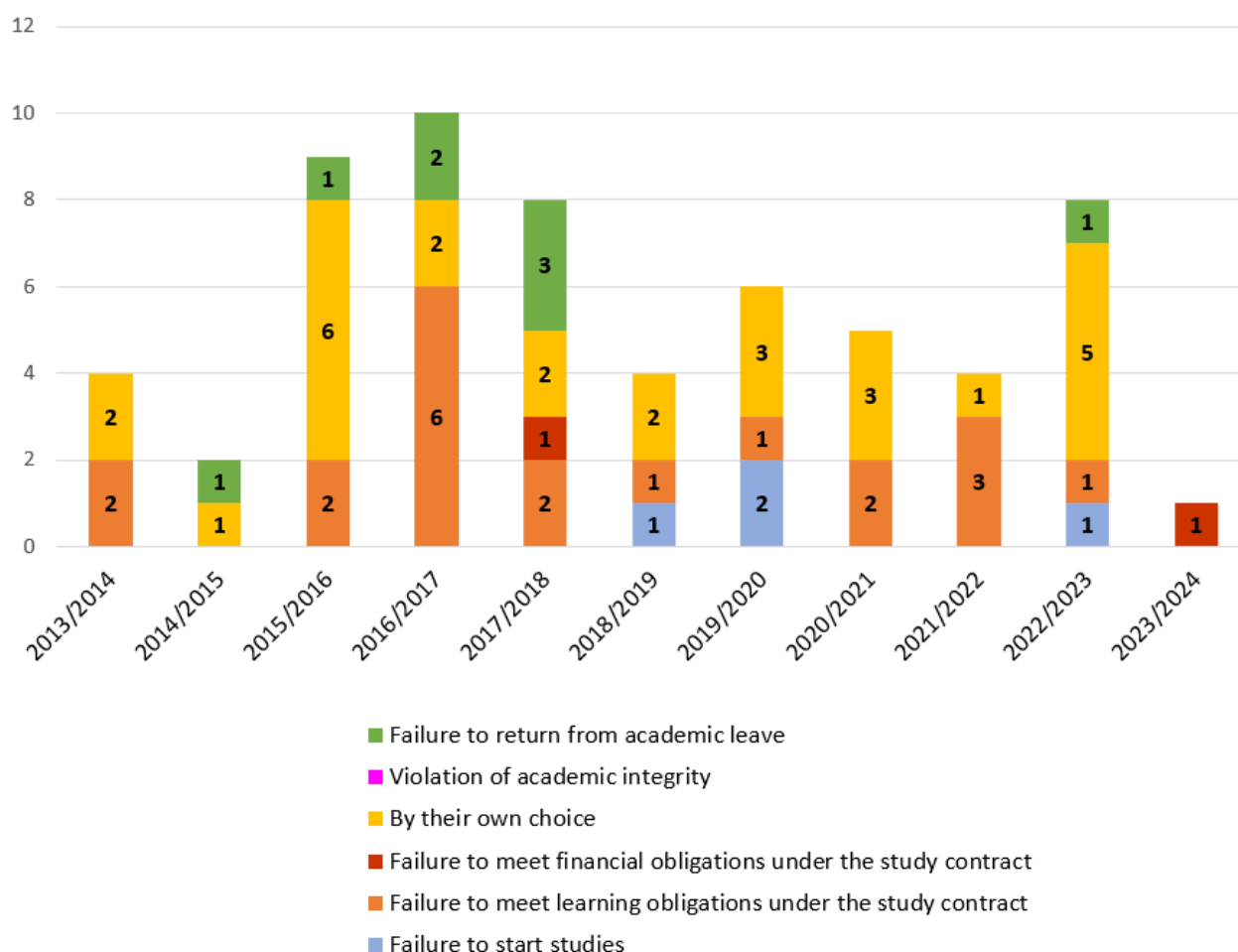
The number of state-funded study places and the increase in the number of international students are the main factors influencing student numbers. Currently there are 13 state-funded study places in the programme.



**Figure. 3.1. Dynamics of the number of students enrolled in the master's study programme SOPA in 2013/2014 - 2023/2024**

In order to implement the goal of the study direction to internationalise the study programme, in the reporting period the study programme was licensed to be conducted in English, thus attracting students from foreign countries (e.g., Russia, USA, India, Sri Lanka, Cameroon, Sweden). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to provide face-to-face studies, so some international students who started the programme dropped out. The process is long and complex for third-country nationals, requiring several months from the submission of the application to arrival in Latvia and the start of studies (global security situation, visa issues, residence permits, verification of previous education, etc.). Admission of international students to the programme takes place twice a year. These factors make it difficult to organise studies and prevent drop-outs if a master's student arrives late in the semester.

An analysis of the number of students who have dropped out shows that the drop-out rate is highly variable (see Annex 3.1.2., Table 1.7; Figure 3.3.). The total drop-out rate is 59 students, which is 32% of the total of 184 students in the reporting period.



**Figure.3.2. Reasons for drop-out**

In the reporting period, the reasons for discontinuation of studies were mainly related to the students' own wish (26 students or 38%), for not fulfilling the obligations of the study agreement, not fulfilling the requirements of the study programme (20 students or 34%) and not returning from academic leave (8 students or 14%). Working master's students tend to have difficulties balancing work and private life with their studies, which is a reason for interrupting their studies or taking academic leave. Health problems are also sometimes a reason for drop-out. There are cases where master's students resume their studies but are unable to write their Master's thesis on time and drop-out again. 4 students were expelled before starting their studies (for health reasons, not having targeted their studies). Also, during the 1st semester, a small drop-out occurs if the master students have realised that the chosen study programme does not match their interests.

In order to reduce the drop-out rate, all students who have written an application for exmatriculation are invited to an interview with the Dean or the Vice-Dean of Studies or the programme director. Students from abroad discontinue their studies mainly due to personal or family reasons of their own volition or due to financial difficulties. For students starting their studies at a later stage, a great deal of individual support is provided directly by the programme director, including ESAF's administrators, who advise and support them on various issues related to the study process.

Over the last couple of academic years, potential students have also shown interest in distance learning, although it has not yet been possible to recruit a group of students to open distance learning in the 2023/2024 academic year.

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

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

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

The content of the academic Master's study programme SOPA and the Master's degree to be obtained correspond to the title of the study programme, the programme allows to achieve its goal and objectives (see 3.1.2. part), as evidenced by the compliance of the study programme content with the National Standard of Academic Education (see Annex). The study programme is implemented in accordance with the goal of the study direction, its content ensures the continuity of the bachelor study programme and the sustainable development of the study direction. The implementation of the programme is based on cooperation and responsible action between students, teaching staff, graduates, employers and industry. The teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme actively participate in the work of various sectoral organisations, committees and councils, are experts in their fields of study, and actively participate in the work of scientific projects.

According to the National Standard of Academic Education, the content of the study programme includes study courses:

1) which include the study of theoretical findings in the chosen field of the relevant branch or subfield of science (Philosophy of Science 2 CP (3 ECTS), Theory of Sociology 4 CP (6 ECTS), Social Research Methods 4 CP (6 ECTS), Public Administration 3 CP (4.5 ECTS), Organizational Behaviour 3 CP (4.5 ECTS), Analytic Demography 2 CP (3 ECTS), Social Welfare 4 CP (6 ECTS), Organisational Studies 4 CP (6 ECTS));

2) which include theoretical knowledge approbation in the aspect of current problems in the chosen field of science or subfield (Principles of Scientific Research 2 CP (3 ECTS), Public and Non-Governmental Sector 4 CP (6 ECTS), Human Development 2CP (3 ECTS), Policy Analysis 2 CP (3 ECTS), Research of Quality of Life 2 CP (3 ECTS), Development Programmes 2 CP (3 ECTS), Sociological Information Processing 2 CP (3 ECTS), Rural Studies 2 CP (3 ECTS)).

Elective study courses give students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge in specific, field-related areas, such as Project Management 2 CP (3 ECTS), Postmodern Theories 2 CP (3 ECTS),

Bioethics 2 CP (3 ECTS), Sociology in Latvia 2 CP (3 ECTS), Environmental Sociology 2 CP (3 ECTS), Digital Media in Modern Society 2 CP (3 ECTS), etc.

The content of each study course is designed in accordance with the aim, objectives and expected results of the study programme. The learning outcomes to be achieved in the study courses are subordinated to the learning outcomes defined in the study programme, as evidenced by the mapping of learning outcomes. The learning outcomes, as well as the descriptions of individual study courses, are organised according to the principle “knowledge - skills - general skills - competence”. Knowledge, skills, competences are graded in order to make the assessment of knowledge more transparent. Each course of study has a defined purpose and function in achieving the learning outcomes. The content of the study courses is mutually consistent in the design process to avoid unnecessary duplication (see Annexes for course mapping and course descriptions).

The content of study courses is regularly reviewed and updated in line with the research industry, labour market requirements and scientific trends. The relevance of the course content to current knowledge is ensured by:

- the scientific activity of the teaching staff and regular participation in scientific conferences;
- participation of the teaching personnel in research projects, thus strengthening the link between education and research;
- professional development activities, seminars, courses, which provide opportunities and motivation for teaching personnel to improve their professionalism, as well as to diversify their teaching methods and revise the content of the courses they teach;
- participation of teaching personnel in the ERASMUS+ programme, thus facilitating the exchange of teaching methods and study experience;
- the activities and participation of the teaching personnel in various institutional committees, which allows a better understanding of various social processes and the transfer of topical issues in the field to the study process.

Updating the content of courses is also prescribed by the legal documents of LBTU (Procedure for Developing Course/Practice Programmes and the Procedure for Registering and Updating Information in the LBTU IS Course Register), which stipulates that any course programme must be reviewed and enhanced at least once every two years during a self-assessment of the programme, as well as supplemented with the latest information and trends in the field based on:

- programme director's initiative;
- initiative of the teaching personnel member delivering the course;
- recommendations given in student surveys of teaching personnel;
- recommendations given in employer survey questionnaires and during an assessment of the programme, as well as during the defence of bachelor theses that are summarized and presented in a report by the Master Examination Committee.

The director of the programme summarizes the recommendations made by students and employers about the necessary changes in the content of a course and informs the teaching personnel member who is responsible for reviewing the content and integrating the suggested ideas into it.

In 2020, within the framework of the LBTU project “Improvement of the management of the Latvian University of Agriculture” No 8.2.3.0/18/A/009, the evaluation of study programmes was organised. Experts from market research company RAIT Custom Research Baltic Ltd, as well as an international expert from the Estonian University of Life Sciences were involved. The overall assessment of the experts was very positive, with positive evaluations of the structure, content and outcomes of the study programmes. The experts' recommendations have been taken into account

in the development of the study programme development plan until 2023 (Table 3.3.). The plan was also discussed with students and has been largely implemented during the reporting period.

Table 3.3.

**Curriculum Development Plan (to be implemented by 2023)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Implementation of the study programme in the form of e-learning (distance learning), development of study courses in e-learning in the MOODLE	Study programme director, Teaching personnel involved in programme implementation
To update the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study programme, including transferable and soft skills Update the curricula, content and literature used in the study courses	Study programme director, Teaching personnel involved in programme implementation
Develop new elective courses (Part B)	Study programme director
More active use of MOODLE and other on-line platforms and tools in teaching courses	Study programme director, Teaching personnel involved in programme implementation
Acquisition of teaching literature on public administration and contemporary research methods	ESAF
Provision of data analysis techniques programmes	ESAF
Motivating students to take advantage of scholarships and mobility opportunities	Study programme director

At the end of each academic year, a survey of students is carried out to find out their opinions on the relevance of the study programme to the labour market. Students' evaluations are taken into account in order to improve the quality of the study process, primarily by the study programme director, who works on improving the study courses with the teaching staff involved in the study process at the institute. In order to have a more than quantitative data, the programme director also conducts qualitative research by interviewing students and alumni who are working in organizations and research and can give their assessment of the quality of the studies.

Guest lectures are regularly organised for master's students, both at ESAF level and in individual courses of the programme. Guest lecturers include professionals from other universities, state and local government institutions, research and academic institutions, as well as NGOs from both Latvia and abroad. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the study process was conducted online for a long time in the form of distance learning, hence many guest lectures were also held remotely. In this way, creative solutions were sought for a more successful study process in order not to lose the long-standing tradition of linking studies with professionals in the field. Every autumn, ESAF organises an

Alumni Lecture Week, inviting alumni from all study programmes to share their experiences of study and, in particular, their working lives.

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

The content of the study courses included in the study programme is regularly revised, the list of study literature and information sources for studies is renewed and supplemented, in order to ensure the awarding of a master's degree in sociology based on the latest achievements and findings of social sciences, especially the sociology of organisations and public administration (for details see Annex 3.2.5. on descriptions of study courses). Lecturers regularly update their knowledge by participating in scientific conferences and research projects. The participation of the academic personnel in various national and international researches and activities makes a significant contribution to the implementation of the study programme (for details, see chapter 2.4.3 of part 2 of the report). Listed below are some research projects in various related fields: the project *"Cutting-edge knowledge and solutions to study demographic and migration processes for the development of Latvian and European society (DemoMigPro)"* of the National Research Programme "Letonika – Fostering a Latvian and European Society" (2021-2024), Latvian Council of Science tenure project "Resilient and sustainable rural communities: multiplier effect of local food system" (2020-2021), the National Research Programme EKOSOC-LV project 5.2.3 *"Latvia's rural and regional development processes and opportunities in the context of the knowledge economy"*, the National Research Programme EKOSOC-LV, sub-programme 5.2.8 "Processes of Cultural Environment Development, Preservation of Environmental Diversity and Urbanization in the Context of Sustainable Development in Latvia", project 5.2.7. „Restoration of society by reducing the risks of depopulation, promoting the regeneration of the nation and connections with the diaspora for the successful transformation of Latvia's national economy" (2014-2018); project VPP-IZM-2018/1-0015 "Development of a Sustainable and Cohesive Society in Latvia: Solutions to Demographic and Migration Challenges" (DemoMig) under the NRP "Latvian Heritage and Future Challenges for the Sustainability of the State" (2018-2021), Erasmus+K2 project "Education in Rural Entrepreneurship through Producing and Valorising of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants" (REMAP).

The programme director is a member of European Society for Rural Sociology and Latvian Sociological Association (a board member in 2020-2021).

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

The implementation of the study programme and the evaluation of results are ensured through the mapping of study courses (see Annex 3.2.3.). The content of the study courses and the methods used are oriented towards the achievement of study results in accordance with knowledge, skills and competences. Using the existing study framework - lectures and seminars, as well as individual work, lecturers use various methods in their work to present topics and assess knowledge. The basic principles and procedures for the assessment of students' knowledge are determined by the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No.240 "Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education", as well as by the internal regulatory documents of LBTU. The criteria for evaluation of achievements of LBTU students are described in the Regulations of Studies. At the commencement of studies, master students are acquainted with the course descriptions, achievable results and evaluation procedure. The assessment of the achievement of the learning outcomes in the study programme is consistent, fair and appropriate for all students and is carried out in accordance with the approved procedures. Teaching personnel are familiar with and use a variety of assessment methods. For an evaluation of the methods and procedures used to assess student achievement, see Section 2.1.5. These procedures, criteria and principles for assessing different levels of student achievement contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the study programmes and ensure the assessment of student-centred learning.

The teaching methods and objectives used in each study course to achieve the learning outcomes can be found in the programme of each study course (see Annex 3.2.5.). Discussions, pair and group work, case and problem analysis, role plays, tests and self-assessments, reports, analysis of previous research on a particular topic, etc. are often used. Taking into account the different backgrounds of students in social science research, lecturers use study methods that promote the exchange of information and sharing of experience, as well as critical thinking and the ability to justify one's own opinion. For example, in the first semester during the study course "Principles of Scientific Research", master students conduct a literature review on a potential master thesis topic, presenting the novelty of their proposed research. By presenting the review during a seminar, other students have the opportunity to comment and ask questions, thus training their research skills and their ability to critically evaluate research approaches in sociological research.

The experience gained during the Covid-19 pandemic with distance learning opportunities in the e-studies (MOODLE) and online lectures on the BBB platform has led to more opportunities to use digital solutions in the implementation of the study programme. The study process has become more flexible, with digital solutions being used for learning topics, submitting coursework, controlling plagiarism, as well as for remote tutorials, guest lectures and lectures. In the autumn semester of 2023, several study courses developed within the framework of the ESF project "Digitisation Initiatives for Student Involvement and Study Quality Improvement at the University of Latvia and Project Partner Universities (2022-2023)" were tested and successfully used in various study courses, for example, on online survey creation, use of databases in the development of study papers, scientific terminology, etc.

Feedback on submitted independent work is given to master's students in e-studies system or in the following sessions during the course. Masters students are informed both about individual study results and about similar mistakes in the course. The tutors also provide advice by e-mail or in the MOODLE. In addition to lectures and seminars, students have the opportunity to attend guest lectures and participate in study tours. Students also have the opportunity to take part in events organised by ESAF that allow them to link theoretical knowledge with the real situation in companies - Alumni Week (two times a year) and International Week activities. The study process can be called student-centred because it takes into account students' previous research experience

and needs, providing for different learning paths in the course programmes, using diverse study methods, ensuring a fair and transparent assessment procedure and providing feedback on the acquired knowledge, skills and competences. Students are encouraged to evaluate each course of study at the end of the course, and their comments are taken into account both in the further planning of the course (e.g. in terms of content and teaching methods) and in the further development of the programme. Students can make use of the opportunities provided by the faculty to submit proposals and receive support and information from lecturers, the programme director and technical personnel.

In order to ensure the use of modern teaching methods in the study process, teaching personnel regularly improve their qualifications by attending university didactics courses at LBTU, RSU, internships abroad within the ERASMUS programme and other qualification improvement opportunities (see Annex of CVs for details). Various methods are used in the study process:

- monological methods (classical lectures, lectures with Microsoft Office PowerPoint presentations, watching videos),
- dialogical methods (discussions, role-plays, seminars with presentations by postgraduate students, brainstorming),
- research methods (e.g. study tours, problem solving, SWOT, case studies, summer schools).

Greater emphasis is placed on dialogical methods and the active and independent involvement of masters in the study process by assigning individual or group work related to, for example, problem solving and case analysis, analysis of policy documents, drawing up summaries and contours, mind mapping, creating and analysing thematic reviews of guest lectures and conferences. Training excursions to the state, local government and non-governmental organisations within the framework of individual study courses and guest lectures of specialists in the sector are essential.

Master students who have graduated from different bachelor's programmes are admitted to the study programme, in rare cases also master's programmes (mainly in social sciences and humanities) in different institutions of higher education in Latvia and in different periods of time, therefore their background and knowledge in sociology (history of sociology, sociological theory, research methods) may be quite different. In order to align the levels of master students' knowledge, a number of possibilities are offered: (1) the study plan has been designed in such a way that the main courses of sociology theory are acquired in the first semester, (2) during the study process, the academic personnel determine the level of masters' prior knowledge and accordingly choose the most appropriate study methods, also offering individual solutions, (3) upon the recommendation of the professors, the master students independently acquire the necessary knowledge in addition, (4) as a listeners, students have an opportunity to take some LBTU undergraduate study courses to compensate the lack of knowledge.

In accordance with the tasks of the study programme, in the course of the implementation of studies a student-centred study process conforming to the level of master's studies is ensured in several ways:

- teaching personnel is available at consultation times (at least once a week) in order to provide individual consultations to students. Doctors are also available at other times acceptable to students, contact is made via email, BBB platform in the MOODLE, Zoom, telephone,;
- it is possible to organise studies according to an individually drawn up plan, if it is not possible for the master to attend classes and fulfil the requirements laid down by the principal in a particular study course within the time periods laid down for objective reasons;
- the study process (classes) is organised at weekends (Fridays and Saturdays), which makes the studies much more accessible to those master students who work;

- in developing master's thesis and engaging in scientific activity (participation in research projects, preparation of scientific publications, participation in conferences), that also within the framework of study courses, research interests and needs of students are taken into account when developing individual work;
- master students are informed about current events, guestlectures, conferences, publications which are related to their research interests; when organising study tours and guestlectures, the interests of students shall be co-ordinated with the objectives of the study programme or study course and the defined study results;
- in all study courses study materials have been prepared in an e-studies (MOODLE), so students may flexibly use the possibilities offered by the e-studies in the course acquisition, if necessary;
- students are involved in decision-making processes, regularly evaluating the work of the teaching personnel and the quality of studies during student surveys.

In February 2024, LBTU transitioned to the ECTS credit system (for details see Order of the LBTU Vice-rector of Studies "Procedure for Study Course / Traineeship Programme Development Process and Procedure for Information Registration and Amendments in LBTU IS Course Catalogue" included in Annex); respectively, 1 CP=1 ECTS and the total number of hours of one credit point is 25-27 h. According to the new system, 3 ECTS in master's studies corresponds to 81 hours (of which 24 are contact hours), 4 ECTS corresponds to 100 hours (of which 32 are contact hours), 5 ECTS corresponds to 135 hours (of which 40 are contact hours), 6 ECTS corresponds to 162 hours (of which 48 are contact hours).

The study process is not significantly different for those studying in Latvian and English. A student-centered approach is also used in the study process of international students, interactive study methods, e-study environment, creative teaching methods, guest lectures and study tours are widely used, various study materials and books in English are available to them. Both Latvian and English students equally actively participate in international scientific conferences, Erasmus+ mobility, various seminars, evaluation of the study process. Compared to the Latvian stream, for which classes are scheduled on Fridays and Saturdays, respecting the fact that master's students are employed, classes for international students are scheduled throughout the week.

Part-time distance learning is not currently implemented in the Master's programme, but when it is, a similar approach to the Bachelor's programme will be used. At the beginning of each semester, the director of the study programme creates a plan according to which study courses are taken. Once a month, the teaching staff of each study course organizes an online consultation, during which distance learning students have the opportunity to communicate with lecturers. Study courses are studied according to the schedule developed at the beginning of the semester, respecting the pace and capabilities of each student. The main communication between lecturers and students takes place on the Moodle platform, however, students have the opportunity to communicate with teaching staff by phone or in person, they are also offered the opportunity to participate in online guest lectures or in-person events at LBTU. The e-study methodologist provides a lot of support in the study work.

**3.2.4. If the study programme envisages an internship, describe the internship opportunities offered to students, provision and work organization, including whether the higher education institution/ college helps students to find an internship place. If the study programme is implemented in a foreign language, provide information on how**

internship opportunities are provided in a foreign language, including for foreign students. To provide analysis and evaluation of the connection of the tasks set for students during the internship included in the study programme with the learning outcomes of the study programme (if applicable).

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

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

At the end of the studies, students elaborate a Master's thesis in the amount of 20 CP (30 ECTS); in total 44 Master's theses were defended in the reporting period (Table 3.4.). Master's thesis is an independently carried out research, which confirms the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, methodological and organisational skills in the sociology of organisations and public administration within the scope of the study programme. The Master's thesis demonstrates the student's ability to independently carry out sound research with elements of novelty or practical application, to independently formulate conclusions and proposals. When choosing the topic of the Master's thesis, students are guided to study issues related to the orientation of the study programme: the functioning of organisations and public administration.

Table 3.4.

**Changes in the number of graduates and the average mark for master's theses in the reporting period**

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>Full-time studies</b>	<b>Average mark</b>
2013/2014	3	8.3
2014/2015	4	7.25
2015/2016	1	9
2016/2017	5	7.6
2017/2018	4	7.25
2018/2019	8	7.9

2019/2020	5	8.6
2020/2021	5	8.2
2021/2022	5	7
2022/2023	4	7

Students choose topics for their Master's theses that are relevant to public, including municipal, non-governmental and private sector institutions (see Table 3.5.), so often Master's theses are developed in collaboration with them. In general, master theses are developed in accordance with the requirements set for the development of master's theses, socially relevant and practically solvable topics are selected for research, which correspond to the orientation of the study programme. Where quantitative methods of analysis are used in the research, the Master's students strive to use not only descriptive analysis indicators, but also criteria of correlation and statistical validity. In most cases, Masters students demonstrate good skills in interpreting research results using appropriate sociological theories.

Table 3.5.

#### **Thematic compilation of SOPA master's theses**

CULTURE, IDENTITY, ECONOMIC PROCESSES IN LATVIAN REGIONS	Integration of rural youth into the labour market; Regional identity; Cultural consumption patterns; Innovative cultural services in communities, etc.
CURRENT PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION	Education reforms and stakeholder involvement in reform implementation; Implementation of the Competence Approach in Latvian schools; The role of mentoring in engaging new teachers in schools, etc.
SOCIAL PROBLEMS	Social aspects of different addictions and the role of different agents involved in addressing them; Evaluation of support institutions and services; Social work, etc.
PERFORMANCE OF ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND NGO SECTORS	Assessment of the performance of organisations and opportunities for improvement, Problems of recruitment and attraction of personnel in companies; Cooperation problems and solutions; Study of factors influencing motivation in private sector organisations, etc.
LABOUR MARKET PROBLEMS	Employers' job satisfaction, quality of working life in different sectors (social work, education); Labour market inclusion; social habits and healthy lifestyles; attracting young people to rural areas in the context of sustainability; factors affecting quality of working life for different groups of workers, etc.

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SOCIAL EXCLUSION  
AND INCLUSION,  
QUALITY OF LIFE IN  
THE REGIONS OF  
LATVIA

Integration of people with disabilities into society; Social inclusion and quality of life aspects of the elderly; Gender equality issues; Leisure opportunities for different social groups; Quality of life of different social groups in urban and rural areas; Work-life balance of teachers.

The Master's theses highlight topical and innovative research topics, and the best Master's theses are promoted for participation in competitions for the best research papers, such as the „ATSPĒRIENS” (TAKE-OFF) announced by the Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees. During the reporting period, several works were submitted to the competition and also received good evaluation and recognition.

During the reporting period, 10 (or 22.7%) of the 44 defended Master's theses were ranked as the best by the Master's Examination Committee (MEC) - these Master's theses were ranked 9 “excellent” and 10 “outstanding” (see Annex). The research results of the best master theses are published in conference proceedings and international scientific journals, the publications are prepared by the graduates together with the supervisors of the master theses. Every year with the final thesis topics the master students also participate in the LBTU international student scientific conference “Students on their Way to Science”, a publication is also produced, experience in scientific research work is gained.

Often, Master's theses are related to the fields in which students work, thus deepening research and addressing issues specific to their work. Master's students are involved in several National Research Programmes, resulting in Master's theses (e.g. in the NRP “Latvian Heritage and Future Challenges for the Sustainability of the State” (2018-2021) and the project “Cutting-edge Knowledge and Solutions to Study Demographic and Migration Processes for the Development of Latvian and European Society”(DemoMigPro) and in the NRP “Letonics for the Development of a Latvian and European Society” 2021-2024 project “New Solutions in the Study of Demographic and Migration Processes for the Development of a Latvian and European Knowledge Society (DemoMigPro)” (project no. VPP-LETONIKA-2021/3-00)). Master's theses produced are deliverables of the scientific project, with 2 Master's theses in the reporting period.

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

**3.3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples.**

LBTU and ESAF provide material, study, informational and financial basis for the implementation of the Master's programme (see the information provided in the criteria 2.3.1.-2.3.3. of the third chapter of the second part). Studies in the SOPA Master's programme is mainly organised in the

main building of LBTU at Liela Street 2, Jelgava, where the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities is located. As a result of recent renovations and IT support for STEM fields, the auditoriums are equipped according to modern requirements and lecturers can use a variety of teaching methods. Students have access to the LBTU library, as well as to all other information and facilities provided by LBTU and ESAF (see annexes for more details). As a concrete example, the teaching of the study course "Processing of Sociological Information" is organised in the computer room of the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies, where the relevant software facilities are available.

Until now, the master's study programme has not been implemented in the form of distance learning, but all students have equal access to provision and support for their study needs. Study materials, literature and databases offered in the LBTU library can be easily used both in person and remotely in Latvian and English languages. Remote access to resources is very convenient especially for distance learning students. Master's students of all study forms and streams can easily use the e-study environment Moodle, where study materials, additional information and possible communication with lecturers are available.

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

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

Calculation of the number of students required in the Master's study programme to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the study process is as follows. The required total academic workload in hours during the academic year – students must acquire 40 (60) credit points (CP) per academic year. The required number of contact classes (lectures, practicals/laboratory classes, seminars) for 1 CP is 12 h, for 40 CP it is 480 h. In addition to contact hours during classes, 128 hours are planned for other teaching-related work (student written work marking, examinations, tests etc.) for teaching personnel. The total academic workload per year is estimated to be 608 h ( $480+128=608$ ). The required number of workloads for the delivery of the programme per academic year (based on a decision of the Senate, the following number of hours of academic work per academic year has been set for a full-time equivalent workload at LBTU):

- professor – 900 h
- associate professor – 920 h
- assistant professor – 940 h
- lecturer/assistant – 960 h

Teaching personnel of various positions are engaged in the programme, yet for the calculation of a required number of workloads, the average number of hours worked by an assistant professor was chosen: 608 h (academic work) / 940 h (hours per workload) = a workload of 0.65. The required funding for teaching personnel salaries per academic year: EUR 1124 (Cabinet regulation No. 445) \* 0.65 workload \* 2 (number of groups) \* 12 (months) \* EUR 1.2359 (social tax) = EUR 21 670,76.

The number of students required to cover the costs of the programme: the number of students making up 2 groups must be 12. The minimum number of students making up one group must be 6 (this covers salaries and other costs). Material and technical resources are provided for the delivery of programmes at LBTU, involving no additional expenses.

During admission, LBTU assembles student groups for the implementation of the study programme, if at least 5 students apply to study there. This applies to both full-time studies and distance learning. Due to the fact that 5 applicants did not apply for studies in the master's programme or changed their mind during admission and were enrolled in full-time studies, the distance learning form of study is not implemented at the moment. However, studies are provided if the required minimum number of students has been enrolled at the start of the studies, but students drop out during their studies.

Since one of the goals of LBTU and the study direction is the internationalization of studies, studies are also provided for groups of students with less than 5 students, and admission takes place twice a year. In recent years, there has been a greater interest in studies from foreign students, thus the groups also become larger, reaching the set minimum.

In accordance with the LBTU Council Decision No 15, the tuition fee for the first year students in the academic year 2023/2024, who are not financed from the state budget, is determined, which stipulates that the tuition fee for the academic master's study programme in full-time studies is 2000 EUR per year, in part-time distance studies -1600 EUR per year. For students from abroad, the tuition fee is set at EUR 3000 per year. For more information on the financial support of the study field and the corresponding study programmes, see Section 2.3.1.

### 3.4. Teaching Staff

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

The qualifications and professional development of teaching personnel is determined by:

- Law on Higher Education (1995);
- Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 129 "Procedure for the Evaluation of the Scientific and Pedagogical Qualifications of a Candidate for the Position of Professor or Associate Professor or the Results of the Work of Artistic Creativity of a Professor or Associate Professor" (the

Regulation provides the procedure for the evaluation of the scientific and pedagogical qualifications of a candidate for the position of professor or associate professor by the Council of Professors);

- Regulations of the Latvian University of Life Sciences and Technologies on *Academic Positions, which define the requirements for applicants for academic positions*;
- Results of the master students' evaluation of the quality of work of teaching personnel, etc.

The scientific qualifications of academic staff are an indicator of their training. All academic personnel involved in the study process hold a doctoral or Master's degree. 14 of the 16 lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme have doctoral degrees, including three associate professors and a visiting associate professor with a doctoral degree in sociology, one assistant professor with a doctoral degree in sociology, while the remaining lecturers have doctoral degrees in philosophy, Dr.phil. in social work, economics, history, geography, engineering (environmental sciences). Six lecturers are experts of the Latvian Council of Science.

The qualifications of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme are appropriate to the requirements of the study programme and the profile of the relevant study courses: study courses providing knowledge and skills in sociological theories, social science research methodology, organisation studies are taught by lecturers with theoretical and practical research experience and a doctoral or Master's degree in sociology. Courses of study which provide an understanding of and develop competence in the field of organisations and issues of public administration, rural and regional development are taught by faculty members with both research and practical experience in these fields. The course is mainly taught by SOHU faculty members, but professionals from other ESAF institutes and other faculties (Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology) are also recruited. Looking at the distribution of the number of academic positions per number of lecturers involved, it can be concluded that 16 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the programme, including 5 associate professors, 1 guest associate professor, 6 assistant professors, 1 lecturer and 3 lecturers. The student-teaching personnel ratio as of 01.10.2023 is 8.2 (the average at LBTU is 13.1). The main changes in the reporting period are related to the improvement of qualifications of the teaching personnel (elected to higher positions, obtained a doctoral degree or changed their main place of work, losing the status of elected staff). Starting from the academic year 2023/2024, the titles of some positions at LBTU have changed, as a result of which guest assistant professors and guest lecturers have become lecturers (see Table 3.6.).

Table 3.6.

**Academic personnel of the Master's study programme SOPA (2017-2024)**

<b>Total teaching personnel, including by position:</b>	<b>2017/ 2018</b>	<b>2018/ 2019</b>	<b>2019/ 2020</b>	<b>2020/ 2021</b>	<b>2021/ 2022</b>	<b>2022/ 2023</b>	<b>2023/ 2024</b>
Associate professors	5	6	5	6	6	5	5
Guest associate professors	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Assistant professors	5	8	7	3	5	6	6
Guest assistant professors	2	3	2	5	5	2	0

Lecturers	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
Guest lecturers	2	2	2	1	1	1	0
Lectures (guest teaching personnel)*	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Proportion of elected teaching personnel, %</b>	79%	77%	82%	76%	64%	88%	88%
<b>Proportion of guest teaching personnel, %</b>	21%	23%	18%	24%	36%	12%	12%

*\*According to the new classification of academic positions in LBTU from 2023/2024*

As shown in Table 3.6., an increase in the proportion of elected teaching personnel from the academic year 2017/2018 to 2023/2024, which reaches 88%, could be viewed as a positive trend. The qualifications of teaching personnel involved in the delivery of the programme (assistant professors and associate professors are those who basically contribute to the delivery of the programme), meet the requirements for the delivery of the academic study programme and the requirements of relevant legal acts ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.

Study courses are taught in Latvian by 16 teaching staff, while in English by 13 teaching staff (including all associate professors). The level of English language skills of the lecturers is indicated both in the CVs attached to the report and in a separate appendix indicating which study courses and in which language each of the lecturers delivers. All teaching staff working with international students have knowledge of English at B2 or C1 level.

Teaching personnel actively use the opportunities offered by LBTU and ESAF for qualification improvement and participate in seminars and courses according to their research interests, as well as to the study courses they deliver, which allows to integrate knowledge into the relevant study courses (for more details see CV the academic personnel in the Appendix to Part 2 of the report). At least once every 6 years lecturers learn the latest pedagogical methods in the course "Innovations in University Didactics", attend courses and seminars also outside LBTU.

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

Based on the [Regulation on calculation of academic workload 2023/2024](#), the study programme has 1.59 staff positions (see Table 3.7.). Associate professors and visiting associate professors account for less than one load (0.75), assistant professors - for 0.58, lecturers - for 0.11 and lecturers (visiting teaching personnel) for 0.15. The Master's programme is delivered by the academic personnel with the highest academic qualifications. The ratio of elected academic staff to non-elected academic staff is 88% to 12%, which is positive, as the implementation of the Master's degree programme is predominantly carried out by elected academic staff, but also involves professionals from the industry. This proportion of academic staff has remained relatively stable throughout the reporting period. Several lecturers obtained doctoral degrees during the reporting period (Table 3.7.).

Table 3.7.

**Academic workload of the teaching personnel in accordance with the LBTU Regulation  
on calculation of academic workload 2023.2024**

Teaching personnel		G0805, Master's study programme SOPA
Associate professors	<i>Study work, h</i>	648.80
	<i>Number</i>	5
	<i>Workload</i>	0.71
Guest associate professors	<i>Study work, h</i>	36.60
	<i>Number</i>	1
	<i>Workload</i>	0.04
Assistant professors	<i>Study work, h</i>	546.30
	<i>Number</i>	6
	<i>Workload</i>	0.58
Lecturers	<i>Study work, h</i>	103.00
	<i>Number</i>	1
	<i>Workload</i>	0.11
Lectures (guest teaching personnel)	<i>Study work, h</i>	147.20
	<i>Number</i>	3
	<i>Workload</i>	0.15
<b>Total hours</b>		1481.90
<b>Total persons</b>		16
<b>Total workload</b>		1.59

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

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

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

In order to ensure the interconnection of study courses, the study course programme development process regulated by LBTU is followed (Decision of the Vice Rector for Studies No. 2.4.-8/59 Procedure for Developing Course/traineeship Programmes and the Procedure for Registering and Updating Information in the IS Course Register of LBTU”), which consists of three consecutive stages:

- review of the developed study course programme at the meeting of the academic staff of the responsible department/centre/institute (the head of the responsible department/centre/institute director is responsible for the implementation of this stage);
- review of the course programme by the Methodological Commission of the institution in whose study programme the course is included (responsible: Methodological Commission);
- approval of the course programme by the Faculty Council of the faculty representing the field/sub-field (responsible: Faculty Council).

The director of the Study Programme, as a member of the Methodological Committee, shall examine in detail the course programmes approved by the institutes/departments and submitted to the Methodological Committee and shall ensure that there is no unnecessary overlap in the topics of the courses.

There are 4 study courses in the Master's study programme SOPA taught by several faculty members (two lecturers from SOHU for each study course), and several study courses in Latvian and English are taught by different lecturers from SOHU. This requires the faculty members to coordinate the content of the study course, the teaching methods used and the procedure for assessing the study results. Methodological seminars and discussions on the management of master's theses, teaching of study courses, current developments in the field of sociology, etc. are held as needed at the institute responsible for the implementation of the programme, SOHU. The Institute's meetings review and approve the programmes of the study courses, as well as the topics of the Master's theses, and organise preliminary defences of the Master's theses. Information is exchanged through seminars, institute meetings, ESAF dean's office meetings and personal contacts. In the process of developing study course programmes, lecturers mutually coordinate the topics to be covered in the course content, define the achievable study outcomes in accordance with the study programme objective and achievable results (knowledge, skills, competence). Master's students are motivated to choose a topic or research direction for their master's thesis already at the beginning of their studies, and in several study courses (e.g. Principles of Scientific Research, Sociology in Latvia, Research of Quality of Life, Organisation Studies) academic personnel assign study tasks and papers, the completion of which, as far as possible, each master's student is thematically linked to the topic of his/her master's thesis. The programme director organises regular meetings of the lecturers involved in the programme to discuss the programme's development directions. Cooperation between the lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme takes place both in the teaching of individual courses and in the organisation of guest lectures and study tours, involving students from other ESAF study programmes.

The ratio of the number of students to the number of teaching personnel as of 01.10.2023 is 8.2 (the average at LBTU is 13.1).

# Annexes

III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme	Master_diploma_supplement_OSPS_EN.pdf	Magistra_diploms_pielikums_OSPS_LV.pdf
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period	SOPAm_Student_statistics_ENG.docx	OSPSm_Statistikas_dati_par_studejosajiem_LV.docx
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard	SOPAm_Compliance_with_National_Standard_Academic_Education_ENG.docx	OSPSm_atbilstiba_valsts_izglitiba_standartam_LV.docx
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	Mapping_of_study_courses_ENG.xlsx	Studiju_kursu_kartejums_LV.xlsx
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	SOPA_Study_plans_ENG_corrected.zip	OSPSm_Studiju_plani_LV_precizeti.zip
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	SOPA_Master_Study_courses_programmes_ENG_corrected.zip	OSPS_Magistra_studiju_kursu_apraksti_LV_precizeti.zip
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)	LBTU_apliecinajumu_studiju_virzienam_Sociologij_politologija_un_antropologija_EN_2.docx	Par_LBTU_apliecinajumu_studiju_virzienam "Sociologija, politologija un antropologija" - precizējums.edoc

# Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration (43314)

Study field	<i>Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration</i>
Education classification code	<i>43314</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic bachelor study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Ginta</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Kronberga</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>ginta.kronberga@lbtu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Dr.sc.soc.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>To prepare highly qualified specialists, providing the students with knowledge of and skills and competence in analyses of the performance of public, private and non-governmental organizations and development of reasonable proposals for solving problems in the fields of organizations and public administration.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<i>1) to provide students with an opportunity to obtain an academic education in the specialty of sociology of organizations and public administration through creative learning and scientific research work with an opportunity to continue studies for a master's degree;</i> <i>2) to build up students' general knowledge of and skills and competence in the professional, personal and social life by applying a multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to learning;</i> <i>3) to develop and enhance students' knowledge of and skills and competence in the sociology of organizations and public administration, placing a special focus on analyses of processes related to organizations and public administration in rural areas;</i> <i>4) to develop and enhance students' knowledge of and skills and competence in the acquisition of empirical information as well as data processing, analysis and presentation to a professional level.</i>

Results of the study programme	<p><i>Students will be able to demonstrate:</i></p> <p><i>Knowledge of:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1) social processes occurring in the society, focusing on those related to organizations and public administration;</i></li> <li><i>the theoretical principles of sociology, which allow social processes and regularities, especially in rural areas, to be understood and explained;</i></li> <li><i>2) elements of public administration, including the performance of local governments in Latvia and the EU, the procedure for drawing up legal documents by local governments in Latvia, as well as local government policies;</i></li> <li><i>3) empirical social research, with a focus on the basic principles of methodology and conducting of quantitative and qualitative research, as well as the basic requirements for preparing and communicating research results;</i></li> <li><i>4) specifics and diversity of and analysis approaches to organizational research.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Skills in:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1) assessing social processes related to the functioning of society in the context of sustainable development, based on their knowledge of sociology;</i></li> <li><i>2) applying their sociological knowledge to decision-making and implementation by using communication skills and being able to argue their points of view independently and in a team;</i></li> <li><i>3) identifying problems in organizations and public administration, especially in rural areas, by selecting proper sociological concepts for research, as well as in applying the organizational research approach appropriate to the situation and developing proposals for making a decision;</i></li> <li><i>4) identifying sources of necessary information and methods of obtaining it.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Competence in:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1) identifying and typologizing social processes from the perspective of sociology;</i></li> <li><i>2) assessing the necessity of researching the processes occurring in the society, as well as conducting sociological research, analysing data and developing recommendations;</i></li> <li><i>3) shaping municipal policies, drawing up draft policy documents (municipal concepts, strategies and development programmes and guidelines) and coordinating the implementation of municipal policies;</i></li> <li><i>4) engaging in the activities of organizations, including national and local government institutions, and assessing trends therein;</i></li> <li><i>5) thinking, performing analyses, syntheses and assessments and managing critically and creatively.</i></li> </ol>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>Bachelor thesis</i>

## Study programme forms

**Full time studies - 3 years - latvian**

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	180
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary Education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor Degree of Social Sciences in Sociology</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

**Places of implementation**

Place name	City	Address
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies	JELGAVA	LIELĀ IELA 2, JELGAVA, LV-3001

**Part time extramural studies distance education - 3 years, 6 months - latvian**

Study type and form	<i>Part time extramural studies distance education</i>
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	180
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary Education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor Degree of Social Sciences in Sociology</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

**Places of implementation**

Place name	City	Address
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies	JELGAVA	LIELĀ IELA 2, JELGAVA, LV-3001

**Full time studies - 3 years - english**

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	180
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary Education. At least B2 level of English language skills</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor Degree of Social Sciences in Sociology</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

**Places of implementation**

Place name	City	Address
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies	JELGAVA	LIELĀ IELA 2, JELGAVA, LV-3001

### 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

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

Currently, the academic bachelor programme Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration is delivered as full-time (in Latvian and English) and part-time distance learning (in Latvian), see Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Academic bachelor programme Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration

<b>General characteristics of the programme</b>	<b>Current situation</b>
<i>Education classification code</i>	43314
<i>Workload</i>	180 CP
<i>Programme delivery languages:</i>	Latvian and English
<i>Duration</i>	3 years -full-time; 3 years and 6 months -part-time distance learning

Changes since the previous accreditation certificate was issued on 22/05/2013 for the academic bachelor programme Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration related to the implementation of the recommendations given by the expert committee on the enhancement of the programme.

In April 2022 (Decision No. 2022/08-I made at a meeting of the Study Quality Committee on 27 April 2022), several changes to the programme were licensed. The rationale for the changes was as follows:

- the change of the education classification code from 43310 to 43314 was made in accordance with Cabinet regulation No. 322 Regulations regarding the Classification of Education in Latvia;
- the change of the workload from 124 (186) CP to 120 (180) CP for full-time and part-time learning was done in accordance with the requirements of the national academic standard of education;
- the programme is also delivered in English to implement the recommendations given by the experts for enhancing the programme in the previous accreditation report;
- changes in the duration of the programme – a 3-year and 6-month duration (7 semesters) – was introduced for part-time distance learning.

In 2024, LBTU transitioned to the ECTS credit system. There have been no changes in the content of the study programme, the volume of study courses in the study plan was mathematically recalculated to the new credit points (the annex to the report contains study plans in which the amounts of all study courses are indicated in the new credit points (1CP=1 ECTS). According to the new procedure, 3 ECTS in bachelor's studies corresponds to 81 hours (of which 32 are contact hours), and 6 ECTS corresponds to 162 hours (of which 64 are contact hours). The plan with the new credits is available in the annex.

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

The programme was designed and delivered based on relevant legal acts (Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia, Cabinet regulations: Regulations on Opening and Accreditation of Study Directions, Regulations on the State Academic Standard of Education), as well as internal regulatory documents of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies.

Based on the recommendations given by the Accreditation Committee (2013), at a meeting of the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities (SOHU) of the Faculty of Economics and Social Development (ESAF), six strategic goals for the development of the study direction Sociology, Politology and Anthropology were approved on 19 November 2013, which could be achieved during the programme delivery period until the next accreditation of the study direction (initially planned for 2019, later postponed to 2024):

- enhancement and development of programmes at all the levels of study, focusing on the preparation of specialists based on needs for rural areas and regions of Latvia;
- recruitment of applicants at all the levels of study,
- internationalization of studies;
- development and implementation of e-learning (distance learning);
- promotion of research activities implemented by students and teaching personnel;
- strengthening and development of cooperation with public, non-governmental and private sector organizations.

Two academic programmes with the same name Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration are delivered in the study direction (bachelor and master), and these goals apply to both of them.

Overall, an analysis of the goal, objectives and learning outcomes of the programme set out in the table with the characteristics of the programme revealed that they were mutually agreed upon and linked to the mission of LBTU – to create an internationally competitive, innovative, creative and sustainable future for the development of society. The goal of the study direction is to prepare internationally competitive specialists acquiring bachelor- and master-level knowledge and a proper set of research skills and competence in the field of organizations and public administration to solve problems related to the sustainability of society. It should be noted that the programmes delivered at LBTU are specific (sociology of organizations and public administration) compared with other

programmes in this field in Latvia.

To achieve the above-mentioned strategic goals and the goal of the programme, intensive work on enhancing the programme was done during the reporting period. The academic bachelor programme Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration is currently delivered full-time (3 years, or 6 semesters) in Latvian and English and as part-time distance learning (3 years and 6 months, or 7 semesters) in Latvian. This allows us to conclude that the goal of internationalisation of the programme has been achieved, as the programme is delivered in English, thereby developing the programme and attracting students from abroad following the LBTU strategy for 2023-2027. The workload of the programme is 180 credits, and the degree awarded is a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Sociology. The delivery of the programme as part-time distance learning gives opportunities to make the programme more attractive, modern and accessible to students for whom full-time studies are difficult or impossible, thus allowing them to balance their learning with work and private life (e.g. Latvian nationals living and working abroad, shift workers, young parents with small children, those employed in specific fields (e.g. soldiers or athletes)). Interest in various forms of study: full-time, part-time distance learning and studies in English tends to grow on the part of students, and this is also confirmed by the data, which are given in detail in section 3.1.4. To achieve the above-mentioned strategic goals and the goal of the programme, intensive work on enhancing the programme was done during the reporting period. The academic bachelor programme Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration is currently delivered full-time (3 years, or 6 semesters) in Latvian and English and as part-time distance learning (3 years and 6 months, or 7 semesters) in Latvian. This allows us to conclude that the goal of internationalisation of the programme has been achieved, as the programme is delivered in English, thereby developing the programme and attracting students from abroad following the LBTU strategy for 2023-2027. The workload of the programme is 180 credits, and the degree awarded is a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Sociology. The delivery of the programme as part-time distance learning gives opportunities to make the programme more attractive, modern and accessible to students for whom full-time studies are difficult or impossible, thus allowing them to balance their learning with work and private life (e.g. Latvian nationals living and working abroad, shift workers, young parents with small children, those employed in specific fields (e.g. soldiers or athletes)). Interest in various forms of study: full-time, part-time distance learning and studies in English tends to grow on the part of students, and this is also confirmed by the data, which are given in detail in section 3.1.4.

The admission requirements are appropriate and sufficient for achieving the learning outcomes at the required quality and for the duration of the programme; applicants are admitted in accordance with the procedure and criteria set by LBTU (for details, see section 2.1.4). The learning outcomes to be achieved are aligned with the goal and objectives of the programme and the content of the programme (see the mapping in the annex). The degree awarded is subordinated to the learning outcomes and the content of the programme, which fully correspond to the field of study, and the programme is delivered and developed in accordance with the strategic goals of LBTU and ESAF.

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

In Latvia, specialists in sociology are prepared by only two universities: the University of Latvia (LU) (bachelor, master and doctoral programmes) and Latvia University of Life Sciences and

Technologies (bachelor and master programmes).

Only LBTU delivers bachelor programme with emphasis on organizations and public administration, which focus on: 1) studies of social processes in rural areas and regions of Latvia; 2) analyses and studies of the performance of administrative organizations of various levels in the regions of Latvia; 3) research into aspects related to rural development in the broadest sense (aspects of rural development policies, administrative and territorial reforms, social exclusion and inclusion, aspects of quality of life of various social groups, identification and analyses of employment problems, analyses of social aspects of local businesses (goods and services), availability and quality of services, etc.).

The scientific interests of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the program are related to the orientation of the study programs. Student bachelor's thesis are often developed in cooperation with national authorities, NGOs and municipalities, planning region administrations and other organizations in the regions of Latvia; therefore, the results of the most important papers are tested in practice, see section 3.4.6 for details.

Bachelor theses are often produced in cooperation with national institutions, NGOs and municipalities, planning regions and other organizations in the regions of Latvia; therefore, the empirical results of the most important theses are tested in practice, thus providing real solutions to the situation.

In the autumn of 2019, the results of a study by Dynamic University Ltd on labour demand trends (LLU project No. 8.2.3.0/18/A/009) were published showing that various level managers who plan and manage a range of organisational functions – finance, human resources, development, sales and communication – were among the TOP 25 professions in the EU, the demand for which continued to increase. The participants of a focus group discussion pointed out that the clear majority of companies in Latvia had at least once encountered a shortage of highly qualified middle- and senior-level managers over the last couple of years. The participants of the discussion predicted a further increase in the demand for labour force in the future, which was supported by economic growth and the growing involvement of residents in business. Highly qualified specialists were in demand.

Using alumni monitoring data available in the State Education Information System, the employment rate of alumni from the SOPA programme was analysed by thematic group. The field of study Sociology, Politology and Anthropology is included in the thematic group Social sciences, commercial sciences and law. 2020 data show that this thematic group accounted for 36.57% of the total university alumni in Latvia that year; the thematic group Social and human behaviour sciences made up 5.55%. A total of 86.46% of all LBTU alumni were employed in 2020, which was the highest rate among all universities ([https://www.viis.gov.lv/sites/default/files/202306/ml\\_Absolventu%20monitorings\\_23\\_par%2021.pdf](https://www.viis.gov.lv/sites/default/files/202306/ml_Absolventu%20monitorings_23_par%2021.pdf)).

A survey was conducted (see the survey questionnaire in the section Other annexes) to identify the employment and experience after graduation as well as future careers of alumni from the SOPA bachelor programme; the survey was available from 19 to 29 March 2024. During the reporting period, 122 individuals graduated from the programme. The survey used purposive sampling. The questionnaire was distributed through social media with an invitation to alumni to participate in the survey. In total, 62 responses were received, and 51 women and 11 men participated in the survey. Some of the respondents - 21 lived in Jelgava, 7 in Riga, and the rest of the respondents represented various cities and rural municipalities in all the planning regions of Latvia.

According to the survey results, 34 alumni were continuing their education at higher levels,

including the doctoral level (4 respondents). According to the answers, 19 of the alumni chose LBTU as their place of university studies, 14 respondents chose other universities in Latvia, and one continued education abroad.

As regards employment, 55 respondents were employed (5 of them had established their businesses) and worked full time. Two were unemployed and 5 were on parental leave. According to the profession classification, 18 were managers, 12 were senior specialists and 24 were specialists, 2 represented military personnel, 2 represented service and sales personnel, skilled workers and craftsmen, and one respondent represented a simple profession. Employment status was obtained relatively quickly within 1-3 months after graduation (19 respondents), while 33 respondents admitted that they were already employed during their university studies, often in simple professions, but after graduation, they were allowed to change their jobs or had career advancement. Below are some examples in which the respondents described their careers:

*"During my university studies, I worked in the private sector, then I was employed in the non-governmental sector in a leading position; in parallel with my work, I obtained a master's degree and experience in the National Research Programme. Seeing this experience, I was offered a job in state administration. I was recommended for all jobs";*

*"I worked for a long time both in the public and private sectors. Then I successfully founded my own business";*

*"From a specialist to a manager in ~ 5 years";*

*"I work for the State Police. SOPA served as a base because higher education was required. I am grateful to the university and the teaching personnel because SOPA is an excellent programme that prepares students for basically any job in state administration or private companies - only training specific to each job follows, but as I already mentioned, SOPA is an excellent base";*

*"I worked for a research company, then in state administration";*

*"I already worked during my university studies, at first simple jobs, in my last year I already had my first managerial job - I managed a news portal. I mostly worked in the communication industry, currently my job relates to international communication";*

*"Initially in customer service, but now I work in the field associated with my bachelor's degree from SOPA".*

According to the respondents, the employment fields represented by them were all the major fields included in the NACE Rev. 2 classification, which allows us to conclude that SOPA alumni are competitive and the knowledge, skills and competence acquired are in line with the demand in the labour market. The basic fields were education (13 respondents), public administration and defence; compulsory social insurance (11) and information and communication services (9).

An analysis of the answers about the remuneration level, it should be concluded that for most of the respondents, it is above the national average: 34 respondents earned more than EUR 1600 (gross), 16 respondents in a range of EUR 1301-1600 and 7 in a range of EUR 1001-1300, while the rest indicated less than EUR 1000

Realizing that development in Latvia cannot be imagined without professional and socially competent specialists and managers in any industry, the SOPA programme prepares specialists with knowledge of public administration processes and how to analyse them who understand not only the decision-making process but also the course of practical implementation of the decisions, thereby contributing to prospects not only for public administration but also for the development of various areas/industries of the national economy through implementing common EU strategies in

Latvia.

The programme is focused on the preparation of specialists having the ability to adapt to changing labour market conditions and the acquisition of knowledge related to the implementation of common EU strategies and the achievement of the objectives of Latvia in the context of these strategies. The programme is regularly updated, which includes the novelties and priorities of the EU, thereby ensuring the compliance with both national and EU labour market forecasts.

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

The number of students enrolled on the programme in the reporting period (2013/2014-2022/2023) was variable, see Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

**Number of students enrolled on the academic bachelor programme Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration in the reporting period**

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>Full-time students (incl. foreigners)</b>	<b>Part-time students</b>	<b>Total</b>
2013/2014	63	17	<b>80</b>
2014/2015	54	13	<b>67</b>
2015/2016	41	8	<b>49</b>
2016/2017	49/1	3	<b>52</b>
2017/2018	28 (1)	1	<b>29</b>
2018/2019	38 (1)	0	<b>38</b>
2019/2020	41 (3)	0	<b>41</b>
2020/2021	52 (8)	0	<b>52</b>
2021/2022	54 (7)	0	<b>54</b>
2022/2023	50 (8)	12	<b>62</b>

An analysis of changes in the number of students revealed that it was affected by several important factors

First, the programme is specific (sociology of organizations and public administration) compared

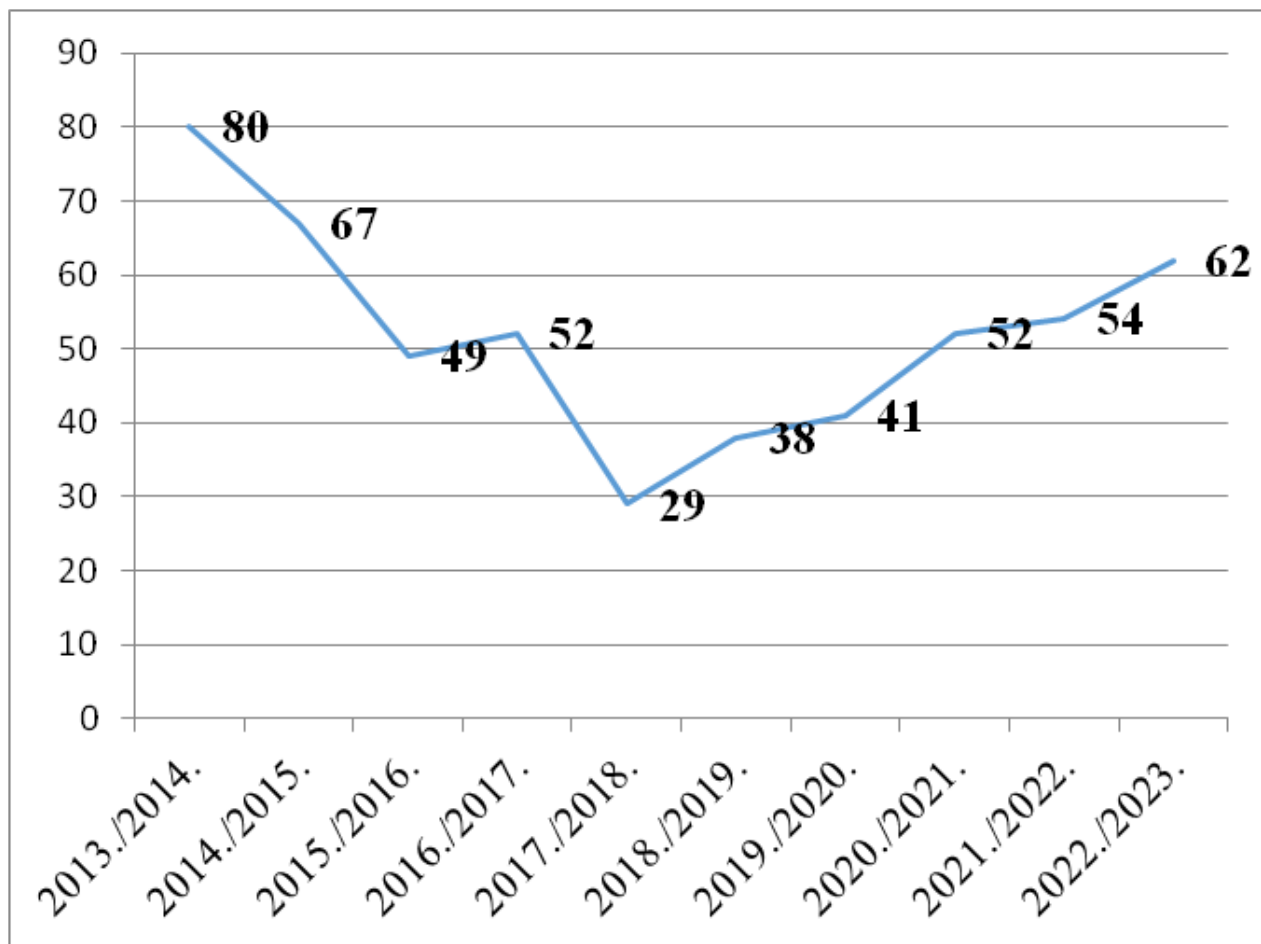
with other programmes in this study direction in Latvia.

Second, the availability of state-funded study places. Despite the high rating given to the programme during the previous accreditation and an analysis of the secondary results by the Ministry of Education and Science, the allocation of state-funded study places to the programme was stopped. The number of state-funded study places is given in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>State-funded study places as a % of the number of students</b>
2013/2014	55%
2014/2015	45%
2015/2016	39%
2016/2017	19%
2017/2018	0%
2018/2019	0%
2019/2020	0%
2020/2021	0%
2021/2022	15%
2022/2023	13%

A decrease in the number of state-funded study places is associated with uncertainty and inconsistency in the higher education policy of Latvia; consequently, it is difficult to predict opportunities for and the development of social sciences in the future. From the academic year 2017/2018, only self-paid students have been enrolled on the programme, which significantly affected the decrease in the number of students. However, since the academic year 2021/2022, 8 state-funded study places have been allocated to the programme, and the number of students tended to increase.



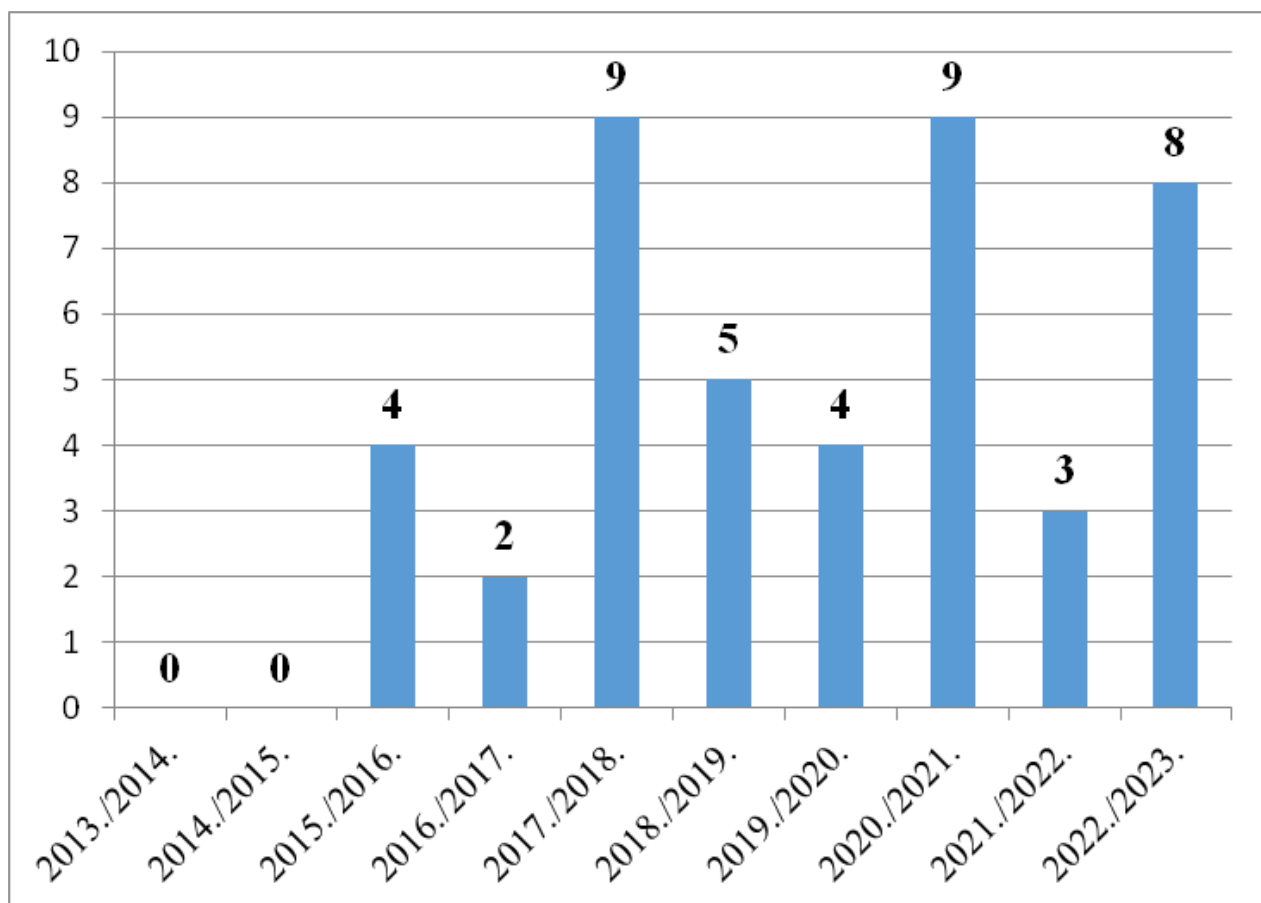
**Fig.3.1. Changes in the number of students in the reporting period**

Third, the changes in the duration of the programme, which allow the content of the programme to be gradually and continuously adapted to the current requirements of the labour market to maintain the competitiveness thereof. In the academic year 2014/2015, LBTU began to deliver a programme with a 3-year duration. In the academic year 2016/2017, the programme was graduated by students who were enrolled on the programme with a duration of 4 years, and for part-time students it was 5 years (see the Annex).

Fourthly, part-time studies as a form of study with face-to-face sessions became less and less in demand in order to attract students and from 2022/2023. of the study year, a part-time form of distance learning is being implemented, in which the number of students is increasing, 2022.2023. 12 students, 2023/2024 22 students.

Fifth, the delivery of the programme in English attracted applicants from abroad. There was interest from foreign applicants who represented countries such as the USA, Japan, India, Morocco, Ukraine and others (see the Annex for details). There were external factors in the attraction of foreign applicants (problems with visas, residence permits etc.), which hindered the admission of more foreign applicants and affected high-quality organizational activities to be carried out, thereby maintaining stability in the student drop-out rate.

Sixth, support for students for resuming their interrupted studies. During the reporting period, there were a total of 44 students who started their studies in later phases, see Figure 3.2.

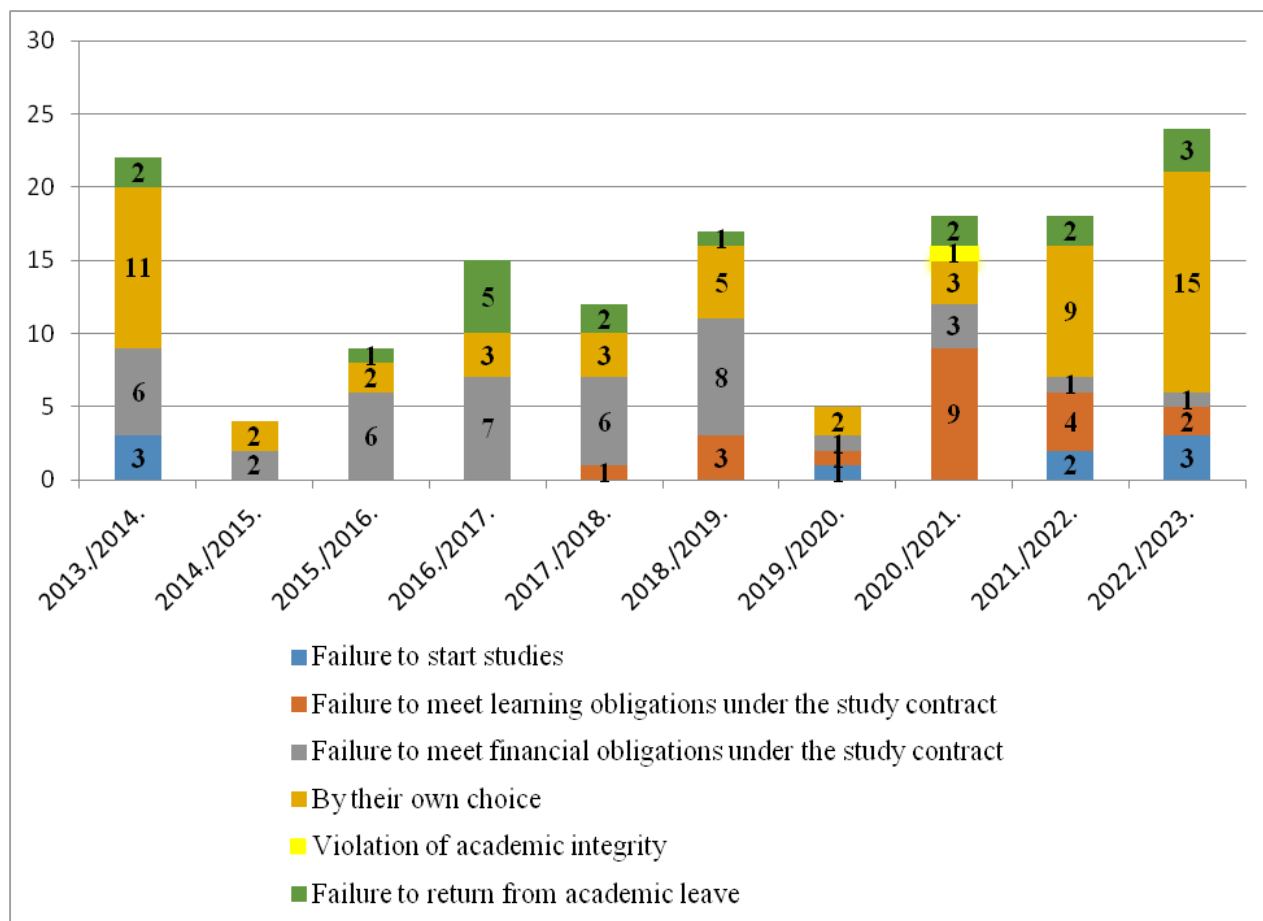


**Fig.3.2. Number of students who started their studies in later phases**

Among the students who started their studies in later phases were both students who came from other universities and colleges, as well as those who started their studies in the programme but did not finish it. In the academic year 2022/2023, there was great interest in distance learning, which allows students to balance their studies with employment and the private life. Great individual support for students who start their studies in later phases is provided directly by the director of the programme, as well as ESAF dean office specialists advising and supporting them in various problems related to the study process.

During the reporting period, 95 full-time and 19 part-time students graduated from the programme. Several students graduated from the programme with distinction, see section 3.4.6 for details.

An analysis of the number of students who stopped their studies (were exmatriculated) reveals that the number of dropouts was very volatile (see Table 1.7 in the Annex). The total dropouts were 144, which represented 31% of the total number of 470 students in the reporting period.



**Fig.3.3. Reasons for stopping studies**

The reasons for stopping studies mainly related to their own choice (55 students or 38%), failure to meet financial obligations under the study contract (41 students or 28%), failure to meet study obligations under the study contract. A student loan is available for full-time and part-time students to cover tuition fees. Successful full-time students have access to tuition fee relief in accordance with the procedures established by the LBTU Senate, and students also have an opportunity to apply for scholarships. The reasons for stopping studies were as follows: not meeting the requirements of the programme (20 students or 14%), not returning from academic leave (18 students or 13%), not starting studies (9 students or 9%) and violations of academic integrity (1 student or 1%). Working students tended to have difficulty in balancing their jobs and the private life with studies, which was a reason to stop studies or go on academic leave. Sixty seven % students stopped their studies during year 1 because they did not choose the right programme, they could not devote enough time to studies, difficulty in financing their studies, family circumstances etc. To reduce the dropout rate, all students who have written an application for exmatriculation are invited to discussions with the dean or the vice-dean for studies, or the director of the programme. The total number of full-time students was also not significantly affected by the fact that the students changed the type of study from full-time to part-time, starting permanent employment that could not be combined with full-time studies, as well as student athletes who could not combine full-time studies with training. Foreign students stopped their studies mainly due to personal or family circumstances by their own choice.

Since the academic year 2021/2022, 8 study places funded from the state budget have been allocated to the programme. The number of state-funded study places, an increase in the number of foreign students, part-time distance learning were the main factors that influenced and contributed to the increase in the total number of students.

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

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

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

The content and delivery of the programme contribute to sustainable development of the programme and the study direction, as it is based on cooperation and responsible actions involving students, teaching personnel, alumni, employers and representatives from the field of organizations and public administration. The teaching personnel engaged in the delivery of the study direction actively participate in various this field's organizations, committees and councils, and are experts in their fields of science.

The content of the programme corresponds to the name of the programme, allowing achievement of the goal and objectives set (see section 3.1.2 and annexes), which is evidenced by the compliance of the content of the programme with the Academic Education National Standard (see the Annex).

The content of the programme includes:

- 1) courses that deal with the framework, principles, structure and methodology of social sciences and sociology;
- 2) courses that examine the history of and current problems in the development of a science or a sub-branch thereof
- 3) courses that deal with the characteristics of and problems in a science or a sub-branch thereof from an interdisciplinary perspective.

A module for building business professional competence has been designed in accordance with the Academic Education National Standard and the requirements of the Environmental Protection Law and the Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law (see the Annex).

The elective courses give students an opportunity to deepen their knowledge in specific field-related areas (organizational culture, personnel management), as well as get the latest knowledge about innovations in organizations (sustainable project management, digital marketing), knowledge management and global processes (factual literacy, various foreign languages, business

communication).

For part-time distance learning students, elective courses are offered from among those available in the Moodle system, while for those studying in English, the elective courses are those planned for the respective semester by the ESAF institutes for foreign students.

The content of each course is designed in accordance with the goal, objectives and learning outcomes of the programme. The learning outcomes as well as descriptions of individual courses are structured according to the principle of “knowledge – professional skills – soft skills – competences”. The knowledge, skills, competences are graded to make a more transparent assessment of students’ learning outcomes. Each course has a specific goal and function in achieving the learning outcomes. When designing new courses, the content of any course is coordinated with each other so that they do not duplicate unnecessarily (see the course mapping and course descriptions in the Annex).

The content of courses does not differ for full-time and part-time distance learning students.

The content of courses is regularly revised and supplemented according to the needs of the field, the labour market and scientific trends. The content of courses is aligned with the latest scientific findings, which is achieved as follows:

- teaching personnel’s scientific activities and regular participation in scientific conferences;
- participation of teaching personnel in research projects, thus strengthening the connection between education and research;
- professional development activities, seminars, courses that provide opportunities and motivate the teaching personnel to build up their professionalism, as well as diversify teaching methods and review the content of the courses delivered;
- participation of teaching personnel in the ERASMUS+ programme, thus promoting the sharing of pedagogical methods and teaching experience;
- teaching personnel’s activities and participation in committees of various institutions, which allows them to better understand various social processes and transfer the latest developments in the field into the study process.

Updating the content of courses is also prescribed by the legal documents of LBTU (Procedure for Developing Course/Practice Programmes and the Procedure for Registering and Updating Information in the LBTU IS Course Register), which stipulates that any course programme must be reviewed and enhanced at least once every two years during a self-assessment of the programme, as well as supplemented with the latest information and trends in the field based on:

- programme director’s initiative;
- initiative of the teaching personnel member delivering the course;
- recommendations given in student surveys of teaching personnel;
- recommendations given in employer survey questionnaires and during an assessment of the programme, as well as during the defence of bachelor theses that are summarized and presented in a report by the State Examination Committee.

The director of the programme summarizes the recommendations made by students and employers about the necessary changes in the content of a course and informs the teaching personnel member who is responsible for reviewing the content and integrating the suggested ideas into it.

The compliance of courses with the needs of the field and the labour market was assessed as part of LBTU project No. 8.2.3.0/18/A/009 "Enhancement of the Governance of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies". Experts from the public opinion and market research company "RAIT Custom Research Baltic Ltd" and an international expert from the Estonian University of Life

Sciences were involved, as well as an assessment and recommendations by *Dynamic University Ltd* were taken into account. The experts' recommendations have been considered when drawing up programme enhancement plans until 2023. The enhancement activities carried out during the reporting period are summarized in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4

**Enhancement plan for the study direction and the programmes contained therein**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Description and rationale for implementation/non-implementation</b>
The enhancement of the programmes contained in the study direction involves the implementation of the programmes in the form of distance learning	Part-time distance learning was available in both programmes during the academic year 2022/2023; accordingly, all the courses have been developed and available on <i>Moodle</i> .
More use of Moodle and other IT tools (Microsoft Excel) and data visualization tools in delivering courses	Teaching personnel involved in the delivery of programmes take courses on the use of IT tools in the study process, and apply them practically during the delivery of their courses. Software for data analysis methods (SPSS) is available both in the faculty building and in the palace at 2 Liela Street.
Procurement of educational literature on the topics of public administration and the latest research methods	ESAF regularly procures scientific literature and textbooks in Latvian and English, which cover the topics of public administration and the latest research methods
Optimization of courses and expansion of elective courses	In accordance with the SOPA bachelor programme plan, changes have been made, the learning outcomes to be achieved in the programmes have been updated, including transversal skills, new restricted elective courses have been designed and offered (Part B).
Enhancement of the form of e-learning	Regular activities are carried out to review and enhance the content of courses for distance learning on the Moodle platform, renew course content and recommended literature in Latvian and English

At the end of each academic year, student opinions about the content of courses and whether the programme matches labour market requirements are identified by conducting a survey of students from the programme (full-time and part-time distance learning students as well as those studying in English participate in the survey).

In recent years, the average rating of all courses contained in the bachelor programme increased from 4.33 in the academic year 2019/2020 to 4.54 in 2022/2023, and compared with 2021/2022 (4.2), it was an increase of 7%. Student ratings are taken into account to increase the quality of the

study process, and this is primarily done by the director of the programme who works at the institute with teaching personnel on enhancing the courses.

To have not only quantitative ratings, the director of the programme also conducted qualitative studies by interviewing students and alumni who worked in the field and could give their ratings of the quality of the study process, see Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

**Ratings of the SOPA programme by students and alumni**

<i>Along with flexible study schedules, distance learning provides an opportunity to combine full-time employment with full dedication to learning, as well as better balance the job and the private life. The study process is smooth and depends on my plans, which is essential when a larger amount of information needs to be learned. Thank the teaching personnel for their individual attitude and responsiveness!</i>	Part-time distance learning student
<i>Studying sociology has been one of the best decisions of my life. At the same time, I have joined the global community and enjoyed individual attention from my teachers. My professors supported me and cared about my education, and the assignments given were interesting and relevant. I am very grateful for the opportunity to study at LBTU!</i>	Foreign student's experience, 2019 graduate
<i>If looking back on the time spent at the university, I view it as very productive, both formally and informally. In a formal sense, I highly value the academic knowledge base that I acquired while taking the SOPA programme, and I also appreciate the highly qualified teaching personnel with whom it was a pleasure to work with. The knowledge acquired was the basis for applying for the patron Kristaps Morberg's scholarship at the end of my studies, which ultimately resulted in success. It is worth noting that the acquired knowledge is an invaluable basis for currently studying law at the College of Law. In an informal sense, I am happy about the experience and emotions I gained when I got involved in the ESAF student self-government.</i>	2017 graduate

*I appreciate the fact that the programme was not narrow-minded, but offered a wide variety of courses that helped me to understand myself better and become aware of the areas that interested me. The programme provided extensive knowledge about society, its structure, institutes, laws, organizations, administration and ongoing processes, as well as the skills to identify, analyse problems and search for solutions. The teaching personnel were professionals in their field who gave us the opportunity to connect theoretical knowledge with the real situation by developing various student research papers and projects. It was only after my graduation that I realized that a serious foundation had been laid in me - the ability to find information and apply it, the ability to look for opportunities, the ability to judge, present and structure the results. This is the knowledge that you have to deal with on a daily basis: social policies and legislation, project management, organization management, public relations, public administration, social work, the urban and rural environment, psychology, rhetoric, research.*

2015 graduate

*The programme provided multifaceted knowledge about the operational processes of various public institutions and private sector companies and taught me to look at them in a broader, long-term context. I am very demanding of myself, so I usually approached my studies a great sense of responsibility because I perceived it as a test for myself, an opportunity to prove myself and learn the specific topic more deeply. In my opinion, motivation and self-initiative were very important in my studies. I remember that I voluntarily presented my student paper and the results of the my research to the management of the some institutions and companies, giving my suggestions and recommendations for future improvement in the performance. Thus, I tried to connect the theoretical knowledge with the practical situation in the labour market. Each student paper and research brought new experiences, discoveries, as well as contacts. During my university studies, thanks to the director of the programme, I used an opportunity to work as a volunteer during the 11<sup>th</sup> Saeima of the Republic of Latvia, where I gained unique experience and a full-fledged vision of the specifics of public administration work and the necessary competencies. This experience significantly supplemented my theoretical knowledge, as it allowed me to build up my information analysis skills, as well as analytical thinking, communication, work planning and organizing skills. Family, friends and, of course, competent and welcoming teaching personnel were a great support during my university studies.*

2015 graduate

Student ratings play an important role in enhancing the content of courses, supplementing the courses and selecting teaching personnel to be engaged in the programme. For the variants of the programme delivered in Latvian (full-time and part-time distance learning), teaching personnel might differ in some cases because of the workload planned for the teaching personnel (so that it does not exceed an FTE workload). All teaching personnel members who participate in the delivery of the programme in English have foreign language skills of at least B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages ([www.europass.lv](http://www.europass.lv)).

Student recommendations are discussed at SOHU meetings and by the ESAF Methodology Commission. Students participate in the ESAF Bachelor Methodology Commission.

Part-time distance learning students acquire 27 credits during one semester and 18 credits during the seventh semester (see study plans in the annex).

Those studying in English must take a Latvian language course, which is planned for the first semester.

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

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

From 2024, the total number of hours per credit point (CP) is 25-27 h (1 CP=1 ECTS). For information on the transition from the Latvian credit point system to ECTS at LBTU, see the annex (decision of the Vice-rector for studies Procedure for the Course/Traineeship Programme Development Process and Information Registration and Amendments in the LBTU IS Course Catalogue).

The study process does not differ for those studying in Latvian or English. A student-centred approach is applied to the learning process, and interactive learning methods, the e-learning system, creative teaching methods, guest lectures and study trips are widely used as well. Scientific research done by students is associated with the field of study. Students studying both in Latvian and English equally actively participate in international scientific conferences, Erasmus+ and various seminars, in rating the learning process etc.

The basic principles and procedures for assessing student performance are governed by the "Regulations on the national academic standard of education" (Cabinet regulation No. 240 of 13/05/2014), as well as internal regulatory documents of LBTU. The assessment criteria for LBTU students are prescribed by the LBTU Regulation of Studies. In the programme, an assessment of learning outcomes is consistent, fair and appropriate for any student and is performed in accordance with the procedures adopted. The teaching personnel are competent in and apply a variety of assessment methods. The assessment methods and procedures used are described in section 2.1.5. Such procedures, criteria, principles for assessing student performance at different

levels contribute to the achievement of the goal of the programme and allow an assessment of student-centred learning.

When selecting assessment methods for courses, the following is considered:

- the goal and objectives of the programme and the expected learning outcomes thereof;
- the goal of a specific course and the learning outcomes thereof;
- the specifics of the content of the course to be learned, as well as of the topic (theme);
- learning opportunities for students, diverse needs thereof;
- the learning environment: resources for learning, information sources, material and technical resources;
- teaching personnel's own possibilities in managing the study process.

Student-centred learning involves applying a diverse range of teaching methods by teaching personnel, depending the circumstances:

- **traditional methods:** lectures, practicals, seminars;
- **methods that build analytical, critical, systemic and creative thinking, as well as communication skills:** group work, discussions, debates, presentations, case studies situation analysis, problem solving, study trips, educational games etc.;
- **methods for independent and research work performed by students individually or in groups:** reports, essays, homework, a study project and a bachelor thesis;
- **meetings with experts** – field professionals – in guest lectures and during the ESAF Alumni Week.
- **summer schools** that involve the application of scientific research methods and case analysis and build interdisciplinary knowledge, skills and competence.

The teaching personnel constantly varies the range of teaching methods. The three key methods, which are used in the delivery of courses contained in the programme along with lectures, are **discussions, practicals individually and in groups** and **presentations**.

Lectures as the basic method are used in general and study direction courses. Multimedia technologies and the Internet are widely used in lectures. The study process occurs both face-to-face and remotely via the *Moodle* platform (especially for part-time distance learning students), delivering online classes on *BigBlueButton*, *Zoom* or other platforms. Lecture materials are available to students on the Moodle platform, which facilitates their work in the classroom and gives them an opportunity to devote more time to an analysis of previously received lecture materials, a critical analysis and discussion of the topic covered.

To increase the quality of the study process, guest lectures and online guest lectures are also delivered by specialists from different fields within specific courses, e.g. in the following courses: Introduction to Studies, Sociology of Work, Approaches of Organizational Research, Sociology of Family, Community Development, etc. During the International Week, guest lectures are also delivered by teaching personnel from LBTU partner universities. More than 10 guest lectures are delivered every year.

During practicals, students consolidate the knowledge acquired in lectures and build skills in the practical application of various methods, thereby gaining an understanding of various regularities in sociology and public administration based on the theoretical knowledge and critical thinking. For this purpose, handouts have been prepared for courses.

Group work is often practised during lectures and practicals, and students learn to work in a team and build their communication and presentation skills, as well as acquire the ability to carry out an assignment together, take responsibility, build the ability to delegate responsibilities and develop

the ability to control a process.

The discussion method is widely applied, and students engage in a conversation, defend their opinions with arguments on the specific topic under discussion. This method builds discussion skills, as well as the application of this method stimulates thinking in students, which helps to build an understanding of the course topics learned during lectures and practicals.

Debates are also practiced in some courses. During debates, students develop self-confidence, speaking skills, as well as the ability to identify regularities in various processes.

Seminars are held during the learning process, which creates an opportunity for students to acquire and develop independent work skills, thereby encouraging self-education not only during university studies but also after graduation. At the same time, seminars create an opportunity for students to develop induction and deduction skills, which should help them to select the most useful sources of information, data and facts for a topic covered. Students' prior knowledge, ability to use information technologies as well as ability to work individually and in a group, which can build their skills and quality of independent work, are very important for seminars held within various courses.

Situation analysis/case studies are suitable for students to apply the acquired knowledge in practice, solving various real situations, as well as to acquire the skills to analyse, draw conclusions and make recommendations.

As a teaching method in some courses – *Professional English, Professional German, General Sociological Theory*, etc. – educational games are also used so that students can apply the acquired knowledge in practice to solve various problems and analyse practical situations.

During a course, students keep their factual materials compiled and assignments completed, which indicate their progress, growth, achievements, skills and attitude, in a portfolio folder.

Study trips are also held, and students meet and communicate with, participate in discussions with field specialists and entrepreneurs, as well as obtain the latest information necessary for courses. On average, there are 5-10 study trips an academic year.

Employer opinions on student and alumni knowledge, skills and competences are obtained in several ways: employers and alumni are invited to LBTU during ESAF Alumni Weeks, while employers participate in the work of the SEC. In addition, 1<sup>st</sup> year students from the bachelor programme interview employers within the course *Introduction to Studies*. They freely choose an employer representing a sociological organization or any public, private or non-governmental organization to identify the knowledge and skills necessary for a sociologist or manager (of any level). When conducting interviews, the principles of sociologist professional ethics are observed. According to the interviews, the most frequently mentioned kinds of knowledge needed in the job in public administration, politics and sociology are sociological research methods, organizational and management theories, project management, psychology etc. The most important skills needed were as follows: the ability to find information, systematization and analysis skills, creative and critical thinking skills, computer skills (SPSS), language skills, presentation and rhetoric skills, the skills to work in a team/group or individually, effectively plan, organize and manage one's own work. Alumni and employers value the flexibility of the programme as the most important advantage, as the graduates can integrate into the labour market.

In student-centred education, an important aspect is **academic personnel consultations** (according to a consultation schedule placed on the ESAF website, the LBTU IS platform and the Moodle platform, as well as in institutes and departments). Enough consultations are available to students, as the students also have an opportunity to meet with the teaching personnel at another time, upon individual agreement. Students have an opportunity to communicate electronically by

using the unified e-mail system of LBTU and via the Moodle platform for some courses. Students appreciate direct communication for acquisition of knowledge and skills, while electronic communication for solving organizational problems and submitting independent assignments as well as for communication during studies abroad under the ERASMUS+ programme.

**When working on a study project and a bachelor thesis**, the student practically, applying his/her fundamental and theoretical knowledge in the sociology of organizations and public administration, conducts independent empirical research, thus demonstrating the knowledge, skills and competence to independently solve current problems in society or organizations.

Nowadays, the emphasis has shifted from "teaching" to learning, which has been especially facilitated by the availability of information technologies. Therefore, studies in the programme has become *more personal* (information and course programmes are adapted to the wishes, abilities, interests and needs of each student); *more interactive* (new digital forms and samples make it easy and enjoyable to learn, work, play, create, shape and interact); *immediate* ( using information technologies, there is an opportunity to learn everything exactly when it is needed, in the way it is needed, at one's own request and in a way suitable for everyone); *more cooperative* both in face-to-face lessons and via the Moodle platform. Mutual cooperation on the Internet allows students to share their abilities with other students taking the course.

**The teaching methods selected contribute to the achievement of learning results of both the programme and the courses contained therein.** This is also supported by cooperation with other stakeholders involved in the delivery of the programme.

**Cooperation with public, non-governmental and municipal sector organizations.** Cooperation with employers representing the field is established during study trips to public, non-governmental and private sector organizations, as well as research companies. As part of LBTU project No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/014 "Development of LBTU Academic Personnel" teaching personnel had practical training at "RAIT Custom Research Baltic Ltd" to gain new theoretical knowledge and practical skills in conducting sociological research in the private and the public sector outside the academic environment, in applying innovative methods in researching various social groups as well as in marketing and market research. However, others had practical training at "Latvian Mobile Telephone Ltd" and "LLF Sadarbnīca Ltd." Senior students acted as mentors for 1<sup>st</sup> year students, while teaching personnel acted as mentors for NGOs, e.g. during the project "*Providing Support to Young People in Non-family Care to Improve Life Skills* implemented" by the association "Gaišo domu platforma" (Bright Thought Platform). Research is conducted in cooperation with municipalities as well.

Teaching personnel organize and manage the Sociologist Microscope, which is intended for students from year 6 to year 12 to get to know the profession of a sociologist and various research methods used in sociology. Several events are held (students are involved as assistants if necessary), which are attended by students from general and professional secondary educational institutions located from Jelgava city, as well as from Riga.

Two **summer schools** were held during the reporting period. The first of them focused on the theme "*Building a Community. Its Social, Economic and Cultural Aspects in Practice*". During this period, a hay sculpture workshop "Days of Hay" was held in Kaldabruna village in 2017, where the theme was "Creation of the World", and both students and teaching personnel participated in it. The idea gained support and was implemented by ESAF in cooperation with the association "Udenszimes" (Watermarks) and its leader. Students, representatives of NGOs and residents of the local community participated in the lectures and activities held by the summer school and led by ESAF teaching personnel. The summer school provided everyone interested in it with information about practical methods for researching opportunities for the local community and this territory,

thereby allowing identification of its strengths and opportunities for the development thereof.

The second summer school held in Aizkalne parish, Preili municipality in 2019 had the theme "*What to do with the Place?*" It was attended by students from various programmes who were interested in local community and rural development and who had a desire to learn and get involved in the development of the place. In addition, local residents were invited to participate in the summer school together with the students and look at the environment they knew from a different point of view. The purpose of the summer school was to explore the existing cultural, social, physical and other resources and to create a collaborative model for promoting development rooted in the place. For a week, the students lived in Aizkalne together with the teaching personnel of LBTU, and along with delivering classes and exploring Aizkalne, they got to know the cultural and historical region of Latgale, visited local farms and craftsmen. Besides, the summer school had special guests with motivating stories about creating one's own place in rural areas. During the summer school, students from sociology and business programmes, as well as future environmental engineers and veterinary medicine students studied together and built not only their knowledge but also their research skills by observing and questioning the residents of Aizkalne.

Teaching personnel and students from the SOPA programme are involved in various **scientific and practical activities**, which allow them to establish and develop cooperation with other stakeholders, as well as make a practical contribution to the learning process and extra-curricular activities.

The teaching personnel involved in the delivery of the programme regularly raise their qualifications and undergo professional development, which allows them to enhance their courses delivered, e.g. at least once every six years, the teaching personnel attend a professional development programme for higher education educators "Innovations in University Didactics" (160 h) at LBTU. Several teaching personnel took English language (120 h) and other courses delivered as part of LBTU project No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/014 "Development of LBTU Academic Personnel". The teaching personnel have used an opportunity to build their knowledge in seminars and courses held outside LBTU, as well as undergo practical training in organizations representing the field. The teaching personnel raise their qualifications by participating in international and scientific conferences and international seminars.

Programme **teaching personnel and students are involved in research projects and research activities**, e.g. in cooperation with the agency LETA, the students participated in exit polls during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> elections of Saeima. Besides, international and Latvian students regularly participate and lead sections in the "International scientific student conference *Students on Their Way to Science*".

Students are involved in LBTU **events at the national and international level**. For example, they participated as volunteers in the centenary event "Countryside Comes to the City" in Riga, they were in the "Great League" of LBTU, represented LBTU in business games, etc.

The involvement and dedication of students is maximally intense, while teaching personnel can provide a successful study process and final examinations.

New methods and approaches are constantly integrated into the implementation of the study direction. LBTU, ESAF, the programme director and teaching personnel develop and align part-time distance learning with the main trends in higher education development in the world, which requires significant efforts to develop this type of study. Already since the beginning of the reporting period (given the recommendations and the goals set), courses for the bachelor programme have been designed and also delivered on the Moodle platform, thus considering the introduction of distance learning into the study direction in the future. The teaching personnel

raised their qualifications and designed courses to be placed on the Moodle platform. The experience shared between LBTU teaching personnel, as well as their practical training or courses taken that related to the delivery of distance learning (see in detail in section 2.3.4.) had a positive impact on the ratings given by the licensing experts to the readiness of the teaching personnel engaged in the programme to deliver the distance learning courses.

Since the academic year 2022/2023, the programme has been delivered as part-time distance learning, and the courses needed for the programme have been designed and placed on the Moodle platform. The use of the LBTU Moodle platform is governed by the decision of the Vice-rector for studies Procedure for Using E-studies System at LBTU (The document is attached to the report in the section Other attachments in the folder LBTU Documents in Latvian). LBTU rector decision No. 4.3.-8/105 sets the Distance learning regulation in LBTU (The document is attached to the report in the section Other attachments in the folder LBTU Documents in Latvian). Part-time distance learning students are provided with two to four contact hours per credit. For part-time distance learning, contact hours mean individual and group consultations; online feedback on assignments submitted; final examinations; contact hours for part-time distance learning are indicated in course descriptions, as they are used to plan workloads (academic work) for teaching personnel.

At the beginning of each semester, the programme director agrees on contact hours for the current semester with the teaching personnel and informs students about the schedule of courses for the semester, which are placed on the MOODLE platform and accessible via BigBlueButton (BBB), where records of the courses for students who do not connect at the specified times due to objective reasons can also be made to be watched later. Part-time students sometimes have an opportunity to connect to online lectures for full-time students (e.g. if such lectures are delivered in accordance with the Procedure for Organizing Distance Learning at LBTU) or attend them in person.

At the beginning of each academic year, the programme director delivers in-person introductory classes (as part of the course Introduction to Studies), which include guest lectures for full-time and part-time distance learning students. An e-learning methodologist also participates, familiarizing the students with the specifics of the Moodle platform and how to use it, as well as how to access and use the resources of the LBTU Fundamental Library remotely.

The teaching personnel engaged in the study direction have gained rich experience in the use of diverse instructional materials, tests and teaching methods, as well as widely apply various digital solutions to ensure the achievement of the goal of the programme. The LBTU e-learning methodologist offers individual and group consultations and is always available for both teaching personnel and students.

Significant individual support for students who start their studies in the later phases of part-time distance learning is provided directly by the programme director, including ESAF office assistants advising and supporting them in various problems related to the study process.

**3.2.4. If the study programme envisages an internship, describe the internship opportunities offered to students, provision and work organization, including whether the higher education institution/ college helps students to find an internship place. If the study programme is implemented in a foreign language, provide information on how internship opportunities are provided in a foreign language, including for foreign**

**students. To provide analysis and evaluation of the connection of the tasks set for students during the internship included in the study programme with the learning outcomes of the study programme (if applicable).**

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

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

Upon completing university studies, the student must produce a bachelor thesis worth 10 (15) CP. A bachelor thesis is an empirical research study conducted independently by the student, which confirms the build-up of theoretical knowledge and methodological skills in the sociology of organizations and public administration within the scope set by the programme. The process of producing a bachelor thesis proves the student's ability to integrate the knowledge, skills and competences acquired during theoretical courses into an empirical research study of current problems and issues in society or an organization. In producing a bachelor thesis, the student demonstrates the ability to think logically, critically and creatively, conceptually use his/her theoretical knowledge of sociology and practical research skills in selecting, systematizing, analysing and interpreting data by employing appropriate sociological research methods to draw conclusions and proposals based on the empirical research conducted as well as the knowledge gained during the studies.

During the reporting period, 122 bachelor theses were produced and defended. An analysis of thesis topics allows us to identify six main categories of thesis topics, see Table 3.6.

Table 3.6

**Thematic summary of final theses of the SOPA program**

PERFORMANCE OF ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND NGO SECTORS	Voluntary work in NGOs; Information, the availability and communication processes in organizations; Assessment of the performance of organizations and opportunities for improvement; Personnel selection and attraction problems in companies; E-services and information technologies in municipalities, the related risks and security; Cooperation problems and solutions; Factors in motivation in private sector organizations; Organizational image and reputation etc.
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SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF ESTABLISHMENT OF MUNICIPALITIES	Establishment of municipalities: positive and negative aspects; Public opinion on the administrative and territorial reform: expectations and reality; Municipal development strategies; Performance of local governments as assessed by residents; Opportunities to use the EU Structural Funds for the development of territories and organizations; Public participation in municipal decision-making etc.
CURRENT PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION	Continuing education and professional development opportunities in the regions of Latvia; Access to education for various social groups; Higher education from the perspective of young people: motivation for learning, the choice of a profession; Prospects for the development of rural schools, school networks in the regions, Education reforms and the involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of reforms; Cooperation between scientists and entrepreneurs in Zemgale region etc.
SOCIAL PROBLEMS	Social aspects of various addictions and the role of various agents involved in solving the problem; Dysfunctional families; problems of foster families; Assessment of the performance of and services provided by support institutions; Social work with the community etc.
LABOUR MARKET PROBLEMS	Employee satisfaction with work, the quality of working life; Integration of various social groups (unemployed, young people, NEET youth, women etc.) into the labour market; Public habits and choices under surveillance capitalism; Attraction of young people to rural areas in the context of sustainability; Factors in the quality of professional life for various groups of employees etc.
SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION, QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE REGIONS OF LATVIA	Integration of people with special needs into society; Social inclusion of elderly people and life quality aspects; Gender equality problems; Leisure opportunities for various social groups; Life quality of various social groups in the city and rural areas; Life quality of families; Educator work-life balance affected by Covid-19 etc.

In the academic year 2018/2019, one international student graduated, while in 2022/2023 they were three, two of them graduated with distinction and continued their studies for a master's degree.

The students who graduated from the programme with distinction are especially noteworthy (at least 75 percent of the marks must be 9 or 10 and no marks lower than 7 during the entire period of studies). An applicant for a diploma with distinction must defend the bachelor thesis with a mark of 9 or 10. An excellence or "red diploma" is proof of the student's outstanding success, which s/he has achieved thanks to their determination, high working abilities, as well as family support throughout their university studies.

During the reporting period, 5 graduates graduated from the programme with distinction, two of

them were foreign students.

Table 3.7

**Changes in the number of graduates and the average mark for bachelor theses in the reporting period**

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Average mark</b>
2013/2014	11	4	<b>15</b>	8.2
2014/2015	17	12	<b>29</b>	8.2
2015/2016	8		<b>8</b>	8.3
2016/2017	19	3	<b>22</b>	7.5
2017/2018	9		<b>9</b>	8.3
2018/2019	6		<b>6</b>	9.2
2019/2020	10		<b>10</b>	7
2020/2021	8		<b>8</b>	7.7
2021/2022	5		<b>5</b>	7.4
2022/2023	10		<b>10</b>	7.6

In the reporting period, 45 out of 122 bachelor theses defended (or 36%) were marked by the State Examination Committee (SEC) as the best bachelor theses. These were bachelor theses with a mark “with distinction” and “excellent”; for the thesis topics, see Annex.

Overall, the scientific and methodical level of the bachelor theses defended in the reporting period was rated by the SEC as very good. Over the years, the practical applicability of student research has improved, and their research focuses on specific organizational problems. The research focuses on relevant and innovative topics, the best bachelor theses are submitted for participation in competitions, e.g. a competition „ATSPĒRIENS” (TAKE-OFF) announced by the Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees for topics relevant to this organization. In the reporting period, several bachelor theses were submitted to this competition and also received a good rating and recognition. Overall, it should be concluded that the practical applicability of student research tends to improve, and the students’ presentation skills continue to improve as well. Every year, students also participate in the international student scientific conference *Students on their Way to Science* with the topics of their bachelor theses, thereby producing a research paper and gaining experience in scientific research work. Several students, together with the teaching personnel of the programme, also participate in other international conferences and publish their research findings made when working on their bachelor theses in scientific proceedings.

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

**3.3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples.**

The available material and technical as well as financial resources and facilities for learning are sufficient and meet the requirements for the delivery of the programme and the achievement of learning outcomes. For the delivery of the programme, the shared informational, material and technical resources of LBTU, ESAF and other faculties are exploited (see criteria in sections 2.3.1-2.3.3).

In the programme Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration, the study process mainly occurs in the main building of LBTU where the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities is located at 2 Liela Street, Jelgava. Classrooms are furnished to meet modern requirements, and teaching personnel can employ a variety of teaching methods. Students have access to the LBTU library, as well as all other informational, material and technical resources and facilities available at LBTU and ESAF. As a specific example, the course "Social Statistics" and the course "Mathematical Methods in the Social Research" are delivered in the computer classroom of the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies delivering relevant programmes.

The resources used for delivering the programme for those studying in Latvian and in English practically do not differ. The only difference, which could be mentioned as an example, relates to some sources of literature, which are indicated in the descriptions of courses in the list of compulsory reading, and are available only in Latvian. The teaching personnel delivering the courses ensure that all students take the courses according to the requirements specified in the course descriptions to achieve the learning outcomes. Foreign students have access to the same learning, informational, material and technical resources as those studying in Latvian. Part-time distance learning students have an opportunity to participate in in-person classes. Guest lectures and study trips are held for those studying in Latvian (full-time and part-time distance learning) and those studying in English, and the students also have an opportunity to participate in international student conferences etc. All students have equal access to library resources at LBTU and ESAF. Students having an LBTU username and password can access all the resources needed for the learning process, e.g. library e-resources, Moodle, communication with teaching personnel etc. even when they are outside the building of LBTU.

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

**3.3.3. Indicate data on the available funding for the corresponding study programme, its funding sources and their use for the development of the study programme. Provide information on the costs per one student within this study programme, indicating the items included in the cost calculation and the percentage distribution of funding between**

**the specified items. The minimum number of students in the study programme in order to ensure the profitability of the study programme (indicating separately the information on each language, type and form of the study programme implementation).**

As at 01/03/2023, 58 students (3 groups) were enrolled on the programme Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration delivered in Latvian and English.

Calculation of the required number of students for bachelor programmes to achieve the profitability of the learning process:

- the required total academic workload in hours during the academic year – students must acquire 40 (60) credit points (CP) per academic year. The required number of contact classes (lectures, practicals/laboratory classes, seminars) for 1 CP is 16 h, for 40 CP it is 640 h. In addition to contact hours during classes, 128 hours are planned for other teaching-related work (student written work marking, examinations, tests etc.) for teaching personnel. The total academic workload per year is estimated to be 768 h (640+128=768);
- the required number of workloads for the delivery of the programme per academic year: based on a decision of the Senate, the following number of hours of academic work per academic year has been set for an FTE workload at LBTU:
  - professor – 900 h
  - associate professor – 920 h
  - assistant professor – 940 h
  - lecturer/assistant – 960 h

Teaching personnel of various positions are engaged in the programme, yet for the calculation of a required number of workloads, the average number of hours worked by an assistant professor was chosen: 768 h (academic work) / 940 h (hours per workload) = a workload of 0.82;

- the required funding for teaching personnel salaries per academic year: EUR 1124 (Cabinet regulation No. 445) \* 0.82 workload \* 3 (number of groups) \* 12 (months) \* EUR 1.2359 (social tax) = EUR 41 007.76
- the number of students required to cover the costs of the programme: the number of students making up 3 groups must be 40. The minimum number of students making up one group must be 14 (this covers salaries and other costs). Material and technical resources are provided for the delivery of programmes at LBTU, involving no additional expenses.

A different number of contact classes and therefore a different minimum number of students per group have been set for each version of the programme delivered. The calculations indicated the minimum number of students at the maximum number of contact classes for self-paid students. If the number of contact classes is smaller, the minimum number of students is also smaller. If both government-funded and self-paid students are included in a full-time group, the minimum number of students is also different because the group is formed without changing the number of contact classes. The minimum number of students varies depending on the workload of self-paid students.

During admission, LBTU forms a group for the programme if at least 5 students have applied for it. The programme is delivered if the required minimum number of students has been achieved at the start of studies; however, students drop out during their studies.

Since one of the goals of LBTU and of the field of study is internationalization, the programme is also delivered to groups of less than 5 students. In recent years, there has been greater interest from foreign students, therefore, the groups also become larger.

According to LBTU Supervisory Board decision No. 15, a tuition fee is set for year 1 self-paid students for the academic year 2023/2024: EUR 1800 per academic year for full-time students and EUR 1400 part-time distance learning students. The tuition fee for the international students is set at EUR 2500 per academic year. For additional information on the financial security required for the delivery of the study direction and the programmes contained therein, see section 2.3.1.

### 3.4. Teaching Staff

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

At the time of submitting the report, 27 teaching personnel were involved in the delivery of the academic bachelor programme Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration (in 2023/2024). Most of the teaching personnel are employed by three institutes of ESAF: the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities (SOHU), including the Language Centre (ValC), with 19 teaching personnel; the Institute of Economics and Finance (EKFI) and the Institute of Business and Management Science (UZVA) have a total of 4 teaching personnel, while teaching personnel from other LBTU faculties have also been recruited to deliver some courses (e.g. the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology, the Faculty of Forest and Environmental Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies with a total of 4 teaching personnel). The mentioned organisational units contribute to the delivery of specific courses, teaching and methodological resources, development, revision and updating of course programmes, as well as the quality of the learning process.

The mentioned organizational units ensure the delivery of respective courses, teaching and methodological activities, the development, updating and refinement of course programmes, as well as the quality of learning.

During the delivery of the programme, a teaching workload for teaching personnel consists of delivery of classes, as well as student written work marking and supervision of bachelor theses. A relatively low proportion in the total workload is represented by work in state examination committees, supervision of traineeships/defence of traineeship reports and supervision of doctoral theses. Teaching personnel plays an essential role in achieving high-quality results from learning for students and building up their knowledge, skills and competences. A summary of the teaching personnel involved in the delivery of the programme over the past seven years is presented in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8

**Teaching personnel involved in the delivery of the programme**

	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	2023/ 2024
<b>Total teaching personnel, including by position:</b>							
professors	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
associate professors	5	4	5	6	6	5	6
visiting associate professors	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
associate professors Emeritus	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
assistant professors	10	10	9	6	5	7	7
visiting assistant professors	3	3	2	5	5	3	3
lecturers	8	6	6	6	2	5	5
visiting lecturers	9	14	12	13	11	10	4
assistants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
visiting assistants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Proportion of elected teaching personnel, %</b>	71%	64%	65%	65%	61%	82%	81%
<b>Proportion of visiting teaching personnel, %</b>	29%	34%	35%	35%	39%	18%	19%

As shown in Table 3.8, an increase in the proportion of elected teaching personnel from the academic year 2022-2023, which exceeds 80%, could be viewed as a positive trend. The qualifications of teaching personnel involved in the delivery of the programme (assistant professors and associate professors are those who basically contribute to the delivery of the programme), meet the requirements for the delivery of the programme and the requirements of relevant legal acts and ensure the achievement of learning outcomes.

The number of teaching personnel working with foreign students is slightly smaller. A total of 18 teaching personnel (associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers and assistants) are involved in providing the learning process, 12 of them are from SOHU and the LBTU Language Centre, and the other 6 represent the above-mentioned institutes. This is due to the fact that all the teaching personnel who are engaged in the delivery of the programme in English have foreign

language skills of at least B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages ([www.europass.lv](http://www.europass.lv)). The teaching personnel can regularly enhance their knowledge of English by taking language courses delivered by the LBTU Language Centre.

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

As mentioned in section 3.4.1, the delivery of the programme is mostly ensured by teaching personnel working at the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities. At the beginning of the reporting period, i.e. in the academic year 2013/2014, the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities employed 33 teaching personnel, of whom: 14 were visiting lecturers; 3 lecturers; 5 visiting assistant professors; 6 assistant professors; 5 associate professors. At the end of the reporting period, i.e. in the academic year 2022/2023, 20 teaching personnel worked at the institute, including: 4 visiting lecturers; 2 lecturers; 3 visiting assistant professors; 6 assistant professors; 4 associate professors. As shown in Table 3.7, the total number of teaching personnel employed by the institute has decreased, which is particularly true for the number of visiting lecturers. The number of other academic positions has remained relatively unchanged. The fact that, despite the decrease in the number of teaching personnel during the reporting period (-16), it was possible to attract 3 new teaching personnel and maintain the number and proportion of academic positions necessary for the delivery of the programme should be viewed positively. Most of the teaching personnel involved in the programme have a doctoral degree, which shows the trend of increasing the qualifications of teaching personnel, e.g. 1 visiting lecturer, 1 visiting assistant professor and 1 assistant professor currently hold the position of associate professor, while 1 visiting lecturer is in the position of assistant professor.

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

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

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

In the reporting period, more than two teaching personnel were involved in the delivery of several courses, but this basically related to the teaching personnel from other faculties or ensuring the learning process for foreign students at the SOHU institute (teaching personnel working with students in Latvian and English, which requires English language knowledge of at least B2, are different). For example, in the courses – "*Labour and Civil Protection*", "*Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development*" – lectures are delivered by professors, associate professors or assistant professors, while lecturers or visiting lecturers deliver practicals.

To ensure the linkage between the courses, the requirements for course programme development governed by LBTU are met (Decision of the Vice Rector for Studies No. 2.4.-8/59 "*Procedure for Developing Course/traineeship Programmes and the Procedure for Registering and Updating Information in the IS Course Register of LBTU*"), which consists of three consecutive stages:

- reviewing a new course programme at a meeting of academic personnel of the responsible department/centre/institute (responsible for the implementation of this stage: the head or director of the responsible department/centre/institute);
- reviewing the course programme by the respective Methodological Commission, (responsible: the Methodology Commission);
- approval of the course programme by the Board of Faculty representing the science or a sub-branch (responsible: the Board of Faculty).

The director of the programme, as a member of the Methodology Commission, evaluates in detail the course programmes approved by the institutes/departments and submitted to the Methodology Commission and ensures that the topics of the courses do not overlap.

The information provided in section 2.4 shows that the teaching personnel involved in the delivery of the programme also cooperated within research projects implemented during the reporting period, as well as several teaching personnel produced joint research papers, interdisciplinary summer schools were held together, guest lectures and study trips were held etc.

The ratio of students to teaching personnel in the academic year 2023/2024 was 12.1 (as at 01/10/2023, 73 students).

# Annexes

III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme	Bachelor_diploma_supplement_EN.pdf	Diploms_Pielikums_LV.pdf
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period	Annex 1. Statistical data on students enrolled on the academic bachelor programme SOPA clarified.docx	1 pielikums Statistiskas dati par studejosajiem OSPS precizets.docx
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard	Annex 2 Compliance of the bachelor programme Sociology of Organizations and Public Administration with the Academic Education National Standard.docx	2 pielikums atbilstiba valsts izglitiba standartam.docx
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	OSPS Mapping clarified.xlsx	OSPS Kartejums precizets.xlsx
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	Study plans OSPS 24 25 EN.docx	Studiju plani OSPS 24 25 LV.docx
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Study Courses clarified.zip	Studiju kursi precizets.zip
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)	LBTU_apilecinajumu studiju virzienam Sociologij politologija un antropologija_EN_2.docx	Par LBTU apilecinajumu studiju virzienam "Sociologija, politologija un antropologija" - precizējums.edoc