APPLICATION

Study field "Social Welfare" for assessment

Study field	Social Welfare
Title of the higher education institution	Latvijas Universitāte
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Self-evaluation report

Study field "Social Welfare"

University of Latvia

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I - Information on the Higher Education Institution/College

1.1. Basic information on the higher education institution/ college and its strategic development directions, including the following information:

1.1. Basic information about the UL and its strategic development directions

The University of Latvia (hereinafter – the UL) **was founded in 1919** and is the largest general-profile university in Latvia. It plays an important role not only in the development of the educational system, but also sustains the overall national economic growth.

The University of Latvia has assembled the leading teaching and research potential of the Republic of Latvia in natural sciences, humanities and social sciences. The University offers state-of-the-art studies and research through the synthesis of higher education and science. The University of Latvia actively participates in solving topical national and social problems, as well as being the centre of intellectual life of Latvia, it generates new knowledge while nurturing the national language, culture and promoting the development of the state and society.

The UL concentrates its efforts on high return on invested resources, sustainable and environmentally friendly use of resources, the development of scientific excellence, open and interdisciplinary structures for research and studies. The UL has evolved into a modern academic campus providing the environment and infrastructure for excellence in research, studies and creativity.

The University has developed creative solutions to attract new financial resources, use funding and donations from the European Union, international organizations, national and local governments, entrepreneurs and individuals.

Currently the main operation of the UL takes place in Riga, Raiņa bulvāris 19 and Torņakalns Academic Centre, as well as in various faculties in Riga and in UL regional branches in Alūksne, Bauska, Cēsis, Jēkabpils, Kuldīga, Madona and Tukums.

The University of Latvia is the only classical university in Latvia and is the largest institution of higher education in Latvia in terms of student numbers (see Figure 1) among state higher education institutions and those established by legal entities. In the year 2019/2020, Turiba University shows the highest number of students (3333 students) in among higher education institutions founded by some autonomous legal entities.
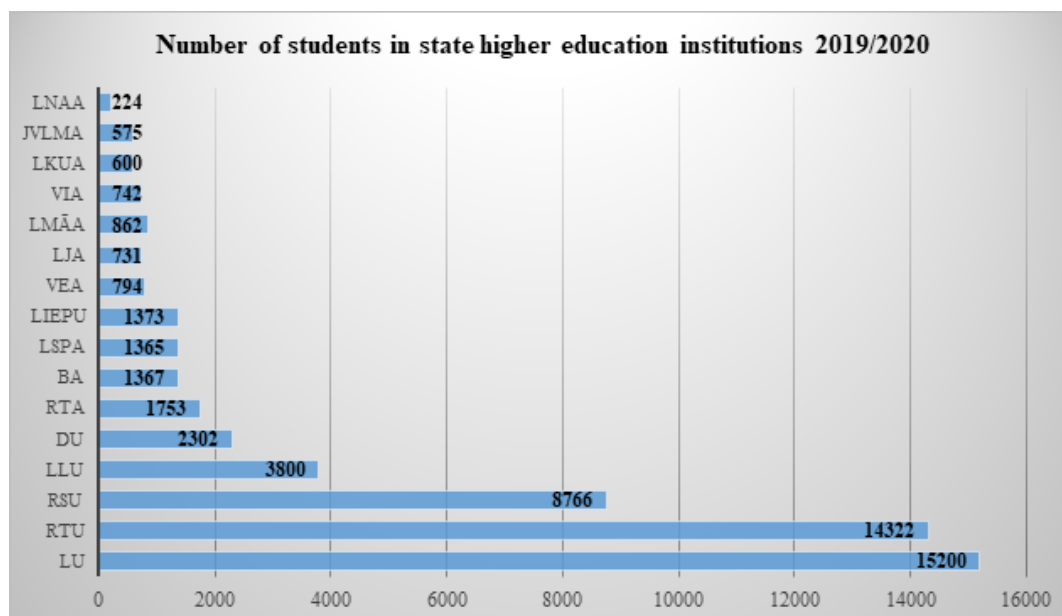
Figure 1. Number of students in state higher education institutions in the academic year 2019/2020

Retrieved from:

https://izm.gov.lv/lv/publikacijas-un-statistika/statistika-par-izglitibu/statistika-par-augstako-izglitibu

1. *University of Latvia (UL)*
2. *Riga Technical University (RTU)*
3. *Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU)*
4. *Daugavpils University (DU)*
5. *Riga Stradiņš University (RSU)*
6. *Liepaja University (LU)*
7. *BA School of Business and Finance (BASBF)*
8. *J. Vītols Latvian Academy of Music (JVLMA)*
9. *Latvian Maritime Academy (LMA)*
10. *Latvian Academy of Culture (LAC)*
11. *Art Academy of Latvia (AAL)*
12. *National Defence Academy of Latvia (NDAL)*
13. *Latvian Academy of Sport Education (LASE)*
14. *Rezekne Academy of Technologies (RAT)*
15. *Ventspils University College (VUC)*
16. *Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (VUAS)*

The UL implements study programmes at all levels, covering 28 branches of science and 150 study programmes in 22 fields of study are implemented at 13 faculties of the University (see Table 1), where several have gained international excellence and quality assessment. The UL has also got 3 medical colleges (2302 students in the academic year 2019/2020) and doctoral schools.

Table 1. Study fields implemented by the University of Latvia, number of study programmes therein and accreditation period (13.08.2020.)

No.	Study fields	Number of study programmes	Accreditation period

1.	Architecture and Construction	1	31.05.2013-30.06.2022.
2.	Life Sciences	3	29.05.2013-30.06.2023.
3.	Economics	12	26.06.2013-30.06.2021.
4.	Physics, Materials Science, Mathematics and Statistics	7	29.05.2013-30.06.2023.
5.	Geography and Earth Sciences	6	24.04.2017-24.04.2023.
6.	Information Technology, Computer Engineering, Electronics, Telecommunications, Computer Management and Computer Science.	5	29.05.2013-22.08.2023.
7.	Internal Security and Civil Defence	3	05.06.2013-30.06.2024.
8.	Information and Communication Sciences	6	24.05.2013-30.06.2021.
9.	Education, Pedagogy and Sports	24	12.06.2013-30.06.2024.
10.	Chemistry, Chemical Technologies and Biotechnology	3	24.05.2013-30.06.2023.
11.	Arts	1	16.10.2015- 02.06.2021.
12.	Psychology	3	21.06.2019-21.06.2025.
13.	Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology	9	12.06.2013-30.06.2024.
14.	Social Welfare	2	14.05.2013-30.06.2022.
15.	Religion and Theology	3	22.05.2013-30.06.2023.
16.	Law	4	21.06.2019-21.06.2025.
17.	Translation	2	14.05.2013-30.06.2024.
18.	Management, Administration and Real Estate Management	13	26.06.2013-30.06.2021.
19.	Language and Cultural Studies, Native Language Studies and Language Programmes	21	26.06.2013-30.06.2024.
20.	Health Care	13	31.05.2013-30.06.2022.
21.	History and Philosophy	6	24.05.2013-30.06.2023.
22.	Environment Protection	3	05.06.2013-30.06.2024.

The University of Latvia (*Latvijas Universitātes 2019. gada publiskais gada pārskats* [University of Latvia Annual Report 2019]) conducts international-level fundamental and applied research in 4 science groups, 12 priority research areas, and 22 areas of excellence. In addition to research work and the provision of studies, the university contributes to knowledge and technology transfer. The

University conducts a range of contract research projects worth more than a million euros. The UL intellectual property portfolio has 24 valid Latvian patents (the UL being the sole owner) and 10 valid European patents. In order to promote economic development, the University has set more than sixty potential cooperation solutions for different industries. The UL scientific activities are conducted in 17 scientific institutes https://www.lu.lv/en/about-us/structure/institutes/, while various studies, training and counselling are offered in 28 study centres https://www.lu.lv/en/about-us/structure/ul-centres/.

In order to promote cooperation between the UL and local governments in the fields of human resources development, education and interdisciplinary research, the UL operates the Regional centre, while in order to strengthen international cooperation, the UL has concluded more than 227 bilateral cooperation agreements with universities in 51 countries https://www.lu.lv/en/cooperation/international-cooperation/. The University successfully implements projects funded by the EU and other international organizations, EU Structural Funds and other funds, as well as the state budget and domestic and foreign companies.

The UL has 10 choirs, 3 folk dance groups, 2 ensembles, student theatre, student brass band, folklore dance group and pottery studio. The activities are implemented also by the UL structural units: UL Museum, UL Botanical Garden, UL Rhododendron nursery "Babīte", University of Latvia Press (UL Press), UL Baldone Observatory. The foundations perform successfully, too: UL Foundation and Alumni Club.

The competitiveness of the University of Latvia is built on academic and research excellence. The University guides and directs the development, renewal and collaboration of its academic and research staff, and ensures resources and administrative support through an excellence-driven approach. The UL employs 3118 people, incl. 1404 members of UL academic staff and 1714 – UL general staff.

The university's financial performance is characterized by a turnover of EUR 95.4 million and an equity ratio of 78%.

In the academic year 2019/2020 there were 15 250 students at the University of Latvia, and the studies of 6 837 students were funded from the state budget. In total, about 5 000 new applicants are enrolled each year.

Figure 2 shows the dynamics of the number of students at the University of Latvia and the population of Latvia over a 6-year period, and the respective correlation trends.
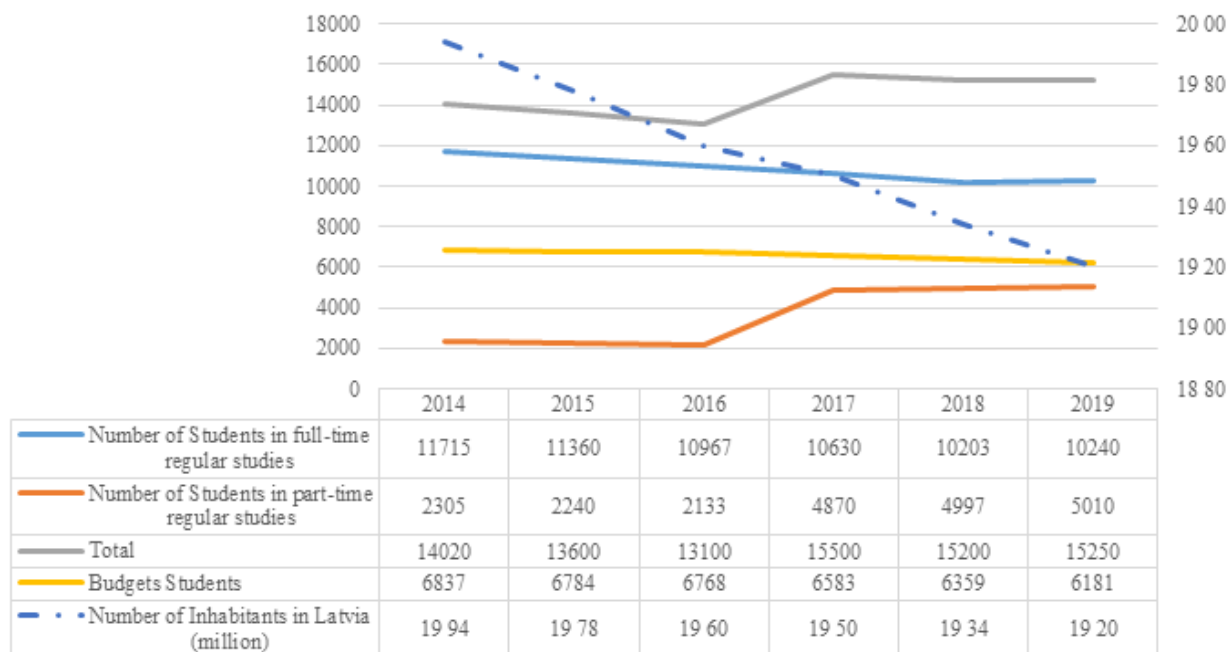
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of Students in full-time regular studies	11715	11360	10967	10630	10203	10240
Number of Students in part-time regular studies	2305	2240	2133	4870	4997	5010
Total	14020	13600	13100	15500	15200	15250
Budgets Students	6837	6784	6768	6583	6359	6181
Number of Inhabitants in Latvia (million)	19 94	19 78	19 60	19 50	19 34	19 20

Figure 2. Number of students at the University of Latvia compared to the population of Latvia, 2014–2019

UL vision, mission and values

Vision: The University of Latvia makes its contribution to the global processes of science, higher education, knowledge, technology transfer and innovation, ensures growth of democracy and culture of Latvia, development of Latvian language and economy.

Mission: Space for excellence, environment for development, time for responsibility. UL is a research university with a high international reputation. UL creates an interdisciplinary, open and innovation-oriented environment for excellence in work and studies. Activity of UL forms the foundation for sustainable development and economic transformation of Latvia.

Values: University community, focus on excellence, research-based development, openness, cooperation, academic freedom.

General information about UL branches

The University of Latvia has 7 regional branches, which were taken over by the University of Latvia in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Order No. 164 of April 3, 2017 "On Liquidation of Riga Academy of Pedagogy and Education Management". Detailed description of branches in the Annex 2 "Information on the implementation of the study field in the branches".

The branches were established in response to the initiative of local authorities to offer higher education close to the place of residence to promote the development of Latvian regions (see Table 2 for the year of establishing the branches).

Table 2. Year of establishment of branches

Branches	Foundation year

Cēsis	1995
Kuldīga	1996
Tukums	1996
Jēkabpils	1996
Bauska	1997
Madona	1997
Alūksne	1999

The development of the UL branches is linked to the UL strategic goals and development plans of the municipalities of the region. It is essential for the development of municipalities to maintain the working population level. The study programmes implemented in branches are actively supported by the local governments, as they promote the development of Latvian regions by offering higher education close to the place of residence, thereby facilitating the development of human resources in the regions. The students combine studies with work, thus preserving jobs and connection with their family. Accordingly, the opportunity to study in the closest proximity to the place of residence and work that is offered at the branches, facilitates the implementation of the Latvian National Development Plan 2014–2020. The Plan's priority "Growth-Supporting Territories" states that "Our mission is to achieve sustainable growth by strengthening the capacities of the regions and making the most of their strengths and resources. In contrast to the current monocentric population structure, a balanced polycentric approach should be developed." (*National Development Plan 2014–2020. Retrieved from:* NAP2020 | Pārresoru koordinācijas centrs (pkc.gov.lv)) As expected, the graduates of the programmes do not change their place of residence and continue their professional activities in their region when studies are over, thus contributing to the development and growth.

The implementation of study programmes in the UL branches in line with the labour market demand allows to increase the number of qualifications/degrees in the regions, as well as to provide for the advancement of skills required for professional activity and career in the regions.

The students rationalise the choice to obtain education at UL branches by the opportunity to remain and gain employment in their town or region; to be with and take care of the family while pursuing studies; the opportunity to obtain another qualification if the demand of the labour market in the region so requires; monthly income, which in the regions of Latvia is lower compared to Riga and the area around Riga and is a disincentive for the choice of studies in Riga.

The key tasks set out in the UL strategy include the knowledge base expansion for the needs of the Latvian economy and knowledge management. The UL branches implement this task in cooperation with the local governments and the UL structural units (faculties, research institutes, etc.). The co-operation with local governments highlights the demand for specialists in the regions and facilitates the advancement of relevant study programmes and continuing education programmes, as well as the development and implementation of the new programmes.

Several study fields are accredited in the branches and 15 different fee study programmes are currently being implemented (see Table 3 below) starting with the first level (college) higher education programmes, professional bachelor's to master's degree programmes.

Table 3. Number of study fields and study programmes implemented in the regional branches of the University of Latvia, data as of 2019

Branches	Alūksne	Bauska	Cēsis	Jēkabpils	Kuldīga	Madona	Tukums
Number of study fields	3	1	2	1	3	1	1
Number of study programmes	3	2	5	1	8	2	4

The total number of students in the branches in the academic year 2019/2020 amounted to 1743.

The UL plans to develop regional education centres based on the identified needs of the region in cooperation with the regional governments, to expand the range of study programmes and other educational services available in the region, including continuing education programmes and courses.

UL development strategy – key objectives and directions
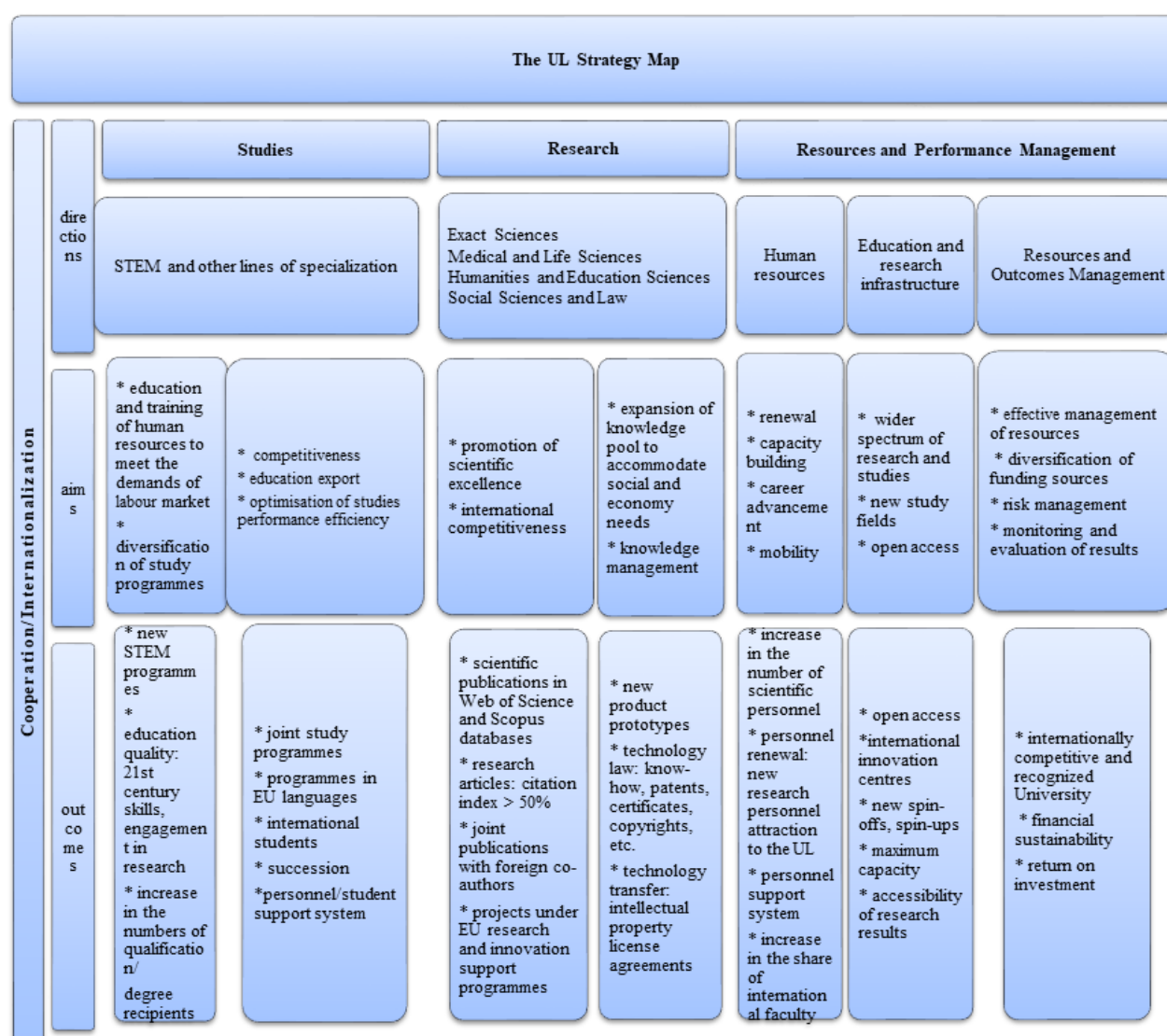

Figure 3. UL strategic objectives 2016–2020

The strategic objectives of UL (see Figure 3) are set out in the LU Development Strategy 2016-2020 to increase the competitiveness, visibility and effectiveness of the study process. In line with the

recommendation of the Ministry of Education and Science, letter No 4-10e/21/99 on Institutional Development Strategies, the LU Development Strategy has been extended until a new strategy has been adopted (Order No 1-4/175, 08.04.2021).

1. The objectives of the development direction **Development of higher education:**

   ○ Training of human resources in line with labour market demand;
   ○ Enhancement of competitiveness and quality of education;
   ○ Internationalization of education;
   ○ Optimisation of study process efficiency.

2. The objectives of the development direction **Development of research capacity and competitiveness:**

2.1. Promotion of research and scientific excellence;

2.2. Raising international competitiveness;

2.3. Expansion of the knowledge base.

3. The objectives of the development direction **Development of human resources:**

3.1. The development of motivation and remuneration system;

3.1.1. The development of UL academic and research staff remuneration system;

3.1.2. The development of UL employees' performance assessment system;

3.1.3. The development of UL academic staff motivation system;

3.1.4. The reinforcement of UL employees' retention, workplace satisfaction, and motivation through job satisfaction surveys

3.2. Capacity building of human resources

3.2.1. Ensuring the availability and recruitment of human resources by strengthening the image of the University of Latvia as of an attractive employer and by improving the UL recruitment and selection system;

3.2.2. The development and improvement of staff further training and upskilling system

3.2.3. The development of staff career planning system

4. The development direction **Academic staff renewal and succession;**
5. The objectives of the development direction **Development of resources and performance management system**:

5.1. Financial capacity building;

5.2. Knowledge management system optimization, incl. Marketing activities for promoting technology transfer;

5.3. The establishment of UL Academic Centre;

5.4. The development of higher education and research infrastructure;

5.5. The optimization of real estate management;

5.6. The development of changes support system;

5.7. The optimisation of operational efficiency;

5.8. The implementation of result management system.

6. The objectives of the development direction **Promotion of cooperation**:

6.1. Expansion of research organizations networks;

6.2. Expansion of cooperation networks with economic operators.

6.3. Expansion of cooperation with the public (raising public awareness of scientific achievements)

7. The objectives of the development direction **Internationalization**:

7.1. Student mobility;

7.2. Academic and research staff mobility.

The new UL Development Strategy for 2021-2027 (hereinafter referred to as UL Strategy 2027, LU_strategija_buklets_2021.pdf) was adopted already after the preparation of this report, by the UL Senate decision 28.06.2021. It continues the course of the main activity of UL towards scientific excellence, development of studies and investment in society, while the institutional developments of UL include talent development, the environment and management as well as organizational culture. There has been a consolidation of objectives. As a science university, UL has a primary strategic focus on scientific excellence and will focus more on green thinking and an organisational culture, including innovation and cooperation, in the coming period. Following the approval of UL Strategy 2027, the Senate will launch an update of the policy of sectoral groups, as well as the development and approval of the implementation plan.

1.2. Description of the management 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.

1.2. The University of Latvia governance structure

The UL is governed by the main decision-making bodies, governance and administration, as well as the councils of the core structural units. The UL students are represented in the main decision-making bodies by the Student Council, while employees are represented by trade unions.

Until the Higher Education Reform (HER), the UL governance, administration and **main decision-making bodies** of UL are the Constitutional Assembly, Senate, Rector and Academic Court of Arbitration (LU Constitution, p .5 .1). Not later than 30.11.2021. a new governance instrument of hte institution of higher education - the Council of UL elected by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia (AL 12(1)). For the ra tio of the membership of the main decision-making bodies of UL and the time-limits for election see in Table 4a.

Table 4a

Time-limits for the election of the main decision-making bodies of UL, proportions of composition and characteristics of mandate

	Changes	Election term	Number of members	Academic personnel	General peronnel	Student represent.

Constitutional Assembly	Until HER	3 years	300	66,7%	8,3%	25%
	After HER	3 years	200	>60%	-	>20%
Council of UL	Not later as 30.11.2021	4 years	11	5		
Senate	-	3 years	50	76%	4%	20%
Rector	-	4 years	1	1		
Academic Court of Arbitration	-	3 years	5	80%	0	20%
Mandate						

The **highest representative institution** of the University of Latvia is the Constitutional Assembly (Constitution, Art. 5.3). The **Senate is a collegial administrative and decision-making body elected** by the UL staff (Constitution, Art. 5.6). The **Rector is the senior official** of the UL (Constitution, Article 5.10). The UL **is also governed** by vice rectors, directors, chancellor and a collegial advisory body – the Council of Deans. (Constitution, Article 5.2; Council of Deans regulations). The UL leadership is represented by Rector, Vice-Rectors, Chancellor, Head of Administration and other staff members. It has authority to rule on all issues that are not within the specific competence of the Constitutional Assembly of the University of Latvia, the Senate or the Rector of the University (Administration regulations, pp. 7–8). The UL governance, the Rector's office and the UL administration units are constitutive bodies of the UL administration (Administration regulations, Art. 6). The UL Administration responsibilities are defined at five hierarchical levels, the subordination of which to the Rector may be changed for the attainment of the UL mission, strategy and objectives (Administration regulations, Art. 35). The collegial advisory bodies of the Rector and Governance of the University of Latvia are the Advisory Council, the Council of Science, the Strategic Board, Quality Consultative Committee and the Study Programme Quality Assessment Board. The Rector may form advisory councils and **employ experts to coordinate the activities of the University** and to address various issues. Regulations proposed by councils are approved by the Senate (Constitution, Art. 5.2).

The core structural units of the University of Latvia are academic units, branches and centres, as well as units performing organizational, economic and service duties. The structural units of the University of Latvia do not have legal personality (Constitution, Art. 6.1). The UL core structural units are the units which are not incorporated into other units. They are established, reorganized or liquidated by a decision of the Senate, and their operation is governed by the regulations approved by the Senate (Constitution, Art. 6.2).

The academic units of the University of Latvia are the faculties, research institutes, departments, chairs, laboratories, the University of Latvia Library, the Botanical Garden, the Museum of the History of Science and Technology, and the Academic Press. The UL faculty or the UL research institute, in accordance with its needs and following the UL procedure, establishes its self-governing and internal structure, organizes records, staffing, develops and adopts the rules and regulations necessary for the performance of its tasks on issues not regulated by UL governing bodies. The faculty or the UL research institute is established by a decision of the Senate, but is reorganized or liquidated upon the initiative of the respective faculty (research institute), the Rector or the Senate.

The UL faculty is an academic unit established for the implementation of academic activities in one or several branches of science. In this field, the faculty fulfils the common tasks of the

University of Latvia and adheres to its principles. In matters of relevant academic and professional activities, the UL faculty plays the role of an organizational, methodological and ideological think-tank, without prejudice to the competence and responsibility of the governing bodies of the University of Latvia. In order to achieve the objectives of its activities, the faculty develops, coordinates and implements academic, doctoral and professional studies, as well as interest and continuing education programmes, supervises scientific, pedagogical and methodical activities in the respective branches of science in the UL, coordinates the scientific, pedagogical and methodical activities of its departments and ensures adequate conditions and resources, as well as stimulating academic environment.

The functions of the institutes include the organisation of fundamental and applied research in one or several branches of science, as well as the implementation of study programmes, the coordination of scientific and pedagogical activities, while providing the necessary conditions and resources.

The self-governance of the faculty and/or research institute includes the governing bodies of the faculty (research institute) and its academic units. Its task is to organize the activities of the faculty or research institute in accordance with the competence of the faculty or research institute, to secure the rights of the staff provided for in the Constitution and the statutes of the faculty or research institute and to ensure that the norms and requirements specified therein are respected.

The Council is the supreme decision-making body of the Faculty.

The Scientific Council is the supreme decision-making body of the UL research institute. The Faculty is led by **the Dean** of the Faculty. The research institute is led by **the Director**. The work of the academic unit of the Faculty or of the research institute of the University of Latvia according to the competences specified in its regulations is decided by the meeting of its academic staff (scientists) and guided by the head of the structural unit. The regulations of the department (faculty, research institute) may also provide for other governing bodies. The head of each academic unit is its official representative at the faculty (research institute) and beyond. He is responsible for the performance of the tasks of the unit, as well as for the employment of staff members and the efficient use of the material resources available to the unit (Constitution, Art. 6.12–6.14).

For the purpose of academic work, faculties establish departments, research institutes, chairs, centres, laboratories, etc., while the UL research institutes establish departments, chairs, laboratories, etc.

The Centre is an interdisciplinary unit of study and research (covering different subjects or disciplines).

The Department is a study and research unit that participates in the development and implementation of study programmes and conducts scientific research in at least one sub-field of science.

The Research Laboratory is a research unit participating in the development and implementation of research programmes, as well as studies.

The training laboratory is a training unit that ensures the implementation of the experimental or practical part of study programmes. Centres, chairs, research and training laboratories are established on the proposal of an individual professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher by the Faculty Council or Scientific Council of a research institute. They are reorganized or liquidated on the initiative of the department or Faculty Council or the Scientific Council of the research institute. Chairs, research laboratories and professors' groups decide on all

issues of their academic activities, which, by Constitution, have not been placed under the responsibility of the Faculty Council (Research Institute Council) or the Senate. The sub-units of several branches of science operating in one branch at the faculties or research institutes unite in a department. The academic potential of each department should be sufficient to provide for at least one study (research) programme. The Faculty (UL research institute) may delegate some of its functions and powers to the departments. The academic departmental sub-units may delegate to the department the powers referred to in the preceding paragraph. The department is governed by its regulations, approved by the Faculty Council or the Scientific Council of the research institute. The decision on the establishment, reorganization or liquidation of a department, a research institute, a centre is taken by the relevant Faculty Council or by the Scientific Council of the research institute, which comes into force upon an order issued by the UL (Constitution, Art. 6.8–6.11).

The UL administration ensures the legal enforcement of the UL mission, goals and strategy, as well as the provision of support to UL staff and other UL employees.

The Rector's Office ensures the strategic monitoring of the UL administrative units, spot inspections of the legitimacy and usefulness of the activities of the core structural units on behalf of the Rector, as well as the UL representation in the policy and legislative processes at the national and European Union level. It also ensures the establishment and implementation of the principles of UL international relations and cooperation. The functions of the Rector's Office include the procedures for quality assurance in higher education and the assessment of compliance of the processes with the UL mission, objectives and operational strategy, as well as secretarial functions for the Rector, Vice-Rectors and the UL Governance Sessions (Administration regulations, Art. 52, 54).

Department Directors – ensure the compliance of UL operation with the requirements of internal and external regulatory acts, develop, improve and implement the internal UL regulations, control their execution, coordinate management and provide services to the staff and UL structural units. The departments, in accordance with their competence and functions, implement the UL Strategic Plan, UL Development Strategy, UL Rector's Programme and other UL Development Planning Documents, as well as initiate and implement projects of the European Union and other funds related to the improvement of the Department performance. (Administration regulations, Art. 61).

Vice Rectors – their functions, responsibilities and competences are set by Rector's order. The competence of the Vice rectors is determined by decree of the Rector, but it may include the rights to take over certain functions subordinated to the UL departments (Constitution, Art.18).

The University of Latvia has the **Student Council**, which is a self-governing student body, an independent decision-making body of the University of Latvia, representing the rights and interests of students. Its purpose is to represent the UL students and defend their rights and interests, as well as to promote the development of education and science in Latvia. (Constitution of the Student Council of the University of Latvia, Art. 1–2). The Student Council operates in accordance with the Constitution of the Student Council, which is developed by the students and approved by the Senate. Within the framework of self-government, the students have the right to form faculty (institutes) student councils and other bodies. The student self-government of the University of Latvia represents the students of the University of Latvia domestically and internationally, advocates and represents the interests of students in academic, material and cultural issues in the UL and other state and economic institutions, determines the procedures for the election of students at the Constitutional Meeting and the Senate. The decisions of the Student Council of the University of Latvia after their approval by the Senate must be observed for their duration by all students. The student self-government is entitled to request and receive information and

explanations from authorized representatives of any structural unit of the University of Latvia on all issues affecting students' interests. The students' self-government representatives have the right to participate in decision-making bodies of the UL at all levels, as well as to participate as observers in examinations. The University of Latvia supports and facilitates the activities of the UL Student Council, including financially. The student self-government uses the funds for the fulfilment of the functions specified in the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Constitution, Art. 7).

A detailed description of all the main bodies involved in the decision-making of UL, their composition and powers is given in Table 4 - as annex .

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, as well as the stakeholders involved in the development and improvement of the quality assurance system and their role in these processes.

1.3. Quality policy

By implementing quality management, the UL provides a set of activities and methods by which quality is planned, implemented, systematically evaluated and continually improved, thus contributing to the achievement of the objectives set by the UL and to meeting the needs of its stakeholders. UL quality management has been introduced and implemented since 2010, while quality policy – since 2012. The UL defines quality as a measure of excellence, which characterises the ability to meet and exceed the foreseeable and future needs of its stakeholders and to ensure that the processes meet industry regulatory and standard requirements.

Description of the quality policy implementation mechanism

UL quality assurance policy is a continuous development of excellence to ensure a balanced and sustainable outcome that meets the needs of all stakeholders. Quality Policy (*Retrieved from: https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti_EN/2/Kvalitates_politika_majas_lapai_ENG.pdf*) and Quality Action Policy (*Retrieved from: https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti_EN/2/Kvalitates_ricibpolitika_majas_lapai_ENG_new.pdf*) is a set of quality-related principles, goals and actions required to achieve them and implemented by the University of Latvia in accordance with internationally recognized standards in higher education and organization management. The aim of the quality policy is to contribute to the implementation of the UL mission, the achievement of strategic goals and sustainable development by defining guidelines and principles for ensuring a consistently high quality of operations. Quality Policy and Quality Action Policy, together with other policies and a set of processes, ensures the coherent planning and implementation of UL activities. Quality Policy and Quality Action Policy are an integral part of the quality assurance system and applies to all areas of UL and is to be implemented at all levels of UL governance.

The UL quality management system is implemented in accordance with the TQM (Total Quality Management) principles, integrating the excellence approach to UL corporate culture. The UL uses the internationally recognized and practically applicable quality management methodology – the EFQM (European Foundation of Quality Management) model of excellence for the implementation of comprehensive quality management. In some areas, the quality management system is enhanced to ensure compliance with current standards and frameworks, including: Adherence to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in the European

Higher Education Area (ESG) in the provision of the study process. The University of Latvia uses the internationally recognized methodology "Results – Approach – Implementation – Evaluation – Review" to ensure cyclical and continuous quality management. RADAR, *Results – Approach – Deployment – Assessment and Refine).* Scheme of the UL Quality Management System – Figure 4.
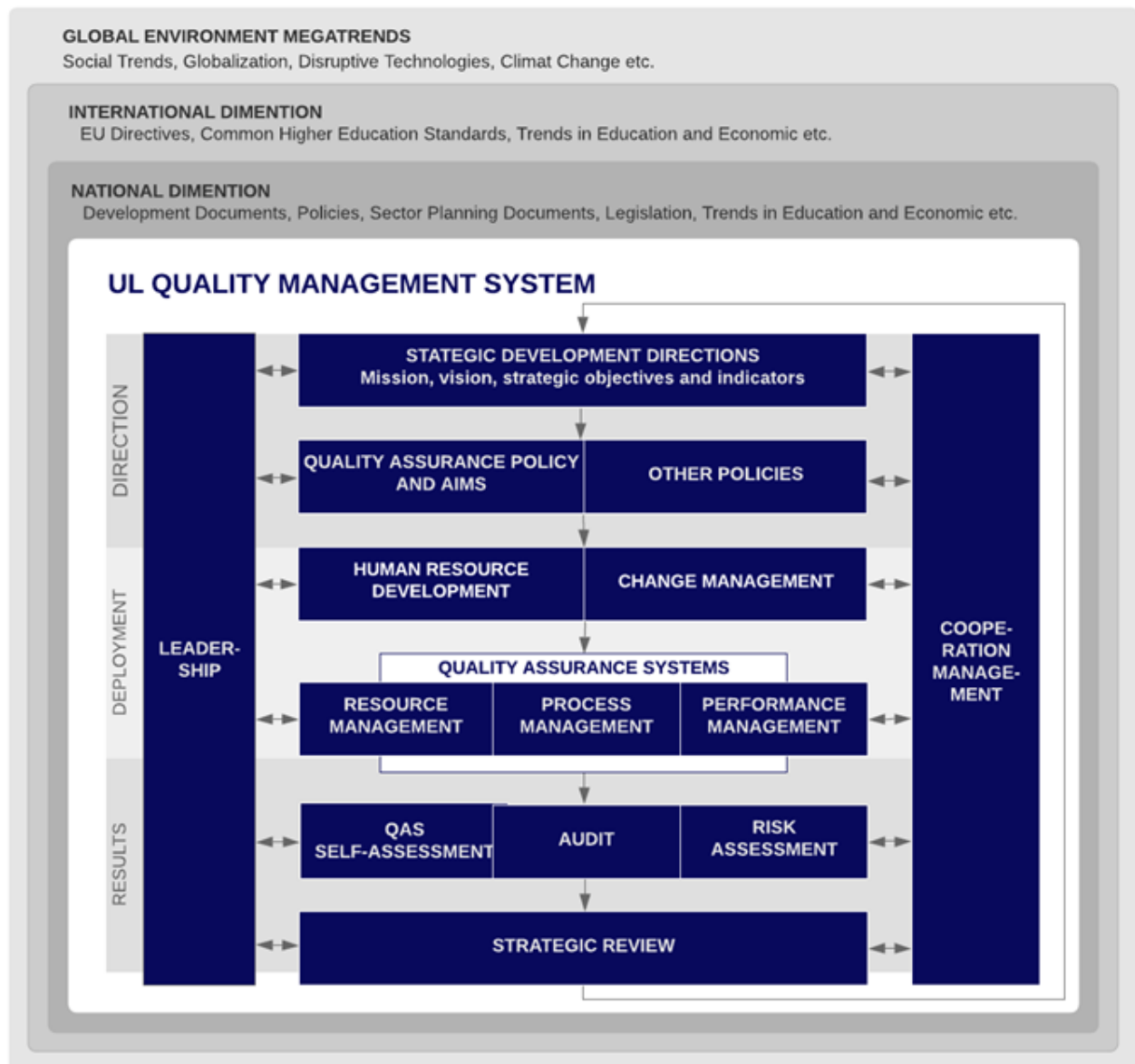

Figure 4. UL Quality Management System Diagram

The UL strategic development directions and the expected results or the intended operational goals are defined in the UL Development Strategy 2016–2020. (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy **- LATVISKI ŠEIT IR SAITE!**). The strategy has been developed taking into account the development directions and priorities set in the planning documents of the European Union and Latvia. Based on the analysis of competitiveness and SWOT, the University of Latvia has defined an action plan and various programmes for achieving the strategic development goals. The strategy also defines the tasks to be performed and the tools needed to achieve the strategic goals. According to the development directions, the UL position and commitment are formulated in policies, incl. Quality Policy, Personnel Policy, etc. Expected results are defined in key areas of activity as well as in financial and governance areas and are aligned with the interests of UL stakeholders. The results describe the achievements, efficiency and sustainability as well as long-term performance. Achievements are benchmarked against others, especially those in the industry, domestically or internationally.

In order to achieve results in selected strategic directions, the UL is developing effective and innovative **approaches and solutions** integrating up-to-date standards and guidelines, as well as state-of-the-art methods in resource management, process management and quality measurement. The UL management ensures the creation of the prerequisites for achieving the results, awareness of the need for quality, as well as passing the policies to the employees and ensuring that they are followed. The University of Latvia has been implementing a process management system (*QuPeRs*) (**LATVISKI ŠEIT IR SAITE**), which provides for the identification, structuring, process development, measurement, analysis and improvement of processes necessary for the quality management.

In order to implement activities aimed at **the achievement of strategic objectives**, the UL ensures the use of previously agreed policy approaches and solutions. The actions are planned, coordinated and evaluated through the development and implementation of action plans and operational actions coordinated with strategic action plans and programmes. Effective operation of the quality management system is ensured by regular supervision of the introduced quality management system, continuous improvement, as well as by performing internal audits. The UL uses a fact-based decision-making approach through process measurement and result management. The UL assesses and improves the approaches and solutions implemented against the indicators of strategic goals and quality goals. Internal control is ensured through reviews and self-assessments, risk assessment, as well as through planned internal quality audit. Based on the results of internal control, the UL management makes appropriate decisions on the necessary improvement of internal control system and quality management system. The UL has a performance management system in place to monitor and analyse the performance of the UL, its departments and staff, to assess the UL's progress towards the goals set in the strategy, and to compare UL performance with that of other higher education institutions in different areas and scales (intra-UL within different structural units, nationally, internationally). Structured management of results ensures constant monitoring of the results achieved by the University of Latvia and the possibility to use the obtained information in making decisions on the necessity to implement appropriate activities. The main users of results management are UL management, vice-rectors, heads of faculties, institutes and departments. Other employees of different levels of the UL organizational structure involved in the performance of the indicators, though indirectly, are also the users of the performance indicator system. (*Retrieved from: https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/lu_portal/zinas/2018/julijs/LUstrat_Kopsavilk_250517.pdf.*) Internal control and result management ensure identification of improvements and preventive actions, as well as determination of the level of achievement of strategic goals, i.e. annual strategic review, the results of which might determine whether changes in strategic goals, action plans, programmes, incl. indicators are required.

The guidelines for the development, maintenance, improvement and evaluation of the UL quality management system are summarised in the Quality Management Manual, which is binding on each UL employee. (*Retrieved from: https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/lu_portal/dokumenti/strategijas-un-koncepcijas/lu_izcilibas_modelis.pdf*)

Description of the parties involved in the design and development of the quality system and their roles

The parties involved in the UL activities are local and foreign natural or legal persons who use the UL services or whose socio-economic situation is influenced by the UL activities. In terms of quality policy, the client can be either internal – a unit or employee of the University of Latvia, or external – students of the University of Latvia, employers, academia, government as a representative of society in general, etc.

The implementation of the UL mission shall take into account the interests and needs of the following parties involved in its activities:

- *Saeima* and Government of the Republic of Latvia, Ministry of Education and Science and other public administration institutions,
- higher education quality assurance organizations and their associations,
- UL students, Latvian students and students abroad, student representations,
- potential students in Latvia and abroad,
- parents (guardians) and patrons of students and potential students,
- Higher education institutions/ colleges in Latvia and abroad, scientific institutes, networks, associations, academic organizations,
- UL academic and general staff,
- Industries, companies and professional associations (employers),
- UL graduates,
- non-governmental organizations,
- mass media,
- society.

Employees, students, graduates, employers, business partners and other clients are key stakeholders in the design and development of our quality assurance system. The actors involved in the quality management of UL and their roles are described in Table 5.

Table 5. Description of the main stakeholders involved in UL quality management and their role

The University of Latvia has a **Quality Consultative Committee**, which advises the Rector, Quality Manager, Internal Auditor and Leading Expert on quality management at the UL. Its purpose is to advance the development of the UL quality management system, its alignment with current requirements in the sector, quality management standards and guidelines, UL strategic development directions, as well as the interests of the employers, UL students and Latvian society. The Quality Consultative Committee is made up of at least one representative from UL faculties, UL scientific institutes, UL academic centres, UL students, UL Department of Studies, UL Department of Science, UL Department of Human Resources, independent quality management experts, employers, and social partners. The main functions of the Committee are to hear reports on the development of the UL quality management system, to express the opinion of UL stakeholders on UL quality assurance issues, to inform UL governance and staff responsible for quality management, internal audit and results management on current issues and best practices, as well as to indicate the areas for improvement of the UL quality management system and to propose the actions to be taken by UL quality managers. The responsibilities of the Committee include reviewing and discussing the conceptual documents of the UL quality management system, advising on measures to improve the UL quality management system, and promoting the benefits of the UL quality management system.

Procedures for quality assurance in higher education

The procedures for Quality Assurance at the University of Latvia are identified, formalized and implemented in accordance with Latvia's legal regulations, European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), as well as internal imperatives.

The procedure of the implementation of study programmes is determined by the UL internal legal regulations, including the documents regulating:

- development of new study programmes;
- admission requirements, matriculation and enrolment;

- planning, implementation and updating of study courses and modules, internships/placements;
- organization of examinations, final examinations and rotation;
- exmatriculation and issuance of diplomas and certificates;
- recognition of prior education or professional experience;
- self-assessment of study programmes;
- submission of student proposals and complaints, appeals against administrative decisions;
- promotion process.

The development of new study programmes at the University of Latvia is implemented in accordance with the procedure stipulated in the Regulations on the UL Study Programmes and Continuing Education Programmes (Senate Decision No. 102, approved April 24, 2017) and includes several stages:

- elaboration of the study programme concept in agreement with the vice rector and the dean of the faculty, and its approval by the faculty council;
- evaluation of the study programme concept with the assistance of experts and subsequent approval by the UL Study Programme Quality Assessment Board (SP QAB);
- elaboration of the full study programme, evaluation of the same with the assistance of experts, and subsequent approval by the faculty council, the SP QAB and UL Senate.

The development and updating of study courses are consistently implemented by the University of Latvia in accordance with the predefined procedure, requirements for the elaboration of the course and e-course description, as well as by ensuring a unified procedure for inclusion and exclusion of study courses from the study programme.

The study programme ensures consistent adherence to the principles of academic integrity in the conduct of students and staff, avoiding deception and fraud, ensuring objectivity, responsibility, promoting mutual respect and trust, and thus promoting the quality and prestige of Latvian education and science (see Figure 5).
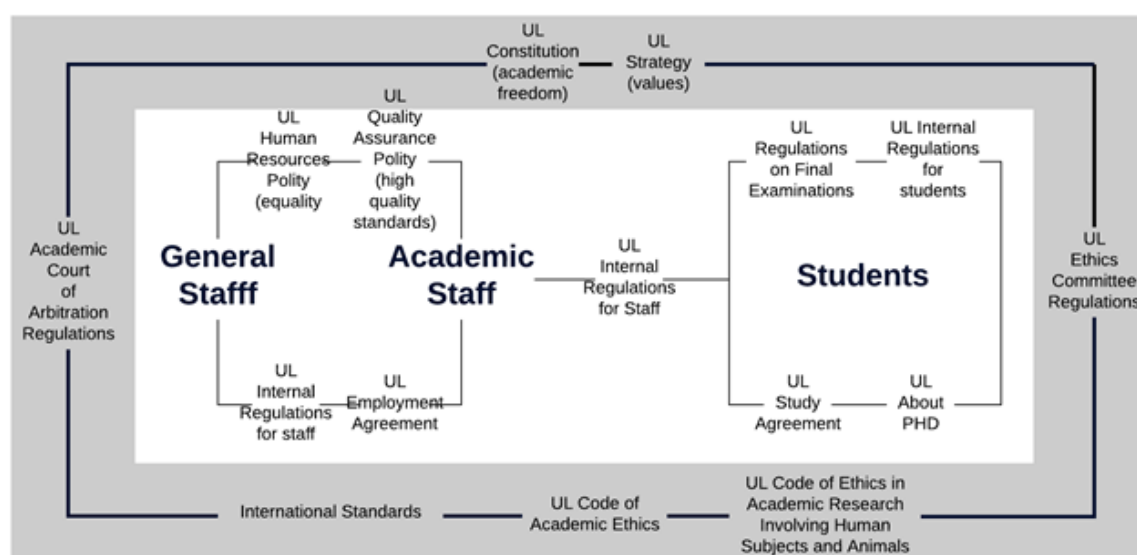

Figure 5. UL academic integrity documentation

The UL systematically ensures appropriate measurements, including measurements of the level of satisfaction of stakeholders. In order to evaluate the study process, the University of Latvia has established a procedure for organizing regular surveys. The questionnaires are administered

centrally. The following **surveys** are organized regularly:

- first year student survey on the commencement studies;
- first year student survey on first study experience;
- survey on study courses and the work of the teaching staff, including a survey on study internship and a survey on course papers and final papers (hereinafter – Study Course Evaluation Survey);
- last-year students survey on study programme content and learning outcomes;
- survey for students who have decided to discontinue their studies at their own discretion or for those who have already stopped their studies, hereinafter referred to as a "Attrition Survey";
- graduate survey;
- employer survey.

The results of the surveys are used for the operational enhancement of the academic staff competences, for the improvement of planning of the study process, for the provision of student services, etc. as well as development planning.

Various activities are implemented for the regular analysis and updating of study programmes, as well as to determine the need for the improvement of the study process, incl. active international cooperation with analogous study programmes abroad, involvement of employers and social partners in the development of study content, participation in the assessment of students' achievements during the study process, elaboration of qualification papers, provision of practical studies, etc. The UL enhances the cooperation between the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study field programmes, including mutual peer assessment of the lecturers (hospitation) and assessment of the lecturers in the faculty units. At the same time, continuous feedback is provided to inform stakeholders about the learning outcomes and competences of students and graduates, as well as satisfaction rates.

In order to ensure the quality of higher education, the UL has implemented a system of quality assessment and improvement of study fields and study programmes, which is integrated into the UL general quality assessment system and as such ensures regular internal quality assessment, planning and improvement (see Figure 6).
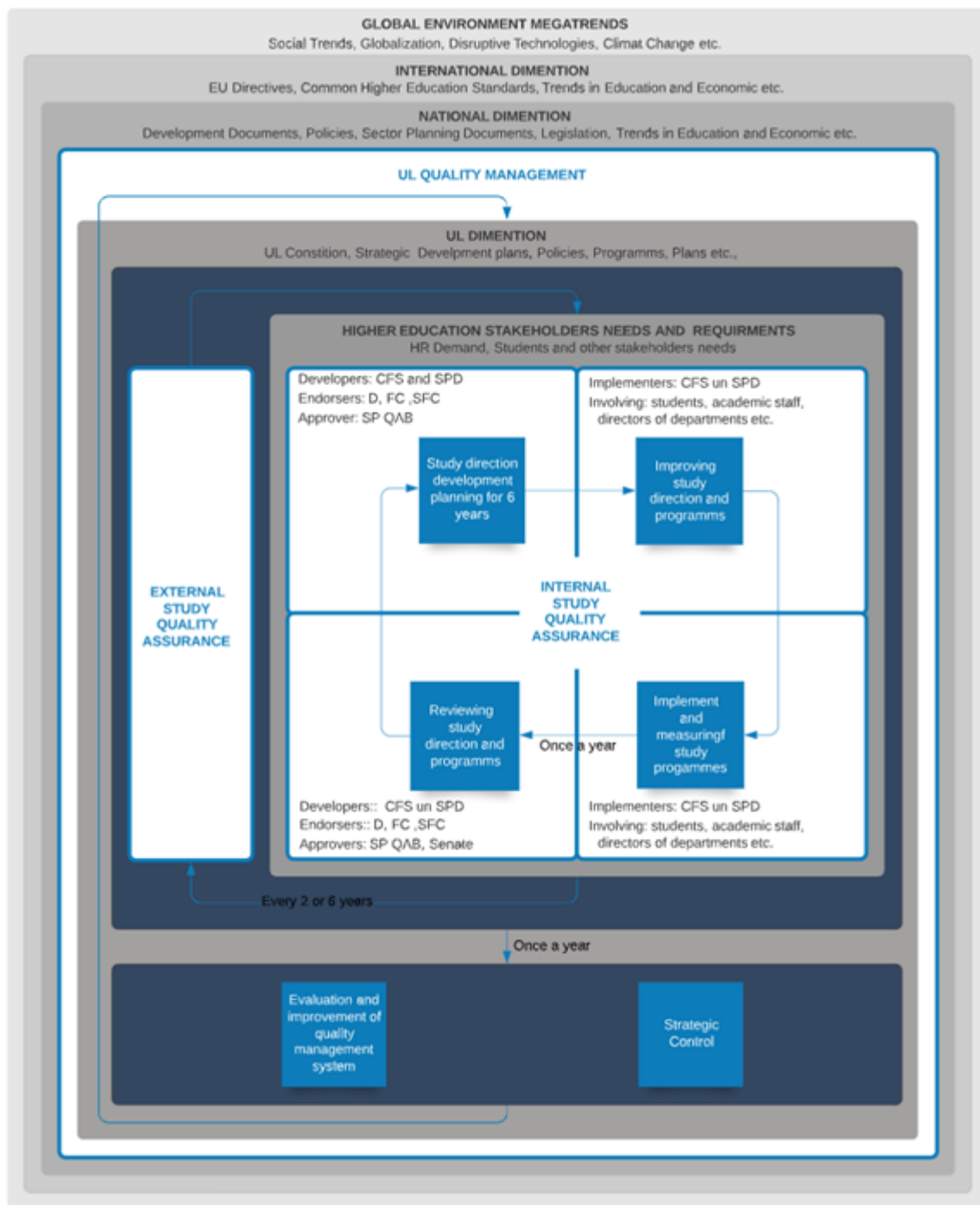
Figure 6. University of Latvia study quality assessment and improvement system

Abbreviations:

CFS – Coordinator of the study field,

D – Faculty Dean,

FC – Faculty Council,

SFC – Study Field Council,

SP Director – Director of the Study Programme,

SP QAB – Study Programme Quality Assessment Board

In order to ensure the functioning of the system of internal quality assessment and improvement of study fields, the UL provides for the planning of the development of the study fields and the improvement of the respective study programmes. An annual review of the study field development plan for 6 years and each study programme plan for 1 year is carried out, including assessment of the actual measurement results. This information is analysed in the **Annual Study Field Report** (hereinafter – the Report, its procedure approved by the UL Order No. 1/290 "The Annual Reports of the Study Field of the University of Latvia" of 14.07.2020), the preparation of which is supervised by the coordinator of the study field, involving study programme directors. The study programmes are reviewed to evaluate and improve the quality of their content and implementation. The report analyses the implementation and topicality of the programmes, as well as implemented changes, evolution and improvement and the assessment provided by stakeholders. The report is evaluated by the study programme council and approved by the faculty councils after approval by the dean of the faculty. prior to the approval of the study field report by the Senate, the Department of Studies provides an opinion on the study field study quality, as well as compliance with the requirements of regulatory enactments, while the Study Programme Quality Assessment Board (hereinafter – SP QAB) provides an opinion on the study quality of the study field, based on independent expertise.

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 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education 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 evidence for the full compliance, partial compliance or non-compliance.

1.	The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.	Complies
		The University of Latvia's Quality Policy sets out a set of quality principles, goals and actions required to achieve them, which the University of Latvia implements in accordance with internationally recognized standards in higher education and organization management. The aim of the quality policy is to contribute to the implementation of the UL mission, the achievement of strategic goals and sustainable development by defining guidelines and principles for ensuring a consistently high quality of operations. The policy, together with other policies and a set of processes, ensures the coherent planning and implementation of UL activities. This policy is an integral part of the quality management system, it applies to all areas of UL and implements them in a unified system at all UL governance levels. The UL quality management system is implemented in accordance with the TQM (Total Quality Management) principles, integrating excellence approaches to the UL corporate culture. By implementing quality management, the UL provides a set of activities and methods by which quality is planned, implemented, systematically evaluated and continually improved, thus contributing to the achievement of the goals set by the UL and meeting the needs of stakeholders. For the implementation of comprehensive quality management, the UL uses the internationally recognized and practically applicable quality management methodology – EFQM Excellence Model. In some areas, the quality management system is enhanced to ensure compliance with current standards and frameworks of the field, including: provision of study process - ESG. The UL has identified, formalized and implemented procedures for quality assurance in higher education in accordance with Latvian legislation, European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), as well as internal necessity. The UL has a system of quality assessment and improvement of study fields and study programmes included therein, which, when integrated into the UL quality management system, guarantees responsible involvement of all study management levels in the regular study quality assessment, planning and improvement. The internal quality control of the study field is carried out by the directors of the study programmes, the director of the study field, the council of the study field, the dean, the faculty councils, SPQAB and, in case of external quality assessment, the UL Senate. The assessment of study quality is based on planning and review cycles both in the study field and in each study programme dimension.

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.	Complies
		The design, internal approval, supervision and periodic inspection of the UL study programmes is set in accordance with the relevant external regulations of the Republic of Latvia and the UL internal regulations. The aim of the "Regulations on University of Latvia Study and Continuing Education Programmes" (UL Senate Resolution No. 102 of 24.04.2017) is to determine the requirements for the content and implementation of study programmes and continuing education programmes developed and implemented by the University of Latvia. that would ensure the provision of high quality, domestically and internationally competitive, modern study programmes with high added value, continuing education programs for students, as well as efficient implementation of resources. The Regulations establish the principles of the structure, content and management of study programmes and continuing education programmes at the University of Latvia. The regulations include the description of the study programmes and continuing education programmes implemented by the University of Latvia and their structure, as well as the rules of programme development. The Regulations stipulate that the design of the study programme concept and the full study programme development may be initiated by the UL staff representatives and employees, the UL collegial decision-making institutions, as well as non-UL members (e.g., employers). The evaluation of the development of new study programmes according to UL procedure takes place across several successive stages: 1) elaboration of the study programme concept; 2) coordination of the study programme concept within the council of study field or councils and with the heads of the structural units involved; 3) submission of the study programme conception to the Department of Studies, submission of the application to the Head of the Study Programme Quality Assessment Board (SP QAB) for evaluation of the conception by external experts and receipt of the opinion; 4) elaboration of a full-time study programme in accordance with external and internal regulations and submission for evaluation and approval to the council of study field and faculty council or councils or scientific councils of scientific institutes. 5) Submission of full-time study programme to Department of Studies for evaluation and approval by two independent experts and at SP QAB. To advance to the UL Senate. 6) The examination and approval of study programmes in the Senate of the University of Latvia and advancement of the study programme license application. The annual evaluation of the existing study programmes of the University of Latvia is carried out in accordance with the "Procedure for Preparing the Annual Reports of the Study Fields of the University of Latvia" (UL Order 1/290 of 14.07.2020), which determines the functioning of the system of internal quality assurance of the study fields of the University of Latvia.

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.	Complies
		"Procedure for Developing and Updating Study Courses at the University of Latvia" (UL Order No. 1/277 of 10.08.2018) stipulates that the description of each study course includes the planned learning outcomes and the criteria for their assessment, as well as publication in the e-learning environment.
4.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.	Complies
		In order to ensure modern and effective HR management practice in the organization in accordance with the UL strategy, vision, mission and values, the UL has developed and implemented the "Human Resources Management Policy of the University of Latvia" (UL Senate Decision No. 264 of 28.01.2019). It describes the principles and procedures of the University of Latvia in personnel selection, employment relations, provision of motivation system and personnel development. In order to ensure purposeful professional development of the UL academic staff, the University of Latvia elaborated "University of Latvia Academic Staff Development Action Plan 2018–2020" within the framework of the project operational programme "Growth and Employment" 8.2.2. Specific Objective "Strengthening Academic Staff of Institutions of Higher Education in Strategic Specialization Areas".
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.	Complies
		The Procedure for Organizing Regular Surveys for the Evaluation of the Study Process at the University of Latvia (UL Order No. 1/334 of 22.08.2016) stipulates that the Department of Studies of the University of Latvia organizes surveys for students, graduates and employers centrally each academic year. The summary of the results of the course and lecturer work is available at three levels: lecturers, study pro-gramme directors, deans. The results of the study surveys are described and analysed in the annual reports of study fields. Information about student achievements is collected at the LUIS. It is available in various sections for analysis of study field programme development.

6.	The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.	Complies
		The functioning of the system of internal quality assurance of the study fields of the University of Latvia is determined by the "Procedure for the preparation of annual reports of the study fields of the University of Latvia". The UL study fields are being re-accredited within the set terms. In order to promote the quality and competitiveness of UL study programmes, the "Order of the University of Latvia Foundation for Quality Improvement of Studies" (UL Order No. 1/149 of 20.04.2018) provides opportunities to receive support within the framework of UL projects for the quality improvement of study programmes and process.

II - Description of the Study Direction (1. Management of the Study Direction)

1.1. Economic and/or social grounds for the creation of the study direction and the relevant study programmes, the assessment of the interrelation among the study programmes, as well as the analysis of the significance (singularity) of the study programmes in comparison with other similar study programmes in Latvia and abroad.

1. Study field administration

1.1. Economic and / or social justification of the study field and the study programmes included therein

Social justification of the study field and the study programmes included therein

The topicality and substantiation of the programme of the study field "Social Welfare" are determined by (1) the priorities set in the development planning documents of Latvia – progress towards equality of opportunities, quality of life and inclusive society; (2) the socio-economic situation in Latvia, which is characterized by a high proportion of the population at risk of poverty and social exclusion, and the need for high-level professionals who can provide services and solutions to social problems in line with global social work education and practice standards and international development trends; (3) as well as the need to develop excellence in researching the issues of social welfare and studies dedicated to social work.

The study field "Social Welfare" is important in the strategic development of Latvia. Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 (hereinafter – SDSL 2030), which is the hierarchically highest long-term development planning document in Latvia, defines the development vision of Latvia as a flourishing country of active and responsible citizens. (*Saeima. (2010). Latvijas ilgtspējīgas attīstības stratēģija līdz 2030. gadam [Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until*

2030]. Approved on 10 June 2010 by decision of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia. Retrieved from: http://www.latvija2030.lv/upload/latvija2030_saeima.pdf) Strategic indicators include the Gini coefficient (to monitor income inequality reduction) and Poverty risk index (to monitor poverty reduction). The inclusion of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the labour market and the improvement of social security system services have been identified as priority tasks for investing in human capital. In the context of regional and local governments, a high-quality living environment and the promotion of social inclusion, as well as available services throughout the territory of Latvia are important. (Saeima. (2010). Latvijas ilgtspējīgas attīstības stratēģija līdz 2030. gadam [Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030]. Approved on 10 June 2010 by decision of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia. Retrieved from: http://www.latvija2030.lv/upload/latvija2030_saeima.pdf, in English: LIAS_2030_en_1.pdf (pkc.gov.lv) The medium-term planning perspective, the National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021–2027 (hereinafter NDP 2027) indicates the quality of life as one of the main directions toward change and growth. It includes increasing general well-being and opportunities for every inhabitant of Latvia. (Saeima (2020). Latvijas Nacionālais attīstības plāns 2021. – 2027. gadam [National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021–2027]. Approved on 2 July 2020 by decision of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia. Retrieved from: https://www.pkc.gov.lv/lv/nap2027, in English: https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027__ENG.pdf) Mutual care, better living conditions, access to services, concrete steps to reduce inequalities and others constitute important elements of quality of life, all of which will contribute to the overall performance of society. The first strategic objective of NDP 2027 states "Equal opportunity is the most important element of social justice, and it contributes to reducing income inequality. We will strive to ensure that all people have the opportunity to acquire a good education, receive quality healthcare, have decent work, and achieve aspirations, to grow and live in a safe environment and are socially protected equally in all the regions of Latvia" (Saeima (2020). Latvijas Nacionālais attīstības plāns 2021. – 2027. gadam, 12. lpp. [National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021–2027, p. 12]. Approved on 2 July 2020 by decision of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia. Retrieved from: https://www.pkc.gov.lv/lv/nap2027, in English: https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027__ENG.pdf). For the first time, a special direction is dedicated to social inclusion, and the goal of the direction is formulated, as follows: "Personalised, human-centred social support is offered to all who need it or might need it" (Saeima (2020). Latvijas Nacionālais attīstības plāns 2021. – 2027. gadam, 25. lpp. [National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021–2027, p. 25]. Approved on 2 July 2020 by decision of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia. Retrieved from: https://www.pkc.gov.lv/lv/nap2027, in English: https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027__ENG.pdf). Taking into account the commitment formulated by NDP 2027 to advance toward the Scandinavian social welfare state model on the one hand, and the high indicators of poverty and social exclusion on the other, the programmes of the study field "Social Welfare" and professionals trained therein will significantly contribute to achievement of Latvia's strategic objectives and development priorities. The contribution of the study field "Social Welfare" to reaching Latvia's strategic goals is based on the mission of social work – to promote the well-being of society and each individual, to help meet the basic needs of all people, paying special attention to the needs and opportunities of those who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty; to facilitate social changes and promote social justice (National Association of Social Workers (2017). Code of Ethics. Approved by the NASW Delegate Assembly. Retrieved from: https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics), which is also binding in the implementation of professional study programmes in social work.

The social substantiation of developing the study field "Social Welfare" and the study programmes thereof is closely related to the shortage of professional social workers and the spread of manifold social problems. Latvia is among the EU member states with the highest rates of poverty and social

exclusion – in 2020 the EU average was 21.1%, while in Latvia 27.3% (*Eurostat (2020a). Over 20% of EU population at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2019. Retrieved from:* https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/), as well as high income inequality indicators – in 2018, the Gini coefficient in the EU averaged 30.8, whereas in Latvia 35.6 (*Eurostat (2020b). Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income - EU-SILC survey. Retrieved from:* http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?lang=en&dataset=ilc_di12). Studies show that poverty and inequality hamper social cohesion, mutual trust of people and their trust in government, and that economic growth suffers as a result (*Stiglitz, J. E. (2012). The Price of Inequality. New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company.; United Nations Development Programme (2019). Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century. Human Development Report. New York: United Nations Development Programme. Retrieved from:* http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2019); *Wilkinson, R. & Pickett, K. (2010). The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger. Bloomsbury Publishing.*). Poverty and income inequality are also linked to inequalities of opportunity, inequalities in capacity, inequalities in education and health, as well as inequalities in access to technology and skills to use it. The most recent research also shows that inequality begins even before birth, and that the difficulties it causes accumulate throughout life, mutually negatively reinforcing themselves (*United Nations Development Programme (2019). Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century. Human Development Report. New York: United Nations Development Programme. Retrieved from:* http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2019). There is also a relatively low level of support for people in crisis situations and poverty in Latvia – the budget for social protection in 2018 in the EU averaged 19.2% of GDP, while in Latvia 11.6% of GDP (*Eurostat (2020c). Government expenditure on social protection. Retrieved from:* https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Government_expenditure_on_social_protection#Expenditure_on_.27social_protection.27). According to the latest available statistics of the Ministry of Welfare as of 2019, more than 109 000 inhabitants of Latvia received one of the municipal income-tested benefits, 45 564 persons received low-income status and 41 522 persons were issued with the status of a needy person (*Labklājības Ministrija (2020). VALSTS STATISTIKAS PĀRSKATU KOPSAVILKUMS. Pārskati par sociālajiem pakalpojumiem un sociālo palīdzību novada/republikas pilsētas pašvaldībā 2019. gadā [SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STATISTICAL REPORTS. Reports on social services and social assistance in the regional / city municipality in 2019]. Retrieved from:* Par 2019.gadu | Labklājības ministrija (lm.gov.lv)). In addition to material support, these people also require social services provided by highly professional social workers to enable them to overcome the encountered difficulties of life and get out of poverty. Given the significant increase in the minimum income threshold in 2021, the number of recipients of social assistance and social services will increase significantly. Specialists who have completed programmes of the study field "Social Welfare" are necessary for finding practical solutions and providing support to the inhabitants of Latvia in difficulty, as well as for making a significant contribution to formulating evidence-based social policy and social welfare research, whose absence precludes implementation of good governance, as well as establishment and realisation of evidence-based policy.

Moreover, Latvia acutely needs social work specialists who, among other capacities, can also develop new social services. At present, the number of social workers is insufficient and not everyone has adequate education, as required by the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance. Social services are provided by 906 registered social service providers representing municipalities (social service, municipal institution or structural unit), NGO sector, i.e., associations, foundations and their structural units, as well as religious organizations, and, additionally, public and private sector social service providers (data of the Ministry of Welfare Register of Social Service Providers, as of 10.12.2020). In municipal institutions alone, social services and social assistance are provided

by 7250 employees, of which 2092 are social workers (*Labklājības Ministrija (2020). VALSTS STATISTIKAS PĀRSKATU KOPSAVILKUMS. Pārskati par sociālajiem pakalpojumiem un sociālo palīdzību novada/republikas pilsētas pašvaldībā 2019. gadā [SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STATISTICAL REPORTS. Reports on social services and social assistance in the regional / city municipality in 2019]. Retrieved from: Gada dati | Labklājības ministrija (lm.gov.lv)*). The number of existing employees in comparison to the population in many municipalities does not meet the requirements – it is insufficient. According to the data of the study "*Ex-ante* assessment of operational efficiency of local government social services " (2017), the indicated number of social work specialists (1:1000) specified in Section 10 of the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance has been reached in about half of the surveyed municipalities. The requirements of the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance have most often been fulfilled by the municipalities of Kurzeme and Latgale regions, where according to the information provided by the directors of social services, the requirement of regulation has been fulfilled in 65–68% of cases. The requirement is less often fulfilled in the social services of Riga region municipalities (*BISS (2017). Ex-ante izvērtējums pašvaldību sociālo dienestu darbības efektivitātes novērtēšanai [Ex-ante assessment of operational efficiency of local government social services]. Retrieved from:* http://petijumi.mk.gov.lv/node/2945). Thus, not all municipality social services can recruit the required number of employees. The staff resources of social services are insufficient – heavy workload and general shortage of staff reduce the quality of work, moreover, several areas of social work cannot be developed sufficiently – preventive social work, social work in the community. In addition, to date, municipal social services have often emphasized the provision of social assistance, failing to fully understand or develop social services. Researchers suggest that social work should be given priority over social assistance (*BISS (2017). Ex-ante izvērtējums pašvaldību sociālo dienestu darbības efektivitātes novērtēšanai [Ex-ante assessment of operational efficiency of local government social services]. Retrieved from:* http://petijumi.mk.gov.lv/node/2945). However, this can only be achieved by changing the understanding of the social services' role of and the role of social work in municipalities, and this requires employees in the field of social welfare who have received contemporary education and have a capacity for novel outlook. According to the main policy performance indicators in the field of social work set by the Ministry of Welfare, it is planned that at least 65.5% of Social Services will meet the norm set by the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance (LSSSA) on the minimum number of social work specialists. Specialists trained in the University of Latvia "Social Welfare" study field programmes will help to achieve this strategic goal of social work.

As to the qualification of social work specialists, according to the main policy performance indicators in the field of social work, in 2019, 90.67% of social work specialists employed by social services should have had the education specified in the LSSSA law. Guidelines for Development of Professional Social Work for 2014–2020 reveal that in 2012 only 75% of all social work specialists working in social services had appropriate education, which demands a completed the second level vocational higher or academic education in social work or caritative social work (*Labklājības Ministrija (2013). Profesionāla sociālā darba attīstības pamatnostādnes 2014.-2020.gadam [Framework for Professional Social Work Development 2014–2020]. Cabinet of Ministers Order No. 652. Retrieved from:* Par Profesionāla sociālā darba attīstības pamatnostādnēm 2014.–2020.gadam (likumi.lv)). The situation has improved over the years, nevertheless, it still remains unsatisfactory. The Ministry of Welfare (hereinafter – MoW) Report on Social Services and Social Assistance in Municipalities in 2019 shows that out of 2 092 social workers, only 1 369 had appropriate education: 1 186 had second level vocational higher or academic education in social work or caritative social work, 116 had appropriate first level professional higher education, while the remaining 67 were in the process of obtaining the first or second level higher education. The data on the qualifications of staff employed by NGOs and private sector social service providers is

lacking.

The need for more social workers is also demonstrated by the difficulty to ensure the transition to community-based services. A project for the deinstitutionalisation of social care is carried out in Latvia until 2022 – approximately 1 000 people in each region will leave their former life in institutions and it is planned to provide them with social services outside the institutions. The reality is that community-based services still remain extremely lacking even in 2020. For example, throughout Latvia there were only 25 group houses (apartments), 5 halfway houses and 2 specialized workshops (*Labklājības Ministrija (2020). VALSTS STATISTIKAS PĀRSKATU KOPSAVILKUMS. Pārskati par sociālajiem pakalpojumiem un sociālo palīdzību novada/republikas pilsētas pašvaldībā 2019. gadā. Retrieved from: Gada dati | Labklājības ministrija (lm.gov.lv))*. The current number of social work specialists is insufficient to develop community-based services that meet the requirements of global social work education and practice standards in the 21ˢᵗ century for people who desperately need such support to ensure an independent life. The field of criminal justice also experiences a move towards re-socialization in the place of punishment and development of social inclusion measures, which means the need for strengthened social work in the regional structures of the State Probation Service and the Prison Administration. For example, in 2019 the prisons contained 3414 prisoners, more than 1500 have returned to society after serving their sentences, but the number of clients of the Probation Service was 17 787 (*Ieslodzījuma vietu pārvalde. (2020). 2019. gada publiskais Pārskats [Public Report 2019]. Riga. Retrieved from:* https://www.ievp.gov.lv/lv/gada-publiskie-parskati; *Valsts probācijas dienests (2020). Drošākai sabiedrībai. Publiskais pārskats 2019 [For A More Secure Society. Public Report 2019]. Riga. Retrieved from:* https://www.vpd.gov.lv/lv/media/82/download) (PA, 2018; SPS, 2018). All of these people also require support so to enable successful integration into society and prevent a recurring threat to public security.

This means strengthening the provision of social services in local governments and state institutions, as well as bolstering human resources in municipal social services, the state, non-governmental and private sectors in the field of social welfare. There is still an insufficient number of social workers in the country, which also determines the need to strengthen, continue and expand social work studies.

The third important aspect to be emphasised in the substantiation of the need for establishment and development of the study field "Social Welfare" and the study programmes thereof, is the need to foster excellence in research dedicated to social welfare and social work . This rationale is based on the requirements of good governance calling for evidence-based policies and practices, which means the need to train professionals capable of conducting high-quality research. This rationale is also based on the global trend of social work development in the 21ˢᵗ century to forge ever closer links that tie education and practice to research. The University of Latvia is one of the first higher education institutions in Latvia, where social work studies commenced just a few years after the restoration of independence. The Advanced Social and Political Research Institute at the University of Latvia Faculty of Social Sciences has implemented notable research in the field of social welfare (e.g., research on social sustainability, reduction of poverty and inequality under the auspices of the national research programme "Innovation and sustainable development: Latvia's post-crisis experience in a global context (SUSTINNO)", study of social service provision within the framework of the project "Life with Covid-19: Evaluation of overcoming the coronavirus crisis in Latvia and recommendations for societal resilience in the future" funded by the national research programme "Covid-19 mitigation"). However, a broad, stable and systematic research basis in social work in Latvia still needs to be developed. Latvian higher education institutions that implement social work study programmes and non-governmental organizations significantly contribute to development of the profession itself and professional growth of social work specialists, however, the sufficient role

of research in the development of the social work profession is not ensured. Notably, research elements, e.g., critical, reflexive and research mindset are also important in practice of social work. The professional standard of a social worker and the professional standard of a senior social worker also stipulate the knowledge, skills and competences related to research, thus determining the need to develop them also in the programmes included in the study field. The University of Latvia has all the prerequisites for purposefully developing systematic, excellence-oriented research in social work and promoting closer links between research and studies.

Assessment of interconnections among study programmes

The study field "Social Welfare" consists of two programmes – the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" (code 42762) and the professional master's study programme "Social Work" (code 47762).

As a result of acquiring the professional bachelor's study programme, the student obtains a 2nd-level professional higher education, a professional bachelor's degree in social work and the fifth-level professional qualification "Social Worker", which provides the necessary knowledge, skills and value base for qualified professional work in micro, meso and macro levels, and continuing education at master's level or professional development courses.

The content of the bachelor's study programme is based on 1) learning outcomes corresponding to Level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework; 2) the duties and tasks of a social worker, knowledge, skills and competence determined by the social work professional standard of Latvia; 3) the latest trends in the social work profession and education in the world. In Latvia, similarly to the most EU countries, the in-depth knowledge of generalist social work is acquired at bachelor's level, and includes the following: the social worker identifies and analyses the social problems of the individual, family, group, community and society, promotes their prevention, solves them in cooperation with clients and representatives of other professions, attracting or creating appropriate resources (financial, human resources, organisational potential, etc.); in professional activities upholds social justice in its professional activity, promotes the client's self-determination; represents the interests of the client; follows the norms of professional ethics, constantly improves his or her professional competence, as well as contributes to the development of social work practice and research. The bachelor's programme provides students with knowledge of various aspects of social work practice and research, including a critical understanding of theories and principles, as well as comprehension of social processes, their impact on individuals, groups and communities, and of opportunities to promote change at different levels. The aim of the programme, its tasks and the results to be achieved are directed at enabling students to implement the basic tasks and responsibilities of professional activity.

As a result of completing the professional master's study programme, the student obtains a professional master's degree in social work and senior social worker qualification corresponding to Latvian professional qualification level 5 (there are currently only 5 professional qualification levels in Latvia).

The content of the master's study programme is based on the following: 1) learning outcomes corresponding to Level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework; 2) the duties and tasks of a senior social worker, knowledge, skills and competence determined by the senior social worker professional standard of Latvia; 3) the latest trends in the social work profession and education in the world. Students gain in-depth specialised knowledge and understanding of social work, operation of social welfare systems, social policy, social welfare research, specialization in criminal justice social work and social work with family with children. Students acquire a critical comprehension of the theories and the latest scientific findings in these sub-fields of science. Graduates of the master's programme are able to solve problems on an expert level, critically apply

the acquired theories and methods in problem solving and research, as well as are able to integrate knowledge from different fields. Graduates of the programme are able to critically evaluate information resources, organize user-oriented information systems, make decisions in complex situations, offering creative, innovative solutions, create new knowledge. The programme graduates are entitled to study in the third study cycle – the doctoral study programme, developing a dissertation in the field of Sociology and Social Work.

The content of the programmes has been designed taking into account the characteristics of the differences in the EQF levels and the specifics of the professional standard at each level, and also to comply with the principle of knowledge succession between the programmes. At the same time, the content of the master's programme is devised to admit people who do not have a bachelor's degree in social work, but have acquired their first level higher education in another field, but have a practical experience in the field of social welfare. Therefore, the programme content includes several general topics pertaining to social work. The long-term experience of both UL and RSU shows that the profile of a master's student in social work considerably differs from the profile of students in other fields, who are usually young people aged 24–27. Studies of social work pursuing the master's degree attract highly motivated people at various stages of life, who mostly are already working in the field of social welfare and who have accumulated significant life experience, which allows them to acquire study content quickly and efficiently. Likewise, in the UK and many other places it is possible to study social work at master's level without a professional social bachelor's degree.

Analysis of the significance and uniqueness of study programmes in comparison with other similar study programmes in Latvia and abroad

Next, the significance and uniqueness of the bachelor's and master's programmes implemented by the University of Latvia in comparison with other similar study programmes in Latvia and abroad will be considered. Among state higher education institutions of Latvia, only Riga Stradiņš University and Liepāja University implement programmes of both levels. All three higher education institutions (UL, RSU, LiepU) award 160 credit points (CP) for the amount of studies in their bachelor's programmes. At the master's level, the differences in the scope and content of studies are greater. RSU offers two study programmes in the amount of 60 c. p. at the master's level – "Social Work" and "Social Work with Children and Youth", which is a joint study programme with Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania). The professional master's study programme "Social Work" implemented by LiepU amounts to 40 credit points. UL implements the professional master's study programme "Social Work" in two forms – in the amount of 80 c. p. and 60 c. p. Among state higher education institutions, Rezekne Academy of Technologies also implements the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work and Social Rehabilitation" (160 c. p.), which is a joint programme with Siauliai University (Lithuania). Amongst the private higher education institutions, caritative social work is advanced by the Latvian Christian Academy in the framework of the professional bachelor's study programme Caritative "Social Work" (160 c. p.). The higher education institution also offers three professional master's study programmes that belong to the field of social welfare – "Caritative Social Work" (40 c. p.), "Supervision" (60 c. p.) and "Social Entrepreneurship Management" (80 c. p.). Both levels of higher education in the field of social welfare studies are also offered by SIA "Baltic International academy", where the acquisition of bachelor's programme is possible in Riga, Daugavpils, Jelgava and Jēkabpils, but the acquisition of master's programme is possible in Riga and Daugavpils.

While the programmes offered by LiepU are characterized by a strong emphasis on pedagogy, RSU's strength and unique feature is the connection with medicine. The importance and uniqueness of study field "Social Welfare" programmes of both levels offered by the University of Latvia are their emphasis on solid research, characterised by professional activities of the academic staff,

close integration of studies and research, high teaching quality of research courses and high standards of scientific work applied to final theses. A strong research basis is ensured by the fact that study programmes are implemented at the University of Latvia Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) in close cooperation with the teaching staff of sociology field, as well as FSS Advanced Social and Political Research Institute offers a substantial platform for attracting and implementing national and international research projects. The importance and uniqueness of the bachelor's programme is also marked by close cooperation with local governments and employers in the regions enabled by the UL Regional Centre, allowing to provide high-quality studies closer to home and to promote the balanced development of regions, increase the human capital of regions and contribute to the effective solution of social problems in the regions. The significance and uniqueness of the master's programme is characterized by a specialization in the field of criminal justice, which is the only one of its kind in the Baltics.

For the comparison of UL programmes with social work programmes abroad, the study programme in social work of the University College Copenhagen (the first institution in Denmark offering social work since 1937), the study programme in social work offered by the Department of Social Work at the University of Gothenburg, and the study programme offered by the University of Tartu Faculty of Social Sciences. The scale of study programmes at Danish and Swedish universities is difficult to compare with Latvia, as around 200–300 social work students are admitted each year (the Scandinavian welfare state model ascribes significantly greater attention and expenditure to the field of social welfare, there are long-standing social work traditions, and the much greater number of inhabitants results in the need for more social workers), but the content and form of studies are comparable. These higher education institutions were chosen because they represent the Scandinavian traditions of social work and education, and NDP 2027 provides grounds for moving towards the Scandinavian welfare state model, additionally, these universities offer high quality education. In Estonia, the socio-economic situation and population are more similar to Latvia, as is the history of social work as a profession. Considering that the University of Tartu takes a higher position in the international rankings than the University of Latvia, it is well worth to compare the content and form of studies with the best in the Baltic region. All universities offer both bachelor's and master's level studies in social work. However, the bachelor's degree programme "Information Society and Social Welfare" offered at the University of Tartu is interdisciplinary, allowing for specialization in sociology and information science or in social work and social policy. The duration of studies is three years (180 ECTS), and by choosing the appropriate specialization, one can obtain the 6th level professional qualification in social work (according to the Estonian standard). The duration of master's studies at all these higher education institutions is two years (120 ECTS), but the University of Copenhagen also offers a continuing education programme of 60 ECTS. Thematically, study programmes are similarly organized, including study courses in social work theories and methods, psychology, legislation, related social sciences and research methods, but the study organization differs. The main difference is that at the University of Copenhagen the study programmes consist of only 10 study courses, at the University of Gothenburg – 15 courses, and at the University of Tartu the studies are organized in the form of extensive study modules. The study organization in Tartu is more similar to the University of Latvia, because in addition to extensive, integrated study modules in the amount of 12 ECTS or 24 ECTS, there are also elective courses in the amount of 6 ECTS. Several lecturers and specialists of the field cooperate within the framework of each course, ensuring an integrated and comprehensive acquisition of each topic. This is the most significant difference with the UL study programme, which according to the generally accepted practice in Latvia consists of many 3–6 ECTS study courses. We can assume that offering thematically integrated, extensive courses helps students to gain deeper and more comprehensive knowledge, understanding and capacity to navigate in the course topics, it could help to look at professional issues in the context of several scientific disciplines. It also permits

reducing the number of examinations that must be taken, and complete a greater amount of independent work. All study programmes have both formally organized study internship or placement, as well as practical tasks, visits to institutions and research tasks. As a result of the comparison of study programmes, we can conclude that the social work study programmes implemented at the University of Latvia in the field of social welfare in their content and organization of practice correspond to the study programmes recognized in Europe in the sphere of social work education.

1.2. Aims of the study direction and their compliance with the scope of activities of the higher education institution/ college, the strategic development directions, as well as the needs and the development trends of the society and the national economy.

1.2. Correspondence of the study field goals to the strategic development directions of the University of Latvia

The mission of the study field "Social Welfare" is to develop social work as a profession and as a field of science, promoting the principles of social justice, social development and inclusive society. The objectives of the University of Latvia (UL) study field "Social Welfare" are 1) to provide internationally competitive education in social work and to train highly qualified specialists capable of creative thought and realisation of their professional and human potential for the benefit of Latvian, European Union (EU) and global society and competitive in the national and international labour market; 2) to become one of the leading research centres in Latvia and the Baltics in the field of social welfare and in the sociology and social work, strengthening the synergy between studies and research.

Tasks for achieving the goals of the study field "Social Welfare":

- to ensure the scientific substantiation of social welfare studies and compliance with the standards of the professions "Social Worker" and "Senior Social Worker", and observation of global social work education and practice standards;
- to create a study environment based on excellence, cooperation and knowledge transfer; to develop a student-centred approach and collegial peer interaction in the study process, respecting the dignity, rights and interests of all involved parties and promoting the integrity of the social work profession;
- to continue improving the organization and content of the study programmes implemented in the study field, systematically following the current developments and topicalities in the development of the social work profession both in Latvia and internationally;
- to ensure the acquisition of social work values and principles, knowledge and skills, and their integration into the study process, also promoting the opportunity to improve knowledge, skills and competences in professional practice in cooperation with the professionals of the sphere, lecturers and students of other universities, as well as benefitting from international mobility of lecturers and students;
- to provide students with opportunities to acquire knowledge, develop skills and professional competence in identifying, researching and solving social problems; to develop critical thinking skills and scientific comprehension of society;
- to advance excellence in research by promoting the research activities of the teaching staff involved in the programme, participation in national and international projects, development of high-level scientific publications;

- to promote the professional qualification improvement of the teaching staff involved in the programme, including the promotion of the international mobility and professional development of the academic staff in higher education and research institutions outside Latvia.

The goals of the study field "Social Welfare" correspond to and are closely related to the mission, vision and development strategy of the University of Latvia, stipulating that the UL development goal is to become an internationally recognized research university of European and global standing. The current study field contributed to the achievement of the fpllowing goals formulated in the UL Development Strategy 2016-2020:

1) Training of human resources with orientation toward labour markets of Latvia and EU:

1. Content improvement of the existing study programmes by promoting the advancement of students' general skills, including the introduction of study forms that include analysis of economic issues and societal needs, as well as promoting the acquisition of skills required to develop innovative products: financial literacy, identification of customer needs, design, process management, introduction of solutions into the market;
2. Diversification of the study offer – creation of new, internationally competitive study programmes in accordance with the demand of the labour market;
3. Expanding the knowledge base and innovation resources by attracting partners from the midst of employers and professional organizations for the development and implementation of study programmes;

2) Internationalization of education:

1. Research of European and global processes in development of higher education and implementation of the acquired knowledge and good practice at the University of Latvia;
2. Support for the mobility of students and academic staff, internships for career development of those studying abroad;

3) Increasing the efficiency of study activities:

1. Concentration of human resources, ensuring "critical mass" for the implementation of an effective study process and research;

4) Renewal and capacity building of academic staff.

The UL Strategy 2027, adopted after this report was developed, builds on what has been achieved in previous years, highlighting excellence in research, interdisciplinarity, international recognition and stressing the uniqueness of study programmes offered as a strategic objective. The objectives of the study field "Social Welfare" go in line with the development directions and strategic objectives set out in the UL Strategy 2027, also highlighting the scientific excellence in the field of social welfare and the sociology and social work, and also highlighting the development of strong, unique and competitive study programmes. In both – research and studies, objectives of the study field "Social Welfare" are focused on internationalisation and international recognition, which is also an important component of the LU strategy 2027. The study field will contribute to the following objectives set out in UL Development Strategy 2027:

1) University as an internationally recognised science and research centre

1.1. Research excellence; 1.2. Cross-disciplinary research; 1.3. International visibility.

The study field "Social Welfare" provides the quality of scientific results focused on excellence, as well as the development of interdisciplinary networks and knowledge-sharing activities. The study field intends to intensify and diversify the participation of UL researchers in international networks

and scientific activities.

2) A unique offer of studies and a high degree of graduates' competitiveness

2.1. Studies based on research and practice; 2.2. International and interdisciplinary offers of studies; 2.3. A studentcentred and inclusive approach.

The study field programmes are implemented in accordance with the UL objective to develop research and practice-based studies through a student-centred and inclusive approach, and to expand substantially international and interdisciplinary offer of studies. The study field makes a significant contribution to regional access to higher education.

3) University activities as the foundation for Latvia's growth

3.1. Preservation, strengthening and creation of know-how; 3.2. The creation of sustainable values and the wellbeing of society; 3.3. Strengthening the value of university in society; 3.4. Successful transfer of know-how and technology.

The study field helps to maintain and promote accumulated intellectual values and scientific achievements. The study field significantly increases the value of academic knowledge in society, addressing major social challenges in research and study, and contributing significantly to the inclusion of vulnerable social groups in society. The study field extends the involvement of students in creating innovation. The study field fully supports the goal of UL to develop an open science approach by promoting the sharing of science infrastructure and the accessibility of scientific results.

4) Development and excellence oriented personnel policy

4.1. Development of academic and general staff; 4.2. The growth and renewal of academic staff.

The acadmic staff of the study field is also a UL community and contributes to the achievement of UL objectives. The personnel policy of the study field goes hand in hand with UL's aim of ensuring the development, growth and renewal of academic and general staff. In order to develop and retain talents and make academic careers more attractive, UL will expand career opportunities for academic staff, improve the motivation system and put it into practice.

5) Green thinking, attractive, sustainable university environment and effective administrative support

5.2. Innovative and digital study, research and work environment; 5.3. Effective organisational management and integrated quality management.

The study field, in line with UL objectives, participates in the creation of an innovative and attractive study, research and work environment, supports efficient information and communication technology provision, continuous development of the quality management system, human-oriented organisational management and administrative support that will contribute to excellence and student engagement.

6) Inclusive, collaborative and innovation-oriented culture

6.1. Wellbeing of students and staff, value-oriented and inclusive culture;   6.2. Innovation, innovative and creative thinking and the environment;   6.3. Internationalisation and openness to cooperation.

In the study field is developed an organisation culture based on values, ethical and equal treatment, cooperation, a high culture of work and communication, creating a healthy and active lifestyle environment. In the study field the principles of academic honesty and ethics are respected

in the studies and research, including the system for verifying the originality of content.

In accordance with Latvia's Research Priorities 2018–2021, academic staff and students in the field of social welfare significantly contribute to research under the theme 9 "Public health, quality of life and nation's sustainability", as well as theme 10 "Critical thinking, innovation, competitiveness and globalization", and theme 11 "Letonika, diaspora and intercultural communication", theme 12 "Human and technology, quality of education". These directions are also stated as the University of Latvia priority research areas. The social welfare programmes and their operation promote the progress specified in the University of Latvia strategy in the spheres of scientific research, meeting the needs of the labour market and international cooperation.

The substantiation of the study field "Social Welfare" in accordance with the development needs and development tendencies of the society and national economy is based on the substantial position, which the field of social welfare takes in the strategic development of Latvia. As noted above, SDSL 2030 defines the development vision of Latvia as a flourishing country of active and responsible citizens (*Saeima. (2010). Latvijas ilgtspējīgas attīstības stratēģija līdz 2030. gadam [Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030]. Approved on 10 June 2010 by decision of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia. Retrieved from:* http://www.latvija2030.lv/upload/latvija2030_saeima.pdf), which also means advancement towards lower income inequality and rates of those under the risk of poverty. The inclusion of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the labour market and the improvement of social security system services have been identified as priority tasks for investing in human capital, while regarding regional and local governments, a high-quality living environment and promotion of social inclusion are important, as well as availability of services throughout the territory of Latvia (*Saeima. (2010). Latvijas ilgtspējīgas attīstības stratēģija līdz 2030. gadam [Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030]. Approved on 10 June 2010 by decision of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia. Retrieved from:* http://www.latvija2030.lv/upload/latvija2030_saeima.pdf). NDP 2027 also indicates the quality of life as one of the main directions of change and growth, which includes an increase in general well-being and opportunities for every inhabitant of Latvia (*Saeima (2020). Latvijas Nacionālais attīstības plāns 2021. – 2027. gadam [National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021–2027]. Approved on 2 July 2020 by decision of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia. Retrieved from:* https://www.pkc.gov.lv/lv/nap2027, *in English:* https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027__ENG.pdf). Social inclusion has become an important strategic goal, emphasizing that "Personalised, human-centred social support is offered to all who need it or might need it" (*Saeima, 2020, Pp. 25*). Materialisation of these goals can be achieved by highly qualified social workers in the field of social welfare who understand, know, are able and skilled to solve the social problems of society in accordance with the latest scientific knowledge, socio-economic opportunities and do so professionally as autonomously, critically thinking social workers. This is ensured by the knowledge, skills and competences offered by the University of Latvia FSS. Only such employees are able to respond flexibly to the changing demands of society and perform their tasks in the public, as well as private and non-governmental sectors. Taking into account the NDP 2027 commitment to advance toward the Scandinavian social welfare state model on the one hand, and the high indicators of poverty and social exclusion on the other, the social welfare study programmes and the professionals trained therein make a significant contribution to attaining Latvia's strategic goals and development priorities. This goes also in line with UL Strategy 2027 development direction "Investments in society". The contribution of the study field "Social Welfare" to the achievement of Latvia's strategic goals, as well as UL Strategy 2027, is based on the mission of social work – to promote the well-being of society and each individual, to help meet the basic needs of all people, paying special attention to the needs and opportunities of those who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty; to facilitate social changes and promote social justice (*National Association of Social Workers (2017). Code of Ethics.*

The need for the programmes of study field "Social Welfare" in the context of the national economy is also based on the Framework for Professional Social Work Development 2014–2020, the objective of which is to create a unified system that provides support to the population in reducing social problems. The Framework sets down two directions of action – 1) Improvement of quality, provision of accessibility and increasing of efficiency of social work; 2) Sustainable development of professional social work. Framework for Professional Social Work Development 2014–2020 confirms that the number and qualification of social work specialists employed in social services do not comply with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments and that the model of cooperation between social workers and institutions in solving the client's social problems is insufficiently developed. Therefore, professional social workers are in demand in state and municipal institutions, as well as private and non-governmental sectors' institutions and organizations. Although the activities set out in the Framework are aimed mainly at supporting social workers employed in municipal social services by providing them with supervision and professional development, UL FSS sees its potential capacity and contribution to education of social workers, improvement of social work quality and sustainable development of social work.

1.3. SWOT analysis of the study direction 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 direction 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 direction for the next assessment period shall be provided.

1.3. SWOT analysis of the study field

Table 7. SWOT analysis of study field "Social Welfare"

Strengths	*Weaknesses*
The UL study field "Social Welfare" has long standing experience in implementation of bachelor's and master's level study programmes, as well as implementation of doctoral studies in the science field "Sociology and Social Work", which is included in the study field "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology".	The quality and excellence of studies in the UL study field "Social Welfare" is still on the way to recognition in the European and Baltic educational and research space.

High employment rates of UL study field "Social Welfare" programs' graduates and positive feedback from employers, their desire to employ graduates of social work programmes.	The limited number of state-funded study places and limited opportunities to attract paying students, because the remuneration of social workers is not sufficient to repay the study loan. At times, banks do not issue study loans at all to motivated students who are themselves raising children.
Highly qualified and internationally recognized academic staff is involved in implementing the programmes of the UL study field "Social Welfare".	Insufficient availability of scientific literature in the state language impedes the studies of bachelor's level students, especially in the UL branches.
Regular and systematic qualification improvement, growth and renewal of academic staff involved in implementation of the programmes of the UL study field "Social Welfare".	The workload of students in their main job hinders the full use of international mobility opportunities and participation in the international student exchange programme *Erasmus.*
The academic staff of the UL study field "Social Welfare" participate in international and national research projects.	In terms of the effectiveness, different levels of involvement of UL study field "Social Welfare" academic staff in research.
The UL study field "Social Welfare" is a platform for intensely implemented co-operation with internationally recognized professors of social work. A co-operation network has been established to support studies at various levels. International co-operation has been established with seven EU higher education institutions on development and implementation of a master's programme "Social Work" in the sphere of criminal justice.	Insufficient number of full-time academic staff with qualification in social work, which limits the diversification of the study programme offer, development of continuing education, development of research projects and participation in international projects.

Successful work organization of study programmes, enabling the employed social workers to successfully combine studies with their direct work responsibilities.	The discrepancy between the classification of occupations and the classification of scientific fields hinders the formation of professional identity and integrity, as well as the development of high-level research identifiable directly with social work. None of the academic staff hold a doctoral degree in social work and in Latvia obtaining such a degree was not possible until recently. Only recently social work is included in the classification of sciences together with sociology (forming the field of Sociology and Social Work).
The diverse content of the study programmes, which is implemented in cooperation with other study fields implemented by UL FSS. The focus is placed on strengthening the connection between social work theory and practice, practical examples and tasks in the study process, use of diverse study methods.	Insufficient use of continuing education programs / lifelong learning opportunities in the UL FSS study field "Social Welfare".
The small number of students in groups allows to have a personal approach to the study process. This also permits students to share professional experience and, as a result, gain both deeper and broader knowledge, which is further facilitated by the use of various interactive methods.	The full potential of master's level studies is hindered by the lack of understanding of some employers about the importance of master's level education in the development of professional social work. Many directors of social services themselves have only a bachelor's level education, which promotes fear of competition and hinders a broader view on the development of the profession in Latvia, that would be based on international experience.

A team of lecturers has been successfully formed, including academic lecturers and high-level practitioners, thereby providing the crucial combination of theory and practice.

Acquisition of professional skills in close cooperation with interested employers (for example, the State Probation Service) and successful cooperation with institutions offering internship – social service providers and professional organizations.

Optimal working conditions created for the implementation of study programmes in the UL study field "Social Welfare" are ensured by the faculty, which provides technical and informative resources (computer classes, library, modern technologies for the use of visual materials, advanced e-environment).

The teaching staff and researchers of the UL study field "Social Welfare" are publicly recognised, provide their opinions to the media, as well as they provide assessment and expertise on social issues and social policy that is important and topical for the society.

The UL Regional Centre provides the basis for the development of social work programmes closer to students' places of residence, responding to the needs of the regions for highly qualified social workers.

Opportunities	*Threats*

To attract new and perspective lecturers to the programmes of the UL study field "Social Welfare", expanding the proportion of lecturers with the qualification of a social worker and a doctoral degree.	Higher education policy of Latvia, where the role of social sciences and humanities programmes in the country's development is not appreciated and therefore insufficient financing is assigned to these fields, instead overly funding science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) study programmes, which already fail to fill the available places funded from state budget.
Good academic and professional career opportunities for the teaching staff of the programmes of the UL study field "Social Welfare".	Significant decline in the quality of general secondary education of potential students due to the country's overall education problems and uneven development, the growing gap between preparedness and knowledge attained by graduates of different schools, particular disparity between pupils from urban and rural schools.
Good opportunities of academic and professional development open to the teaching staff of the programmes of the UL study field "Social Welfare", including international mobility.	The decrease in the numbers of potential and current students due to the rise in economic migration, insufficient solvency of the population and state-subsidized higher education opportunities in Europe, including other Baltic states.
Development of lifelong learning and professional development (continuing education) programmes, including more extensive use of the opportunities offered by the UL Regional Centre.	Insufficient state funding for research of socially important issues and development of social welfare study programmes.
Long-term involvement of foreign teaching staff in the implementation of the programmes of the UL study field "Social Welfare".	Insufficient remuneration for teaching staff due to inadequate state funding, which hinders both full-time employment of new teaching staff and attraction of high-level practitioners on a contractual basis for the implementation of programmes.

Strengthening and developing opportunities for international cooperation in research and education, including the development of study programmes in cooperation with universities in other European countries.

Development of study content in English and attraction of foreign students to the study programmes of the study field "Social Welfare" at the University of Latvia.

To expand involvement in attracting and implementing national and international research projects in the field "Social welfare".

To make more active use of the extensive and diverse infrastructure of the University of Latvia for improvement of the cooperation among the academic and general staff of the study field "Social Welfare" and organization of studies.

Significant transformations have occurred since the last accreditation of social work programmes and since the approval of the study field "Social Welfare". They will be discussed in greater detail in the section particularly dedicated to it, but these transformations are also important with regard to SWOT analysis. In several years, there were no state-funded places in the professional bachelor's programme "Social Work" and thus it was not possible to attract a sufficient number of students capable of paying the study fee, which led to the suspension of the programme, thereby posing a serious threat to its long-term viability. In 2018, in response to the invitation of the Regional Centre and the request of local governments, the branches of the University of Latvia were accredited as the locations of programme implementation. Since 2019 students have been admitted for part-time regular studies in the branches of the University of Latvia Regional Centre, and the studies was implemented successfully. As a result of purposeful effort by the leadership of the faculty and study field, 10 more state-funded places were allocated in 2020 (and 12 more in 2021), furthermore – the admission of students and the implementation of the programme in Riga were renewed (the threat was transformed into an opportunity). Undoubtedly, with the rapidly growing number of students (opportunity) and precarious financial situation (a weak point, as the branches enrol only paying students, tuition fees are relatively low and there is a challenge to balance expenses, but raising the fees may not be commensurate with people's income in regions and their paying capacity), it is very difficult to rapidly increase and stabilize the composition of teaching staff. It can be said that currently in the regions the demand for social work studies, as well as the need for professional development of social work (two opportunities) is greater than UL is able to provide.

Likewise, in analysis of the current opportunities and weaknesses, it is necessary consider other significant events since the previous accreditation. Back in 2012, the second level two-year study

programme was accredited, which, according to the recommendations of international evaluators was successfully developed into a master's level study programme (accredited in 2014). This programme has worked consistently and successfully, permitting to retain the core of the teaching staff during the time when the existence of the bachelor's programme was under a threat. Although the University of Latvia does not have a separate doctoral study programme in social work, the teaching staff has developed international co-operation with the network of Nordic and Baltic doctoral schools in social work. During this period, the network's summer schools have already been held twice in Riga. This confirms the high qualification of the lecturers of the UL study field "Social Welfare" and strengthens the international recognition and involvement of the UL in high-level social work education networks, which is a potential opportunity to develop closer international cooperation in the next accreditation period.

The most important challenge (which is both an opportunity and a weakness) is to attract new and talented lecturers with social worker qualification in order to advance and strengthen the teaching staff composition, programme content and research excellence.

The practising specialists of the sector shows low enthusiasm to work at a university due to relatively low remuneration for highly qualified professionals in the sector, but too difficult and unrealizable for those who would find the work at the university financially appealing. Currently, after many years of purposeful work, two research assistants with a master's degree in social work are actively involved in the implementation of study programmes in study field "Social Welfare" and are approaching the final phase of their doctoral dissertations, consequently, already for the next accreditation period it is planned to attract two elected lecturers who will hold a doctoral degree in sociology and social work, as well as professional master's qualification in social work. There is also a continuous and proactive initiative for the involvement of social welfare professionals in the implementation of studies.

The next major challenge is to attract national and international research funding to strengthen and advance research excellence (which to date is both an underused opportunity and a weakness). Latvia does not have a strong centre of excellence in the field of social work research, and the University of Latvia, as a research university, has all the opportunities to develop research excellence in social work. At present, opportunities are already provided by strong research in sociology, specializing in social policy, social security, social services, active aging and criminal justice. On the other hand, the fulfilment of these opportunities is hindered by the overload of the existing teaching staff and leading researchers (a weakness), which should be addressed by attracting additional new teaching staff and researchers. One of the solutions, even in conditions of limited financial resources, is the involvement of professionals and outstanding master's students enrolled in doctoral studies in order to strengthen a high level of research capacity and ensure the renewal of academic staff, enhancing the capacity of human resources.

A problematic factor, which particularly inhibits the implementation of the full potential of master's level studies is the lack of understanding amongst a sufficient number of employers and social workers regarding the importance of master's level education in the development of professional social work. This has been revealed both during the operation of the working group for the development of the standard for social work profession, where the lecturers of the University of Latvia participated, and in discussions with employers and organizations of this field. Even many social service directors have only a bachelor's level education, which unfortunately promotes fear of competition and prevents a broader view upon the development of the profession in Latvia based on international experience. In Latvia, those working in the profession of social work have a relatively limited awareness of the fact that in international practice social work specializations are usually acquired at the master's level (e.g., in the USA, Great Britain), in Finland a master's degree is considered the norm in the social work profession. The guidelines for the development of social

work and the *ex-ante* assessment study indicated that in Latvia social services overly concentrate on the provision of social assistance, rather than to social work and high-level social services. It is necessary to change this situation. The management and teaching staff of the study field "Social Welfare" at the University of Latvia must carry out extensive explanatory work and be actively involved in discussions on the development of the social work profession in Latvia, participate in the development of the guidelines of social work practice for the next period to direct them toward the global social work education and practice standards and the development trends of the profession laid out by the International Federation of Social Workers.

Development plan of study field "Social Welfare"

The development plan of the study field "Social Welfare" has been elaborated on the basis of the goals and tasks of the study field. In the next accreditation period, the most important development tasks are related to 1) development of study programmes; 2) the establishment and advancement of professional development (continuing education) programmes; 3) staff renewal and professional development; 4) strengthening research excellence; and 5) developing international cooperation both in study and research areas. The development plan of the study field can be assessed as corresponding to the development goals of the study field and is realistically feasible. See the Study Field Development Plan in Annex 4.

The elaboration process of the study field development plan can be assessed as efficient and in compliance with the University of Latvia regulations. The main responsibility in the elaboration process of the development plan lies with the coordinator of the study field "Social Welfare", and the development plan is drafted in cooperation with the directors of the programmes implemented within the study field, involving the council of study field and teaching staff, which consists of academic staff as well as professionals of social welfare sector, representing the professional organisations of the sector, as well as employers. The development plan of the study field "Social Welfare" is approved by the council of study field. The overall review of study field development plan including the development goals of the study field is carried out at the general meeting of the teaching staff of the programme convened especially for this purpose once in the academic year, usually in connection with the internal quality management measures. Execution of the study field development plan is also monitored at the meetings of the council of study field, where, based on the recommendations of the programme directors, corrections and additions to the development plan are formulated.

1.4. The structure of the management of the study direction and the relevant study programmes, and the analysis and assessment of the efficiency thereof, including the assessment of the role of the director of the study direction 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 direction.

1.4. Structure of study field and corresponding study programme administration structure

Collegiate responsibility for the administration of the study field lies with the UL decision-making bodies – the Senate, the UL Study Programme Quality Evaluation Board (headed by vice-rectors), faculty councils and council of study field, which evaluate study quality and decide on study quality assurance measures.

The UL governance is responsible for the functioning of the study quality management system, the management of results, process monitoring and audits.

Responsibility for the quality of the study field and the study programmes implemented therein lies with the study field coordinator and dean, study programme directors, and sub-programme directors.

Each lecturer is responsible for the quality of the content and implementation of the course, research activities and professional development.

The students' responsibility is defined in their rights and obligations to promote the achievement of UL goals and excellence in studies, participating in the UL collegial institutions and regularly expressing their opinion in student surveys.

Figure 7. Administration structure of the study field and corresponding study programmes (see Annex 5)

Each UL study programme has a **study programme director** who directs the development and implementation of this study programme. The director of the study programme is approved by the Senate on the proposal of the faculty council representing the respective branch of science. If the study programme covers several sub-programmes, the sub-programme director may be approved by the decision of the faculty council in each sub-programme. The director of the study programme is a member of the council of study field and coordinates activities with it. The director of the study programme is responsible to the dean, coordinator of study field, council of study field, faculty council, vice rector, and rector. The duties of the director of the study programme are defined in Regulations on the University of Latvia Study Field Management. The director of the study programme is responsible for ensuring that the content of the study programme complies with the regulatory enactments, and the improvement of the study programme, incl. elaboration of changes in study programmes, in line with the trends in the field and labour market, as well as taking into account the needs of stakeholders. Responsibilities of the study programme director include ensuring co-operation with Latvian and foreign higher education institutions and other UL study programme directors in matters of study content coordination and experience exchange, as well as with employers and internship sites regarding study content issues to ensure employment-relevant study results.

Coordinator of the field of study is responsible for the supervision of the study programmes of one study field, their conformity with the Development Strategy of the University of Latvia, ensuring topicality and development, as well as implementation of coordinated management of and cooperation among the study programmes. The coordinators of study field, in co-operation with the study programme directors and the director of the UL Regional Centre, in cases when the study programmes included in the study field are implemented in the UL branches, ensure the revision, development planning and implementation of study programmes included in the study field. The coordinators of study field organize the work of council of study field, as well as regularly organize the development of the annual study field report and its promotion for review and approval by the council of study field and the faculty council. The coordinator of study field in co-operation with the study programme directors and the UL Department of Studies ensure the accreditation and re-accreditation of the study field. The coordinator of study field may be the Dean of the faculty, the head of the department or the director of the study programme included in the field. The coordinators of study field are approved by the order of the Rector of the University of Latvia on the proposal of the UL Department of Studies or the decision of the faculty council.

Council of Study Field is responsible for all levels of academic, professional and doctoral study programmes relevant to one study field. The council of study field consists of the coordinator of the

study field, all study programme directors and sub-programme directors of the study field, representatives of the students (not less than 20 percent of the composition of the council of study field, student representatives are nominated by the Student Self-government), employers and cooperation partners' representatives (candidates are proposed by the heads of departments, coordinators of the study field, study programme directors and sub-programme directors). The council of study field can be supplemented with graduates of the study field programmes` not involved in the implementation of the study field, as well as with professors, associate professors and other qualified specialists of the field (candidates are proposed by the heads of departments, coordinators of the study field, study programme directors). The council of study field approves the development plan for the study field, evaluate and submit to the Study Programme Quality Assessment Board for approval applications for the new study programmes, evaluate and submit to the faculty council annual study field reports, as well as changes in study programmes.

Faculty councils, consisting of representatives of the academic and general staff, elected for three years, and student representatives, who make up at least 20 percent of the councillors, decide on the academic, economic, financial, and other activities of the faculty that are within the competence of the faculty or may be passed on to the Senate.

The study results of UL study fields and study programmes are evaluated, as well as proposals to the faculty council and UL governance on further development of the programmes are provided by **the Study Programme Quality Assessment Board** (hereinafter – SP QAB). This board reviews and provides opinions on study programmes, incl. evaluates applications for new study programme concepts, new study programmes and closure proposals, significant changes in accredited study fields that require a decision of the SP QAB, as well as applications for new study modules and sub-programmes. When evaluating the concepts of new study programmes, annual reports of study programmes and of study fields, the SP QAB is guided by the opinion of anonymous, independent experts. The SP QAB consists of Vice Rectors, Chairman of the Academic Commission of the Senate or his authorized representative, Director of the Department of Studies, Representative of the Department of Student Services, Internal Auditor, Head of Quality, representative of the Department of Science, representative of the UL Library, a representative delegated by the Student Council and a representative delegated by the UL Alumni Club.

The management structure of the study field "Social Welfare" is implemented in compliance with the UL management and governance scheme and regulations within the FSS management framework. The study field is implemented by the coordinator of the study field "Social Welfare" and programme directors in accordance with the instructions of the UL management, study field development strategy, decisions of the Council of Study Field "Social Welfare", decisions of Faculty Council, dean's instructions and collegial decisions of the staff meetings of the Department of Sociology. The content of the study field programmes, including the annual reports, is evaluated and approved by the Council of Study Field "Social Welfare", which includes the directors of the study field programmes, the student representative and the representative of employers. All changes in study programmes are introduced with the approval of the study f council. The duties and responsibilities of the administrative staff and academic staff involved in the implementation of the study field "Social Welfare" are defined in the job descriptions and regulatory enactments of the University of Latvia. The duties and responsibilities of students are defined in the Rules of Internal Regulations of the University of Latvia, and other UL regulatory enactments. The study organization in study field "Social Welfare" is supervised by the Head of the Department of Sociology in cooperation with the directors of the study programmes, as well as in collaboration with the directors of the UL branches. Taking into account the implementation of the bachelor's programme both in Riga and at the UL regional branches, the management of the professional study programme "Social Work" is divided – the programme director implements it in cooperation with the

study director, addressing development and planning matters, as well as those pertaining to students, according to the situation and requirements. This allows for a higher quality of management and more efficient work with students in the regions. Staff meetings of the Department of Sociology are held regularly, discussing the topical issues related to the implementation of the study field, and making the decisions collegially in connection with the organization of practical study work. Given that the implementation of social work study programmes involves a great proportion of professionals of the field, regular extended meetings of lecturers are also held to collegially discuss the issues related to the implementation of studies, as well as to strengthen cooperation and the integrity within the field of study. Since the declaration of the emergency situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the imposed restrictions of assembly, the meetings are held in a virtual environment using *MS Teams* or *ZOOM* platforms.

The management of the study field is supported by the **UL Administration**, whose main purpose is to ensure the legal fulfilment of the UL mission, goals and strategy, as well as to provide support to the UL staff and other UL employees. The UL Administration performs the administrative functions defined in the legislation: administrative process, making administrative decisions, drafting of regulatory enactments, internal control, tracking, supervision, quality control, etc., insofar as they are not performed by other UL structural units (institutions). The Administration manages UL activities in the field of private law, manages communication and co-operation between the UL structural units (institutions), as well as the public, natural and legal persons, and provides support to the UL core structures (institutions) in fulfilling their functions and tasks. The UL Administration includes the following units: Department of Science, Department of Studies, Department of Student Services, Department of Communication and Innovation, Department of Finance and Accounting, Legal Department, Department of Human Resources, Department of Information Technology and Department of Infrastructure.

T**he Department of Studies** has an essential role in the management of the study field, whose main functions are to draft legal acts and documents related to the study activity, to coordinate and control their implementation and further development, to ensure planning of study processes corresponding to the UL mission, goals and strategy, preparation and implementation of licensing and accreditation, further monitoring of programme implementation and development, monitoring and analysing study course and programme content, organizing regular updating of study courses and programmes, ensuring their quality and cost-effectiveness, and the acquisition of widely demanded capabilities and practical skills, e-studies development.

The Department of Science is involved in organizing study-related research and promoting student involvement in research. The main functions of the Department of Student Services are to organize and ensure the matriculation and exmatriculation of Latvian and foreign students, circulation of study documents and their record-keeping, to maintain the register of qualification documents, including the register of diplomas and graduates, to provide students with social, cultural and other support functions, as well as to provide advice and information to students on social security, to inform potential applicants about the study process and organization of studies, and to ensure the administration and implementation of mobility programmes. The Head of UL Quality Control and Internal Auditor also participate in the development, maintenance, implementation, evaluation and improvement of the study quality management system.

In the study field "Social Welfare", as in the case of the University of Latvia in general, the co-operation and mutual relations of the administrative staff, academic staff and students are based on mutual respect and co-operation, focusing on the strategic goals of the University of Latvia. The Academic Ethics Codex of the University of Latvia, Regulations for Academic Integrity at the University of Latvia, Rules of Internal Regulations of the University of Latvia for the Students, Procedure for the organization of examinations of study courses at the University of Latvia and

other UL regulations are observed directly in the implementation of the study process and also in informal communication. Students use the opportunity to express their opinion and advocate their rights, ensuring a neutral and effective inversion of issues related to the study process. Although the students at the branches of the UL Regional Centre are geographically remote and therefore less involved in the UL FSS Student Self-Government, nevertheless, a student enrolled in the branch is particularly represented at the council of study field in order to reinforce the involvement. Students at the UL branches successfully communicate their needs and suggestions to the management of the branches, who pass them on to the director of the study programme or the study director, who proceeds to solve the respective issues. With the development of the UL Regional Centre, there is a more precise coordination of the activities of the Programme administrator (according the terminology used in UL - Specialist for Teaching Quality Assurance) of the faculty and the the Programme administrator of the branches and the division of responsibilities in order to provide excellent support to students and ensure coordination of the study process. The support of the UL administrative and technical staff to the study field "Social Welfare" is appropriate for ensuring the implementation of the programmes and development needs.

1.5. 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 the study period, professional experience, and the options for the students to have their previously acquired formal and non-formal education recognised within the study direction by providing specific examples of the application of these procedures.

1.5. Assessment of student admission requirements as well as of the study field validation opportunities regarding the period of study, professional experience, previously acquired formal and non-formal education

The admission process is governed by the Enrolment Rules (LATVIJAS UNIVERSITĀTE (lu.lv)) and subordinate orders that determine the procedures for the given academic year:

1. admission requirements and criteria for undergraduate programmes;
2. admission requirements and criteria for higher-level study programmes;
3. admission requirements and criteria for doctoral programmes;
4. admission requirements and criteria for residency study programmes;
5. admission procedure for the academic year;
6. an estimate of the registration fee;
7. tuition fees in programmes;
8. number of study places for admission;
9. procedure for the preparation of entrance examination materials;
10. composition of the Admission Board;
11. composition of the entrance examination commissions;
12. date and location of entrance examinations.

Admission procedures vary by study level.

Enrolment in undergraduate studies is centralized through the 'Single Enrolment in Undergraduate Programmes', which integrates the enrolment in 12 Latvian universities. The competition for study places is based on the results of the centralized examinations or the grades of the persons with an obtained secondary education up to year 2004, the persons who have been exempted from the

centralized examinations or have completed their secondary education abroad. In the case of study programmes that do not have appropriate centralized examinations, additional requirements for specific grades are added, and the programmes requiring special skills or aptitude set an additional entrance examination. As a result, applicants are ranked according to their scores. Programmes may provide benefits to National Olympiads or other competition winners (for more information on admission requirements, see the description of each study programme).

Enrolment in master's degree programmes is decentralized, at each faculty, but with uniform deadlines. Enrolment is based on grades obtained during the undergraduate studies. In programmes that allow for prior education in various fields, the entrance examination is used to determine the correspondence of the candidate's prior knowledge to the field of the study programme.

Admission to master's level study programmes is decentralized, taking place in each faculty, but within the same deadlines. Admission is based on assessments obtained during the undergraduate studies. In the programmes where admission permits previous education in various fields, as is the case in the professional master's study programme "Social Work", an entrance examination is used to determine the compliance of the applicant's prior knowledge with the field of the study programme. Applicants must submit a CV, and during the entrance interviews the connection of the applicant's work experience with the field of social welfare is assessed, and the correspondence of the applicant's prior knowledge to the field of the study programme is determined.

Admission to doctoral studies takes place centrally. The applicant must submit the topic of the promotion thesis and the name of approved supervisor. The applicant's eligibility is assessed by the doctoral council of the branch. In the study field "Social Welfare", graduates of the master's programme have an opportunity to study for a doctorate in the scientific area "Sociology and Social Work", which belongs to another study field.

As provided for in Section 47, Paragraph three of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, on November 16, 2004, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted Regulation No. 932 "Procedures for the Initiation of Studies in Subsequent Study Stages" (hereinafter – Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers). Pursuant to Article 7 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations, and Article 3 of the Procedures for the initiation of studies in subsequent study stages at the University of Latvia, a person may commence studies at a later stage if their previously acquired part of the study programme is not below 40 credit points.

Recognition of previously completed courses is a prerequisite for starting studies at a later stage. The procedure for the recognition of study courses is stipulated in the legal act "*Credit transfer procedure at the university of Latvia*" approved by the UL Senate (Decision No. 190 of 29.12.2008, nr_190_kursu_atzisana_eng.pdf (lu.lv)). According to the above procedure, on the basis of the student's application, the possibility to recognize study courses acquired at another Latvian higher education institution, higher education institution abroad or during the previous study period at the University of Latvia is considered. In all study programmes, the programme director is responsible for this task. In accordance with the procedures for the initiation of studies in subsequent study stages at the University of Latvia, Article 2.3, previous courses may be recognised at the same level or at a lower level.

In the study field "Social Welfare", the opportunity to recognise previously acquired study courses, as well as to start studies in later study stages is actively used (see Table 8). Given that social work specialists are offered educational programmes of several levels, the opportunity to continue studies at the second level, equalising the study courses acquired at the first level, is very important and meets the needs of the labour market. The opportunity to continue studies in the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" at the UL branches in Cēsis and Alūksne

was offered in the winter admission of 2019, since local governments and employers in the regions emphasized that municipal social services agencies and social service providers lacked qualified social workers, and, simultaneously, there were many social care-givers and social rehabilitation specialists who wished to obtain the qualification of a social worker and a bachelor's degree. The possibility to continue studies was provided and implemented in accordance with the aforementioned regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers, and the previously acquired education in the amount of 80 credits was recognised in accordance with the study course recognition procedure at the University of Latvia. For example, the courses of the 1st level programmes acquired at the P. Stradiņš Medical College of the University of Latvia, and Rezekne Academy of Technologies have been recognised in the study field "Social Welfare". Bachelor's level studies in social work programmes commenced at other higher education institutions have also been recognised, for example, those acquired at the Baltic International Academy and the Higher School of Social Work and Social Pedagogy "ATTĪSTĪBA" (where studies had been started but not completed). Some course credits have also been recognised and transferred from previously acquired studies at the University of Latvia bachelor's study programme "Pedagogy", the University of Agriculture of Latvia (now- Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies) bachelor's study programme "Sociology", as well as studies at the College of Law. Study courses acquired in *ERASMUS* programmes are recognised in all study programmes.

Table 8. Number of students with recognised study courses at the study field "Social Welfare"

Study programme	Number of students with recognised courses among all active students at 24.10.2019	Number of students with recognised courses since 01.01.2013
Professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work"	18	18
Professional master's study programme "Social Work"	1	5
Total	**19**	**23**

Although overall the University of Latvia rarely makes use of the opportunities for recognition of learning outcomes acquired in previous education (including continuing education programmes) or professional experience (governed by "Regulation on the Evaluation and Recognition of Prior Learning at the University of Latvia" UL Senate Decision No. 201 of 26.03.2012 LATVIJAS UNIVERSITĀTE (lu.lv) and "Regulations on the Recognition of Knowledge, Skills, Competence Acquired Outside of Formal Education or in Professional Experience, Recognition of Study Results Achieved in the Previous Education, and Referencing of Academic Activity at the University of Latvia", UL Senate Decision UL Senate No 2-3/86 of 28.06.2021. regulation-on-recognition-and-referencing-2021.pdf (lu.lv)), this innovation introduced under the auspices of the Bologna Process is particularly actively employed in the programmes of the study field "Social Welfare". Since the students in both bachelor's and master's programmes frequently already work in their profession,

every year there are some students who use this opportunity. Recognition of knowledge acquired in continuing education is used less often, because the number of contact hours and hours of independent work for professional development courses most often is at variance (insufficient). The students at the study field "Social Welfare" more often use the opportunity permitting recognition of professional experience. However, although a larger number of students could equate professional experience with internships, it is important that students gain experience in social work also in other institutions in order to expand and deepen their professional experience. Students are informed about this opportunity and programme directors conduct personal discussions about the usefulness and benefits of the internship. Therefore, the recognition of study results obtained through professional experience takes place only after a careful assessment of each specific case in relation to the expected learning outcomes in the respective programme.

All procedures are published and available in the University of Latvia system of regulatory enactments, which is available to every UL employee and student. FSS readily recognises the study results obtained in previous education (including continuing education programme) or professional experience, and for the convenience of students all the necessary information is also available on the FSS website: https://www.szf.lu.lv/studijas/pieredzesizglitibas-atzisana/

1.6. 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.

1.6. Assessment of methods and procedures used to evaluate student achievement

In conformity with the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia, the UL internal regulation "Procedure for Development and Updating of Study Courses at the University of Latvia" stipulates that information on the conditions, aims, tasks, requirements for obtaining credit points, study content, organization and tasks advanced for the students' independent assignments, planned learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, competence) and their assessment methods and assessment criteria are included in all study course descriptions. Those are available to students in the UL Information System and UL e-learning environment. The recording of the assessment of the students' results is implemented in the respective study course e-environment. The UL has formulated the learning outcomes for each study programme and for each study course as a set of knowledge, skills and competences. The courses in study programmes are developed in accordance with the principles of gradation and succession. To that end, the study programmes map the expected learning outcomes (see Annex 20 on the mapping of results of professional bachelor study programme (PBSP) "Social work" and Annex 32 on the mapping of results of professional master study programme (PMSP) "Social work").

At the beginning of studies, students are informed of the organisation and implementation of studies in the relevant study programme, but when commencing the acquisition of each particular study course, the academic staff inform students specifically about the organisation, content, requirements, learning outcomes, tests, examinations and evaluation criteria, as well as explain the integral quality of the study course for achieving the overall outcomes of the study programme. The students can familiarize themselves with the criteria and conditions for assessment of student achievement and the binding procedures in the course descriptions and e-learning environment, as well as at the beginning of each course during the first lecture, when each lecturer introduces

students to the course organization, briefly describes the requirements for intermediate and final examinations, describes grading criteria and examination procedures, without changing these requirements and grading criteria throughout the semester. In the study field "Social welfare" Programmes' a variety of methods in the process of evaluating student achievements are used. These are addressed in detail in the programme profiles. The evaluation process is based on the regular work of the student during the semester and evaluates the performance in seminars, group tasks and interim assessments, as well as final examination.

The organization of the study course examinations and the assessment of the students' achievements is performed in accordance with the "Law on Higher Education Institutions" and the "Procedure for Organizing Study Course Examinations at the University of Latvia" *(University of Latvia Senate Decision No. 211 of 29.06.2015).* elaborated by the UL Constitution and applicable to the assessment of the results of full-time and part-time students enrolled in UL study programmes at all levels.

There are two types of tests in each course: the interim assessment or so-called semester examinations and the final examination. The overall assessment of the acquisition of a study course consists of: the overall assessment of interims (not less than 50% of the total score) and the assessment obtained in the examination (not less than 10% of the total score). The tests may be carried out in writing or orally or in a combined form (written and oral). The assessment of the students' achievements is performed by resorting to the form of the tests and the methods corresponding to the teaching methods used in the study process, both during contact lessons and in the organization of students' independent work.

Taking an examination is a mandatory requirement for obtaining credits for the acquisition of a study course. The procedures and criteria for the assessment of interims are determined by the responsible department in accordance with the profile of the study course. The study course acquisition rating is calculated in the UL centralised recording system according to the algorithm specified in the course description, taking into account the assessments obtained in the interims and examination, and recorded in the examination report.

Types of interim assessment are: quiz, individual work, practical work, laboratory work, report, and other types of work according to the profile of the study course. The number and type of interim assessments are specified in the description of the study course. To be assessed on the acquisition of a course, the assessment obtained for the examination is to be positive. The acquisition of a course may be positively assessed even if the examination has been failed but this possibility has been specified in the study course description. The overall assessment of course acquisition is calculated in the UL e-studies environment according to the algorithm specified in the course description, taking into account the assessments obtained in interim tests and examinations.

In accordance with the profile of the study course, the requirements for attending classes may also be determined.

At the end of each study course there is a final examination: examination or defence (course work, final project, term paper, field course, internship). The procedure of defence and assessment of course paper, final thesis project, term paper, field course and internship is stipulated in UL normative acts.

The study results are evaluated on a 10-point scale. If allowed by external regulations, study results can be assessed as "passed" or "failed" with the permission of the UL Vice Rector. The course is considered to have been successfully completed, i.e., the grade is positive if the grade on the 10-point scale is not lower than '4' (almost satisfactory) or 'passed'. In this case, the student earns credit for the course.

For the evaluation of students' knowledge, skills and competence in each study course, the 10-point scale criteria described above are used. The criteria for each study course are based on the learning outcomes and assessment descriptions (see Table 9) published in "Procedures for the Development and Actualization of Study Courses at the University of Latvia".

Table 9. Assessment descriptions

Acquisition level	Grade notations	Explanation (pursuant to Cabinet Regulations No. 141, 512, 240 and the UL Senate Decision No. 211 of 29.06.2015)
very high acquisition level	**10 (with distinction)**	knowledge, skills and competence exceed the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course and testify to the ability to carry out independent research and deep understanding of problems
	9 (excellent)	knowledge, skills and competence fully comply with the requirements set for the study programme, study module or the study course and the students possess the ability to use the acquired knowledge independently
high acquisition level	**8 (very good)**	the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course are completely met, though in certain issues the students do not have an understanding deep enough to use the knowledge independently for solving more complex problems
	7 (good)	in general, the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course are met but occasionally the inability to use the acquired knowledge independently is established
average acquisition level	**6 (almost good)**	the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course are met, but there is a lack of deep understanding of the problem and inability to use the acquired knowledge
	5 (satisfactory)	in total, the study programme, the study module or the study course is acquired but there is insufficient knowledge of certain issues and inability to use the acquired knowledge
	4 (almost satisfactory)	in total, the study programme, the study module or the study course is acquired, however, there is insufficient understanding of some basic concepts and there are considerable difficulties in practical application of the acquired knowledge
low acquisition level	**3 (weak)**	the knowledge is superficial and incomplete; the student is unable to use it in specific situations
	2 (poor)	a superficial knowledge of only some issues is present; most of the study programme, study module and the study course not acquired
	1 (very, poor)	there is no understanding of the fundamentals of the course and there is almost no knowledge of the study programme, study module or the study course

The relevance of assessment methods and procedures to the achievement of the objectives of study programmes and the needs of students are analysed and developed, taking into account the experience of academic staff, by analysing the results achieved by students and the results of surveys conducted over several academic years. Students in the surveys recognise the importance of clearly formulating the results of the studies and defining the evaluation criteria, as well as the regular feedback on student achievements in the study process. In order to ensure this, the academic staff systematically analyse their experience, collaborate with colleagues, analyse student achievements and develop course descriptions by investing the description of the results of

studies and their evaluation criteria, thereby providing justification for the assessment.

In evaluating the results of studies, compliance with the basic principles for the valuation set by the Cabinet Regulation of the Republic of Latvia No. 141 "Regulations on the state standard for first level professional higher education" of 20.03.2001, No. 512 "Regulations on the state standard for second level professional higher education" of 26.08.2014 and "Regulations on the state standard of the academic education" of 13.05.2014 is considered:

- **the principle of openness of the evaluation and clarity of requirements** – the University has established a set of requirements for evaluating the results of studies in line with the aim and objectives of the study programme as well as the aim and objectives of study courses;
- **the principle of the possibility of reviewing the evaluation** – the University has established the procedures for reviewing the obtained assessment;
- **the principle of mandatory evaluation** – it is necessary to obtain a positive assessment of the content of the entire study programme;
- **the principle of the variety of types of testing used in the evaluation** – different types of testing shall be used in the evaluation of the acquisition of the study programme;
- **principle of conformity of assessment** – in the course of testing, the student is given an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, skills and competence in relevant tasks and situations. The content to be included in the tests corresponds to the content specified in the course programmes.

The basic criteria for the evaluation of final papers are determined by the UL Decree No. 1/38 of 03.02.2012 *(Amendments: UL Order No. 1/69 of 26.02.2015).* On the development and defence of the final papers (bachelor's, master's, diplomas and qualifications) at the University of Latvia. Additional criteria may be determined for the evaluation of final papers, which shall be approved by the faculty council on a proposal from the relevant study programme council.

The methods used in the course examinations in the study programmes of the study field "Social Welfare" for the assessment of students' achievements fully comply with the process specified in the aforementioned university's internal "Procedure for development and updating of study courses at the University of Latvia". The evaluation of specific achievements, for example, the evaluation of students' internships takes place within the framework of the internship described in this procedure, supplementing the conditions stipulated therein with more detailed evaluation criteria of specific works. Information about them is included in the course description and provided in the first lesson of the study course.

The elaboration, requirements and evaluation procedure of the final thesis in the study field "Social Welfare" is common to all programmes implemented at the UL Faculty of Social Sciences and is described in the Methodological Guidelines for Development and Defense of Course Paper, Bachelor's, Master's Thesis and Diploma Paper (approved by UL FSS Council 2018 Decision No. SZF-V12.2/13). Instructions are available on the UL FSS website, in the section "Studies", in the sub-section "Key documents" (https://www.szf.lu.lv/studijas/svarigakie-dokumenti/), as well as on the websites of the respective courses in "E-studies". The control and evaluation of final thesis elaboration consists of several stages – development of the research project or concept, pre-defense of the final thesis and defense of the final thesis. Such a multi-level assessment system allows to follow the development of students' final theses, to promote students' work motivation and to ensure that the work is performed systematically and meets a good quality standard. The criteria for evaluating the quality of the final theses consist of the following criteria:

1) choice of the thesis topic, clarity of wording and logic of the work;

2) theoretical substantiation of the thesis;

3) research methodology and use of research methods;

4) analysis and conclusions of the results;

5) quality of the thesis language;

6) compliance with norms and technical requirements of scientific work.

Two further criteria are related to the defense of the thesis:

1) report of the author of the work (ability to scientifically, concentratedly and with good substantiation to present the performed research, formulate conclusions, indicate further possible directions of the research);

2) answers to questions and the ability to discuss.

The final examination in the professional bachelor's study programme consists of a bachelor's thesis and a state examination. The state examination for obtaining the qualification of a social worker has been developed in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation of 26.08.2014 No. 512 "Regulations on the state standard of second level professional higher education" and in accordance with the social work professional standard. The state examination in an integrated way includes the knowledge and skills acquired during the studies, creating an opportunity for the student to show an understanding of social policy and social work as a sub-field of Sociology and Social Work, and social work as a profession. The aim of the state examination is to generalize and systematize the knowledge and skills acquired in the study courses. The task of the state examination is to establish students' knowledge in 3 thematic blocks: (1) theoretical foundations of social work; (2) social work at the micro, meso and macro levels, (3) social work values, ethics and interdisciplinarity of the profession.

1.7. Description and assessment of the academic integrity principles, the mechanisms for the 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.

1.7. Assessment of the principles of academic integrity in the study process

The UL respects the principles of fair and responsible conduct as stipulated in The Academic Ethics Codex of the University of Latvia, (UL Senate 27.10.2018. decision No. 170) and in the Regulations for Academic Integrity at the University of Latvia, (UL Senate 25.02.2013. decision No 287). These documents are publicly available to students and staff of the UL.

To prevent violation of academic integrity, the UL has developed the Unified Computerized Plagiarism Control System (hereinafter – System) (UL 22.04.2014. Order No 1/125). The System verifies students'; final study research paper (qualification paper, diploma paper, bachelor's thesis, master's thesis, doctoral thesis). The procedure has been established to determine further course of action (UL 22.04.2014. supplement to Order No 1/125), in the case of plagiarism.

The UL as the developer of the System and its operator constantly updates the System and provides other higher education institutions with the opportunity to use the System on the basis of

a cooperation agreement. Currently, based on the cooperation agreement, seven higher education institutions in Latvia – Daugavpils University, Liepaja University, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Riga Stradiņš University, Rezekne Academy of Technologies, University College of Economics and Culture and Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration, use the System.

The system automatically compares the final theses uploaded to these university systems, incl. material available on the Internet, and in the event of a certain percentage match, the study programme directors are sent an overview of these test results, whereby the same text snippets from different authors are simultaneously viewed. The programme directors pass this information on to the appointed supervisor and reviewer for review and, in the event of a suspected breach of academic integrity, pass on the results of the analysis to the final examination panel for final consideration. The co-operation of several higher education institutions for unified computerized plagiarism control facilitates more effective control of the study process at every higher education institution and in Latvia in general, and this system works well in practice, raising the importance and quality of the diploma papers.

The texts of the final thesis developed in the study programmes of the study field "Social Welfare", as well as the texts of "Course Paper I" ("Kursa darbs I") and "Course Paper II" ("Kursa darbs II") are checked using the System. During the reporting period, plagiarism was detected twice in the professional master's study programme "Social Work" implemented in the study field "Social Welfare" in the final thesis at the pre-defense stage, performing a check of the draft thesis with the help of the System. The situation was resolved in accordance with the relevant regulations of the University of Latvia, informing the supervisor of the final thesis, who carried out an in-depth inspection and a detailed description of correspondence, and informed the dean thereof. The students wrote explanations pointing to the references used and the lack of understanding regarding placement of direct quotation in quotation marks, as well as to the fact that the text is not polished in the draft and particular paragraphs in the theoretic part of the thesis consisted of notes and transfers from the used works, which would be revised in the final text. The dean's decision was to expel the students on the grounds of the plagiarism found in the draft of the final thesis submitted for the pre-defense, and not to give the students the opportunity to eliminate the plagiarism in the final text of the thesis. These students have not resumed their studies. These events have caused lecturers and students to take the quality of the draft thesis more seriously. It is problematic that the lecturers themselves do not have access to the System and the supervisors have to check the drafts of the course papers and final theses manually, which is extremely time-consuming and inefficient. The issue is being resolved in cooperation with the administration of the faculty and the Department of Studies.

1.8. Specify the websites (e.g. the homepage) on which the information on the study direction 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.

1.8. Description of the UL website

The target audience of the UL website https://www.lu.lv/en/ (hereinafter referred to as the website) is the UL prospective and existing students, employees, cooperation partners, scientists and the

general public.

The site is intended for access to and storage of public information, providing its visitors with an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the UL's activities as reflected in digital environment on the internet.

The site consists of the following sections:

- ROTATING NEWS – Significant UL information utilizing the UL visual identity, which has certain characteristics and strengthens the image of the university and promotes its recognition in the digital environment.
- NEWS AND EVENTS – UL current events and planned events. Information is prepared by UL structural units and communication and innovation department.
- DISCOVER UL – Information about studies, extracurricular activities, science.
- STUDIES – with subdivisions -
  - College study programmes,
  - Bachelor's study programmes,
  - Master's study programmes,
  - Doctoral study programmes,
  - Residency.

The information is prepared and published by the Department of Communication and Innovation in cooperation with the Department of Studies and the Department of Student Services.

The STUDIES section in Latvian provides information on programme aim, objectives, study outcomes, programme volume and duration, programme study language, information on employment and vacancies after graduation, as well as programme study plans. If you have any questions, please contact us for further information. This section also publishes study-relevant information under the heading STUDY PROCESS – Academic calendar, Lecture timetable, Tutorials, Key documents and forms, Information on mobility at higher education institutions, Recognition of experience / education, Lifelong learning opportunities as well as links to UL e-learning environment and LUIS information system.

The section contains information about the University of Latvia Libraries offer, Career Centre information, Student Council activities.

The two subsections STUDENT LIFE and MORE THAN STUDIES inform existing and potential students about hostels, meals, parking and bicycle parking, mentor support, and information for people with disabilities. There is a wide range of information on how to enrich one's extra-curricular life with sport, culture.

The ADMISSION section contains information for school pupils, prospective and existing students. In this section, the pupils can get acquainted with the events and creative competitions organized by the respective faculty, the participation wherein and successful performance can give additional admission points. The prospective students may get introduced to the information on all levels of programmes, admission requirements, credit and scholarship information, as well as return to intramural studies. The prospective students will be able to get acquainted with the most frequently asked questions and answers, information on Career Centre activities, preparatory courses and classes for school pupils.

Other sections – "Science", "Cooperation", "About Us"– provide more information about UL activities in research, projects, conferences, cooperation partners, normative acts, strategy.

The website www.lu.lv/par-mums/dokumenti/pasnovertejuma-zinojumi/ contains annual study field self-assessment reports.

The websites of the structural units (faculties) prepare information on the programmes offered by the respective faculty and on the scientific activities of the faculty. The content blocks are exactly the same as the blocks on the UL official site, but more specific information is posted directly about the respective faculty activities.

The faculty website can be reached from the UL website via the faculty reference (https://www.szf.lu.lv).

The FSS website uses a unified UL visual style. The primary target audience of the SSF website is the prospective and current students of UL, the university's cooperation partners, scientists and the general public. The FSS website is intended for the availability and storage of public information, providing an opportunity for its visitors to get acquainted with information about the activities of FSS in digital form on the Internet. It consists of the following sections:

- "NEWS" and "EVENTS" – FSS news and planned events (information is prepared and posted on the FSS website by the FSS public relations specialist).
- "STUDIES" – with subsections on lecture timetables, session schedule, MOODLE, UL Information System LUIS, the key documents and other useful information for students (prepared by FSS public relations specialist in cooperation with study programme directors, methodologists, as well as the Department of Studies, information on FSS website is published by the Department of Communication and Innovation).
- "SHORTCUTS" (their number can be altered);
- Other sections ("I WANT TO STUDY AT FSS"; "LIFE AT FSS"; "RESEARCH"; "ABOUT US").

The information is prepared and posted on the FSS website by THE FSS public relations specialist. The information is prepared in cooperation with Department of Studies, study programme directors, teaching staff and ASPRI researchers. If necessary, the content of the FSS website is translated and reflected in the English version of the FSS website (https://ulfss.lu.lv).

The structure of the UL website in English www.lu.lv/en is similar to the page published in Latvian and described above, the section "GRIBU STUDĒT" ("I WANT TO STUDY") is replaced by "ADMISSION", where the foreign students of degree programmes as well as visiting students can find information about the available study programmes, admission procedure, scholarships. If an author of information submits a text for publication in a foreign language other than English, a Latvian translation of the text or a short summary must be attached.

The heads of the University of Latvia structural units are responsible for the preparation of the information within the competence of their structural units for website, the accuracy and updating of that information. The content administrators of the structural units' websites are responsible for the maintenance of the website, the posting of the prepared information and its regular updating. In FSS public relations specialist is responsible for the online publication of content.

II - Description of the Study Direction (2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System)

2.1. Assessment of the efficiency of the internal quality assurance system within the study direction 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 direction and the relevant study programmes.

2. Efficiency of the internal Quality Assurance System

2.1. Assessment of the efficiency of the internal quality assurance system

The quality management of the study field "Social Welfare" is ensured in accordance with the quality assurance mechanism and procedures established by the University of Latvia (see Chapter 1). Students, lecturers, study programme directors, etc. are involved in the management of the study field.

The study programmes included in the study field are regularly provided with review of study courses, regular surveys and measurements, self-assessment, etc., according to the procedure established by the University of Latvia. The activities targeting the advancement of study field are planned for a period of six years and guided by the UL Development Strategy, trends prevailing in the sector and labour market, study outcomes, stakeholder needs, as well as internal and external (accreditation, licensing) quality assessment recommendations.

The review of study courses, performance of regular surveys and measurements, self-assessment, etc. for study programmes included in the study field "Social Welfare" are regularly provided in accordance with the procedures established by the University of Latvia. Study field improvement activities are planned for a six-year period based on the UL Development Strategy, trends in sector and labour market, study field results, stakeholder needs, as well as the recommendations provided in internal and external (accreditation, licensing) quality assessment.

In the study field "Social Welfare" the internal quality control of the study programmes is performed by the Council of Study Field "Social Welfare" and the direct implementers of the programme – programme directors in cooperation with the teaching staff of the Department of Sociology and professionals of the sector involved in the implementation of the programme. The evaluation of the academic staff according to their results in research and teaching, as well as the performance regarding work efficiency, competence development and quality improvement tasks is evaluated by the Head of the Sociology Studies Department in cooperation with programme directors based on the personal results of the academic staff members achieved during the working year. The discussion of the study field development plan and the results of its implementation takes place at least twice during the academic year at the meeting of the Council of Study Field "Social Welfare". The course of development is regularly discussed in the Department of Sociology and in the meetings of the academic staff involved in the implementation of social work programmes at least twice a year. The report is evaluated by the Council of Study Field "Social Welfare" and the Council of the Faculty of Social Sciences. At the faculty, the quality of studies is also monitored by the Deputy Executive Director for Studies.

Various activities are implemented for regular analysis and updating of study programmes, as well as determination of the needs for improvement of the study process, including purposeful cooperation with employers and professional organizations, formal and/or informal surveys of employers and social partners, focus group discussions, student surveys about quality and organization of the study process, questionnaire surveys of graduates and students on the quality of study programmes, career monitoring of graduates, etc. Quality assurance is based on active international cooperation with analogous study programmes abroad, involvement of employers and social partners in the development of study content, participation in the assessment of students' achievements throughout the entire study process, in development of theses and qualification

papers, provision of applied research, etc. For example, representatives of professionals and employers of the field, beyond involvement in the work of final examination commissions, also participate in the defense of course papers. The Regional Centre holds an annual meeting with employers in the regions to understand keep up to date with the regional needs in the context of programme implementation.

Cooperation is ensured between the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study field programmes, including mutual learning of the teaching staff, as well as regular evaluation of the teaching staff in the faculty departments. The UL Department of Studies also with every year upgrades the methodological support in the didactics of the university provided to the teaching staff. Materials are available for the development and improvement of e-learning courses, mapping of study results, methodological materials for more successful management of remote studies during emergencies and social distancing, etc.

At the same time, continuous feedback is provided to inform stakeholders about the learning outcomes and competences achieved by students and graduates.

The topicalities in the assurance of study field quality and outcomes of the respective study programmes, annual report, changes in study programmes, and other issues are regularly reviewed and discussed in the Council of Study Field "Social Welfare" and Council of the Faculty of Social Sciences. Two study programmes are being implemented in study field "Social Welfare" at the Faculty of Social Sciences and the branches of the UL Regional Centre. The Council of Study Field "Social Welfare" includes the directors of study programmes (including the head of the Department of Sociology), a representative of employers representing the NGO sector, and a representative of students from a UL branch (in order to strengthen the representation of branches in the study field council). Student representatives are also involved in the work of the Council of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Regular reports on and reviews of study fields, changes and self-assessments are assessed by UL Study Programme Quality Assessment Board (QAB), including independent experts, who evaluate the documentation before approval by the UL Senate.

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 procedures for the development of new study programmes within the study direction (including the approval of study programmes), the review of the study programmes, the aims, and regularity, as well as the stakeholders and their responsibilities. Description of the mechanism for obtaining and providing a feedback, including with regard to the work with the students, graduates, and employers.

2.2. Assessment and analysis of the design and review of study programmes

The establishment of new study programmes at the UL is performed in accordance with the procedure specified in Regulations on University of Latvia study and continuing education programmes (Study_and_continuing_education_programmes.pdf (lu.lv)), and includes the following steps:
- elaboration of the study programme concept in agreement with the Vice Rector and the Dean of the Faculty, and its approval by the faculty council;
- evaluation of the study programme concept with the assistance of experts and subsequent

approval by the UL Study Programme Quality Assessment Board (SP QAB);

- elaboration of the full study programme, evaluation of the same with the assistance of experts, and subsequent approval by the faculty council, the SP QAB and UL Senate.

The coordinators of UL study fields in cooperation with the directors of study programmes, prepare study field self-assessment reports each academic year (hereinafter - Self-assessment report) (procedure approved by UL Order No 1/373 of 16.09.2016.). The self-assessment reports are approved by the faculty councils and submitted to the Department of Studies. The Department of Studies reviews self-assessment reports for compliance with requirements and submits the same to the SP QAB composed of all UL Vice-Rectors, Chair of the UL Senate Academic Commission, UL student representative, UL Alumni Association representative, UL Library representative, Advisor to Rector on Quality management issues, and representatives of several UL departments – Study, Science, Student Services, while involving both internal and external experts and also cooperating with the UL Alumni Club in recruiting experts. The study programmes are reviewed to assess and improve the quality of their content and implementation. The self-assessment reports reflect the implementation of the programmes, developments, newly introduced changes and evolution of the same as well as the assessment by stakeholders, both, in terms of student survey results and the assessment expressed by employers.

On the basis of the SP QAB decision, the opinions prepared by the experts shall be evaluated in the study field council, preparing a plan for implementation of the expert recommendations. Then the coordinator of the study field and program directors are responsible for implementation of the plan.

The reviewing of study programmes involves:

- **Study Programme Directors** – responsible for ensuring the operation of the study programme, reviewing, evaluating and developing of the same, while reflecting it in the annual self-assessment report and preparing the analysis of the evaluation as expressed by the parties involved in the programme, viz. students, alumni, employers, etc.; responsible for discussion of the programme's activities at the meetings of the council of study field etc. *(Senate Decision No. 70 "Regulations on the University of Latvia Study Field Management" as of 27.01.2020);*
- **Coordinator of the Study Field** – responsible for the development of a strategy for the study field, accreditation and re-accreditation, and, in cooperation with programme directors, the annual self-assessment report on the quality of studies in the given study field as well as improvements to the same *(Senate Decision No 70 "Regulations on the University of Latvia Study Field Management" as of 27.01.2020);*
- **Dean of the Faculty** – responsible for the organisation of the study work at the faculty, for economic, financial performance and recordkeeping; for annual accounts on the study and scientific activities of the faculty to both the Faculty Council and the Rector (*UL Constitution, approved at the session of the UL Constitutional Assembly as of 29.03.1996*);
- **Council of Study Field** – responsible for the development of a strategy for the development of study programmes, the evaluation of annual reports, the evaluation of changes to the programme etc. *(University of Latvia Senate Decision No. 70 of January 27, 2020 "Regulations on the University of Latvia Study Field Management");*
- **Faculty Council** – evaluates and approves changes to study programmes, study field self-assessment reports, etc. (*UL Constitution, approved at the session of the UL Constitutional Assembly as of 29.03.1996*);
- **Department of Studies** - analyses study programmes and courses, makes proposals for their development, reorganisation or closure *(Regulations on the Administration to the University of Latvia approved by the UL Order No. 1/244 on July 17, 2017);*
- **Quality Assessment Board for UL Study Programmes** – evaluates new study

programmes, major changes to existing study programmes, annual self-assessments of study fields, outcomes of study fields and programmes and prepares proposals for the Faculty Council and UL leadership on the future development of programmes, etc.

- **UL Senate** – evaluates and approves conceptual study process regulatory documents, study field self-assessment reports, etc. (*UL Constitution Assembly Decision No. 6 "Regulation on UL Senate" as of 10.05.2001*)

To obtain feedback from the parties involved in the study process and related to the performance, the following surveys are regularly organised at the UL:

- first year student survey on the commencement studies;
- first year student survey on first study experience;
- survey on study courses and the work of the teaching staff, including a survey on study internship and a survey on course papers and final papers (hereinafter - Study Course Evaluation Survey);
- last year students survey on study programme content and learning outcomes;
- survey for students who have decided to discontinue their studies at their own discretion or for those who have already stopped their studies, hereinafter referred to as a "Attrition Survey";
- graduate survey;
- employer survey;
- survey on the pilot experience with the second study programme

The results of the surveys are analysed and discussed within the study field and are reflected in the annual self-assessment reports.

The data of the surveys of students of the study field "Social Welfare", the opinions of employers and graduates are discussed in the respective programme reports and their duplication is not expedient here. Notably, the University of Latvia has a unified approach to the quality management of all the implemented study programmes, which is also strictly observed in the study field "Social Welfare", regularly discussing development and quality issues at the meetings of UL FSS Sociology Department, during informal gatherings of the study programme teaching staff, as well as at the Council of Study Field "Social Welfare". In these discussions, teaching staff also receives feedback on the results of student and graduate surveys (in a aggregated way). Each lecturer in the UL Information System may also familiarise her / himself with students' assessments and comments on their study courses. In addition to the regular surveys conducted by the University of Latvia, the teaching staff of quantitative research methods implements surveys of students in the programmes of the study field at least once a year in order to explore the issues that are not covered by the University of Latvia surveys or require a more detailed understanding (for example, by clarifying the pre-existing knowledge or understanding of the selected field of study of the first year students). Informal talks are also being conducted, the boat on issues that require more detailed understanding (such as how students actually feel, what they like or dislike in the study process organisation, where they would like to see any improvements). The latter is particularly important in working with branch students, which is also a new experience for programme directors and staff, not only in the form of study organisation, but also in the learning needs of students.

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 direction and the relevant study programmes are communicated by providing the respective examples.

2.3. Student complaints and proposals procedure and/or characterisation of the system

In keeping with the principles of democracy and equality, and in line with the UL Quality Assurance Policy, all stages of the study process, from admissions to finals, ensure the participation of applicants and students in the assessment of the UL study process. In the matters pertaining to the admission procedure, the UL applicants have the right to lodge complaints with the Chair of the Admission Board.

The right of UL applicants to lodge complaints regarding irregularities in the admission procedure are governed by Enrolment Rules at the University of Latvia (UL Senate Decision No. 15 of 30.05.2016), specifying the procedures for the lodging, processing and appeal of the complaint.

To improve the quality of studies, students have the right to submit proposals and complaints concerning the study process, including the evaluation of tests, examinations and finals. To ensure the quality of the UL study process, the UL has developed and implemented "Procedure for the submission and resolution of students' proposals and complaints" (UL Decision No. 1/21 of 18.02.2002). The procedure specifies the form for the submission of proposals and complaints, as well as the procedure for registration and resolution thereof. Proposals and complaints regarding the study process may be submitted to faculty deans (on the schedule of lectures, on the study process implementation, on the quality of studies administered by the respective faculty and on its development, on the non-fulfilment of the duties of faculty staff, etc.). The initial complaint should be acknowledged and a full response provided within 15 days or within 30 days if additional information is required. Significantly, paragraph 17 of that order expressly provides that: "At the end of each academic year, the Dean of the Faculty must report to the UL Board on the complaints received and decisions taken in the previous academic year." This demonstrates the importance of the internal control mechanisms and the cyclical monitoring of complaints, decision making, student rights and interests, which is important for the proper functioning and possible improvement of this system.

The "Procedure for the organisation of study course examinations at the University of Latvia" has been developed and implemented for the comprehensive evaluation of UL study processes, where the right of students to file complaints regarding the procedures for interim and final assessment and the procedures for resolution of these complaints have been determined. The complaint is submitted by the student to the member of academic staff who has evaluated the examination, on condition that the student has requested a justification for the assessment from the academic staff prior to submitting the complaint. The lecturer must review the application within 5 working days. If the lecturer considers that the student's application is not substantiated, they shall submit the application to the Head of Department for consideration and decision.

The evaluation of graduation examinations is determined by "Regulation on graduation examinations at the University of Latvia" (UL Senate Decision No. 183 of 27.12.2011), which stipulates that the students are entitled to appeal if the Dean has not given them permission to take the final examinations or to appeal against the final examination procedure.

The University of Latvia has an Academic Court of Arbitration, whose regulations determine the opportunity to apply to this collegial institution regarding any study-related issues, including control over adherence to the principles of assessment.

The students have the right to appeal against the UL order on ex-matriculation in conformity with "University of Latvia state budget subsidized study place competition (rotation) procedure" (University of Latvia Senate Decision No. 381 of 25.06.2010). In its turn, "Procedure for Application for Tuition Fee Discounts (UL Order No. 1/89 of April 14, 2009) provides students with an opportunity to appeal against decisions on granting or refusing tuition fee discounts within one month from notification issued to the student by submitting a written application addressed to the Rector of the University of Latvia, to be considered by the Rector within one month.

The "Procedure for Discontinuing Studies at the University of Latvia" (UL Senate Decision No.178 of 01.12.2008) provides for the right to appeal against the decision of the Dean refusing to grant a student a study break. The "Procedure for the commencement of studies at the later stages of studies at the University of Latvia" (UL Order No. 1/128 of 08.06.2009) also provides for the right to appeal within a specified period against the decisions made by the Dean.

With respect to students' rights outside the study process, it should be mentioned, that the rights and obligations of the students who use the services of UL hostels are regulated by "Law on the internal order of hotels at the University of Latvia" (30.06.2009, with amendments 19.07.2012), including those to inform the hostel superintendent of any problems, submit proposals to improve performance and complaints regarding catering problems. Hostel and catering issues are addressed by the hostel superintendent.

Each student is entitled not only to the rights to apply to the UL Academic Ethics Committee for possible ethical violations as specified by the UL Academic Code of Ethics, but also to submit proposals to the UL Academic Ethics Committee as regards the improvement of the Code and its implementation.

The proposals and complaints are registered with the departments or commissions where they are submitted, as well as outcomes of the enquiry taken and respective resolutions.

At the UL normative level see "Regulations on the UL visiting student from Latvian higher education institutions" (UL Order No. 1/17 of 25.01.2006), which define that visiting students in the UL have the same rights and obligations as the UL students, meaning that the system for submitting and addressing complaints and proposals applies equally to these students.

It follows from the above that the centralized segment of the UL Complaint and Proposal Submission and Review System covers all the components of every student study life as applies to enrolment at the UL as well as the full-cycle studies and final examinations.

The students of the study field "Social Welfare" are informed about the possibilities to submit proposals and complaints about the study processes, incl. the evaluation of examinations and final theses. The programmes implemented in the field have a relatively small number of students (between 10 and 20 students in a single course), thus a personal approach is possible and conflicts and complications are resolved by informally discussing the situation with students. The same approach is used when considering the proposals. In the programmes implemented in the branches, the students turn to the director of the branch, who further communicates the students' objections, complaints and proposals to the programme director and the study director. Students also make suggestions directly to the teaching staff. For example, in the academic year 2020/2021, when developing "Course Paper I", it was found that full-time working students have significant difficulties in drafting the paper of the required quality in the allotted time at the current lecture load and the need to combine studies, work and family life. In consultations with students, it was decided to re-schedule the study plan in such a way that the term papers would be developed in parallel with the internships, permitting students individually to plan their study time more freely. Likewise, during this academic year it was found that one lecturer did not provide clear information about the task,

scope and evaluation criteria of independent assignments in the first lesson. Personal discussions with lecturer were aimed at preventing the situation from recurring in the future. No formal proposals and complaints have been submitted during the reporting period. Students are positive about the informal approach which ensures the fastest and most effective problem solution, and apparently it has worked well so far, as programme directors and teaching staff solve matters to the point and are interested in successful and collegial collaboration with students. An important role here is played by the status of the professional programme and the possibility to observe the code of professional ethics of social work in everyday work, which includes, among other things, the guidelines of professional ethics in the process of social work education.

2.4. Provide information on the mechanism for collecting the statistical data, as developed by the higher education institution/ college. Specify the type of the data to be collected, the collection frequency, and the way the information is used to improve the study direction.

2.4. Characterization of the statistical data collection mechanism established by the University of Latvia

In order to control, analyse and forecast the dynamics of the number of students, the UL twice a year collects data:

- characterizing the number of applicants and matriculated students and their profile, such as secondary education institution, year of graduation, assessment obtained in secondary education examinations, age, gender, previous higher education and the assessment obtained in such examinations;
- number of students, broken down by faculties, study programmes, study levels, study years, forms and types of studies, source of financing for studies, status of studies - ex-matriculated on the grounds of academic non-compliance, ex-matriculated on the grounds of financial non-compliance, ex-matriculated on the grounds of completion of studies, on academic leave.

In order to control the progress of students' studies and the implementation of the programme, the UL collects data on:

- intermediate assessment and final assessment of students' study courses, broken down by type of examination, final results of final examinations, weighted average grade; data are collected once a semester;
- completion of the study programme in accordance with the requirements set for the acquisition of the programme, broken down by study semesters, parts of the programme (obligatory part, restricted elective part, free elective part and others, according to the structure of the programme); data are collected once a semester;
- students' academic failures in credit points, by semesters, parts of the programme, study courses; data are collected once a semester;
- fulfilment of the tuition fee schedule provided for in the student agreement, broken down by study programmes and semesters.

For the directors of the programmes implemented in the study field "Social Welfare", these data are important in the monitoring and planning of daily work, enable following the progress and individual performance of students. At the beginning of each semester, the teaching staff are provided with this data at the meeting of the Department of Sociology.

In order to obtain information for planning and efficient use of study resources, the following statistical information is collected in connection with study programmes:

- financing of study places, broken down by state-funded, UL-funded and student-funded study places;
- the number of student scholarship recipients and the number of studies and student loans.

In order to evaluate the satisfaction of students, graduates and employers with the study quality and its results, as well as to implement the necessary improvement measures, the UL organizes and compiles data from the following surveys:

- a freshman survey of the first year students on the commencement of studies, which is conducted electronically once a year. The aim of the survey is to explore the motivation for choosing the study field and programme and sources of information, as well as to evaluate the application and registration process in order to improve the student engagement package. Data is collected and analysed by the UL Department of Studies, but the necessary improvement measures are proposed by the UL governance, faculty governance, programme directors, in cooperation with the UL administrative departments;
- a freshman survey of the first year students on the first study experience, also conducted electronically once a year. The aim of the survey is to obtain an evaluation of the first study experience at the UL and study support measures to improve the study environment and facilitate student adaptation. The data are collected and analysed by the UL Department of Studies and presented to the faculty governance and departments. The necessary improvement measures are proposed by the faculty governance and the Department of Studies in cooperation with other departments of the University of Latvia;
- In order to find out the students' opinion about the content of the study courses and to obtain the evaluation of the work of the teaching staff, every semester an electronic survey is conducted on the study courses, including study internship, term papers and final papers. Data is collected by LUIS and is available to faculty, programme directors, and the Dean of the Faculty, as well as the Department of Studies. The data is analysed by the programme directors, the dean, and the necessary improvement measures are proposed by the programme director, the dean, and the council of study field. The results are used to prepare annual reviews of study areas, as well as to develop study programme development plans.
- In order to obtain students' evaluation of the study programme for its further development, improvement of the study process, improvement of the quality and study environment, a survey of the students of the last study year on the study programme as a whole is conducted. The survey is conducted electronically once for each study programme. The results are compiled by LUIS and made available to programme directors and the Dean of the faculty. The data is analysed by the programme directors, the dean, and the necessary improvement measures are proposed by the programme director, the dean, and the council of study field. The results are used in the preparation of annual study field reviews, study field self-assessment reports for the field accreditation and re-accreditation, and in the preparation of study programme development plans.
- In order to identify the main reasons for discontinuation of studies and to facilitate the reduction of drop-out rates, a survey is conducted of students who have expressed a wish to discontinue studies or have already discontinued studies. The survey is conducted throughout the academic year, while the are compiled by the Department of Studies once a semester.

For the directors of the programmes implemented in the study field "Social Welfare", these data are important in the monitoring and planning of daily work, enable following the opinion of students about organisation of study process and quality of studies. At the beginning of each semester, the

teaching staff are provided with the general overview of this data at the meeting of the Department of Sociology. In accordance with the requirements of the Department of Studies, personal discussions are conducted with the teaching staff, whose performance has been assessed by students as weak or mediocre, and the dynamics of performance assessment is followed. Admittedly, not all students complete the surveys in good faith, and some groups of students tend to be significantly more critical (or, conversely, more generous in their assessments) than others. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the dynamics of assessments over a longer period of time (at least 2–3 years or times when the lecturer has taught the course). The survey on the reasons for dropping out of studies is also partially effective, as it provides only a formal insight that is suitable for UL statistics, but proves to be less helpful for an in-depth assessment and analysis of the reasons for dropping out, to determine whether the reason can be influenced / redressed by UL or not. Consequently, programme directors always conduct personal interviews with students who plan to discontinue their studies. It should be emphasized that students are satisfied with the quality of studies, the reasons for dropping out are mainly related to the difficulties in reconciling work, studies and family life. It should be emphasized that the average age of students in social work programmes at both bachelor's and master's levels is higher than the average age of students in academic programmes (for example, in sociology), thus, the responsibilities outside studies are higher and more demanding both at work and in private life.

To monitor the application of study results in professional life and the progress of graduates in labour market, UL collects the following data:

- The aim of the graduate survey is to obtain an evaluation of the graduates' satisfaction with the quality of the acquired programme, the knowledge, skills and competences acquired at the University of Latvia, the contribution of the graduated study programme to their employment;
- The aim of the employers' survey is to determine how employers assess the compliance of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by UL graduates.

For the directors of the programmes implemented in the study field "Social Welfare", the data of these surveys are important in monitoring the results of study work and especially in development planning, allowing to follow the career of graduates and the needs in the labour market. However, surveys of graduates and surveys of employers are carried out once in a few years, because in the reporting period a master's programme was operational, and in this programme admission and completion of studies takes place only once in two years, and the number of students is not large (on average 10). With a small number of graduates and employers, focus group discussions, which take place every few years, and regular, informal talks with employers are more effective. The programme director is actively involved in working groups of the sector in the Ministry of Welfare, discussions and events in the sector, thus practically maintaining a contact with graduates and employers, as well as following current events in the industry.

Each year, the coordinator of the study field in cooperation with the study programme directors prepares a report on the operation of the study field and the programmes therein during the academic year. During the preparation of the report, statistical data is collected and analysed, and the obtained information is used for the development and implementation of the improvements. The report includes the following data, which are collected and analysed annually:

- the list and the total number of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Latvia which implement study fields;
- number of study programmes in other study fields implemented by HEI, broken down by study level and indicating the total number;
- description of study programmes implemented in other study fields by HEIs;

- the number of students in the programmes, indicating the total number, the number of students matriculated in the 1st study year, the number of graduates;
- mobility of teaching staff during the reference period;
- involvement of employers in programmes during the reporting period;
- number of programme students studying abroad in exchange programmes;
- number of international students in programmes;
- summary of the results and analysis of the students' survey on the study courses of the programme;
- summary of the results and analysis of the student survey on the programme as a whole.

In the study field "Social Welfare", the collection and analysis of the aforementioned statistical data is performed in the preparation of the annual report for the needs of quality assurance management. The obtained information is discussed with the council of study field and with the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the programmes, and used in the development and implementation of the study field improvement plan. The report of the study field "Social Welfare" has always been assessed as good and the experts have expressed their approval of the progress and development direction of the programmes.

2.5. Description and assessment of the integration of the standards set forth in Part 1 of the ESG. Specify which of the standards are considered a challenge and which require special attention.

2.5. Characterization and assessment of the integration of ESG part 1 standards

The University of Latvia applies the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG) to ensure the quality of studies. Information about the compliance with the ESG in quality assurance of studies is reflected in Table 10.

Table 10. Implementation of "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG) at the University of Latvia (see Annex).

The main directions of activities in compliance with ESG continuous quality advancement at the UL are: design and approval of programmes; student-centred learning, teaching and assessment; teaching staff and teaching resources and student support. The study field "Social Welfare" fully complies with the requirements and recommendations of all standards and guidelines specified by the ESG, and closely follows the procedure set by the University of Latvia. Increased attention is paid to teaching staff and learning resources, as well as to support for students, which is determined by several factors – 1) at present, a rapid breakthrough in the development of the study field is underway, and due to the increase in the number of students, the teaching staff is being expanded, which requires dedicating an even greater attention to the professional development of teaching staff and other issues identified in section 1.5; 2) the students of social work mainly are people who already have a life experience, they mostly study part-time (all students in branches are only part-time) and work, therefore increased attention is paid to student support, availability of resources and other aspects identified in section 1.6.

II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)

3.1. Provide information on the system developed by the higher education institution/ college for determining the financial resources required for the implementation of the study direction and the relevant study programmes. Provide data on the available funding for the relevant study programmes, as well as the sources of the funding for the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities and their use for the development of the study direction. Provide information on the costs per one student (for each relevant study programme of the study direction) by specifying the headings indicated in the calculation of costs and the percentage of the funding among the indicated headings.

3. Provision of resources and support for study field

3.1. Financial support system

The available funds of the study field "Social Welfare" implemented by the University of Latvia are determined by the state budget funding (grant) and income from tuition fees.

The amount of state budget funding for a particular study year is determined in accordance with the agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science and the University of Latvia. The amount of funding is affected by:

- number of study places financed from the state budget,
- baseline cost of the study place in the given year,
- level of the study programme,
- cost ratio for the thematic area of education.

The tuition fees for each programme at the University of Latvia are determined annually based on the estimated cost of the study place (which includes all forecasted costs – staff remuneration, technical support, infrastructure maintenance and administration costs), the expected number of students and market situation. The tuition fee for a particular student is fixed for each study year for the duration of the studies.

Both state budget funding and tuition fees are aggregated in the UL total budget for the fiscal year. The UL budget is established in accordance with the general principles of budgeting and the budgetary procedure established for each year.

The core structural unit implementing the study programme plans the tuition fee revenue for the given calendar year by submitting it to the Department of Studies, which collects it and submits it to the Finance and Accounting Department for the overall UL budget.

According to the budgeting principles of the University of Latvia, the expected revenue of the study field is distributed as follows: 74% of the direct and direct eligible costs of the study field (remuneration of teaching staff, costs of materials and services, costs of premises and other core structural units); undirect costs (covering all supporting processes – information resources, marketing, IT, financial accounting, management, provision of sports, cultural and social activities, development programmes) – 26%.

The faculties concerned, in cooperation with the Finance and Accounting Department, plan their direct costs for the financial year in question.

The Finance and Accounting Department prepares a joint draft of the UL budget and the Chancellor

of the UL directs it to the Senate Finance and Budget Commission, from where it is forwarded to the UL Senate for approval.

After the approval of the current year's budget, the estimated revenue and expenditure of the respective core structural unit are imported into the IT system of the UL, which is linked to the accounting system and provides an opportunity to track the actual financial situation of the core structural unit throughout the year.

The dean and executive director of the faculty, who implement the operational financial management of the core unit, are responsible for the rational use of the financial resources of the respective faculty within the set budget. In the case of the study field "Social Welfare", when the location of study implementation in the professional bachelor's study programme is both FSS and UL regional branches, financial planning takes place in cooperation amongst UL dean and executive director, and the directors and executive directors of UL Regional Centre, as well as the heads of the UL branches. The Finance and Accounting Department is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the budget and preparing appropriate reports for UL management and controlling organizations.

The budget of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Latvia for 2020 was approved in the amount of EUR 2 584.109, of which 61.8% is funding for the provision of the study process, which, in turn, is planned to increase by 9% in 2021.

The financial resources necessary for the implementation of the study programmes in the study field "Social Welfare" are provided mainly by the state budget grant for the full-time regular study process and the income of the UL Regional Centre from the tuition fees for the programme implemented as part-time regular studies. In 2020, EUR 80 732 from the state budget grant were allocated at the disposal of the faculty to meet the direct costs of the study field "Social Welfare", while the revenue of the Regional Centre from tuition fees in 2020 amounted to EUR 62 400.

Similarly, the research projects implemented within the study field "Social Welfare" and in cooperation with other scientific disciplines at the faculty contribute to financial provision, allow lecturers to develop excellence in science, create opportunities for students to participate in research, and often provide additional resources of the Library of Social Sciences, as well as supplement the material and technical resource basis of the faculty. Research is funded mainly by attracted projects and is an important resource to ensure the involvement of teaching staff in research and to balance the workload of academic and research activities, which are crucial aspects in the research university. In the reporting period, more than EUR 465 000 have been attracted in research, and the development of the field significantly benefits from the professional development of the teaching staff, new knowledge created in research and international contacts established in the research process, linking research and studies, and promoting knowledge transfer.

Based on the data of January 1, 2021, the study direction "Social Welfare" has 17 students enrolled in the second semester of full-time regular bachelor's studies and 20 students in higher level studies, in total 37 or 6% of UL FSS full-time regular students, while at the UL branches in Kuldīga, Cēsis and Alūksne, the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" counted 55 students enrolled in part-time regular studies during the spring semester of academic year 2020/2021.

The financial support of the full-time regular study form of the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" is currently fully covered by the state budget grant. Taking into account that the implementation of the professional bachelor's programme "Social Work" has started from the academic year 2020/2021, the costs of the programme are projected at the same admission results in the following years. The costs per full-time regular student are estimated at EUR 1613, where 46% are used for academic staff salaries, 13% – for salaries of general and auxiliary staff,

15% – other costs related to the implementation of the study programme, and 26% – indirect costs to cover the UL centralized service provision. The cost per student in the previous period, based on a detailed calculation in Annex "Calculation of the cost of the study programm", was EUR 1539.

In the reporting period, the part-time regular form of professional bachelor's programme "Social Work" is implemented in the branches of the University of Latvia in Kuldīga, Cēsis and Alūksne. Costs per student are estimated at EUR 1482, where 40% are the salaries of the academic staff, 17% – the salaries of the general and auxiliary staff, 12% – other costs related to the implementation of the study programme and 32% – indirect costs to cover the UL centralized service provision. The costs in the other branches of the UL (Bauska, Madona, Tukums, Jēkabpils) are estimated to be similar.

The professional master's study programme "Social Work", sub-programme of 80 CP is funded mainly from the state budget – 91%, tuition fee income is 9%, while the professional master's programme "Social Work" in 60 CP format can be acquired only with personal funding. The cost of one study place for the acquisition of 80 CP sub-programme is EUR 2549, where 49% is allocated to the salaries of the academic staff, 12% – to salaries of general and auxiliary staff, 13% – to other costs related to the implementation of the study programme, and 26% – to indirect costs. In turn, the cost of one study place in the 60 CP sub-programme is EUR 2639. Of this amount, 47% is allocated to the salaries of academic staff, 12% – to the remuneration of general and study support staff, 15% – to other costs related to the implementation of the study programme, and 26% – to indirect costs.

Annex "Calculation of the cost of the study programm" contains a detailed cost calculation for the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" full-time regular and part-time regular forms, as well as for the professional master's study programme "Social Work", sub-programmes of 80 CP and 60 CP.

3.2. Provide information on the infrastructure and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study direction and the relevant study programmes. Specify whether the required provision is available to the higher education institution/ college, availability to the students, and the teaching staff (the specific equipment required for the relevant study programme shall be indicated in Part III, Chapter 3 below the respective study programme).

3.2. Infrastructure and logistical support

The University of Latvia, Faculty of Social Sciences (UL FSS) provides the study and scientific process in premises of 4693.1 m^2 equipped for study, administrative and scientific process, which constitute 57.9% of the total area of the building. The auditoriums intended for the study process have the total area of 2122.2 m^2, which consists of 25 auditoriums of different sizes and capacities (see Table 11), which are shared by all study programmes implemented at the faculty. 10 of the 25 auditoriums are fully or partially equipped with modern stationary multimedia projectors, computers and sound equipment. To ensure the study process in classrooms that are not equipped with a projector and a computer, the faculty uses mobile / portable kits.

Table 11. Study premises of the UL Faculty of Social Sciences

Auditorium size	Number	%

up to 50 seats	9	36.0%
51 to 80 seats	12	48.0%
81 to 120 seats	2	8.0%
121 and more seats	2	8.0%
TOTAL	**25**	**100.0%**

In order to ensure the practical side of the study process, part of the study process is implemented in two computer classes equipped by UL FSS (a total of 75 student work stations). The material and technical base of the computer class – computers, licenses and programs – is renewed year by year according to the financial situation of the faculty.

In order to ensure a high-quality and continuous study and scientific process, an evaluation of the necessary investments in the renewal of the material and technical base is performed every year and an investment plan is developed. The faculty's infrastructure, material and technical base can be assessed as good andfully suitable for the needs of study field. In 2023, the faculty should be relocated to the UL Academic Centre, House of Letters.

Students and lecturers will have the opportunity to study and work in contemporary planned and equipped premises, which will allow for a complete modernisation of the learning environment, technologies used in the study process, efficient and rational use of infrastructure, as well as cross-sectoral cooperation.

The study material and technical base at the UL branches allows to fully ensure the conditions required for the acquisition of the study courses included in the study programme. High-quality visual equipment is available in the study auditoriums – whiteboards, interactive boards, document cameras, screens, multimedia projectors, laptops, audio and video equipment. Detailed information on the premises of the UL branches, provision and technical base of study materials can be found in Annex 2 "Information on implementation of the study field in UL branches", subchapter 6.

Wireless internet network is available in all UL premises (including branches), providing connection to laptops, tablets, personal data carriers, smartphones. The internal stationary computer network provides communication between students, lecturers and administrative staff.

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 direction 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 direction, 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 options for the subscription to the databases.

3.3. Methodological and informative provision

General description of UL Library

The UL Library is included in the Library Register of the Ministry of Culture (BLB1000) and accredited until 2022 in the status of National Library.

Access to library information resources and services, opening hours

The basic principle of the library's work is the accessibility of its services to all users, with all departments ensuring the same range and quality of services.

The eight sectoral libraries offer all the services facilitating independent studies. The services are provided in accordance with the UL Library Terms of Use approved by the UL Rector's Order No. 1/39 of 1 February 2017. According to the terms of use, the services are available to UL students, faculty and academic staff, other libraries, students of other universities, as well as any resident. The UL Library provides free basic services and paid ones.

The opening hours of the sectoral libraries are conveniently adapted to students' needs. The libraries are open from 9 am to 9 pm on weekdays – with some of them open from 9 am to 6 pm – and from 9 am to 5 pm on Saturdays. The Library of Natural Sciences and the Library of the House of Science are open to UL personnel (students, academics, research and general staff) 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Three of the sectoral libraries are open for visitors throughout the year, including summer.

At the Library of Natural Sciences, the UL personnel have the 24-hour access to free-access stock, self-service book ordering, extension and return, computers, and cell phone charging point. Having purchased copy cards at the Library of Natural Sciences, users have the access to the copy machine at any time of the day. The Library of the House of Science offers its readers a free-access collection, two self-service systems for book lending, extension and return, and a self-service wall for using laptops. The UL Library is the first in the Baltic States to provide such facilities and services. The self-service wall is equipped with 36 laptops. Using a student or staff card, UL personnel can take and use laptops for 6 hours a day, moreover, this is not restricted to the library area, but anywhere in the building too.

The library premises of the Faculty of Social Sciences, containing the collection pertaining to social sciences, are open to students 55 hours per week in times convenient to students. Users are provided a free-access collection with all necessary publications. The Social Sciences Library occupies three rooms with a total area of 544 m².

The Social Sciences Library provides 84 workstations for visitors, of these 18 are equipped for using computers. The library also is equipped with three scanners, two printers and a copier.

As a consequence of the state of emergency situation restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the UL FSS Library's opening hours have been reduced, however, students can pick up and return the ordered books two days a week. To enable preparation of the final theses, excerpts from books are also digitized in order to provide students with the necessary support in recourse to scientific literature, simultaneously reducing the need to use public transport, which is especially important for students living far from Riga.

Free services

- Electronic ordering/reservation/extension of use of information resources from the Union Catalogue of the libraries of national importance and obtaining information resources for use on site in a library reading room or for taking home.

The service is available to the registered users of UL Library accessing the Union Catalogue from any mobile device and places with the Internet access.

- Delivery of information resources

When ordering information resources of any library in the Union Catalogue, UL academic staff, researchers and doctoral students can indicate the most convenient place – a sectoral library – to receive the reserved information resource. For other users, this option is available only by ordering information resources from the Storage.

- Self-service

All sectoral libraries offer users the self-service scanning and five of the sectoral libraries provide self-service book ordering, extension and return. UL students, academic and general staff can use self-service to obtain one of the 36 laptops in the Library of the House of Science for their temporary use. The service is available 24/7 through the use of UL student or staff card.

- Free access to the reading room, computers and the internet

In the reading rooms, users can make use of reference books and periodicals, stationary and portable computers (both of UL Library and their personal ones), Internet access, including WI-FI which works in all UL buildings. The UL Faculty of Social Sciences Library has 84 workstations (18 computerised and 66 non-computerised).

- Night subscription, pre-booking of information resources

The aim of the Night Subscription service is to provide UL students, faculty and staff with the opportunity to borrow some on-site information resources from the closing of the library to its opening, or to pre-book resources for use at a defined time. The service is free of charge, but if the information resource is not returned on time, the loan is subject to a penalty in accordance with the price list of the UL Library paid services.

- Delivery of information resources in summer

With this offer users can, once per week, order necessary information resources from the Storage and receive them at the most convenient sectoral library (at Raiņa bulvāris, Library of Natural Sciences, Library of the House of Science).

- Information and counselling

One of the main areas of library work is the provision of information services, i.e., counselling, providing information, user training and research support.

The library consultant and staff of sectoral libraries provide UL students, academic, research and general staff with bibliographic, thematic, factographic, addressable, clarifying, and other information and consultations.

The main reference consultant of the UL Library (at Aspazijas bulvāris) provides official and general information services. Users can receive individual consultations and information from the library via email: info-bibl@lu.lv, by phone: 28623551, WhatsApp 28623551 or using *Skype* address: UL Library consultant. Any librarian of a sectoral library also provides consultations on site, on the phone, by email or by *Skype*.

In cases of uncertainty, readers can also use the "Ask the Librarian", "Frequently Asked Questions" and "Express Your Opinion" options available in the Library section of the UL Portal.

- User training

The library actively works with its target audiences - students at all programme levels, academic, research and general staff - not only to promote information literacy, but to provide in-depth knowledge and skills at working with electronic resources

The Library also organizes and conducts presentations, seminars and computer classes, on site and remotely. It also provides hands-on study tours of the Library to allow users to obtain the skills needed for working with free-access collection, self-service equipment and office machinery, such as self-service scanners and copiers, thus, enhancing their learning competence.

The Library has developed a training system with seminars offered for different levels of study programmes.

Special attention is paid to foreign students and the library has prepared and delivers presentations in English "Step by step, the library of UL – for you!". Computer classes are also provided for acquiring skills in using e-resources.

For undergraduate students, the presentations include "Step by Step: The Library of UL – for You!" and the seminars "Electronic Union Catalogue and Primo for Your Successful Studies" (90 min), "Get to Know E-Resources" (90 min), "E-Resources in the Field" (90 min.), e-course "Introduction in Information Literacy" (C part course). Students in the Master's study programmes and residents are offered the seminar "E-Resources in the Field" (90 min) providing advanced skills in working with the relevant electronic resources.

The seminars for doctoral students include "Introduction to the process of academic publishing" (90 min.), "Bibliography and citation management tools" (90 min.), "Use of "Web of Science" and "Scopus" databases in Studies and Research" (90 min.).

Academics and researchers are offered the following seminars: "Bibliography and citation management tools" (90 min.), "Use of Web of Science" and "Scopus" databases in Studies and Research" (90 min.), "Upload of Publications and Editing of Publication List in ULIS" (90 min.), "Deposition of Research Results into UL E-Resource Repository" (90 min.).

Library staff conduct seminars in the UL branches all over Latvia, i.e., in Alūksne, Bauska, Cēsis, Jēkabpils, Kuldīga, Madona and Tukums.

Students of UL branches can request the necessary information resources, as follows:

1. By reserving them in the joint catalogue or PRIMO, and picking them up in person afterwards. Information resources are issued through ALEPH. If the student contacts the librarian and informs about his / her wish to receive books in one of the branches, then they are sent to the required branch by UL transport.

2. By writing an e-mail to info.bibl@lu.lv or szf-bibl@lu.lv, indicating the necessary information resources on the list. A request is then prepared, and the status of the selected books in the ALEPH system is changed to the specific branch. In the ONE DRIVE document, the student's name, surname, ID number, book titles, barcodes and issue date are marked in the table next to the respective branch. The prepared package is delivered to the respective branch by UL transport on certain days, while the student is sent an e-mail with information about the term of book loan, usually for a month with the possibility of extension.

3. Students can also submit their request to the study methodologist of their branch, who will then contact the University of Latvia faculty library employee and inform about the necessary books. In this case the books are also prepared and delivered using the procedure described above.

4. In cases when the director of the branch travels to Riga, she/he offers to bring back the books ordered by the students. Likewise, in these situations, e-mails are previously sent informing of the requests and preparations are made in a timely manner.

5. If the requested book is located in another library, for example, the National Library of Latvia, then an Interlibrary loan request is sent. The student or branch methodologist is informed about it

by e-mail. When the UL library receives the requested book via the Interlibrary loan, the table of contents is scanned and the required book section is sent separately electronically.

6. If all copies have been loaned, the librarian offers to scan the required section of the book from the available reading room copy.

7. If there is no reading room copy, the student is informed that currently the required book is not available, but will be sent as soon as possible.

Fee-based services

The list of fee-based services and price list of the UL Library is approved by the UL Rector's Order No. 1/111 of 07.03.2016.

- Compiling a list of information resources

The UL Library specialists prepare a list of information resources on the user's topic of interest, the theme appeared, for example, in the process of studies or developing some work. The user can order the list electronically by filling in an electronic application form.

- Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and International Interlibrary Loan (IILL)

The UL Library offers its readers to order unavailable information resources from other libraries and document repositories in Latvia through the Interlibrary Loan, and those not available in Latvian libraries from libraries and document repositories worldwide using the International Interlibrary Loan Service. It also procures print-outs of electronic copies of academic articles and re-send them by email.

Library collection, collection replenishment procedure

The UL Library compiles the collection in accordance with the fields of studies and academic work of the UL and the requirements of its study programmes. Information is provided for all levels of the UL studies, that is bachelor's, master, doctor's, as well as for research. The priority in replenishing the collection is the purchase of e-resources.

New acquisitions for the collection are carried out in accordance with the UL centralised funding, which is approved annually by a UL order. The allocated funding is used for purchasing necessary books, for subscription to specialised databases and periodicals. The Library carries out the acquisition of information resources at the request of UL academic staff, at the proposal of the Student Council or at the suggestion of Library staff, with all requests being entered into the ULIS and approved by Dean or Executive Director.

In 2021, the Library makes available 1.8 million units of information resources to its readers. In accordance with the UL study and research infrastructure, the UL Library collection is assembled in 8 sectoral libraries and Repository.

Literature available in the Library for implementation of the study field

Information resources of the study field "Social Welfare", published in the period from January 1, 2015 to December 30, 2020 are available in the UL Library (ULL) general collection and in the UL Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) Library collection.

The printed information resources required for the accreditation of the UL study field **"Social Welfare",** available in the UL FSS Library make up **67%** of the total number of resources available at the UL Library, selected and specified according to pre-defined criteria – time period and keywords in this field. Of the total number of resources by languages, the following are available: in English – 71%, in Latvian – 24%, other – 5%.

The concept of social well-being encompasses a number of interdisciplinary fields, including psychology, medicine, pedagogy, etc. and therefore cannot be considered in a narrow sense.

Table 12. Information resources of the study field "Social Welfare", published in the period from January 1, 2015 to December 30, 2020 and available in the collection of UL Library (ULL)

Total information resources available at the UL Library collection published in the period from 01.01.2015 to 30.12.2020, related to the study field "Social welfare"						
Printed publications (titles/copies)			**Publications according to language (titles/copies)**			
Books	Publication series, periodicals	Other types of publications	Latvian	English	Russian	Other languages
679/1113	8/65	18/31	257/627	404/528	22/27	22/27

Total: **705** titles / **1209** copies

Table 13. Information resources of the study field "Social Welfare", published in the period from January 1, 2015 to December 30, 2020 and available in the UL Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) Library collection

Total information resources available at the UL FSS Library collection published in the period from 01.01.2015 to 30.12.2020, related to the study field "Social welfare"						
Printed publications (titles/copies)			Publications according to language (titles/copies)			
Books	Publication series, periodicals	Other types of publications	Latvian	English	Russian	Other languages
439/653	11/71	19/39	116/294	345/461	6/6	2/2

Total: **469** titles / **763** copies

The level of digitisation of the collection

In cooperation with the UL Department of Information Technologies, the UL Library ensures the free online access to the e-resources repository of the University of Latvia DSpace Home (lu.lv). For the convenience of users, a mobile version of the repository is also offered. To guarantee constant free online access to UL scientific achievements, the Library, authors of publications, UL structural units or UL publishing representatives regularly replenish the repository with electronic versions of their publications, digitised information resources of cultural and historical value, UL personnel's PhD theses and their summaries. The Library offers digitized publications which are subject of prohibition of copyright for use on-site reading rooms of sectoral libraries.

At the moment the various collections of electronic resources at the UL Faculty of Social Sciences comprise **3955** publications (book titles), specifically, **176** publications in the Social Policy and Social Work Organisation section.

E-resources

In agreement with the UL Strategic Plan, the UL Library is increasing the share of e-resources and developing remote access to e-resources.

By modernizing the availability of electronic resources, the latest technology web service Primo

Discovery and SFX has been introduced in the UL Library.

In 2020, the UL subscribes to 34 e-resource platforms (which contain e-books *DawsonEra*, *ProQuestEbookCentral*,e-journals *Cambridge Journals Online, Emerald eJournals Premier, Oxford Journals Online, Sage Journals Online, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink Contemporary Journals, Taylor & Francis Social Science & Humanities Library*, reference resources *LETA online news, Nozare.lv, Letonika*, tools *SAGE Research Methods*, mixed-format databases *EBSCOhost, JSTOR,OECD iLibrary, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, Scopus, Time Higher Education, Web of Science Core Collection, ZentralBlattMATH*). They make available 17 592 full-text e-journals (including individual subscriptions), 2 5 million full texts of doctoral and master's theses from around the world. The UL also connects to 122 credible open access databases with multi-format materials.

Each year, the Library offers, on average, 110 new electronic resource. Overall, on 09.12.2020 the UL Library had purchased 1440 eBooks, with ~ 187 500 eBooks available by the ProQuest Ebook Academic Complete subscription.

Once a year the UL Library evaluates and analyses the usability of the subscribed databases as well as regularly provides its users with trial access to various databases. Information about the e-resources is available through the UL Library webpage "E-resources from A to Z"(E-resursi no A līdz Z (lu.lv)).

UL gives the possibility to use the subscribed electronic information resources (databases, e-book platforms) outside the UL network by logging in with a ULIS username and password.

Subscribed specific e-journals of UL Faculty of Social Sciences

IR (the e-version of the journal supplementing the printed version available at the UL FSS Library)

Subscribed multidisciplinary e-resources that include the materials for the UL study field "Social Welfare"

Cambridge Journals Online – Cambridge University Press full-text database of multidisciplinary e-journals that offers seeking information in more than 300 scientific journals, as well as related online resources. The full texts in such fields as sociology, communication science, politics, philology, etc. are available in the database. *The UL has an access to e-resource archive up to 31.12.2018.*

EBSCO Academic Search Complete – a scientific information resource with information from more than 12 500 full-text journals, including 7 300 scientifically peer-reviewed journals. The database also offers to view annotations from 12 500 journals and 13 200 books, reports and conference proceedings. *The UL has an access to the resource up to 31.12.2020.*

Emerald eJournals Premier – a full-text e-journal database, which provides access to a total of more than 1 million full-text e-journal articles, especially in the social sciences. *The UL has an access to e-resource archive up to 22.04.2020.*

JSTOR – a database of journals, books and primary sources. JSTOR offers the journals published by the leading publishing houses: *Sage Publications, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Blackwell Publishing, Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, John Wiley & Sons* etc. The chronological coverage of journals reaches back to the beginning of their publication.

LVS Latvijas standartu tiešsaistes lasītava *(LVS Latvian Standards Online Reading Room)* – a set of documents of the Latvian National Standardisation Institution.

Oxford Journals Online – the collection provides access to 350 authoritative and leading journals published in collaboration with the world's leading scientific organizations. The database includes

full-text journals with high citation index indicators in various sciences – social sciences and humanities, etc.

ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global – the world's largest database of dissertations and master's theses contains almost five million works in various fields, including social science studies.

SAGE Journals Online – the full-text journal database of publishing house SAGE, featuring articles from more than 1 100 journals. The database encompasses various sciences – social sciences and humanities, etc.

SAGE Research Methods – a library of research methods with more than 1 000 books, reference collections, journal articles and other resources from the world's leading scientists in the social sciences and humanities. SAGE Research Methods is an important online tool for researchers. Two collections are available at the University of Latvia – SAGE *Research Methods – Books and Reference*, and SAGE *Research Methods Cases*.

ScienceDirect – publishing house Elsevier database of humanities and social sciences, as well as other sciences. The database contains information on several thousand journals and books published by Elsevier. The full texts of about 2650 journals are accessible to the University of Latvia, mostly available from 2002 to the latest issue of the journal, as well as more than 350 e-books.

SpringerLink Contemporary Journals – full-text database of Springer Nature journals. It offers the UL scientific and academic staff, as well as students access to more than 6 million articles from more than 3 000 journals, covering social, humanitarian, and other fields of science.

Taylor & Francis Social Science & Humanities Library provides access to full texts from more than 1 100 scientific journals. The broad thematic coverage includes sociology, business, health and social care, and other fields.

Scopus – database of bibliographic and citation information of multidisciplinary scientific releases by the publishing house Elsevier.

Web of Science – Clarivate Analytics database, which contains the most important scientific information about more than 12 000 journals in social, educational, humanities and exact sciences, offering bibliographic and citation information, summaries and other information of articles. The database offers extensive search, selection and analysis of results, including information from 1990 onwards.

E-books purchased by the UL Library in the study field "Social Welfare"

VLeBOOKS – e-book platform, where **2** e-books purchased by the UL Library are available, which include materials for the UL study field "Social Welfare" from the world's leading publishers (for example, Psychology Press, etc.).

ProQuest Ebook Central Academic Complete Collection – a subscription of a collection on the e-book platform ProQuest eBook Central, which includes subscription to **1482** editions (published in the period from 2018 to 2020 (inclusive)) and more than **56** editions published in the period from 2015 to 2020 and corresponding to the UL study field "Social Welfare" from the world's leading publishing houses (for example, Springer Publishing Company, Elsevier Science & Technology, Routledge, John Wiley & Sons, SAGE Publications, Taylor&Francis Group, IGI Global, Emerald Publishing Limited, Palgrave Macmillan UK, etc.).

Open resources, containing materials for study field "Social welfare"

ArXiv.org, BMC, Bookyards, Bookboon, Cambridge Dictionaries Online, Cogent OA, Cognitive

Science Society's Journal Archive, Dart-Europe E-theses Portal, De Gruyter Open, Digital Library of Information Science and Technology, D-Lib Magazine, Directory of Open Access Books, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Diva, EBSCO Open Dissertations, E-LIS (E-prints in Library & Information Science), EuDML, Europeana, European Film Gateway, Eurostat Data EUscreen, Google Scholar, Internet Library of Early Journals, Journals for Free, Laboratorium, Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva Latvijas Valsts kinofotofonodokumentu arhīva audiovizuālo, foto un skaņas dokumentu digitālā krātuve (Latvia State Archive Collection of Audiovisual Documents for Cinema, Video, and Electronic Records), Latvijas Vēstnesis (Official Gazette of the Republic of Latvia), Liber Quarterly, Database of the Central Statistical Bureau of the Republic of Latvia, MDPI, OAPEN, Online Dictionary of the Social Sciences, Open Access Research Database (OARD), Open Humanities Press, Periodika.lv, PLOS Journals, Politikas plānošanas informācijas sistēma (Database of policy planning documents POLSIS), Project Gutenberg, Raduraksti (archives of genealogy), Rare Book Room, Science Books Online, SpringerOpen, World Digital Library, World Intellectual Property Organization databases (WIPO), Zenodo

The library collection is generally in line with the implementation of studies and the development of research, as every year it is added with the most up-to-date information resources in accordance with the information needs of the academic staff and students.

Table 14. Statistics of database use (see Annex)

3.4. 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.

3.4. Assessment of the recruitment and selection of academic staff

There are three teaching groups at the UL: academic staff who hold their academic positions for a limited period of tenure on the basis of elections, acting academic staff and visiting academics, as well as contract (hourly-paid) lecturers.

In the case of elected academic positions, as well as the acting academic staff, the recruitment and selection are regulated by the *Regulatory enactments on academic and administrative positions at the University of Latvia* (https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti_EN/5/nr_153_akad_visp_amatu_nolikums_eng.pdf). According to the regulations, the following academic positions exist at the University of Latvia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher, lecturer, researcher, assistant, research assistant.

The decisions on the need for certain positions are made by the faculties. Competitions for elected academic positions are announced openly. Public calls for applications for the elected academic positions, including the function and terms of reference for the respective position, are published on the University of Latvia's website and in the official gazette *Latvijas Vēstnesis*. Any person who conforms to the requirements specified by the Law on Higher Education, as well as the requirements for the position specified in the terms of reference may apply for the position.

The applicants for academic positions must deliver an open lecture, which is evaluated by two reviewers, who issue their opinion on the quality of the lecture. The electoral procedure is carried out either by the decision-making body of the relevant department (in the case of teaching staff, the faculty council) or, in the case of associate professors and professors, by the Council of

Professors of the relevant field. Elections must be held within three months of the date of the invitation to tender. The candidates are voted by secret ballot. An applicant who has received more than half of the votes of the members present with the right to vote shall be considered elected. According to the Law on Higher Education Institutions, lecturers are elected for a term of 6 years. At the end of the term, the faculty decides on the need to announce a new competition. There are no restrictions on the term of office.

In accordance with the UL regulations, minimum requirements are set for all applicants for academic positions, i.e., knowledge of the official language in accordance with regulatory enactments, knowledge of foreign languages to the extent necessary for the performance of academic duties and continuous improvement of their academic and scientific qualifications. Other requirements differ across academic positions, for instance, to qualify for the position of assistant professor, the candidate has to have a doctoral degree, while the requirements for associate professors are more demanding, i.e., they must have considerable academic and pedagogical experience, extensive list of publications and experience in scientific research projects.

If the Senate chooses to decline the proposal from the department and not to publish vacancies, a visiting academic may be recruited; while if the respective department considers a member of contract (hourly-paid) staff to be more relevant to the development plans and needs of the faculty, the prospective employee concludes a contract for a specified period (usually for the duration of the study course). In such cases, the decisions relating to the candidates' recruitment and selection are taken by the structural units, i.e., faculties. Centralized in these cases is only control that ensures that the unit's remuneration is in compliance with internal and external laws and regulations.

The Rector of the University of Latvia concludes an employment agreement with the person elected for the entire term of office.

The programmes of the UL study field "Social Welfare" are implemented at the Department of Sociology, where professors, associate professors and assistant professors, who are Latvia's leading specialists in several disciplines – Prof. Aija Zobena (social theory, rural sociology), Prof. Tālis Tisenkopfs (social theory, sustainable development), Assoc. Prof. Baiba Bela (qualitative research methods, social sustainability), Assoc. Prof. Līga Rasnača (social policy, theories of social work), Assoc. Prof. Inta Mieriņa (migration, political sociology, not involved in the implementation of social work programmes), Assist. Prof. Ieva Ozola (social work), Assist. Prof. Mareks Niklass (quantitative research methods, employment), Assist. Prof. Jurijs Ņikišins (quantitative research methods, political sociology, not involved in the implementation of social work programmes), Assist. Prof. Renārs Felcis (quantitative research methods, not involved in the implementation of social work programs). The teaching staff elected at the UL FSS Advanced Social and Political Research Institute – researcher Anvars Zavackis (social work in the sphere of criminal justice), research assistant Aiga Romāne Meiere (social work), research assistant Endija Rezgale-Straidoma (social work) are also involved in the implementation of the UL study field "Social Welfare".

During the reporting period, for the first time the lecturers with the qualification of a social worker were elected to teaching positions – social work specialist Ieva Ozola was elected as assistant professor, and Aiga Romāne Meiere and Endija Rezgale-Straidoma – as research assistants. Attracting qualified and motivated teaching staff improves the quality of study programmes and reinforces research.

Guest lecturers and lecturers from other structural units of the University of Latvia, as well as professionals of the field are especially important for professional study programmes and strengthen the links among current events in the field, the labour market and studies, thereby playing a decisive role in the implementation of the UL study field "Social Welfare" programmes.

3.5. 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 qualification (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.

3.5. Promotion of academic staff professional growth and development opportunities

One of the key aspects of Human Resource Development as stipulated in the UL Development Strategy for 2016–2020 is the advancement of the UL academic staff professional development system. Also, in LU Strategy 2027, the growth of academic staff continues to be an important development aim that is covered in the aim "Development and Excellence oriented personnel policy". The UL is aware of the changes in the role of academic staff, who play a key role in ensuring the quality of studies and acquisition of knowledge, skills and competence, and therefore, in line with the UL Strategy a single UL academic staff professional development system is introduced by amending internal regulatory documents and offering to academic staff professional development opportunities. The professional development of the UL academic staff is organised in accordance with the Republic of Latvia Cabinet Regulation No. 662 of 11.09.2018 – Regulation on Requirements for Necessary Education and Professional Qualification, and Procedure of Continuing Professional Development of Educators, where paragraph 16 states: "Educators of higher education and colleges shall, by the end of the term of their election, undertake a vocational development programme on innovations in the higher education system, or the higher education didactics, or the management of educational work at 160 academic hours (including at least 60 contact hours). Professional development may include international mobility and participation in conferences and seminars, as attested by the documents submitted, and is in line with the objective of professional development."

The Department of Studies of the University of Latvia and the Adult Education Centre of the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art of the University of Latvia provide informative, consultative and methodological support to the UL academic staff in the higher education didactics. The Adult Education Centre of the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art of the University of Latvia offers a vocational development programme "Didactics of Higher Education: modern theories and practices", as well as continuing education programmes "Pedagogical aspects of the development of study programmes in higher education", "The professional development of the competence of the student trustee", etc. Coordinator of the UL study field "Social Welfare" and programme director, Assoc. Prof. Baiba Bela, as well as programme director, Assoc. Prof. Līga Rasnača benefitted from the mastering university didactics courses.

On the completion of the continuing education programme "Methodology for the formulation and evaluation of the learning outcomes", programme directors and academic staff target the updating of their study courses and the mapping of the learning outcomes of the respective study programmes and study courses Coordinator of the UL study field "Social Welfare" and programme director, Assoc. Prof. Baiba Bela, as well as programme director, Assoc. Prof. Līga Rasnača, and the study director and research assistant Aiga Romāne-Meiere have used the opportunity to acquire the continuing education programme "Methodology for Formulation and Evaluation of Study Results".

The UL academic staff can advance their English-language skills by completing the continuing

training programme "Professional English Language Enhancement Course for Academic Staff" at the Centre for Applied Linguistics of the UL Faculty of Humanities. The coordinator of the UL study field "Social Welfare" and programme director, Assoc. Prof. Baiba Bela has taken this opportunity. Within the framework of ESF operational programme, specific objective 8.2.2, Assoc. Prof. Līga Rasnača and Aiga Romāne-Meiere have also used the opportunity to advance their English language skills.

Young academics and doctoral students from various UL doctoral programmes, each spring semester, are increasingly using the possibility to attend the continuing education programme "Introduction to teaching in higher education".

To promote collegial learning and identify good practices in teaching, the continuing education programme "Promoting the colleague experience exchange of academic staff" where academic staff carries out peer observation, thereby systematically promoting the exchange of teaching experience among academic staff and contributing to evolvement of the UL as an organisation that learns.

UL academic staff working with freshmen students are a special target group for continuing training and as such are offered a continuing education programme "Professional development advising first year students".

In particular, academic staff in continuing education programmes welcome the opportunity of study process modelling, testing new learning methods.

All programmes have been developed by analysing the professional development needs of academic staff in the context of higher education trends. As part of the deployment of the academic staff training system, the UL Department of Studies conducted an electronic survey of the UL academic staff, which allowed to pool information on their ongoing professional development needs, as well as encouraged a number of Faculty members to express their readiness to participate in the development and offering of continuing education content to their peers in line with professional and didactic development. needs.

On the implementation of each programme, a survey and an evaluation of the outcomes is conducted among the attendees of the programme. Participation in continuing education programmes is voluntary or else might be a recommendation issued by the leadership of the faculty. By and large, the UL faculties organise thematic seminars on topics relevant to the academic staff of the respective faculty.

Particularly actively the professional development opportunities have been used under the auspices of the European Social Fund support instrument specific objective 8.2.2. "Strengthening Academic Staff of Institutions of Higher Education in Strategic Specialization Areas", project No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/010 "Academic Staff Renewal and Continuing Professional Development at the University of Latvia" (hereinafter – SO 8.2.2). The opportunity offered by SO 8.2.2 of a traineeship in a company representing the sector has been used by Assoc. Prof. Līga Rasnača (conducted research at SIA "Vaivaru psihiatrs" on the possibilities of cooperation between social workers and psychiatrists in providing support to people with mental health disorders), and research assistant Aiga Romāne Meiere (worked at SIA "AC Konsultācijas" on the project "Development of Methodology for Social Work with Families with Children" at the development of the methodology, which is implemented within the framework of the European Social Fund project No. 9.2.1.1./15/I/001 "The Development of Professional Social Work in Local Governments"). Research assistant Aiga Romāne-Meiere and Assistant Professor Mareks Niklass have attended the training "Scientific Activity and Publishing Skills". B. Bela, L. Rasnača, A. Romāne-Meiere have improved their professional foreign language skills, while digital skills training has been attended by Assoc.

Prof. Baiba Bela and Assoc. Prof. Gunta Kraģe. E. Rezgale-Straidoma receives the support of a doctoral student within the framework of this project for the purposes of updating the studies in accordance with research interests, taking into account the latest theoretical findings.

The lecturers involved in the study programme also use other professional development courses according to their professional interests. For example, research assistant Aiga Romāne-Meiere has attended Erasmus + training – "Competences - Quality - Quantity in work with young people at risk", as well as attended training relevant to her professional development – "Adolescent Resilience: Promotive factors that inform prevention", held in Bulgaria in the framework of the project "Empowering child's strengths for violence prevention" (OAK Foundation). Gunta Kraģe, whose involvement in the programme is important with regard to development of studies at the UL regional branches and the component of social pedagogy, simultaneously with training offered under SO 8.2.2 has professionally improved the skills and competence related to project management in several continuing education courses offered by RISEBA University of Applied Sciences – "Project Management Tools" (2 CP), "Project Management Methodologies" (1 CP), "Project Management with Agile, Scrum, Lean, Kanban", Professional Development Education Programme (160 hours). Assoc. Prof. Baiba Bela has participated in the master class "Global Citizenship Education" (12 hours) led by Dr. Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti and offered by the Center for Education Initiatives.

During the preparation of the study field self-assessment report, information about the growth and qualification opportunities used by the lecturers involved in the UL study field "Social Welfare" during the reporting period was collected and summarized in Table 15.

Table 15. Assessment of teaching staff growth promotion (improvement of didactic skills and raising qualification) (see Annex).

3.6. Provide information on the number of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study direction, as well as the analysis and assessment of the academic and research workload. Provide the assessment of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff over the reporting period, the mobility dynamics, and the issues which the higher education institution/ college must tackle with regard to the mobility of the teaching staff.

3.6. Description and assessment of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field

The study field "Social Welfare" is implemented by elected UL lecturers (professors, associate professors, assistant professors, researchers and research assistants), as well as professionals and employers of the field, all together 35. From them 28 lecturers are involved in the training of students of the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work", while 21 lecturers teach the students of the professional master's study programme "Social Work" (including Civil Defense and Environmental Protection lecturers, who provide these courses throughout the University of Latvia, and these courses do not constitute a part of 80 CP). The workload of the elected UL teaching staff also includes work with students in sociology and other study programmes. A particular exception is Assistant Professor Ieva Ozola, who as an experienced professional in the field has been elected as an assistant professor without a doctor's degree, based on the regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers on specialists with relevant experience in implementing professional studies, – specifically to ensure the social work programme study process, and she does not teach

in academic study programmes of related fields. In order to ensure high quality in programme implementation, the advantages provided by the intellectual resources of the University of Latvia are fully exercised, involving four professors (A. Zobena, T. Tisenkopfs, I. Reinholde, J. Rozenvalds), four associate professors (B. Bela, B. Holma, L. Rasnača, A. Kučs), five assistant professors (I. Ozola, M. Niklass, G. Kraģe, D. Apse, A. Karpinska), as well as lecturers and research assistants (A. Romāne-Meiere, E. Rezgale-Straidoma, A. Zavackis, Z. Radzobe and others). Involving the professionals of the field is essential in the professional programme and experienced social work specialists make a significant contribution to student education – supervisor E. Apine, social work expert in the field of criminal justice D. Vanaga, social work project management expert A. Rieba, social services development and evaluation expert K. Veispale, personnel management professional E. Selga, gerontologist S. Rudoviča. Professionals from other fields are also involved, to name, among other specialists, psychiatrists A. Koņevina and M. Loseviča, as well as psychologist L. Rēdliha.

The academic and research workload of the teaching staff is well balanced, because a significant part of the teaching staff workload at the University of Latvia, as a research university, consists of work in research projects, which enables advancement of excellence in research and promotes a closer connection between studies and research. Closer links with research are reinforced by involving researchers and research assistants elected at UL FSS ASPRI in the implementation of the programmes. According to the specific character of the professional study programme, a significant proportion of professionals in the field are involved in its implementation, thus ensuring a close connection with the field of social work practice, the current events in the field and awareness of the labour market needs. In order to forge an integrated and unified approach to student-centred education, synergies among the teaching staff of various courses and a sense of team, starting from academic year 2020/2021, informal meetings have been established, which once a semester gather the teaching staff of the basic courses and specialization courses (compulsory parts and optional compulsory parts) of the field. Annex 6 contains information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field, the elective status of lecturers and taught study courses. Curricula vitae of lecturers, which provide a detailed insight into professional biographies, are enclosed in Annex 8.

The main challenge for the implementation of the study field "Social Welfare" in the current accreditation reporting period was the expansion and strengthening of the teaching staff for the resumption and development of the professional bachelor's study programme. An assistant professor's position was created in the field of sociology and social work, in the sub-field of social policy and organization of social work. With a view toward renewal and development of the teaching staff, two perspective doctoral students and UL ASPRI research assistants have been involved in the study process. In the next accreditation period, as the number of students increases, it is planned to expand and strengthen the base of elected lecturers in the field of sociology and social work, sub-field of social policy and social work organization, creating at least one new lecturer's position and two new assistant professor positions. Recruitment of the teaching staff necessary for implementation of the study field is implemented purposefully, flexibly responding to the needs of study improvement and advancement, as well as the development trends in labour market and social work as a profession.

In the framework of study field "Social Welfare", 7 Erasmus exchange agreements have been concluded for the mobility of students and teaching staff. Every year, 1–2 lecturers use mobility opportunities. Although the outgoing mobility of teaching staff directly related to Erasmus exchanges can be described as formally low, there are several factors that must be considered: 1) the limited number of Erasmus mobility places; 2) the high proportion of sector's professionals involved in the programme implementation who are not eligible for Erasmus mobility, and 3) the

intensive involvement of elected teaching staff in science and active international cooperation in research. The international mobility of sector's professionals does not appear in the statistics, nevertheless, they significantly expand their international experience through their professional activities. It should also be taken into account that teaching staff mobility is mainly implemented through scientific cooperation (participation in conferences, international project consortia events, etc.) and mobility projects. For example, within the framework of the EEA and Norwegian grant programme project "Mobility in Political Science and Sociology" (EEA/NFI/S/2015/024), several members of UL FSS teaching staff in the spring semester of the academic year 2015/2016 had the opportunity to go on a research and experience exchange trip to Oslo and the Akershus University College Faculty of Social Sciences (Oslo, Norway) (I. Reinholde, B. Bela, L. Rasnača, E. Rezgale-Straidoma). If mobility within the framework of scientific activity is taken into account, then every year each of the elected lecturers of UL FSS has at least 1–2 international mobility experiences, although this mobility does not appear in Erasmus mobility statistics. The visibility of mobility is more of an accounting problem, since Erasmus exchanges are not sufficiently available due to a limited number of exchanges and lecturer workloads, consequently, the lecturers actively use more convenient forms of mobility and engage in international exchanges much more broadly than just under the auspices of Erasmus. Assessing the contribution that Erasmus exchanges could make, in the next accreditation period the mobility of lecturers involved in the implementation of basic courses in the study field "Social Welfare" to higher education institutions with which cooperation agreements have been concluded in this particular direction will be more purposefully stimulated and supported. Incoming mobility of lecturers, which has some benefits from SO.8.2.2 supports engagement of foreign guest lecturers (e.g., guest lecturer Jonas Buechel taught the course "Social Work in a Multicultural Society" in the spring semester of 2020/2021), however, Erasmus exchange mobility is not sufficiently used.

3.7. 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.).

3.7. Student support system

The students of the UL have access to academic support, career development support and psychological support.

The aim of academic support is to provide students with information and advice on study issues for the entire period of studies. Academic support includes the implementation of the first year of studies support programme, advice on the study process (content of study programme, choice of study courses, legal documents regulating the UL study process), information on tutorials, counselling and workshops on study skills (note-taking, reading for academic purposes, active listening, examination anxiety, time management, libraries and Internet resources).

Academic support in academic matters is managed centrally by the UL Department of Student Services and the responsible persons with the respective faculties: director of the study programme, study advisor, trustee, mentor, coordinator, academic staff, and the UL Student Council and faculty student councils. The University of Latvia Library provides consultations on the use of the library and Internet resources. Table 16 shows examples of key tasks to be performed by student support units / staff.

Table 16. Examples of key tasks to be performed by student support units / staff

Structural unit / staff	Key responsibilities
Faculty Student Council	UL SC advocates the opinion of students, solves various issues regarding distribution of budget places, adaptation of foreign students and the mentoring system, as well as organizes various events for UL students ("Aristotle", "Sports Games", etc.).
Trustee	Informs students of the developments in the study process, provides individual support to those students who face difficulties entering academic environment of the UL and initiates adaptation and team-building measures.
Coordinator, study advisor	Provides study advice, assists in day-to-day issues related to the study process, files study records, advises on the Information System of the University of Latvia (LUIS).
Mentor	A senior student who helps freshman students adapt to the study environment and share their experience.
Student Council (SC)	The purpose of the SC is to represent UL students and to defend their rights and interests. The SC represents the students' interests in academic issues by electing student representatives to the decision-making bodies of the University of Latvia, considering issues related to the study process and its improvement.
Director of the study programme	Organises and manages the development of a study programme in accordance with the requirements of the specific scientific or economic sector, cooperates with employers and internship sites in matters of study content, evaluates and approves particular study modules and individual study plans, etc.
Department of Student Services	Organises the admissions process, advises the Faculty and students on mobility programmes, study, social and cultural issues, advises and organises career couching and consultancy. Organises adaptation measures for students, provides training for trustees, mentors, organises cooperation with employers, etc.

The aim of career development support is to provide students with comprehensive support and develop their lifelong skills to identify their interests, abilities, skills, experience, thus enabling them to take informed decisions as regards education and/or occupation, and ensuring that they can condition their future career, study and life paths. Career development support is provided by the Career Centre of the UL Department of Student Services in collaboration with the respective

faculties.

The Career Centre provides the following services to students:

- personal counselling for future studies and careers, setting up an individual career plan, providing support for the transition between different levels of education and from education to the labour market;
- workshops for career planning skills ("Career planning and development skills", "My first job interview", "Stress management", etc.);
- Internet resource – Career Centre home page (information available in both Latvian and English) https://www.karjera.lu.lv/ and Career Centre (lu.lv) provides up-to-date information on career planning issues, occupational information and the labour market;
- the "E-career" electronic resource https://ekarjera.lu.lv/lv/login and https://ekarjera.lu.lv/login, which enables students to quickly find their internship placements and jobs by adding their CVs to a database and employers to recruit employees by listing information on job vacancies in the database.

Psychological support is provided by the Department of Student Services. A psychologist-consultant provides psychological support to students in solving personal and study issues arising from studies (relationship issues, conflict resolution, emotional difficulties). A psychologist provides personal counselling and telephone counselling.

Special events aimed at integrating domestic and international students are organised in cooperation with the ESN (*Erasmus student network*), thus introducing international students to Latvian culture and traditions and promoting international and domestic student interactions.

In cooperation with the association of persons with disabilities and their friends "Apeirons", an infrastructure assessment has been carried out regarding accessibility for people with special needs. The obtained results are taken into account both in the construction of the new infrastructure and in the development of study programme provision. UL FSS has a lift, which enables mounting the stairs at the entrance to the faculty for students with mobility impairments. In these cases, studies are organized only in the auditoriums on the ground floor. Computer classes and the library are also located on the ground floor and are accessible to students with reduced mobility. Until now, there have been no students in the study field "Social Welfare" who would require such provisions for accessibility of premises, but the faculty is ready to admit such students – the infrastructure is suitable for students with functional impairment.

Within the faculty and regional branches, students can benefit from a wide range of academic support, which is fully in line with the needs of students, while the University of Latvia on centralised basis offers career development support and psychological counselling. Within the framework of academic support, students are provided with information and consultations on study-related matters throughout the study period by the study programme directors, study director, curators, administrative staff and study methodologists at the faculty and UL branches. Academic support includes the support programme offered during the first study year, consultations on the study process, information on consultations given by course lecturers. A service hotel is available for full-time regular students studying in Riga whose declared place of residence is outside the capital. The students attending the UL branches are provided with additional library support (scanning of the necessary scientific literature, assistance in searching for electronic resources), especially in the stage of writing the diploma thesis. The limited number and size of scholarships, which is not in line with the needs of students in the entire higher education system in Latvia, should be pointed out as a disadvantage. The decision of the Ministry of Education and Science to terminate the support it used to grant by repaying the study loan, if the graduate worked in the acquired profession, is considered disadvantageous by the students of part-time regular social work

programmes. Given that there is no state budget funding for part-time regular studies, while the average salary in the field is inadequately low, the state has thus denied an important support tool for prospective and new social workers, negatively affecting access to higher education closer to home and deterring financially disadvantaged students. On the other hand, the student support that is provided under the auspices of the university is in line with the needs of students of the field.

II - Description of the Study Direction (4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation)

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

4. Scientific research and artistic creation

4.1. Characterization and assessment of the trends in scientific research and/ or artistic creation of the respective study field, their compliance with the goals of the UL and the field of study as well as the level of scientific and artistic creativity

In the UL study field "Social Welfare", scientific research is carried out in the field of science "Sociology and Social Work" (5.4), mainly in the sub-field "Social Policy and Organization of Social Work" and "Other Sub-Fields of Sociology and Social Work", also yielding a significant contribution to implementation of interdisciplinary research. The current report does not cover research in the field of sociology and social work that is not directly and closely related to the study field "Social Welfare", as several UL lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme have implemented research in related fields, concerning topics like education, public administration, policy analysis, rural development, sustainable development, migration, human rights, etc. Publications and studies related to these areas will not be considered here.

In the field of sociology and social work, the strategy of scientific research is determined by "University of Latvia Research Programme 2015–2020" (approved by the Senate on 25.01.2016, decision No. 268). It defines four development directions: 1) development of scientific capacity and competitiveness; 2) compatibility of research to the needs of economy and knowledge transfer; 3) human resource development; 4) promotion of international scientific cooperation. The task of the research programme is to contribute to achieving the strategic UL development goal – scientific excellence. It stipulates that scientific research must be based on 1) study and research base funding for basic activities of higher education institutions; 2) performance funding (*ex-post* funding), which is granted for the achieved research results; 3) development funding (*ex-ante* funding), which is obtained through a tender. During the accreditation period, the research activity was implemented in accordance with the vision and mission defined for the social and legal sciences sector in the field of sociology, social and economic human geography and other social sciences, as well as the goals and tasks set for their achievement therein. In 2014, Latvia had the

lowest number of social scientists in the last 5 years, therefore the development of human resources is one of the main goals. Funding, the promotion of innovation, the development of results-oriented research (mainly through encouraging creation of high-level publications), as well as interdisciplinary, inter-institutional and international cooperation are also important.

The vision of research activity in the group of social sciences is to become competitive in the European research space, raising the visibility of the UL science sector in the Baltics and globally and contributing to the societal and economic development of Latvia. The research carried out in the field of social welfare follows the mission explore important questions in the domain of social sciences, questions essential for Latvian economy that have a high knowledge transfer and publication citation potential. Research in the field of sociology and social work is included in the University of Latvia priority research direction concerning societal challenges – "Public health, quality of life and national sustainability". The correspondence of the research carried out in the study field "Social Welfare" in the sphere of sociology and social work to the development directions and objectives of the University of Latvia Social Sciences and Law Sector Group is presented in Table 17. C*orrespondence of research implemented in study field "Social Welfare" in sector of sociology and social work to development directions and objectives of Social Sciences and Law Sector Group*   (see annex).

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.

4.2. Bridging scientific research and/ or artistic creativity with the study process

Linking scientific research with the study process is implemented in several ways:

- students (especially master's programme students) can become involved in research conducted by the academic staff of the field as participants of research, performing the functions of assistants, engaging in field work, etc., thus getting to know the research process better (see details in descriptions of specific study projects);
- students are involved in research work during the development of term papers, bachelor's theses and master's theses, as well as by giving them an opportunity to work in research projects, when appropriate funding is available (e.g., national research programme (hereinafter NRP) SUSTINNO, NRP CoLIFE);
- students use research elements in internship courses;
- the teaching staff of the field uses the results of their own and colleagues' research and knowledge to create and update the course content (e.g., the lessons learned in NRP SUSTINNO on issues of poverty, social exclusion or housing insecurity in the social policy course);
- the teaching staff of the field develops new study courses based on the theoretical conclusions tested in research projects and newly created knowledge (e.g., the courses "Family as a system" and "Phenomenon of violence in social work" have been developed on the basis of the theoretical analysis and empirical research results).

Linking scientific research with the study process corresponds to the practice accepted in the professional education of social work in the world and can be assessed as corresponding to the

study field development goal – to become one of the leading social welfare study and research centres in Latvia and the Baltic states.

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.

4.3. Characterization and assessment of international cooperation in scientific research and / or artistic creation

During the reporting period, international co-operation in the study field "Social Welfare" in the field of sociology and social work, sub-field of social policy and social work organization has been implemented in several directions – through active participation of lecturers in international conferences in Latvia and abroad, building research cooperation in scientific projects and through experience exchange, involvement in organizing international scientific events, writing applications for international research projects. From international cooperation benefit the teaching staff and students of the professional bachelor's degree programme "Social work" and the professional master's degree programme "Social work".

During the reporting period, the elected academic and scientific staff of FSS involved in the implementation of the study field of the University of Latvia have participated in international conferences with more than 70 reports, of which more than 30 have been dedicated to the topics of social sector. Participation in the conferences enables following the news in the sector, to establish valuable cooperation contacts, to affirm the competitiveness of Latvian scientists and researchers, to test ideas for high-level publications. The aim of the next reporting period is to become more actively involved in international conferences dedicated to social work themes, since to date the scientific topics devoted to social policy and social problems have been predominant. During the reporting period, the lecturers of the study field "Social Welfare" in cooperation with the European Society for Social Drug Research (ESSD) and the Ministry of the Interior organized the 30th ESSD conference. Every year, the conference is held in another European city, and in 2019 for the first time in Riga. The conference brings together researchers working on social issues pertaining to drugs. It was attended by researchers from 15 European countries, and 32 papers on a variety of topics were presented over three days. The teaching staff is also actively involved in several research networks of the European Sociological Association – RN03 "Biographical Perspectives on European Societies"; RN26 "Sociology of Social Policy and Social Welfare", RN36 "Sociology of Transformations: East and West". In 2016, in cooperation with ESA RN03 "Biographical Perspectives on European Societies", a conference "Biographical Research: Inequality and Innovation" was organized, the number of attending sociologists reached 30, representing 7 countries, more than 12 universities and research institutes. The teaching staff of the study field "Social Welfare" also participates in the international conference "Riga Readings in Social Sciences" organized by UL FSS ASPRI, which is an opportunity to invite cooperation partners to Riga and make new contacts. Teaching staff also participates in the initiatives of the Anti-Poverty Network Latvia (EAPN Latvia), and European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) events.

During the reporting period, five international research projects exploring the topics of social

welfare have been implemented. At least as many international project applications have been developed but have not received funding. The implementation of the 9th round of the European Social Survey (ESS) allows for participation in a large-scale international comparative study (ongoing). Project "Probation Observatory. Networking and Training" (EU EC Justice programme, 2017–2021) enables advancement of cooperation in the sphere of criminal justice, which ended this year with an international conference and seminar in *ZOOM* format. The teaching staff of the study field "Social Welfare" has been involved in two international projects related to youth research ("Regional Youth Study in the Baltic States" (2020–2021) and "KNOW and DO". Agency for International Programmes for Youth (2014–2018)). The most significant achievement is the involvement in the EU 7th Framework Programme Project "Social Innovation on Active and Healthy Aging for Sustainable Economic Growth (SIforAGE)" (2014–2016), which allowed for strengthening and further development of studying active aging, which already involves the new generation of scientists.

Particular emphasis should be placed on involvement in the Nordic-Baltic Doctoral Network in Social Work (NBSW), in which both researchers and students have participated in summer schools outside Latvia and hosted summer schools in Riga (in 2013 and 2019). The network has been established since 2009 as a co-operation project of Nordic-Baltic countries. Its task is to promote co-operation in scientific research and increase the study capacity of social work. Under the auspices of the network, Doctoral Summer Schools of Social Work are organized every year in one of the seven member states (Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). In 2013, the four-day-long summer school "Social work as a discipline: Knowledge, theory and research" yielded discussions about the identity of social work, the role of theory, diversity of traditions and other issues, and the participants also improved their academic writing skills. In 2019, the theme of the summer school was "Measuring outcomes of social work" and for five days under the guidance of professors young researchers listened to lectures, participated in workshops, analysed and improved their scientific publications, as well as participated in a field trip to social service providers in Riga.

The aforementioned international activities resulted in a joint publication with foreign partners, dedicated to the problems of social work during the Covid-19 pandemic (Rasnača, L., Tzivian, L., Niklass, M. (2020). Latvia. In: Dominelli, L., Harrikari, T, Mooney, J., Leskošek, V. & Tsunoda, E. K. (eds.). *Covid-19 and social work: a collection of country reports*. Covid-19 Social Work Research Forum).

Future plans for international co-operation in scientific research include strengthening links with professors and leading researchers involved in the Nordic and Baltic school by developing joint project applications and publications. It is planned to expand the scope of cooperation by becoming more actively involved in international social work organizations.

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 direction by providing examples and the summary of the quantitative data on the activities in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation relevant to the study direction over the reporting period, for instance, the publications, participation in conferences, activities in the field of artistic creation, participation in projects by the academic staff members, etc., by listing the aforementioned according to the relevance.

4.4. Characterization and assessment of scientific research and / or artistic creation of the academic staff in the respective field of studies

During the last 6 years, the academic staff of the study field "Social Welfare" has prepared more than 30 publications in the field of social welfare in the sub-field of social policy and organization of social work. Scientific articles have been developed in periodicals and collections of articles, departmental collective monographs, publications in conference proceedings, etc., including 9 articles indexed in the Web of Science and SCOPUS databases (see Annex 9). Assistant Professor Ieva Ozola is a member of the editorial board and an active author of the periodical released by the Ministry of Welfare "Sociālais darbs Latvijā" ("Social Work in Latvia"), and she has authored 7 publications in this periodical during the reporting period, as well as supervised creation of a regular column of this periodical "Sociālā darbinieka ekokarte" ("Social Worker's Eco-map") since 2018. Publications in conference proceedings are dedicated to issues such as poverty reduction, housing deprivation, care for seniors in long-term care institutions and others. Issues relevant to Latvia are addressed in the collective monographs "Ilgtspējīga attīstība un sociālās inovācijas" ("Sustainable Development and Social Innovations", 2018),), "Inovatīvi risinājumi ceļā uz ilgtspēju: sabiedrība, ekonomika, vide" ("Innovative Solutions on the Road to Sustainability: Society, Economy, Environment", 2018), "Jaunas pieejas sociālās attīstības mērīšanā: cilvēki, teritorijas, pašvaldībās" ("New Approaches to Measuring Social Development: People, Territories, Municipalities", 2015). There are fewer international publications in books, such as Bela, B., Rasnaca, L. & Stepcenko, A. (2018). Intergenerational Solidarity in Community Practice. Urdaneta, E. & Worsfold, B. (eds). Ideas, Products, Services. Social Innovation for Elderly Persons. Lleida: Editions and Publications of the University of Lleida, pp. 41–60 – prepared as a result of the 7th Framework Programme Project SIforAGE. 2021 will see a publication of two notable books in the theoretical literature of social work in Latvian language with great contribution by the lecturers of the field– Assistant Professor Ieva Ozola, research assistant Aiga Romāne-Meiere, and contract lecturer Evija Apine. One of the books is dedicated to theories of social work, the other – to social casework. The professionals of the field involved in the study work are predominantly focused on social work practice, they are the authors of several social work methodologies, but they have authored significantly less scientific publications in the peer-reviewed editions than the elected academic staff of the University of Latvia. In many cases, the publications of the professionals involved in the study work do not correspond to the field of sociology and social work, but instead to the fields of law, psychology, psychiatry, management science or other related fields.

Characterizing the involvement in projects, the teaching staff of the study field "Social Welfare" in the reporting period implemented 4 projects of national importance (involved in three national research programmes – CoLife, DemoMig, SUSTINNO and ESF project "Development and transfer of innovative regional development diagnostic tools"), 5 international research projects, several contract works, of which the development of a social work terminology dictionary should be especially emphasized (ongoing, 2019–2022). In the sphere of social pedagogy, which is closely related to the sphere of social work, two ESF projects have been implemented with the involvement of study field teaching staff ("Support for Reducing Early School Leaving" and "Establishing and Implementation of Support Programmes to Develop Support System for Young People at Risk of Social Exclusion"). Sector's professionals involved in social work programmes have carried out a number of applied research projects in the spheres of access to social services, violence against children, childcare outside the family, and criminal justice. It should be emphasized that many have been involved in practical projects, training of professionals, counselling, as well as providing supervision to social work specialists.

During the last six years, the elected academic and scientific staff of UL FSS has participated in international conferences with more than 70 papers, of which more than 30 address the topics pertaining to social sphere, as mentioned above. These are international conferences both in Latvia (e.g., "Research for Rural Development", "Riga Readings in Social Sciences") and outside Latvia (e.g., regular conferences of the European Sociological Association (ESA), the XXI Congress of the International Association for Analytical Psychology, International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) Conference "Social Protection and Human Dignity", etc.). The guest lectures of the teaching staff should also be noted. For example, Ieva Ozola has given a guest lecture on Latvian social security system at a cooperation conference organized by the University of Istinyne in Istanbul, Turkey. Baiba Bela has presented a guest lecture on the application of the biographical approach at a doctoral school at the University of Eastern Finland in Joensuu, Finland.

Both bachelor's and master's students benefit from scientific research and international cooperation. At present, the core of the study field's academic staff is most actively involved in scientific research activities. In the next reporting period, it is planned to purposefully develop and expand the involvement of lecturers in research, involving colleagues who so far have not continuously engaged in research. It is also planned to promote experience exchange mobility and cooperation for attracting international projects, without reducing the current activities in international cooperation, continuing active participation in international conferences and development of publications for peer-reviewed journals in the field.

4.5. Specify how the involvement of the students in scientific 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 direction in scientific research and/or artistic creation activities by giving examples of the opportunities offered to and used by the students.

4.5. Characterization and assessment of student involvement in scientific research and/or artistic creation

Students are involved in scientific research in several ways:

- students (especially master's programme students) have the opportunity to participate in research conducted by the academic staff of the field as research participants, performing the functions of assistants, engaging in field work, etc., thus gaining furthering their knowledge of the research process (for more details, see specific study project descriptions). For example, in April 2020, master's students conducted interviews on the implementation of social work under the Covid-19 pandemic emergency conditions, which were used for a feasibility study in the national research programme "Life with Covid-19: Evaluation of overcoming the coronavirus crisis in Latvia and recommendations for societal resilience in the future".
- students are involved in research work during the development of term papers, bachelor's theses and master's theses, and have a chance to work on research projects, when appropriate funding is available. For example, in the national research programme SUSTINNO project "Social dimension of sustainability and social innovation", students developed master's theses under the guidance of the teaching staff in accordance with the project theme and thus contributed to creation of new knowledge.
- students can prepare a publication based on the results of the study work. For example,

Liene Piķe, a graduate of the master's programme, used this opportunity to prepare an article "The use of genogrammes study method in social work with families with children" and to publish it in the Ministry of Welfare periodical "Sociālais darbs Latvijā" ("Social Work in Latvia"), No. 2/2017

During the reporting period, the students of the master's study programme gained more in terms of involvement. In the next reporting period, every effort will be made to make the benefits of student involvement available to students in both programmes. The involvement of students in research projects plays an important role in advancement of social work research and in renewal of teaching and research staff.

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 study direction subject to the assessment, by giving the respective examples and assessing their impact on the study process.

4.6. Characterization and assessment of the forms of innovation applied in the study field

Several applicable innovations are implemented in the study field "Social Welfare", such as product innovations, process innovations and organizational innovations. Product innovations can be observed in the development of new study content, responding to the demand of the labour market and developing courses that were not previously on offer, and in the development of study materials. For example, in the reporting period the courses "Family as a System", "Phenomenon of Violence in Social Work", "Social Entrepreneurship" were developed. Process innovations can be observed in innovations in the learning process organisation. For example, during the reporting period, the e-learning platform (MOODLE) has developed significantly, offering several interactive solutions for the diversification of the learning process, which are actively used on a daily basis as tasks, tests, forum. Study tours are also being developed, expanding students' understanding of social work practice and strengthening the orientation toward work-based learning, which has not previously been a widely used form of the study process in higher education. Organizational innovations are characterized by improvements in the programme management model. During the reporting period, there was a transition from study programme councils to study field councils, creating a broader interdisciplinary scope and enhancing the synergy of intellectual capital. The University of Latvia Department of Studies has started to hold the UL programme director meetings at least twice a year, in which, jointly assessing the achievements, the participants inform about the news and discuss the tasks of the next semester. It strengthens the sense of cooperation and mutual support between the Department of Studies and programme directors, and improves the quality of study process management. Overall, these innovations enable creation of content, environment and process for social work studies that meets the latest trends and requirements in the European Higher Education Area.

II - Description of the Study Direction (5. Cooperation and Internationalisation)

5.1. Provide the assessment as to how the cooperation with different institutions from Latvia and abroad (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers' organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, scientific institutes, etc.) within the study direction contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction. Specify the criteria by which the cooperation partners suitable for the study direction 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 employers.

5. Cooperation and internationalization

5.1. Cooperation with various national and international institutions within the framework of the study field

Despite the small number of students in the reporting period, the study field "Social Welfare" upholds active cooperation with various partners – policy makers, employers, local governments, non-governmental organizations in the field, universities/colleges. It has significantly contributed to improving the quality of studies, programme development and knowledge transfer. The partners are targeted taking into account the objectives of the study programmes and the diversity of areas of specialisation of social work and the diversity of actors in the field of social welfare.

Programme lecturers, especially Assoc. Prof. Līga Rasnača and Assist. Prof. Ieva Ozola regularly cooperate with the Ministry of Welfare both as representatives of the university in various working groups (in connection with social policy issues, development of social services, development of social work as a profession, for example, in development of the professional standard, in elaboration of the National Development Plan for 2021–2027, which also included Assoc. Prof. Baiba Bela). Ilze Skrodele-Dubrovska, Director of the Methodological Management and Control Department of the Ministry of Welfare, has been involved in the final commission of the master's study programme for many years, thereby ensuring that the ministry in charge of the sector has a direct insight into the quality of young professionals' education and training at the UL. Cooperation with employers is essential for ensuring closer links between the labour market and studies in several ways – provision of internships, implementation of study tours, linking study content with labour market needs, attracting sector's professionals to teach courses, involvement of sector's professionals in final commissions (Cabinet Regulation on the national standard for the second level professional higher education stipulates that in the final commissions 50% of the commission members must represent practicing professionals of the sector, high-level experts in their field), feedback on graduates' entry into the labour market and compliance of their knowledge and competence with labour market needs. Cooperation with employers is formalized both in cooperation agreements (see Annex 10) and it is further informally or formally upheld through contractual work relations. For example, co-operation with the Social Administration of the Riga City Council Welfare Department, its head Mārtiņš Moors (this includes formal co-operation agreement to provide internships, joint work in the editorial board of the periodical "Social Work in Latvia" and the editorial board of the social work terminology dictionary) is long-standing and versatile. Under SO.8.2.2, a formal cooperation agreement has been concluded with SIA "AC Konsultācijas", which is a consulting company specializing in research, elaboration of business and economic development projects, preparation of methodologies and scenarios (including development of social work methodology and social work scientific literature). The agreement provides for traineeship of

teaching staff in an enterprise operating in the sector, as well as for involvement of study programmes' teaching staff in the implementation of particular projects related to social work (for example, Ieva Ozola, Evija Apine, Aiga Romāne-Meiere are involved in the development of social work scientific literature).

Cooperation with local governments and local government social services, as well as their structural units is essential. It is necessary both for the provision of traineeships and internships, as well as for a deeper understanding of the social work realities in the regions. It should be emphasized that all the local governments where the branches of the University of Latvia are located are highly interested in ensuring that the University of Latvia would provide a high-quality social work education closer to the students' places of residence. Furthermore, research confirms what municipal leaders know from the experience that the local young people who leave to study in the capital rarely return. As mentioned above, schools are being closed, while the long-term care facilities are opened, and municipalities need to develop community-based services. The UL Regional Centre and branch directors, who have a sound knowledge of the local situation and maintain active contact with local governments and employers, are crucial in cooperation with employers in the regions. Here just one example of successful cooperation in academic year 2020/2021 are highlighted - Cēsis and Alūksne branches hold their first graduation of the bachelor's programme students, and the final commissions involve representatives of the respective local government employers so that they gain direct impression about the students prepared in the programme, while the UL representatives gain a direct experience of the assessment given by the employers in the regions to the quality of the UL students' theses, as well as the employer's perspective regarding the relevance of students' knowledge and competences to the needs of the region's labour market.

Cooperation with non-governmental organizations in the field is imperative – both with those uniting professionals, such as the Latvian Social Workers Association (LSWA) or the Latvian Association of Municipality Social Service Leaders, and with NGOs providing social services (such as the foundation "Sociālo pakalpojumu aģentūra" ("Social Service Agency"), association "Resiliences centrs" ("Resilience Centre"), and NGOs representing the interests of vulnerable social groups (such as "Cerību spārni"("Wings of Hope"), "Apeirons" ("Apeiron"), and others). Membership in an organization uniting sector's professionals enables following all current trends in the sector, participating in the processes and making a significant contribution to the development of the sector. Practically all the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the programme, who have the qualification of a social worker, are involved in the Latvian Social Workers Association. On the other hand, co-operation with NGOs in the field, which are providers of social services, vitally important for closer connection between studies and social work practice - the provision of internships, study tours, attraction of guest lecturers, as well as attraction of experienced contract (hourly-paid) lecturers. Representatives of NGOs, who are both members of the LSWA and employers in the sector, are involved as lecturers and as members of the final commissions, maintaining and strengthening the link between the study field of and the sphere of professional activity.

Cooperation with employers is an essential area of cooperation. As already mentioned, employers considerably overlap with the above-mentioned cooperation partners: municipal social services and social service providers from NGOs. Also state and private providers of social services are important employers and tehy are involved in targeted cooperation. Cooperation with employers takes place both in the provision of practice and in the quality management of the programme in order to identify their needs as well as their satisfaction with the preparedness of programme graduates for the needs of the labour market.

Participation in international social work professional and social work education organizations is

very important for the development and internationalization of the study field "Social Welfare". In order to participate in the global development processes of social work and the study field "Social Welfare", the lecturers hold the membership of the European Social Work Research Association (ESWRA), the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), as well as the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW).

Cooperation with other higher education institutions takes place mainly through research and predominantly with public higher education institutions. For example, cooperation with RSU is formed both in the project of developing a social work terminology dictionary and in the national research programme "Life with Covid-19". Cooperation in the development of study content takes the form of dialogue, discussing the strengths of each higher education institution and future development plans in order to avoid duplication and ensure the diversity of social work education and specializations in Latvia. There is a long-term cooperation in social policy research with both Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies and Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences. Cooperation with other higher education institutions in Latvia should be developed more intensively in the next accreditation period, mainly 1) in the strategic development planning of the field, in order to make more effective use of the strengths of each higher education institution, and 2) in the internationalization of the profession to ensure a more tenacious representation of the vision of higher education institutions about the development of social work as a profession in Latvia, because frequently the needs of practitioners and employers are much more mundane than global trends in professional development, which would promote advancement of social work in Latvia.

Cooperation with foreign higher education institutions takes place 1) within the framework of the *Erasmus* programme (as evidenced by the concluded 7 cooperation agreements available in Annex 12), 2) within the framework of other funding (e.g., the EEA-Norway grant programme project "Mobility in Political Science and Sociology" (EEA/NFI/S/2015/024), which supported research and exchange of experience at the University of Oslo and Akershus, which implement several bachelor's and master's degree programmes in the field of social welfare and can afford very narrow specialization in some of them, such as the master's programme in child welfare), 3) without any particular funding and in relatively informally (e.g., in the Nordic-Baltic Doctoral Network in Social Work), 4) cooperation within science and research projects (e.g., SIforAGE, PONTES projects). The internationalization of studies has been significantly facilitated by the UL project SO.8.2.2, which has enabled involvement of two foreign guest lecturers in the study process – community social work and social planning expert Jonas Buechel (Germany) and expert in issues of homelessness Marie Therese Haj Ahmad (Germany), her surname at the start of the project – Reichenbach. The German tradition of social work is one of the historically oldest and strongest, Germany also upholds long-standing, strong traditions in social work education. Taking into account the dominant Anglo-Saxon approach, especially in the scientific literature, this cooperation allows to diversify the range of social work schools and traditions represented in education, thereby expanding students' understanding of the global diversity of social work. In the next reporting period, purposeful cooperation with foreign higher education institutions with an excellent education in the field of social welfare should be forged, both by strengthening the mobility and exchange of experience of students and lecturers, as well as by developing study content and teaching methods.

Annex 10 contains information on the concluded cooperation agreements, including the subject of each agreement and its term of validity.

5.2. Specify the system or mechanisms, which are used to attract the students and the teaching staff from abroad and provide a description of the dynamics of the number of the attracted students and the teaching staff.

5.2. Attraction of foreign students and lecturers in the respective study field

The most important tool for the involvement of foreign students in the study field "Social Welfare" is *Erasmus* exchange opportunities. The variety of lecturer involvement mechanisms is greater, it is provided both by the *Erasmus* system and various additional funds (DAAD funding for exchanges with Germany, Norwegian financial instruments for exchanges with Scandinavian countries, etc.). As indicated before, in academic years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, the UL project SO.8.2.2 has enabled involvement of two foreign guest lecturers in the study process – community social work and social planning expert Jonas Buechel (Germany) and expert in issues of homelessness Marie Therese Haj Ahmad (Germany). The attraction of foreign students is significantly hindered by the fact that studies are conducted in the state language, their organization is different from most programmes implemented by the University of Latvia (master's programme on Fridays and Saturdays, bachelor's programme in branches, and conducted in Riga only from the academic year 2020/2021). During the reporting period, due to several reasons (changes in the distribution of state funding, transformations in programme management, alteration in the teaching staff), the main priorities included quality assurance and improvement, resumption of study work in the professional bachelor's study programme, which were implemented successfully. In the next reporting period, the main priorities will comprise the internationalization of study work, promoting the mobility of both outgoing and incoming students (e.g., preparing and offering courses in English in the amount specified by the Cabinet of Ministers), as well as promoting teaching staff mobility and attracting foreign lecturers.

5.3. In the event that the study programme entails a traineeship, provide a description of the traineeship options offered to the students, as well as the provision, and work organisation. Specify whether the higher education institution/ college provides assistance in finding traineeships.

5.3. Characterization of students' internships and placements

The study field "Social Welfare" offers study programmes, whereby students obtain a professional qualification and these programmes provide for practice or internship in the amount stipulated by the Cabinet Regulation No. 512 (at least 20 CP in the bachelor's programme and 26 CP in the master's programme) – three study internships in the amount of 26 CP are included in the study programmes of both levels. The amount of the bachelor's programme internship exceeds the minimum requirements of the Cabinet regulation in order to forge a closer link between theoretical knowledge and applied skills. The implementation of internships in the study process ensures consolidation of the study programme results. The aims and tasks of the internship directly correspond to the results of the study programme.

UL helps to provide internships and in both level programmes employers are greatly motivated in providing internships due to the lack of social work specialists and the opportunity to attract potential employees. The organization of the internship is determined by the internship regulations and it is implemented in accordance with the internship agreement on the provision of the internship placement. The first step in the implementation of the internship is the conclusion of a tripartite internship agreement between the higher education institution, the employer and the student. The internship agreement includes the internship goals, tasks, internship course planning,

internship achievement evaluation procedure, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the parties. In the second step, the internship supervisor introduces the student to the internship goals, tasks, and requirements, and the organization's internship supervisor provides instructions on occupational safety, data protection, ethics, and regulatory documents that must be complied with during the internship. If the student is in the current internship placement for the first time, then he/she gets acquainted with the history, mission, vision, values and principles of the institution, as well as the organizational structure.

In order to support students in achieving the tasks set within the internship, the UL internship supervisor organizes regular internship seminars for students, arranges introductory seminars to internship for organisations' internship supervisors, provides personal consultations, visits students at the internship location. In order to ensure timely prevention of internship implementation inconsistencies with the goals and tasks defined for the particular internship, the pre-defense of the internship is organized, in which participation is mandatory. At the end of the internship, an internship defense is organized with participation of programme director, and open attendance by other representatives of teaching staff.

Full information pertaining to the provision of internships, organization and documentation thereof is included in annexes 11 (Principles and procedures for UL student placement), 12 (Information on agreements and other relevant information regarding support for students in provision of internship), 13 (Regulations on students' internship in the PBSP "Social Work"), 14 (Regulations on students' internship in the PMSP "Social Work") . Students are offered internship alternatives and UL assists students to find an internship placement, which is confirmed by the information contained in agreements and other documents attached in Annex 12 regarding support for students in the provision of internship. The organization of work within the internship is determined by the internship regulations, which are attached in annexes 11, 13 and 14. They contain a detailed description of the students' internship organization for both programmes.

5.4. In the event that joint study programmes are implemented in the study direction, provide the justification of the creation of the joint study programmes and a description and assessment of the selection of the partnering higher education institutions by including information on the principles and the procedures for the creation and implementation of these joint study programmes. In the event that no joint study programmes are implemented in the study direction, provide a description and assessment of the plans of the higher education institution/ college for the creation of such study programmes within the study direction.
(Not applicable)

II - Description of the Study Direction (6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures)

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 direction, 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 direction and the relevant study programmes.

6. Implementation of recommendations received during the previous assessment procedures

6.1. Assessment of the implementation plan of the experts' recommendations and the impact of the recommendations on the quality of studies or process improvement in the study field and the study programmes corresponding thereto

In the previous accreditation of the study field "Social Welfare", the evaluation of the programmes of the field received the highest points in FSS. The recommendations provided by the experts were implemented according to the plan approved by the Social Welfare Study Programme Council and, after the reorganization of study field management (transition from study programme councils to study field councils), according to the plan approved by the and internal quality assurance experts. The overview reflecting realisation of the plan for the implementation of the recommendations provided by the previous accreditation experts is attached in Annex 15.

The most significant change after the previous accreditation of the study field is the transformation of the two-year professional postgraduate programme into a master's study programme. Overall, the implementation of recommendations provided by experts has had a positive impact on the study process, i.e., diversification of internships and opportunities for students to work with more varied target groups, the study content quality improvement, strengthening the focus on specific learning outcomes according to requirements of social work as a profession. Highly purposeful and motivated students apply for and are admitted to the master's programme. This has significantly reduced drop-out rates and raised the quality of studies. Significant administrative reforms have taken place at the University of Latvia, opening opportunities for improving administrative support, as indicated by experts. The UL FSS also has invested significant efforts to optimize and improve administrative support resources. Experts have pointed to the need to increase the professional qualification of lecturers – the number and proportion of doctoral degree holders involved in the implementation of programmes has increased, the number of high-level scientific publications has grown, the lecturers have attended various professional development courses (foreign languages, digital skills, specialization, etc.), intensively participated in international and national-level conferences. The available funding has increased significantly – this is determined by both the allocated state budget grant for the implementation of bachelor's programmes and the attracted paying students enrolled at the UL branches in the professional bachelor's programme as part-time regular studies. Likewise, a significant increase is observed in research funding, which has been attracted for research capacity building.Recommendations for the internationalization of studies have been implemented less successfully, as evidenced by low student mobility, missing English language courses, and underused *Erasmus* mobility for teaching staff. During the current reporting period, in the conditions of limited resources the programme management chose to advance the development on a national scale, starting to implement the professional bachelor's programme as part-time regular studies at the UL branches. Thereby, it was possible to ensure a better compliance with strategic national needs, labour market demands and the new strategic direction of the University of Latvia to develop studies closer to home, reducing rural depopulation and increasing human capital in the regions, as well as improving limited financial resources and increasing the low student numbers. This has been a very important step in order to be able to continue working on the goals set in connection with the internationalization of studies and expert

recommendations on the development of joint study programmes in the next reporting period.

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

6.2. Assessment of changes in study programmes or study programmes corresponding to the study direction licensed during the reporting period, or the procedures for the inclusion of a study programme on the study direction accreditation page, and implementation of recommendations provided by experts

During the reporting period, changes were made to the professional bachelor's study programme: in 2018, LU branches - Alukse, Cheese, Kuldiga, Madona were added as places for part-time studies. In this process, three long-term recommendations were received - (1) to facilitate the availability of information on social work in general and on social work study programmes in particular, including on the home page of the faculty; (2) to promote mutual cooperation between teachers involved in the study programme in achieving the results of studies on the programme; and (3) to restore descriptions of study courses until the beginning of the implementation of the relevant study courses. All three recommendations have been implemented in full. Teaching staff have taken advantage of a variety of opportunities to promote social work to the general public – through publications, participation in various seminars, interviews, etc. Renewed and extended LU website (including website of the Faculty of Social Sciences) information on study programmes. Regular joint meetings of the dteaching staff involved in the programme on the topics of the implementation of the programme in a given semester have been established (during the COVID-19 pandemic, they have taken place remotely in the MS Teams platform); 3) the study course description have been updated in the LU Information System until the relevant course has been started.

Annexes

I. Information on the Higher Education Institution/ College		
List of the governing regulatory enactments and regulations of the higher education institution/ college	Annex 1. List of Key Internal Regulatory Enactments and Regulations of the University of Latvia.doc	1. Saraksts ar galvenajiem LU iekšējiem normatīvajiem aktiem un regulējumiem.doc
Information on the implementation of the study direction in the branches of the higher education institution/ college (if applicable)	Annex 2. Information on the implementation of the study field in the branches (LABOTS).doc	2.pielikums Informācija par studiju virziena īstenošanu filiālēs (LABOTS).doc
Management structure of the higher education institution/ college	1.2_UL_Organizational chart ENG.jpg	3. pielikums LU pārvaldības struktūra.odt
II. Description of the Study Direction - 1. Management of the Study Direction		
Plan for the development of the study direction (if applicable)	Annex 4. Study Field Development Plan.doc	4.pielikums Studiju virziena attīstības plāns.odt
Management structure of the study direction	Annex 5. Administration structure of the study field.docx	5. pielikums Studiju virziena pārvaldības struktūra.doc
II. Description of the Study Direction - 3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction		
Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction	Annex 6. Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field-EXCEL (LABOTS).xls	6. pielikums Pamatinformācija par studiju virzienā iesaistītajiem mācībspēkiem-EXCEL (LABOTS).xls
Biographies of the teaching staff members (in Europass Curriculum Vitae format)	Annex_UL FSS_Teaching Staff CV (1).pdf	Pielikums_LU SZF mācībspēku biogrāfijas _CV_LV.pdf
Summary of the statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff over the reporting period	Mobility of lecturers and academic staff – SOCIAL WORK (labots).doc	Mācībspēku ienākošā un izejošā mobilitāte (labots).doc
II. Description of the Study Direction - 4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation		
List of the publications, patents, and artistic creations of the teaching staff over the reporting period	Annex 9. List of academic staff publications, patents, works of art for the reporting period.doc	9. pielikums Mācībspēku publikāciju, patentu, mākslinieciskās jaunrades darbu saraksts par pārskata periodu.doc
II. Description of the Study Direction - 5. Cooperation and Internationalisation		
List of cooperation agreements	Annex 10. Information on agreements and other internship statements and accounts.doc	10.pielikums Sadarbības līgumu saraksts.doc
Statistical data on the teaching staff and the students from abroad	Annex 10.1. Statistical data on academic staff mobility.doc	10.1. Statistikas dati par mācībspēku mobilitāti.doc
Statistical data on the mobility of students (by specifying the study programmes)	Annex 10.2. Statistical data on student mobility.doc	10.2. Pielikums. Statistikas dati par studējošo mobilitāti (labots).doc
Description of the organisation of the traineeship of the students	Annex 11. Principles and procedures for UL student placement.doc	11. pielikums LU studējošo prakses organizēšanas noteikumi.odt
Information on the agreements and other documents confirming the traineeship of the students in companies	Annex 12. SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS IN PROVISION OF INTERNSHIP.docx	12. pielikums. PRAKSES NODROŠINĀJUMS STUDĒJOŠAJIEM.docx
II. Description of the Study Direction - 6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures		
Overview of the implementation of the provided recommendations	Annex 15. Implementation of recommendations (LABOTS).docx	15.pielikums. Rekomendāciju izpilde (LABOTS).docx
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Confirmation signed by the rector, director or the head of the study programme or the study direction of the higher education institution/ college which states that the official language proficiency of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study direction complies with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.	Certification on state language proficiency.doc	Apliecinajums par macibspeku atbilstību_valsts valoda.edoc
III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	Statistical data on students in the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" .doc	
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of 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 (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		Profesionālās bakalaura studiju programmas "Sociālais darbs" atbilstība valsts izglītības standartam BA.doc
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme		
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)		32.Pielikums.Pprofesionālās maģistra studiju programmas Sociālais darbs plāns (1).docx
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules		
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.		
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme		Rektora apliecinājums par kompensāciju.edoc
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.		
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education		
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement		
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.		
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Electronically signed application form for assessment of a study direction	AKREDITACIJAS_PIETEIKUMS_2021_ENG.docx	IESNIEGUMS Studiju virziena "Sociālā labklājība" novērtēšanai.edoc

Other annexes

Name of document	Document
4.tabula. Galveno LU lēmumu pieņemšanā iesaistīto institūciju, to sastāva un pilnvaru raksturojums	4. tabula detalizēts LU lēmumu pieņemš. iesaistīto institūc. raksturojums (Pie 1.2. punkta).pdf
5. tabula. Galveno LU kvalitātes vadībā iesaistīto pušu un to lomas raksturojums	5. tabula. Galveno LU kvalitātes vadībā iesaistīto pušu un to lomas raksturojums.pdf
17. tabula. Sociālās labklājības studiju virzienā īstenotā zinātniski pētnieciskā darba socioloģijas un sociālā darba nozarē atbilstība LU Sociālo un juridisko zinātņu nozaru grupas attīstības virzieniem un mērķiem	17. tabula. .docx
7. attēls_ LU Studiju virziena un tajā ietilpstošo studiju programmu pārvaldības shēma	7. attēls_LU Studiju virziena un tajā ietilpstošo studiju programmu pārvaldības shēma.jpg
14. tabula "Datu bāzu izmantošanas statistika"	14. tabula_Datu bāzu izmantošanas statistika.docx
15.tabula "Mācībspēku izaugsmes veicināšanas (didaktisko prasmju uzlabošanas un kvalifikācijas paaugstināšanas novērtējums"	15.tabula. Mācībspēku izaugsmes veicināšanas (didaktisko prasmju uzlabošanas un kvalifikācijas paaugstināšanas novērtējums (pielikumā).docx
Table 17. Correspondence of research implemented in study field "Social Welfare" in sector of sociology and social work to development directions and objectives of Social Sciences and Law Sector Group	Table 17. Correspondence of research implemented in study field "Social Welfare".docx
10. tabula_„Standartu un vadlīniju kvalitātes nodrošināšanai Eiropas augstākās izglītības telpā" (ESG) ieviešana Latvijas Universitātē	10. tabula_„Standartu un vadlīniju kvalitātes nodrošināšanai Eiropas augstākās izglītības telpā" (ESG) ieviešana Latvijas Universitātē.docx
Figure 7. Administration structure of the study field and corresponding study programmes	Figure 7. Administration structure of the study field and corresponding study programmes.jpg

Table 10. Implementation of "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG) at the University of Latvia	Table 10. Implementation of "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG) at the University of Latvia.docx
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"Social Work" (47762)

Study field	Social Welfare
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	"Social Work"
Education classification code	47762
Type of the study programme	Professional master study programme
Name of the study programme director	Līga
Surname of the study programme director	Rasnača
E-mail of the study programme director	liga.rasnaca@lu.lv
Title of the study programme director	Dr.sc.soc.
Phone of the study programme director	+371 29906016
Goal of the study programme	To educate highly qualified social workers for employment in the state, local government, non-governmental and private sectors, obtaining the seventh level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), as well as the fifth level professional qualification (NQF) and the second level professional higher education in social work and a professional master's degree in social work.
Tasks of the study programme	1. To educate highly qualified senior social workers in accordance with Latvian and global social work standards for working in the field of social welfare with such professional qualification as to be able to perform highly specialized tasks and be able to continue studies at the doctoral level; 2. To develop students' skills and abilities to perform work qualitatively, observing the requirements of Latvian and global standards, as well as the principles of professional ethics, to develop highly specialized theoretical knowledge, skills and values necessary for social work; 3. To ensure the acquisition of the latest achievements in the theory and practice of social work, to promote the ability to continue professional development, to engage in lifelong learning by implementing teaching methods of student-centered approach; 4. To develop students' knowledge and skills necessary for research and creative work, ability to critically evaluate their application in the field of social work, as well as to integrate knowledge from different fields; 5. To advance students' competence in management, information and communication technologies by promoting the ability to participate in scientific and business oriented projects, developing specialized problem-solving skills

Results of the study programme	*Knowledge*
	1. To demonstrate deep theoretical knowledge and understanding of social work practice models, theoretical perspectives, ethics, approaches and methods and their application at different levels of social work;
	2. To apply critical thinking and scientific approach in the analysis and solution of social welfare problems, as well as to know innovative solutions for the development of social work in contact with related fields.
	Skills
	1.To critically analyze social processes in their interaction, plan and administer social work development strategies, resources, problem solutions at different levels, evaluate socio-structural conditions for reducing the impact of discrimination, oppression and social inequality, as well as environmental deficiencies on human and social development;
	2. To create new knowledge in the development of social work theories and practices by integrating original social work research results and findings based on the achievements of other sciences;
	3. To promote social balance and harmony, protection of human rights, active participation in solving important social problems in society, maintaining social dialogue and expressing non-violent position;
	4. To independently organize the implementation of social work, promote cooperation with other professions, sectors and research results, be able to improve and, if necessary, change the existing social welfare system or its elements;
	5. Reasoned justification and decision-making, operating in difficult conditions, offering innovative solutions for welfare research and development of the social work profession.
	Competence
	1. To solve professional issues in difficult situations, to develop new strategic approaches, to take responsibility for contribution to the development of professional social work, improvement of the social security system, to create a socially responsible professional environment
	2. To integrate knowledge and practice in the field of social welfare, as well as to integrate theory and practice from different fields of science, considering the professional values and ethical principles of social work.
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)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	*Admission requirements for applicants to the sub-programme in the amount of 80 CP: 1) a bachelor's or master's degree, or professional higher education in social sciences, humanities and arts or medical and health care sciences; 2) a bachelor's or master's degree, or professional higher education in other fields of science and two years' experience in the field of social welfare; 3) Entrance examination; 4) Additional requirement: curriculum vitae (CV).*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional master's degree in social work (Mg. soc. d.)*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*Senior social worker*

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, CENTRA RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1050

Full time studies - 1 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	*Full time studies*
Duration in full years	*1*
Duration in month	*6*
Language	*latvian*
Amount (CP)	*60*
Admission requirements (in English)	*Admission requirements for applicants to the sub-programme in the amount of 60 CP: a professional bachelor's degree in social work and a professional qualification of a social worker*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional master's degree in social work (Mg. soc. d.)*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*Senior social worker*

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, CENTRA RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1050

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme)

1.1. Description and analysis of changes in study programme parameters that have taken place since the issue of the previous accreditation certificate of study direction or the license of study programme if study programme is not included in the accreditation page of the study direction

IV. DESCRIPTION OF PROFESSIONAL MASTER'S STUDY PROGRAMME "SOCIAL WORK"

1. Characteristics of the study programme "Social Work"

1.1. Changes in the professional master's study programme "Social Work" parameters

The professional master's study programme "Social Work" is based on the previous two-year professional postgraduate programme. In the recommendations of international accreditation of 2012, the experts recommended to transform the programme into a professional master's programme "Social Work". This was accomplished and the programme was accredited in the spring of 2014. So far, the programme has been implemented with two sub-programmes: 80 CP and 40 CP. The sub-programme with study opportunities to obtain a master's degree within one year (40 CP) was offered to graduates of the professional bachelor's study programme in social work, who have already acquired the qualification of a social worker (the 5th level professional qualification). Applicants who have previously obtained a bachelor's degree or the 2nd level professional higher education in another field are offered a professional qualification and a professional master's degree in social work within two years (80 CP). Since the previous accreditation, there have been the following developments: 1) changes in the professional standard, which include offering specialization at the master's study level; 2) the situation in the labour market has altered with the growing demand for specialization, as well as 3) the interest of students in specialization modules in master's studies has increased. Therefore, in accordance with the changes in the professional standard, the professional master's study programme "Social Work" with two sub-programmes in the amount of 80 CP and 60 CP is offered for accreditation. Although the Latvian regulatory framework allows for the implementation of professional master's studies in the amount of 40 CP, the specialization cannot be provided in this amount of credit points. Therefore, a study programme with two sub-programmes has been created in order to provide all students with equal opportunities to acquire specialization modules, as determined by the revised professional standard. Students who have already acquired a professional qualification in social work and who do not require professional practice in the amount of 26 CP (Cabinet Regulation No. 512) can enter the 60 CP sub-programme of the master's programme (study duration – one and a half years). (*See. Table. Parameters of professional master's study programme*).

1.2. Analysis and assessment of the 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 in the different study forms, types, and languages.

1.2. Statistical data on students in the study programme

The professional master's study programme "Social Work" (hereinafter – the study programme) was accredited in 2014 and received a high assessment. Until then, the faculty offered two-year postgraduate professional programme "Social Work", and international accreditation experts Prof. Dagmar Kutsar and expert in NBSW (The Nordic Baltic Doctoral Network in Social Work) prof. LarsUggerhoj in 2012 recommended to transform it into a professional master's study programme. It was successfully accomplished by establishing a professional master's study programme with the financial support of the ESF project "ESF project Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes and Proposals for Quality Improvement" (No. 2011/0012/1DP/1.1.2.2.1./11/IPIA/VIAA/001). In 2014, the programme was accredited with two sub-programmes – applicants with a bachelor's degree and a professional qualification of a social worker were offered the opportunity to obtain a master's degree within a year (40 CP), while the applicants with a bachelor's degree and experience in the social field, but without a professional qualification, could obtain a master's degree and the professional qualification of a social worker within two years (80 CP). The study programme is implemented in Latvian, but guest lectures and particular courses are taught in English, thereby 1) preparing the students for work in an international environment, multicultural society and improving international cooperation skills by meeting lecturers from other countries; and 2) potentially supporting student mobility. The number of state budget places is limited and it is difficult to attract a large number of fee-paying students to the field of welfare due to the relatively low expected salary in the sector, therefore admission takes place every two years. When entering the programme, the number of applicants for each state-funded place is 1.5 to 2 applicants per place, which indicates the demand for the programme.

During the reporting period (since 2014), 80 students were matriculated in the programme, whereas 47 students have graduated from the programme, but 15 are still in the study process (enrolled in the academic year 2020/2021). Of the alumni, 6 have graduated from the one-year sub-programme of the study programme (40 CP), but 41 have graduated from the two-year sub-programme (80 CP). Table 25 contains the data on the number of matriculated, as well as graduated students in the two-year sub-programme, but Table 26 summarizes data on the number of students matriculated in the one-year sub-programme and graduated from that sub-programme. Statistics on students during the reporting period is also summarized in Annex 28.

Table 25. Statistical data on students in the professional master's study programme "Social Work" – full-time regular (80 CP)

Time	Matriculated	Study year		Total	Source of study funding		Exmatriculated	Graduated
		1.	2.		State budget	Personal		
01.10.2014.	24	22	1	23	16	7	2	0
01.10.2015.	1	2	17	19	12	7	6	13
01.10.2016.	17	18	3	21	17	4	1	0
01.10.2017.	-	2	13	15	10	5	6	10
01.10.2018.	16	15	-	15	12	3	7	0
01.10.2019.	-	-	14	14	10	4	2	9
01.10.2020.	15	15			13	2		9

Table 26. Statistical data on students in the professional master's study programme "Social Work" – full-time regular (40 CP)

Time	Matriculated	Study year	Total	Source of study funding	Exmatriculated	Graduated
		1.		Personal		
01.10.2014.	2	2	2	2	-	1
01.10.2015.	-	1	1	1	-	1
01.10.2016.	5	5	5	5	1	4
01.10.2017.	-	-	-	-	-	-
01.10.2018.	-	-	-	-	-	-
01.10.2019.	-	-	-	-	-	-
01.10.2020.			1	1		

There is also a slight dropout every year. Termination of studies is most often decided either in the first study semester or before elaboration of the master's thesis. Discussions have taken place with all students who wanted to terminate their studies, in some cases it was possible to persuade the students not to abandon their studies entirely, but instead to choose study leave. Sometimes studies are terminated by losing the state-funded place, because the person's financial situation does not permit to obtain a study loan. The most common reason for dropping out is the inability to combine full-time work and family care with full-time studies. In the entrance interviews, all applicants are informed about the timetables and the need to devote a significant amount of time to studies, however, for some students combining studies, family care and workload turns out to be insurmountable challenge. On the one hand, the fact that the majority of students already work in the field of social welfare significantly increases the motivation to study. On the other hand, the social work sector employees are often overloaded and burned out, which has an additional negative effect on students' ability to balance all the responsibilities of daily life. The attitude of employers was also clarified in personal discussions – although the majority supports the commencement of studies and is waiting for qualified social workers, the problems to be solved in the daily routine work are set as a priority to which master's studies should be subordinated. The workload of student employees has been discussed with the largest employers (e.g., the State Probation Service (SPS) and the Social Administration of the Riga City Council Welfare Department) and employers understand the problem and try to find the best possible solution, however, the

constraints imposed by the schedule of working hours and remuneration hamper sufficiently radical solutions. To avoid impairing the quality of studies, students either have to change jobs or discontinue their studies, and sometimes the choice is not in favour of studies. The issue of burnout, which characterizes the situation in the field of social welfare in general, is more difficult to address – overload suffered by social workers and the risk of burnout have also been confirmed by several studies (e.g., the ex-ante study carried out in the framework of ESF project "Development of Professional Social Work in Local Governments" (*Ex-ante* izvērtējums pašvaldību sociālo dienestu darbības efektivitātes novērtēšanai [*Ex-ante* assessment of operational efficiency of local government social services] http://petijumi.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/title_file/LM_2017_gala_zinojums_Ex_ante_iz vertejums_pasvaldibu_soc_dienestu_darbibas_efekt_novert.pdf) implemented by MoW 2017; Latvian Council of Science National Research Programme project of 2020 "Life with Covid-19"(*Dzīve ar Covid-19 ["Life with Covid-19], information in the project homepage at: https://www.rsu.lv/projekts/dzive-ar-covid-19*)). Other reasons for dropping out are health problems, changing jobs and various other personal reasons.

1.3. Analysis and assessment of the interrelation between the name of the study programme, the degree or professional qualification to be acquired or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements.

1.3. Linking study programme parameters

The title of the study programme "Social Work" directly refers to the profession to be acquired within the programme and the qualification to be acquired – "senior social worker", moreover, the wording of the acquired qualification indicates the specificity of the master's level. The aim, tasks, acquired knowledge, skills and competence of the study programme correspond to the seventh level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) and the fifth professional qualification (Cabinet Regulation No. 512 "Regulations on the state standard for the second level professional higher education"). The title of the qualification "Senior Social Worker" indicates both a qualification appropriate for practising social work, and a broader view of the development of the field, whereby it differs from the professional qualification obtained in a bachelor's programme. The qualification to be obtained is closely related to the study results at the 7th level of LQF and 7th level of EQF, moreover, it is closely linked with the requirements for master's level education and professional qualification included in the professional standard – in addition to having conversant knowledge of micro and meso and macro level social welfare issues, senior social worker is also able to critically analyse complex problems of social welfare and social work, as well as substantiate the decisions requiring transformation of the existing welfare system. The senior social worker integrates knowledge from different fields, contributes to the creation of new knowledge, development of research or professional methods, demonstrates understanding and ethical responsibility for the potential impact of research results or of professional activities on the environment and society. The aim, objectives and learning outcomes of the programme are aimed at enabling students to implement the tasks and responsibilities of a social welfare social worker, as well as to be well-acquainted with overlapping of various fields.

The aim *of the study programme is to educate highly qualified social workers for employment in the state, local government, non-governmental and private sectors, obtaining the seventh level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), as well as the fifth level professional qualification (NQF) and the second level professional higher education in social work and a professional master's degree in social work.* The objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme are closely linked to the aim of the study programme. The master's study programme "Social Work" corresponds to the description of the final requirements of the higher education cycle, which apply to the master's programmes (LQF level 7). Students gain in-depth, specialized knowledge and comprehension of social work, social welfare systems, social and public policy development trends, social welfare research, specialization in criminal justice social work or social work with family with children, become conversant in theories and the latest scientific findings. The programme provides the ability to independently apply the acquired theories and methods in problem solving and research, integrating knowledge from different fields. Graduates of the programme are able to critically evaluate information resources, organize their availability for the solution of welfare issues, make decisions in difficult situations, offering creative, innovative solutions.

The study programme consists of two sub-programmes – applicants with a bachelor's degree in social work and a professional qualification of a social worker can obtain a master's degree in one and a half years (60 CP) and applicants with a bachelor's or master's degree or professional higher education in social, humanitarian and art or medical and health care sciences (or relevant education in other sciences, if the applicant has at least two years of experience in the field of social welfare) can obtain a master's degree and a professional qualification of a senior social worker within two years (80 CP). In 2014, the programme was accredited with a sub-programme in the amount of 40 CP. However, due to 1) changes in the professional standard, and 2) recent trends in the labour market that show an increasing demand for specialization, as well as 3) due to students' interest in comprehensive professional specialization opportunities, significant changes are envisaged for the next accreditation period. These changes will concern the duration and volume of the shorter sub-programme – the implementation is planned to take one and a half years and in the amount of 60 CP, in order to enable also the students enrolled in the shorter programme to acquire specialization courses in full. It also significantly strengthens the compliance of the degree and qualification with the latest specialization requirements of the profession and allows to achieve the same results in both sub-programmes in terms of specialization.

The title of the study programme, the degree to be obtained, the aim and objectives, the learning outcomes, as well as the admission conditions are interrelated and corresponding, taking into account the study programme implementation time – four semesters (80 CP sub-programme) or three semesters (60 CP sub-programme).

Admission requirements in the sub-programmes are different, formulated in such a way that, taking into account the previously acquired education and professional qualification, it would be possible to achieve the aim of the study programme and the same learning outcomes.

1. Admission requirements in the sub-programme in the amount of 60 CP.

Requirements for previous education: professional bachelor's degree in social work and professional qualification of a social worker.

Admission competition evaluation criteria: weighted average grade and total (or average) grade of final examinations in previous studies.

2. Admission conditions in the sub-programme in the amount of 80 CP.

Requirements for previous education:

- a bachelor's or master's degree, or a second-level professional higher education in the social sciences, humanities and arts, or in the medical and health care sciences;
- a bachelor's or master's degree, or a second-level professional higher education in other fields of science and two years' experience in the field of social welfare.

Criteria for admission competition: weighted average grade and total (or average) grade of final examinations in previous studies; entrance examination, in which study motivation is assessed; experience in the field of social welfare, evaluation of knowledge and skill acquired in practice.

Additional requirement: curriculum vitae (CV).

The following **objectives** have been set in connection with the aim of the study programme and study results:

1. To educate highly qualified social workers in accordance with Latvian and global social work standards for working in the field of social welfare with such professional qualification as to be able to perform highly specialized tasks and be able to continue studies at the doctoral level;
2. To develop students' skills and abilities to perform work qualitatively, observing the requirements of Latvian and global standards, as well as the principles of professional ethics, to develop highly specialized theoretical knowledge, skills and values necessary for social work;
3. To ensure the acquisition of the latest achievements in the theory and practice of social work, to promote the ability to continue professional development, to engage in lifelong learning by implementing teaching methods of student-centred approach;
4. To develop students' knowledge and skills necessary for research and creative work, ability to critically evaluate their application in the field of social work, as well as to integrate knowledge from different fields;
5. To advance students' competence in management, information and communication technologies by promoting the ability to participate in scientific and business-oriented projects, developing specialized problem-solving skills.

Study results are integrated with tasks and are aimed at achieving the goal of the study programme. Study courses (their content, learning outcomes) have been developed in connection with the formulated learning outcomes in order to ensure their achievement. In both sub-programmes, students acquire equivalent, highly specialized knowledge, skills and competences. Graduates of the programme obtain **knowledge:**

1) to demonstrate deep theoretical knowledge and understanding of social work practice models, theoretical perspectives, ethics, approaches and methods and their application at different levels of social work;

2) to apply critical thinking and scientific approach in the analysis and solution of social welfare problems, as well as to know innovative solutions for the development of social work in contact with related fields.

Study courses provide **the skills** necessary for professional activity:

1) critically analyze social processes in their interaction, plan and administer social work development strategies, resources, problem solutions at different levels, evaluate socio-structural conditions for reducing the impact of discrimination, oppression and social inequality, as well as environmental deficiencies on human and social development;

2) to create new knowledge in the development of social work theories and practices by integrating original social work research results and findings based on the achievements of other sciences;

3)to promote social balance and harmony, protection of human rights, active participation in solving important social problems in society, maintaining social dialogue and expressing non-violent position;

4) to independently organize the implementation of social work, promote cooperation with other professions, sectors and research results, be able to improve and, if necessary, change the existing social welfare system or its elements;

5) reasoned justification and decision-making, operating in difficult conditions, offering innovative solutions for welfare research and development of the social work profession.

As a result of mastering the study programme, the students acquire **competence:**

1)to solve professional issues in difficult situations, to develop new strategic approaches, to take responsibility for contribution to the development of professional social work, improvement of the social security system, to create a socially responsible professional environment;

2)to integrate knowledge and practice in the field of social welfare, as well as to integrate theory and practice from different fields of science, considering the professional values and ethical principles of social work.

The study programme is completed by those students who have successfully passed the final examination – master's thesis, which is a student's independent study of social work practice, which confirms the acquisition of theoretical, practical knowledge and methodological skills in social work, its organization and cooperation with associated sectors.

The programme provides the right to study in the third cycle of studies to obtain a doctoral degree in the field of sociology and social work. During the reporting period, two graduates of the study programme are doctoral degree candidates, preparing doctoral theses for defense.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof)

2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In 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.

2. Content and implementation of studies

2.1. Assessment of the topicality of the study courses / modules and their relevance to the needs of the sector, labour market and scientific trends

Several national planning documents have been taken into account in improvement and advancement of the programme content. The national development planning document "National Development Plan for 2021–2027" (NDP 2027) defines the priorities, directions and measures, which directly concern development of social work sector. Emphasising the importance of social work education, NDP 2027 projects improving the motivation system of social work specialists, and strengthening their professional competence to provide and improve innovative, client-based social services that meet demographic trends and the needs of the population or target groups and ensure their availability in the regions of Latvia.

Likewise, one of the priorities "Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030" (SDSL) is long-term investment in human capital, which also includes the availability and quality of social services, and this priority cannot be attained without professionals who have obtained the corresponding higher education. The Updated Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training (*IFSW. (2020). The Updated Global Standards For Social Work Education And Training: The New Chapter In Social Work Profession. Retrieved from: https://www.iassw-aiets.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/IASSW-Global_Standards_Final.pdf ; Profesionālās izglītības likums (Vocational Education Law, 1999, with amendments of 23 April 2015, which entered into force on 16 July 2015))*, revised in 2020, and the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles (*IFSW (2018). Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles. Retrieved from: https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-ethical-principles/*) have also been taken into account, since international cooperation and sustainable development of the programme is possible only in accordance with internationally recognized development trends and principles advanced for the study programmes in the field, which have been elaborated with participation of the world's leading social work specialists. The content of the latest global social work development documents reflects scientifically substantiated requirements for social workers, which are included in the content of the study programme courses.

The specialization in social work with previously convicted persons and their families– Criminal Justice Social Work – is implemented in accordance with the recommendations of the Ministry of Welfare of the Republic of Latvia and the State Probation Service. A specialization module "Social Work with Family with Children" has been created in accordance with the requirement established in the revised professional standard of a social worker. The need for this specialization is also justified by the demand of the labour market and several studies. For example, in the study "Ex-post Assessment of the National Family Policy Guidelines 2011–2017" (*SIA "SAFEGE Baltija" (2018) The study "Ģimenes valsts politikas pamatnostādņu 2011.-2017. gada ex-post novērtējums", p. 174*), as well as in the study "Results of assessment of operational efficiency of local government social services and their analysis" (*"Ex-ante assessment of operational efficiency of local government social services". Retrieved from: http://petijumi.mk.gov.lv/node/2945 ; http://petijumi.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/title_file/LM_2017_gala_zinojums_Ex_ante_izvertejums_pasvaldibu_soc_dienestu_darbibas_efekt_novert.pdf*).

The programme content is revised and updated, ensuring collaboration of service and practice. The programme content improvement includes the results obtained in research of international cooperation projects. For example, "Criminal Justice Social Work" (CJSW), "Circles of Support and Accountability" (Circles4EU) and "Social Innovation for Active and Healthy Aging" and Healthy Aging, SIforAGE). During project development, the University of Latvia and the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme cooperate with various universities in the European Union and other countries (e.g., Utrecht University, Avans University of Applied Sciences

(both Netherlands), University of Bucharest (Romania), University of Reims (France), De Montfort University in Leicester, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow (all UK), Maltepe University (Turkey), etc. For example, in the project Circles4EU, international partners developed innovative social work methods that can be used to work with former prisoners and other client groups (e.g., involuntary clients) for adaptation in different societies. The study programme also invests significant effort in development of social work terminology, which is reinforced by the involvement of lecturers in the project of developing a dictionary of social work terminology (implemented from 2019 to 2022). The project requires cooperation with partners of the sector (for example, the Latvian Association of Social Workers, non-governmental social service providers, specialists of the Riga City Council Welfare Department Social Administration), which strengthens cooperation with employers. The project opens up opportunities for student involvement in discussions on topical issues of sector's terminology. The programme content was also developed on the basis of stakeholder needs (social workers, probation specialists, employers in the field of social welfare). The aforementioned cooperation in research permits to ensure correspondence of the programme content to the latest research findings, while collaboration with employers provides for the compliance of the programme with the situation in labour market.

The study programme is designed in conformity with the following principles, needs and requirements:

1) Global social work development trends, for example, emphasizing the need for an active civic position and advocating for social justice and reduction of social inequality;

2) Latvia's need for social welfare social workers who fortify social sustainability and develop social services at all levels of social work;

3) The need for professionals specializing in criminal justice social work and social work with families with children;

4) Other needs of specialisation.

Table 27 provides the content comparison between 80 CP and 60 CP sub-programmes, showing its topicality and connection with development trends in the labour market and the sector. The main differences are in the scope and content of professional internship, because the students who study for a shorter time (1.5 years), have to complete the internship in the amount of only 6 CP because they have previously acquired a professional qualification in social work. All students are provided with equal opportunities to acquire the theoretical courses of the field required for the master's level, specialization and obtain a professional master's degree.

Table 27. Comparison of study courses in 60 CP sub-programme and 80 CP sub-programme

60 CP sub-programme		**80 CP sub-programme**	
Study course title	**CP**	**Study course title**	**CP**
Part A		**Part A**	

Soci5068 Introduction to Research and Academic Writing	**2 CP**	Soci5068 Introduction to Research and Academic Writing	**2 CP**
VadZ5067 Social Aspects of Project Management	**3 CP**	VadZ5067 Social Aspects of Project Management	**3 CP**
JurZ5153 Human Rights and Social Rights	**2 CP**	JurZ5153 Human Rights and Social Rights	**2 CP**
Soci5078 New Challenges in Professional Social Work	**3 CP**	Soci5078 New Challenges in Professional Social Work	**3 CP**
Soci5066 Latvian Social Security System in International Perspective	**2 CP**	Soci5066 Latvian Social Security System in International Perspective	**2 CP**
Soci5071 Modern Social Work Theories	**2 CP**	Soci5071 Modern Social Work Theories	**2 CP**
Soci5076 Communication with Different Target Groups in Social Work	**2 CP**	Soci5076 Communication with Different Target Groups in Social Work	**2 CP**
SociR006 Professional Practice in Social Work	**6 CP**	SociR000 Professional Practice in Social Work I	**6 CP**
		SociR004 Professional Practice in Social Work II	**6 CP**
		SociR013 Professional Practice in Social Work III	**14 CP**

SociN000 Master's Thesis in Social Work	**20 CP**	SociN000 Master's Thesis in Social Work	**20 CP**
Limited electives (part B)		**Limited electives (part B)**	
Specialisation Social Work in the Field of Criminal Justice		**Specialisation Social Work in the Field of Criminal Justice**	
SDSK5120 Introduction to Forensic Psychiatry	**2 CP**	SDSK5120 Introduction to Forensic Psychiatry	**2 CP**
Soci5064 Approaches to intervention in the Work with Involuntary client	**2 CP**	Soci5064 Approaches to intervention in the Work with involuntary Client	**2 CP**
Soci5062 Social Work in Criminal Justice	**4 CP**	Soci5062 Social Work in Criminal Justice	**4 CP**
Soci5012 Social Work Preventing Violence	**2 CP**	Soci5012 Social Work Preventing Violence	**2 CP**
Specialisation Social Work with Family with Children		**Specialisation Social Work with Family with Children**	
Soci5114 The Approaches in Social Work with Family	**4 CP**	Soci5114 The Approaches in Social Work with Family	**4 CP**
Soci5115 Aspects of Children's Rights Protection in Social Work with Children and Young People	**2 CP**	Soci5115 Aspects of Children's Rights Protection in Social Work with Children and Young People	**2 CP**
Soci 5113 Domestic Violence	**2 CP**	Soci 5113 Domestic Violence	**2 CP**

Soci5061 Social Work with Individual and Family	**2 CP**	Soci5061 Social Work with Individual and Family	**2 CP**

Other elective part B courses   **Other elective part B courses**

Soci5065 Social Work Projects Strategic Management	**2 CP**	Soci5065 Social Work Project Strategic Management	**2 CP**
Soci5072 Community Social Work	**2 CP**	Soci5072 Community Social Work	**2 CP**
Vadz5057 Personnel Management	**4 CP**	Vadz5057 Personnel Management	**4 CP**
Soci5080 Analysis of EU Social Policy	**4 CP**	Soci5080 Analysis of EU Social Policy	**4 CP**
Soci5119 Social Work with Seniors	**2 CP**	Soci5119 Social Work with Seniors	**2 CP**
Soci5067 Social Work with Vulnerable Groups	**2 CP**	Soci5067 Social Work with Vulnerable Groups	**2 CP**
Soci5121 The Challenges of Social Work in Multicultural Society	**2 CP**	Soci5121 The Challenges of Social Work in Multicultural Society	**2 CP**
Soci5075 Qualitative Research methods in Social Work	**2 CP**	Soci5075 Qualitative Research methods in Social Work	**2 CP**
Soci5073 Current Social Problems in Rural Areas	**2 CP**	Soci5073 Current Social Problems in Rural Areas	**2 CP**

Soci5093 Sustainable Development	**4 CP**	Soci5093 Sustainable Development	**4 CP**
Other courses		**Other courses**	
Ķīmi1059 Civil Protection	**1 CP**	Ķīmi1059 Civil Protection	**1 CP**
VidZ1032 Environmental Protection	**1 CP**	VidZ1032 Environmental Protection	**1 CP**

As mentioned above, the sub-programme in the amount of 60 CP can be acquired by those students who have obtained a professional bachelor's degree in social work, and the sub-programme in the amount of 80 CP can be acquired by students who have obtained a bachelor's or master's degree or professional higher education in other social, humanitarian and art or medical and health care sciences, or other sciences, if the applicants have at least two years of experience in the field of social welfare. The study programme sub-programmes in the amount of 80 CP and 60 CP are designed to provide all students with equal opportunities to fully acquire the knowledge, skills and competences required for professional activities in accordance with the requirements of the 7th LQF framework and professional standard specified in the Latvian Education Classification. Contact hours make up at least 30 percent of the programme volume (except for the internships and elaboration of master's theses).

The compulsory content of the study programme consists of study courses that ensure in-depth acquisition of the latest achievements in the theory and practice of the field (sphere professional of activity) (*New Challenges in Professional Social Work*, *Modern Social Work Theories*, *Communication with Different Target Groups in Social Work*, *Latvian Social Security System in International Perspective*) in the total amount of 9 CP. The mandatory part of the programme also contains courses in which students gain knowledge and skills in research and project management (*Introduction to Research and Academic Writing*, *Social Aspects of Project Management*, *Human Rights and Social Rights*), a total of 7 CP. Students who come from another study field and have not obtained the professional qualification of a social worker are provided with professional internship in the amount of 26 CP, while students in the 60 CP sub-programme – in the amount of 6 CP. The internship course content is designed to provide all students with equal professional skills to perform social work in the field of social welfare. All students take the final examination, developing and defending a master's thesis in the amount of 20 CP.

Compared to the previous accreditation, quite significant changes have been introduced into the study programme, supplementing it with the courses *Sustainable Development*, *Personnel Management*, Analysis of *EU Social Policy*, enabling students to acquire management skills necessary for master's qualification and professional activity and gain a basis for international cooperation. These courses also ensure a deeper understanding of developments in the field of social welfare at global and European Union level, including the interaction between the environment and the social sphere. Specializations for social work in the field of criminal justice and social work with family with children have been developed, firstly, responding to the demand of employers (e.g., State Probation Service, heads of local governments, representatives of non-governmental organizations) and students' interests, secondly, taking into account research data about the specialisations required in social work (*Ilze Kurme (2018). Specializācijas sociālajā*

darbā Latvijā – esošā situācija un izaicinājumi. Sociālais darbs Latvijā [Specializations in social work in Latvia - the current situation and challenges. Social work in Latvia]. LM, 2018, No. 2, pp. 15–20.). For example, a study by the Ministry of Welfare conducted in the project "Development of Professional Social Work in Local Governments" found that most social workers work with families with children, but only one in three feels professionally prepared to work with this group. Only every ninth social worker feels prepared to work with former offenders, although every third social worker of social services has to work with representatives of this group (*LM (2017). The study "Ex-ante izvērtējums pašvaldību sociālo dienestu darbības efektivitātes novērtēšanai" ["Ex-ante assessment of operational efficiency of local government social services"]. The 2nd interim report.*). The new courses developed in the study programme, which ensure specialization in social work with family and children, are *Approaches to Social Work with Family*, *Aspects of Children's Right Protection of Children's Rights in Social Work with Children and Young People*, *Domestic Violence*. The course *Social Work Preventing Violence* complements the specialization module Social Work in the Field of Criminal Justice. On the other hand, several study courses will be excluded from the programme (see Table 28). The changes are based on the development trends of the labour market in Latvia, the needs in the sector identified in the research, as well as the trends in the development of the profession internationally.

Table 28. Changes in the master's study programme "Social Work"

Title and volume of study course for the next accreditation period	CP	Study courses excluded from the programme	CP	Substantiation
Sustainable Development	4	Human Development	4	In line with the requirements of the new Social Welfare Social Worker Professional Standard and Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training, to enhance comprehension of the social work context and participatory skills.
Personnel Management	4	Public Administration	4	In line with the requirements of the new Social Welfare Social Worker Professional Standard to reinforce human resource management skills.
Aspects of Children's Rights Protection in Social Work with Children and Young People	2	Volunteer Work Management	2	Specialization course for module Social Work with Family with Children to ensure proficiency in the protection of children's rights.

Domestic Violence	2	Phenomenon of Violence in Social Work	2	Specialization course for module Social Work with Family with Children to enable identification and timely resolution of problems.
Analysis of EU Social Policy	2	Spiritual Dimension of Social Work	2	In accordance with the requirements of the new Social Welfare Social Worker Professional Standard to promote involvement in macro practice.
Social Work with Seniors	2	Gerontology	2	In accordance with the requirements of the new Social Welfare Social Worker Professional Standard and the trends of social and demographic processes.
Social Work Preventing Violence	2			Specialization course for module Social Work in the Field of Criminal Justice
The Approaches in Social Work with Family	4			Specialization course for module Social Work with Family with Children

In summary, the structure and content of the study programme is developed in accordance with the latest research findings, policy documents and other sources:

 In accordance with Latvian regulations and policy documents relevant to the sector: Framework for Professional Social Work Development 2014–2020, laws "On Social Security" (1995), "Law on Social Services and Social Assistance" (2002), NDP 2027, SDSL 2030;

- International social work standards and policy documents: Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training (2020), the Role of Social Work in Social Protection Systems: The Universal Right to Social Protection (*The Role of Social Work in Social Protection Systems: The Universal Right to Social Protection. 2016. Retrieved from: https://www.ifsw.org/the-role-of-social-work-in-social-protection-systems-the-universal-right-to-social-protection/*) (2016), Global Definition of Social Work (*Global Definition of Social Work. 2014. Retrieved from: https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/*) (2014), revised Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles (*Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles. 2019. Retrieved from: https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-ethical-principles/*) (2019);
- Findings and conclusions obtained in international cooperation projects in the EU and participation in social work research networks (NBSW, SWRF), in professional and academic conferences in Latvia and abroad, as well as from publications in scientific journals on social work trends (*International Social Work, Critical Social Policy, Qualitative Social Work, European Journal of Social Work, Probation Journal, Social Work Research, Journal of Social Policy, Child and Family Social Work*), and the latest theoretical literature on social work;
- Recommendations of students, which are regularly obtained as a result of surveys at the end

of each semester and after graduation from the study programme, as well as recommendations of course lecturers;

- Recommendations from experts and employers of the sector, obtained in surveys, focus groups and informal interviews, forums and professional seminars, as well as conclusions regarding research findings and the latest developments in the sector obtained in scientific and professional conferences. *(See. Annex 30. Compliance of PMSP with the state education standard. Annex 32. Plan of PMSP.)*

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. In 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.

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation of study courses / modules and the alignment of study course / module goals with the goals and learning outcomes of the study programme

The courses of the study programme are designed in accordance with the aim of the study programme and the outcomes to be achieved. The mapping of study courses demonstrates how the study programme results are achieved in each particular study course, as well as shows their compliance with the professional standard of a senior social worker. The mapping shows that the content of the courses ensures the acquisition of the aim, objectives and knowledge, skills and competences of the programme (see Annex 32). The structure and content of the study programme have been developed in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 512 "Regulations on the state standard for the second level professional higher education" (*Ministru kabineta noteikumi Nr.512 Noteikumi par otrā līmeņa profesionālās augstākās izglītības valsts standartu [Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 512 "Regulations on the state standard for the second level professional higher education"]. 26.08.2014, Latvijas Vēstnesis, 179, 11.09.2014*). Each sub-programme is designed to achieve the goals and results of the study programme. The content of all courses included in the study programme has been developed in accordance with the aim of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved.

The 80 CP (120 ECTS) sub-programme of the study programme consists of study courses in the amount of 34 CP (51 ECTS), development and defense of a master's thesis in the amount of 20 CP (30 ECTS) and internship in the amount of 26 CP (39 ECTS). The 60 CP (90 ECTS) sub-programme of the study programme consists of study courses in the amount of 34 CP (51 ECTS), elaboration and defense of a master's thesis 20 CP (30 ECTS) and internship – 6 CP (10 ECTS). The main difference between the two sub-programmes is in the amount of internship, which for the short sub-programme is in the amount of 6 CP, instead of 26 CP, because students have acquired professional practice completing internship in the amount of at least 20 CP during their bachelor's studies in social work.

The course structure of both sub-programmes of the study programme consists of courses, which belong to either mandatory part (A) and limited elective part (B). Additionally, it is possible to

acquire Environmental Protection and Civil Protection courses if they have not been acquired during bachelor's studies, because these courses are also necessary for obtaining education corresponding to the 7th LQF. Study plans are designed so that the mandatory part (A) and limited elective part (B) courses are equally available to the students of both sub-programmes. For both sub-programmes, the mandatory part (A) consists of study courses in the amount of 16 CP (24 ECTS) and the limited elective part (B) consists of study courses in the amount of 18 CP (27 ECTS), of which 10 CP (15 ECTS) is a specialization module (according to the choice of the student group – module Social Work in the Field of Criminal Justice or module Social Work with Family with Children), and 8 CP (12 ECTS) can be chosen from a wide range of study courses offered. Overall, the limited elective part has an offer of study courses in the amount of 44 CP. Students initially choose a specialization, and afterwards choose other Part B courses in the indicated amount.

Limited elective (B) courses include two specialization modules and other elective courses:

- **Specialization module: Social Work in the Field of Criminal Justice** (*Introduction to Forensic Psychiatry, Approaches to the Work with Involuntary Client, Social Work in Criminal Justice, Social Work Preventing Violence*);
- **Specialization module: Social Work with Family with Children** (The *Approaches in Social Work with Family, Aspects of Children's Rights Protection in Social Work with Children and Young People, Domestic Violence, Social Work with Individual and Family);*
- **Limited elective part (B) courses for acquisition of specialised knowledge** in one of the directions of the social welfare social work profession or the necessary competence in management and research (for example, *Social Work with Seniors, Social Work with Vulnerable Client Groups, Community Social Work, Analysis of EU Social Policy, Social Work Projects Strategic Management, The Challenges of Social Work in Multicultural Society, Qualitative Research Methods in Social Work, Personnel Management*).
- **Courses *Environmental Protection* and *Civil Protection* are intended as an additional option outside the mandatory 80 CP of the programme**, these courses must be mastered by those students who have not acquired them during bachelor's studies.

The last semester of studies is entirely dedicated to elaboration of the master's thesis.

For supportive and efficient achievement of the programme objectives and the planned learning outcomes, the development of the master's thesis is organized in several stages. At the very beginning of studies, in the first semester, students choose the topic of their master's thesis. In the course

The overall study process ensures in-depth advancement of theoretical knowledge, professional skills and competences, as well as acquisition of research skills and competences in social work. For example, the study course on human rights includes the understanding of social rights and the legal regulation of compliance therewith, the project management course has a pronounced focus on cooperation in conflict resolution and other social aspects of project management. The latest achievements in the sector are mastered through the courses *New Challenges in Professional Social Work, Modern Social Work Theories*, *Latvian Social Security System in International Perspective*, as well as *Introduction to Research and Academic Writing* and *Communication with Different Target Groups in Social Work*. (*See. Annex 29. Compliance qualifications to be acquired in the study programme with the study programme; Annex 31. Professional MSP's Mapping of the learning outcomes.*)

2.3. Assessment of the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) by providing the analysis of how the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) used in the study courses/ modules are selected, what they are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

2.3. Assessment of study implementation methods (including assessment)

The study process is organized in accordance with the principles of student-centred learning and teaching, which envisages the involvement of students not only in the active learning process, but also mutual learning, involvement in research (both micro-research and research assignments implemented together with the researchers in the field). A diverse range of study methods is used in the study process: lectures, seminars, fieldwork elements, study tours, independent assignments, discussions, cooperative learning methods (group work), tests, reports, etc. The teaching methods are chosen according to the aim, objectives and outcomes of each study course, therefore the methods used, for example, in the study course *Social Aspects of Project Management* and in the study course *Domestic Violence* certainly differ. However, the process of mutual learning, discussions of issues in the field of social welfare are integral in the acquisition of any study subject. The discussion method is also used in the development of critical thinking, in the evaluation of theoretical and methodological sources (for example, in the course *Introduction to Research and Academic Writing*).

One of the forms of work is lectures, whereby the UL lecturers provide introduction and orientation in the problems of the course and present theoretical issues. Lectures are taught both as introductory lectures (for example, before each professional internship) and in an interactive form including interaction with the audience and discussion elements (for example, holding a discussion regarding the international outlook upon the country's social security system in the course *Latvian Social Security System in International Perspective*). Lecturers also use study tours, micro-research, promote mastering team work by working with small groups (for example, in study courses *Social Work with Vulnerable Groups*, *Social Work Preventing Violence*). Employers and former graduates are also involved in the implementation and improvement of study courses. The involved graduates have now become experts in their field, popularize their findings in the mass media and in the journal "Sociālais darbs Latvijā" ("Social Work in Latvia"), organise lectures in the form of study visits dedicated to exchange of experience in collaboration with Riga City Council Social Service Pārdaugava Centre, Samaritan Association of Latvia and other institutions and organisations). During the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of online lectures and classes on the *MS Teams* platform became especially relevant.

An e-learning environment (MOODLE) has been created for each study course, in which students have access to lecture materials, task descriptions, additional materials related to the course topics for individual studies. E-learning environment also provides interactivity in the performance of study tasks (tests, forums, seminars, conferences, etc.). All assessments of intermediate and final examinations of study courses with the substantiation of the grade are recorded and available to students in the e-learning environment. The final examinations of the course can take various forms: presentation of the results of individual independent assignment (e.g., in the course *Professional Practice in Social Work II*); group work presentations (e.g., in the course *Social Work with Individual and Family*); The completed group work (e.g., "Microproject" in the course *Social Aspects of Project Management*) can be presented either in the traditional format, or in a video or

another format according to the choice of the group members. At the same time, the traditional written examination, an essay form is very useful in training the ability to analytically substantiate one's opinion (e.g., in the course *Human Rights and Social Rights*), which helps to consolidate critical analysis skills, which will be essential in developing a master's thesis. The form of the oral examination (for example, in the course *Communication with Different Target Groups in Social Work*) promotes the acquisition of communication skills and the ability to react through responding to the lecturer's questions. Course lecturers are encouraged to regularly supplement the content of e-studies and update it with current information (e.g., theoretical literature, publications, normative acts, video materials, tasks for self-examination). The more active use of digital technologies was accelerated by the emergency situation brought about by Covid-19 pandemic, furthermore, this situation also promoted a more efficient use of the digital environment in the study process and communication.

Students have access to consultations and advice of all course lecturers both in person and remotely, support and feedback are received in the study process. An appointed consultation time comprising at least the amount of a lecture per week is mandatory for each lecturer during the course. It usually is attended in person, but in certain situations (especially during the internship and in cases when the lecturer is not employed in the main job at the University of Latvia) consultations can also be held remotely, using technological tools (*MS Teams*, e-mail or *WhatsApp*, *Skype*, etc.). Due to the security measures of the Covid-19 pandemic and emergency situation, all consultations at this time take place online. Students can also receive consultations from the study methodologist and programme director.

The study forms used in the development of the master's thesis have also been elected in order to promote the achievement of learning outcomes and increase the quality of the master's thesis. UL FSS has developed methodological instructions, which provide a detailed description of the requirements for the final thesis, its elaboration process and evaluation criteria. The elaboration of the master's thesis is organized in several stages and in cooperation with the scientific supervisor of the master's thesis, under whose leadership the master's student carries out independent scientific assignment and original research. At the very beginning of studies, in the first semester, the students select the topics of their master's theses.

The evaluation system complies with the Procedure for the organization of examinations of study courses at the University of Latvia. Study result evaluation is carried out in compliance with the basic principles of evaluation stipulated by the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 512 (26.08.2014) "Regulations on the state standard of second level professional higher education" and evaluation principles:

- **the principle of assessment transparency** – in accordance with the set aim and objectives of the study programme, as well as the aim and objectives of the study courses, the university has determined a set of requirements for the assessment of study results;
- **the principle of possibility to review assessment** – the university has determined the procedure for reviewing the obtained assessment;
- **the principle of mandatory assessment** –a sufficiently high (positive) assessment must be obtained, which attests to the acquisition of the full study programme content;
- **the principle of using diverse types of testing in assessment** – different types of testing are used in the assessment of the study programme acquisition;
- **the principle of assessment adequacy** – in the examination assignment, the student is given the opportunity to prove knowledge, skills and competence in appropriate tasks and situations. The amount of content to be included in the examinations corresponds to the content specified in the course programmes.

The basic criteria for the evaluation of final theses are specified by the "Requirements for the development and defense of final thesis (bachelor's, master's, diploma and qualification thesis) at the University of Latvia" (UL order No. 1/38 of 03.02.2012). Course assessment is carried out in a 10-point system. Requirements for obtaining credit points and information about the examination forms and assessment used in the course are indicated in the description of each study course, which is available in the UL Information System (LUIS) and e-learning environment. Students are introduced to the evaluation criteria for grading in the first lectures. Grading gives students the opportunity to show the extent to which they have achieved the expected learning outcomes.

Various tests are used for intermediate testing methods in lectures and seminars, thereby motivating the students to study independently throughout the semester, as well as enabling assessment of the mastered knowledge and evaluation of students' skills to analyse the material to be acquired. Students can get acquainted with the assessment received in e-courses. Intermediate grades obtained during the semester make up at least 50% of the total course grade. Such a multi-level assessment system helps to maintain motivation and promotes systematic study work. At the end of each course, there is a written or oral final examination.

The lecturers of the study programme based the evaluation system upon the procedure adopted by the University of Latvia, with a view to ensure the most objective evaluation possible:

1) Study results are evaluated according to two indicators: quality indicator – a grade on a 10-point scale (in accordance with the requirements of the National Academic Education Standard); quantitative indicator – credit points according to the total number of hours in each subject.

2) In order to obtain credit points, the course must be considered to have been successfully completed, i.e., the grade on the 10-point scale should not be lower than '4' (almost satisfactory) or 'passed'. Special attention was also paid to the satisfactory assessment of the examination paper.

3) The final assessment consists of a final examination (written or oral examination), together with the regular examinations of the study course (intermediate examinations) – tests, individual assignments, presentations in seminars, reports, etc. (in determining the total assessment of the study course acquisition, it is taken into account that intermediate examinations must make up at least 50% of the total assessment, in case of the examination assessment – not less than 10%).

4) The frequency of assessment depends on the scope and specific character of the course. In all courses, the final assessment (grade) is formed cumulatively, i.e., by assessing the student's work during the entire semester and the examination paper. When evaluating students' work, course lecturers also provide their comments and substantiation of the evaluation.

Acquisition of the programme concludes with the elaboration and public defense of the master's thesis, which is evaluated on a 10-point scale. When defending a master's thesis, the evaluation criteria provided in the FSS Methodological Instructions are applied. In order to promote the development and quality of the master's thesis, a seminar is organized, where students present and discuss with lecturers the substantiation of the master's thesis, programmatic elements, selection of appropriate theoretical basis and empirical analysis methods and field work plan. The study course on the development of a master's thesis also envisages the pre-defense of a master's thesis with participation of students, lecturers and professionals of the sector. If the pre-defense does not produce a positive result, then it must be repeated. The result of the pre-defense makes up 10% of the total assessment. The defense of the master's thesis takes place in public, lecturers and professionals of the sector are represented in the commission. After the defense, the reviewer, the supervisor and the members of the commission express their assessment in a closed session. Master's theses are evaluated in a 10-point system. The evaluation criteria for master's theses are: choice of thesis topic, clarity of wording and logic of the thesis; theoretical substantiation of the

thesis; research methodology and application of research methods; analysis of the results and conclusions; quality of language; compliance with norms and technical requirements for research; compliance with the social work sector. The evaluation of the master's thesis makes up 80% of the assessment, but the defense, in which students demonstrate their skills to substantiate, explain and discuss the issues explored in the master's thesis, makes up 10% of the total assessment.

The student-centred study process provides for the content of the study process corresponding to the aim and planned outcomes, as well as interaction and teaching methods in line with achievement of the aim. Here, particular attention is paid to finding out students' opinions, discussing and improving the study process in accordance with the interests of students. Not only practical classes, but also lectures are characterized by interactivity and the choice of appropriate teaching and learning methods. In order to reinforce the student-centred approach, the dialogue between the programme director, lecturers and students regarding the study content, organizational forms and methods is promoted. Comprehensibly and correctly formulated results of the study programme and study courses promote students' understanding and co-responsibility for their own learning, self-evaluation and understanding of the received assessment. Examples of implementation of student-centred study process – in the courses *New Challenges in Professional Social Work*, *Latvian Social Security System in International Perspective*, the students are free to choose individual independent and group assignment topics according to their interests. Likewise, the choice of presentation form is also open to students (e.g., in the course *Social Aspects of Project Management*).

Within the framework of student-centred education, the programme also attaches high importance to the adaptation of students to the study process, students are introduced to the study environment, resources, opportunities to receive consultations.

There are policies and procedures for submitting student suggestions and resolving complaints, reviewing student appeals. In the improvement of the study process, the results of student surveys are evaluated and taken into account, and so are the students' recommendations for the improvement of the study programme and the process, formulated in conversations with the lecturers and the programme director.

2.4. If the study programme entails a traineeship, provide the analysis and assessment of the relation between the tasks of the traineeship included in the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study programme. Specify how the higher education institution/ college supports the students within the study programme regarding the fulfilment of the tasks set for students during the traineeship.

2.4. Bridging of students' internship tasks with the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study programme

Professional internship is a necessary prerequisite for obtaining a professional master's degree in social work. The need for internship is emphasized both in the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training, and in the Cabinet Regulation No. 512, which governs the preconditions for obtaining a professional master's degree. An internship regulation has been developed, indicating the main tasks of the internships. The internship regulations have been prepared in accordance with the following regulatory enactments:

- Regulations on the state standard for second level professional higher education (MK 26.08.2014. Regulation No. 512);
- Regulations on University of Latvia study and continuing education programmes UL Senate decision of 24.04.2017 No. 102);
- University of Latvia Regulations for Organisation of Internships (UL order No. 1/417 of 25.11.2019);

The internship supervisor of the UL FSS is a representative of the faculty, who supervises the student's internship and evaluates the outcomes of internship and learning. The internship supervisor of the organization is an employee assigned by the organisation hosting the internship, who has practical work experience in the profession. The study programme includes three study practices in the amount of 26 CP: in the first semester – 6 CP, in the second semester – 6 CP, in the third semester – 14 CP (80 CP sub-programme). The 60 CP sub-programme includes one professional internship in the amount of 6 CP (in the first semester), the content and requirements of which are designed so that students acquire knowledge, skills and competence in conformity with professional master's studies, gaining the experience of practical work in the field to supplement the material previously acquired during the studies in professional bachelor's programme in social work, and specialising in the social work sphere of their interest. Internships are a mandatory part of the study programme.

The internship is implemented in accordance with the internship regulations and the internship agreement on the provision of the internship placement. The university concludes a tripartite internship agreement with the employer and the student. The internship agreement includes the internship aims, objectives, internship plan, internship achievement assessment procedure, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the parties.

The internship placement chosen by the student is in a private, non-governmental, state or municipal institution or organization where social workers are employed and / or it organizes and provides social services, and with which a tripartite agreement on the internship has been concluded.

As noted above, the professional master's study programme envisages three professional internships (I, II, III) in the 80 CP sub-programme and Internship I in the 60 CP sub-programme. The credit points obtained in internship are, respectively, 6 CP; 6 CP; 14 CP. The aim of Professional Internship I is to analyse the social service(s) in the internship place chosen by the student – a social institution/organization. During the internship, students also enhance their research skills by using various research methods (for example, statistical data analysis, interview, focus group, observation), while researching a social service. The aim of Professional Internship II is to gain experience in researching a social problem and an in-depth understanding of the reduction of social problems at different levels of social work practice. In this internship, the alternatives for reducing social problems are analysed in the context of social work and social policy approaches and solutions. The aim of Professional Internship III is to integrate theoretical and practical knowledge in social work with a case, to strengthen psychosocial counselling skills. During the study course, students reinforce their skills to manage the process of social casework, making general agreements, assessments, choosing the intervention approach, drawing up a plan.

2.5. 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 evaluations of the final theses.

2.5. Analysis and assessment of students' final thesis topics

In the professional master's study programme "Social Work", the final assignment is a master's thesis. In the reporting period from 2013/2014 to 2018/2019, 47 master's theses were defended (see Table 29). The average assessment is 7.5, the received grades cover the entire range of ratings and there are no significant fluctuations over the years.

Every year, students are offered to choose a topic according to their professional and scientific interests, but it is also possible to choose a topic from the selection relevant to Latvian society, which is proposed by the Ministry of Welfare, while the students specializing in Criminal Justice social work can also choose topics offered by the State Probation Service (SPS) and approved by the Ministry of Justice.

Since the graduates of the master's programme are employed at the SPS and Riga City Council Welfare Department Social Administration, as well as in the fields of social welfare related to alternative and institutional care in the state and local government institutions, as well as in the non-governmental and private sector, the topics of master's theses reflect this diversity of professional interests. The master's theses can be conditionally divided into several thematic groups: 1. Social work with former offenders and their families, as well as with victims of violence; 2. Social work with particular target groups; 3. Challenges in social work profession – social work resources and methods; roles and problems of social workers; 4. Social work with family with children, children and young people, including out-of-family care for children. Overall, students most frequently have chosen to research social work with a target group that corresponds to the orientation of the programme to provide specialization opportunities during the study programme acquisition. The graduates of 2020 have not chosen the thesis topics corresponding to the Criminal Justice social work, nevertheless, the interest in this specialization has not ceased, because currently several students interested in this field are studying in the programme.

Table 29. Topics and assessment results of master's theses

Thematic group	Number of defended theses	Average grade
2014		
Social work with former offenders and their families, victims of violence	*3*	
Social work with particular target groups	*2*	*7.6*
Social work resources and methods; roles and problems of social workers	*1*	
Social work with family with children, children and young people, including out-of-family care for children	*2*	
2016		

Social work with former offenders and their families, victims of violence	*1*	
Social work with particular target groups	*7*	*7.4*
Social work resources and methods; roles and problems of social workers	*4*	
Social work with family with children, children and young people, including out-of-family care for children	*4*	
2018		
Social work with former offenders and their families, victims of violence	*3*	
Social work with particular target groups	*4*	*7.6*
Social work resources and methods; roles and problems of social workers	*3*	
Social work with family with children, children and young people, including out-of-family care for children	*5*	
2020		
Social work with former offenders and their families, victims of violence	*0*	
Social work with particular target groups	*3*	*8.0*
Social work resources and methods; roles and problems of social workers	*4*	
Social work with family with children, children and young people, including out-of-family care for children	*1*	
Total	**47**	**7.7**

(See. Annex 32. Plan of professional master's study programme)

2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

2.6. Analysis and assessment of survey results (students, graduates and employers)

Student surveys in the programme are conducted regularly and centrally, using the UL electronic system. At the end of each semester, students complete a questionnaire for each course, and graduates do so after graduation, evaluating their study experience on a scale from 1 (strongly

disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), as well as provide their assessment in free-form comments. Students are asked questions about the study environment (classrooms, technical equipment, availability of study materials) and the lecturer's pedagogical and professional skills. Using the electronic system, the study programme management and lecturers can systematically analyse students' assessments and on their basis to improve the content of study courses or methods.

During the reporting period, student surveys are regularly conducted (after each semester, student feedback is obtained for each study course), and so are the graduate surveys (in the year of graduation). The employer surveys and focus group discussions are organized less frequently (once in a few years). The last ones were carried out in 2020 and 2021. During the reporting period, students gave the highest rating to the courses *Communication with Different Target Groups* (6.84), *New Challenges in Professional Social Work* (6.64), Modern *Social Work* Theories (6.57), *Social Work with Vulnerable Groups* (6.47) and *Introduction to Research and Academic Writing* (6.47). Notably, each group of students assessed the offered study courses slightly differently, and the choice of higher rated courses is not always identical, which may be related to differences in interests and career plans. In general, students positively assess the enthusiasm of lecturers for his or her subject, the connection between theory and practice. The highest assessment consistently is received by the courses taught by Assistant Professor Ieva Ozola and lecturer Evija Apine. The students have made the following comments about the work of the lecturers: *"Interesting lectures that helped in everyday life, communication with others. Especially during the Covid-19 emergency."* *"Lectures are interesting, exciting. I really liked that the lecturer shared the cases from her professional experience. The analysis of the defense of micro-projects and internships seemed extremely valuable, as it provided many important findings and recommendations."* *"I am not afraid to speak up during the lectures by this tutor, even if I am not completely convinced of something, if I may have not fully understood something, because I know that the lecturer will listen and help to deal with the things that are not clear. Always very interested. This seems very important to me, the student."* *"Fantastic lecturer! Very inspiring and knowledgeable! I really enjoyed the numerous practical tasks while we still could attend lectures in person, because they gave the most."*

Student evaluations and comments are available to lecturers, they are used to improve course teaching and content. If the average evaluation of the course is below 5 and students have critical comments, a conversation is organised with the course lecturer to evaluate the situation and provide the necessary methodological support. Such cases are quite rare and can be mainly linked to the lecturer's lack of experience in starting a new course. Students welcome the study materials available in the e-environment and expect feedback that provides a detailed explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of individual and group work. A personal detailed assessment of students' work is expected by the students of the master's programme, and in some subjects it can be further improved. Some students would like to receive a simpler explanation of methodological problems of research.

Analysing the evaluations which the graduates have given the study programme, the average assessment of the programme ranges from 5.8 to 6.5 points. Graduates suggest providing literature in social work in Latvian as much as possible. This is ensured, for example, by regularly presenting the MoW periodical "Sociālais darbs Latvijā" ("Social Work in Latvia"), which is available both online and in the FSS library (as of 2016, 2 issues per year). The programme lecturers also actively participate in the development of methodological materials in Latvian language (e.g., Methodological material for social work with families with children (*Metodiskais materiāls sociālajam darbam ar ģimenēm ar bērniem. LM, AC Konsultācijas, 2020*), and Methodological material for social work with addicted and co-addicted persons (*Metodiskais materiāls sociālajam darbam ar atkarīgām un līdzatkarīgām personām. LM. Dialogs.*

2020), 2020). Social work is a relatively new field in the country and the range of professional literature available in Latvian is still limited.

In the surveys, students point to insufficient cooperation with the Student Self-Government, which can be partly explained by differences in the study organization (active work in the self-government takes place in the first half of the week, while social work students attend FSS on weekends). Furthermore, this concern can be partly explained by age differences, as the Student Self-Government is mainly staffed by non-working bachelor's programme students, while the master's degree programme is mainly taken by students working full-time and caring for their families, and they do not have time for active involvement in student life.

From surveys and discussions with graduates and students, it can be concluded that the motivation to study is significantly enhanced by field trips, study tours and meetings with professionals of the sector, which are very much appreciated by students. The graduates in the open-form responses to the survey questions have given the following opinions: "*I most of all enjoyed guest lectures with sector's professionals, the opportunity to go on study "excursions" to institutions, enthusiastic lecturers who teach courses in earnest.*" "*Recommendation: the opportunity to be in the institutional environment more frequently during the lectures (not only during internship).*" "*Studies helped me to define my place in the labour market." "I improved knowledge related to the specifics of the sector, such as terminology of the sector in a foreign language, theories, etc.".*

In the surveys, graduates have been more critical of the suitability of the premises for certain subjects where practical actions and a more interactive environment are required (for example, in the course dedicated to supervision). It can be concluded that the study environment and communication with students of other programmes is also important for students, and this should be taken into account when organizing joint activities in FSS, not only within the confines of the programme. Careful attention must also be paid to the organizational aspects of studies, which is not always possible due to the voluminous study programme.

In January 2020, in addition to the regular surveys conducted by the University of Latvia, an online survey of FSS social welfare field graduates and employers was conducted (using *Question Pro*) on the results of the study programme and opportunities for improving cooperation. 33 graduates participated in the graduate survey, which is the majority of the 47 graduates who completed the programme during the reporting period. The survey of employers included 9 medium and large employers in the field of social welfare. The advantage of this survey of graduates is that, unlike the survey conducted by the University of Latvia immediately after graduation, here the graduates are able to assess the knowledge, skills and competence acquired during studies after they have been tested by time in the labour market. Graduates rated the following general skills acquired during their studies the highest:

- ability to work in a team (very satisfied or rather satisfied) 99%;
- acquired theoretical knowledge (very satisfied or rather satisfied) 90%;
- communication skills (very satisfied or rather satisfied) 89%;
- research skills (very satisfied or rather satisfied) 90%;
- ability to analyse a large amount of information (very satisfied or rather satisfied) 88%;
- ability to organize and manage one's own work (very satisfied or rather satisfied) 100%;
- organize and manage the work of others (very satisfied or rather satisfied) 70%;
- skills in using information technology (very satisfied or rather satisfied) 78%.

The employer survey reached 9 employers representing medium or large companies/organizations (with more than 50 employees in medium-sized companies and more than 250 employees in large companies). There are not many such employers in the field of social work, and those who

particularly employ the UL graduates are even fewer. Describing the graduates of the master's programme, the employers emphasize purposefulness when entering and studying in the programme, as well as the fact that after graduation the alumni of the programme continue to work in the organization. Employers appreciate the systematic knowledge acquired by the graduates in the field of social work and their understanding of social policy, which is useful for further professional work. Organizational and cooperation skills are also highly valued. For example: *"This study programme is mainly chosen by those who already have experience in our organization, and the studies help and develop a broader view of social work directions, social policy in general, as well as the study process – both study internships and maturity of peers enrolled in the study programme, as well as the wide range of social sphere representation – helps to build a systematic network of partners, which later greatly assists in the practical performance of duties".*

From the point of view of the study programme development, it is important that the surveyed employers would readily offer internship placements to students and employ the graduates.

In early 2021, a meeting with employers in the regions was organized on the *Zoom* platform, in cooperation with the Director of the University of Latvia Regional Centre G. Kraģe and the heads of branches. The discussion was valuable for understanding the attitudes and demand for master's level professionals in the regions. The detailed list of discussion participants is provided in Part III, Section 2.6. The aim of the meeting was to find out the opinions of employers about the current processes in the field of social work, the topicality of the offered study programmes and the necessary improvements. During the meeting, employers expressed their views regarding the UL graduates, their preparedness for social work practice, planned development trends and forecasted vacancies, knowledge and skills required of social workers, as well as opportunities to further strengthen the cooperation with the UL social work study programmes. The responsiveness of employers in terms of providing internship placements and their readiness to engage in research is a particular benefit.

During the meeting, the bachelor's programme received most of the attention, as it is also provided in UL branches. However, the participants of the meeting also spoke about the master's study programme. The key findings:

- Several employers emphasized the need for specialists with specialization in working with families with children, for example: *"There is also a lack of master's level specialists. A specialization is important for working with families with children"*;
- Specialists in branches who have acquired education in other fields, but who want to continue their professional activity in the field of social welfare and social work, are interested in the master's programme;
- Several participants emphasized the importance of professional master's level education in the context of the deinstitutionalisation process, for example: *"since the process of deinstitutionalisation is underway, it requires new social services, in the development of which professional master's education and skills in social work are important"*;
- What is important is not so much the specific digital skills as the information literacy, the readiness to work with different databases, because the digital environment is changing very fast. Communication skills, which are also developed during life experience, are invaluable, therefore a higher education obtained previously in another field is very valuable.

2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.

2.7. Analysis and assessment of incoming and outgoing student mobility

Erasmus exchange agreements have been concluded with five universities during the reporting period (since 2014), and during the last three years, exchange opportunities have been expanded with three more cooperation agreements. Students have ample opportunities to choose to go on an exchange either very near – to Lithuania, Estonia, Poland or Finland, or further afield – to Germany, Belgium, Norway, and since 2020 also to Turkey. However, *Erasmus* exchanges are not a suitable form of mobility for master's students of social work, they do not take advantage of the wide range of opportunities available to them due to restrictions imposed by work and family. According to the students themselves, the mobility of students within the framework of master's studies is hindered by the intensive studies, which most students combine with work responsibilities, and many have families and children. It is also challenging to complete the mandatory part of the programme, especially internship courses. Although all study courses acquired during the mobility period are recognized, in order for the courses acquired during the mobility period to be equated with the courses of the mandatory part of the study programme, they must coincide in terms of content. If the content of the courses does not match, they are equated with the courses of the limited elective part. In the next review period, purposeful motivation of students will be exercised, and alternative mobility opportunities will be sought, as well as alternative options for arranging the mandatory part of the programme, in order to remove obstacles to mobility at least on the part of the University of Latvia. For example, an alternative option is to raise funds for group study tours aimed at exchanging professional experience, spending a week at a foreign university and getting to know organizations and institutions in the field of social welfare. The situation regarding the incoming mobility is similar – the range of courses offered to exchange students in English language needs to be enhanced, and the mobility opportunities offered by UL, including *Erasmus* internship exchanges require a more substantial promotion.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

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. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

3. Provision of resources and support for study programme

3.1. Compatibility of resources with the requirements set for the programme implementation and achievement of learning outcomes

The master's study programme is implemented at the University of Latvia, Faculty of Social Sciences (UL FSS). Resources and equipment are already extensively described in Part II, Section 3 of the current report, therefore, the section below contains only a brief description of scientific literature provided to students. The available resources fully correspond to the requirements for the achievement of the study programme aims and the implementation of a high-quality study process (premises, material and technical provision, required technologies and software all correspond to the study needs). The provision of information necessary for the implementation of the study process is excellent.

The UL FSS library premises, containing the collection of the social science resources, are open 55 hours a week at times convenient to students and lecturers. Users can benefit from an open access collection where they can choose the publications and resources according to their needs. 84 workstations are available for students in the library of the Faculty of Social Sciences, including 18 workstations equipped for use of computer. The library has three scanners, two printers and a copier.

Basic library services free of charge

- *Electronic ordering / reservation / loan period extension of information resources in Electronic Union Catalogue of Latvian libraries of national significance* (hereinafter – Union Catalogue) and receipt of information resources for on-site use in the library reading room or for borrowing. The service is available to users registered with the UL Library.
- *Delivery of information resources.* UL academic staff, researchers and doctoral students, when ordering information resources in the Union Catalogue from any library, have the opportunity to indicate the most convenient place to receive the required information resource – the corresponding branch library.
- *Self-service scanning.* Users have access to a self-service scanning facility.
- Use of *open access reading rooms*, *computers and the Internet*. The reading rooms provide access to a collection of reference literature and periodicals, stationary and portable computers (both the property of UL Library and the possibility to connect the users' personal equipment), Internet connection, including WI-FI, which works in all UL buildings.
- *Night-time subscription, advance reservation of information resources*. The purpose of the "Night-time Subscription" service is to provide an opportunity to use certain information resources outside the University of Latvia Library free of charge from the time of its closure until the opening time. The information resource can be reserved in advance for certain hours.
- *Delivery of information resources in summer.* Once a week, users can receive the information resources reserved in the Union Catalogue from the Repository in the most convenient branch library (Library on Raiņa bulvāris, Library of Natural Sciences, Library at the House of Science).
- *Inquiries and consultations.* Information service for users – consulting, reference, training and support in research is one of the main areas of work of the University of Latvia Library. The UL Library consultant provides bibliographic, thematic, factual, clarifying, etc. references and consultations to UL students, academic, research and general staff. Students use consultations more frequently during implementation of independent assignments, writing term papers and bachelor's theses.
- *User training.* The training is organised with the aim to develop users' skills of independent work, ability to find, evaluate and use information resources and e-environment tools. The library actively works with target audiences – students of all study levels, academic, research and general staff to promote information literacy simultaneously with providing in-depth knowledge and skills in working with electronic resources. In the first semester of studies, the

library organizes and conducts presentations, classes in auditoriums and computer classes for students of social work programme. The students of branches can attend these meetings remotely. The aim of the training is to provide users with the skills to work with open access collections, self-service equipment and office equipment – self-service scanners, copiers, thereby improving the competence of independent learning.

The printed information resources required for the accreditation of the UL study field **"Social Welfare"** available at the UL Faculty of Social Sciences library make up **67%** of the total number of resources available at the UL Library, selected and specified according to pre-defined criteria – time period and keywords in this study field. Of the total number of resources by languages, the following are available: in English – 71%, in Latvian – 24%, other – 5%. The concept of social welfare includes a number of cross-cutting or intermediary sectors, including psychology, medicine, pedagogy, etc. and therefore cannot be considered in a narrow sense.

Table 30. Information resources of the study field "Social Welfare", published in the period from January 1, 2015 to December 30, 2020 and available in the collection of UL Library (ULL)

Total information resources available at the UL Library collection published in the period from 01.01.2015 to 30.12.2020						
Printed publications (titles/copies)			Publications according to language (titles/copies)			
Books	Publication series, periodicals	Other types of publications	Latvian	English	Russian	Other languages
679/1113	8/65	18/31	257/627	404/528	22/27	22/27
Total: **705** titles / **1209** copies						

Table 31. Information resources available at the UL Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) Library collection

Total information resources available at the UL FSS Library collection published in the period from 01.01.2015 to 30.12.2020						
Printed publications (titles/copies)			Publications according to language (titles/copies)			
Books	Publication series, periodicals	Other types of publications	Latvian	English	Russian	Other languages
439/653	11/71	19/39	116/294	345/461	6/6	2/2
Total: **469** titles / **763** copies						

UL Library also provides access to electronic resources: 1. UL e-resource repository; 2. Databases of journals, publishers, etc.; 3. E-book platforms.

Subscribed electronic information resources (databases, e-book platforms) can be used both in the UL network and outside the UL computer network by connecting to them with the LUIS username and password.

For easier access to electronic resources, UL Library has introduced the latest technology web services Primo Discovery and SFX. They provide access to search results retrieved from all UL Library-managed databases through a single interface.

The library collection overall meets the needs of studies and scientific research. Every year it is supplemented with the most up-to-date information resources according to the information needs of the academic staff and students.

The professional master's study programme "Social Work" (80 CP sub-programme) is funded mainly from the state budget – 91%, tuition fee income is 9%. In turn, the studies in the professional master's study programme "Social Work" 60 CP sub-programme are only self-funded by students (to date – in the 40 CP sub-programme). The cost of one study place in the 80 CP sub-programme is 2549 EUR, where 49% is directed to the remuneration of academic staff, 12% – to the remuneration of general and study support staff, 13% – to other costs related to the implementation of the study programme, and 26% – to indirect costs. On the other hand, the cost of one study place in the 60 CP sub-programme is 2639 EUR. Of this amount, 47% is allocated to the remuneration of academic staff, 12% – to the remuneration of general and study support staff, 15% – to other costs related to the implementation of the study programme, and 26% – to indirect costs.

A detailed overview of costs for the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" full-time regular and part-time regular forms, as well as for the professional master's study programme "Social Work", the sub-programmes of 80 CP and 60 CP. A detailed analysis of the financial provision and costs of the programme can be found in Annex 39.

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

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)

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

4. Teaching staff

4.1. Analysis and assessment of the changes in the teaching staff during the reporting period

Since the accreditation of the programme, the composition of the teaching staff has been formed in accordance with the aim of the programme, which envisages ensuring academic and professional excellence in the study process. Therefore, since the very first years of the study programme implementation, highly qualified lecturers of the University of Latvia, professionals of the field, as well as lecturers of other fields are being involved in teaching the programme. Following the students' recommendations, a closer link has been established to connect social work practice with theoretical knowledge and analytical skills. As a result, cooperation with professionals of the sector

continues and is further enforced (Ieva Ozola has been elected an assistant professor, Daina Vanaga is a regular contract (hourly-paid) lecturer). Other professionals of the sector involved in teaching include Mg. soc. d. Inga Liepa-Meiere, Mg. soc. d. Solvita Rudoviča, Mg. soc. d. Aiga Romane-Meiere. The young researchers of the University of Latvia, doctoral degree applicants Endija Rezgale-Straidoma (Mg. sc. soc, Mg. soc. d.) and Aiga Romāne-Meiere (Mg. soc. d.) are employed as lecturers in the study programme. A long-standing cooperation has been established with representatives of other fields – in the study course *Personnel Management* with lecturer Eva Selga, doctor of law, Arturs Kučs – the lecturer of study course *Human Rights and Social Rights*, and doctor of medicine, psychiatry specialist Aleksandra Koņevina. Involvement of a foreign lecturer (Mg. soc. d. Jonas Buechel) contributes to internationalization of the studies and enables students to gain a broader insight into the development of the field outside Latvia. The composition of the teaching staff should be considered constant and changes in the composition of the lecturers are supported if the further teaching of courses is ensured by the teaching staff with higher qualifications, for which positive feedback and evaluation of students has been received.

Table 32. Qualification of the teaching staff of the professional master's study programme "Social Work"

Qualification of teaching staff	Academic year 2020/2021	
	Number	~%
Professors	3	15
Associate professors	3	15
Assistant professors	3	15
Lecturers, professionals of the sector (Mg. soc. d.)	6	30
Lecturers, professionals of other sectors (Dr. sc.)	1	5
Lecturers, professionals of other sectors (Mg. oec.)	1	5
Researchers (Dr. sc. soc.)	1	5
Researchers (Mg. soc. d.)	2	10
Total	20	100

The programme involves highly qualified industry professionals who, in addition to their daily work, are involved in the implementation of projects which contribute to the development of the social welfare sector, have gained attention with their professional and civic activities (for example, work in the Latvian Association of Social Workers, Association of Supervisors). Of course, highly qualified professionals are also in demand outside the University of Latvia, consequently, the study plan must be very carefully designed to reduce the risks to the programme. The professional and scientific qualification of the teaching staff corresponds to aim and objective of the programme, because the specific study courses allow each lecturer to apply his or her professional and scientific achievements. For instance:

- The course *Introduction to Research and Academic Writing* is taught by Dr. sc. soc. Mareks Niklass, who in his capacity of a research methodology specialist participates in international and national research in the field of social sciences and social work;
- The courses *EU Social Policy Analysis, Latvian Social Security System in International Perspective, Modern Social Work Theories* are taught by associate professor Dr. sc. soc. Līga Rasnača, who is a leading researcher in several social policy studies and the author of many international and national publications on social policy issues (e.g., social security system, pension system, active aging, housing policy, poverty and inequality reduction);
- The course Human Rights and Social Rights is taught by Associate Professor Arturs Kučs, who is also a judge of the Constitutional Court of Latvia and has participated in several decisions important for the Latvian social security system (on minimum income levels; on the rights of

same-sex couples);

- The course *Social Aspects of Project Management* is taught by Aija Rieba, who is an expert in quality assessment of social welfare projects with many years of experience;
- The course *New Challenges in Professional Social Work* and *Approaches to Social Work with Family* is taught by Assistant Professor Ieva Ozola, who has the experience of a professional social worker and supervisor, she is an author of several methodologies for social workers developed as a commission by the Ministry of Welfare (Methodological material for social work with families with children, Methodological material for social work with addicted and co-addicted persons);
- The course *Social Work in Criminal Justice* is taught by Dr. sc. soc. Anvars Zavackis, who is also a senior researcher in several international projects implemented at the University of Latvia in cooperation with the State Probation Service (Criminal Justice Social Work, Circles4EU, PONT) and uses the experience and knowledge gained in his position of a researcher;
- The course *Social Work with Seniors* is taught by lecturer Solvita Rudoviča, who has professional experience in managing a social care institution and who is also conversant with the Belgian senior long-term social care organisation in cooperation with lecturer Endija Rezgale-Straidoma, who has conducted a study on social care for seniors in Latvia and Norway within the framework of the development of her doctoral thesis.

The professional and scientific qualification of each lecturer involved in teaching specific study courses of the programme can be similarly described, because all lecturers are selected with a view to promote sharing of their expertise and experience with students, since they have gained this knowledge and achievements in their professional activity and research practice.

Romāne-Meiere and E. Rezgale-Straidoma, candidates for the doctoral degree in sociology and social work, are involved in teaching the courses of the programme, thereby ensuring renewal of the academic staff and the long-term development of the programme as a whole.

4.2. 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.

4.2. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme with the requirements set for the study programme implementation and the regulatory enactments

The study programme courses are taught both by academic staff and social work professionals. The proportion of academia and sector's practitioners is balanced. The interaction of academic lecturers and practitioners in the study process and cooperation in the implementation of social welfare projects (PONT, Glossary of Social Work Terminology) promotes the quality and efficiency of the study process, compliance with the latest trends in research and practice.

The analysis of the qualification of the teaching staff shows that the programme is taught by 3 professors, 3 associate professors, 3 assistant professors, 1 researcher with a doctoral degree and 1 professional of another sector with a doctoral degree. 6 professionals of the sector have more than five years of experience in the field of social work and a master's degree in social work, 2 researchers are doctoral degree candidates. Interdisciplinary cooperation is also promoted by lecturers from the Faculty of Business, Economics and Management, Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Law. 12 of all lecturers are elected staff members at the University of Latvia. Attracting lecturers from different fields allows to promote the necessary cross-sectoral cooperation in the field of social welfare.

Several courses are taught by industry professionals (eg Social Work with Vulnerable Client Groups, Social Work with seniors). Attracting professionals allows to more effectively achieve the results of the study program, in particular to integrate theoretical and research knowledge in the development of social work professional practice, approaches, application of methods and communication with service users, colleagues and professionals. In professional communication, competence in work with diversity is strengthened, involvement in the development of the professional field.

4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the 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 may be additionally specified (if applicable).

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).

4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.

4.5. Examples of academic staff engaging in scientific research and / or artistic creation, both nationally and internationally

The teaching staff of the study programme is involved both in research projects in accordance with their research interests and in the development of practically applicable methodologies, for

example, "Methodological material for social work with families with children" (I. Ozola, A. Romāne-Meiere). In 2020, research topics for academic staff are related to the impact of Covid-19 on social services. The implemented research covers a wide range of directions – social policy, social inclusion, poverty and inequality, access to housing, specific research of social work target groups, etc. This variety of research topics ensures development of new knowledge and assists in achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme. The results of the lecturers' research performance in greater detail are provided in Annex 10. Here are just a few examples of research and professional projects:

- UL FSS research group participated in the implementation of the National Research Programme "Life with COVID-19: Evaluation of overcoming the coronavirus crisis in Latvia and recommendations for societal resilience in the future" (autumn semester 2020), performing analysis of social services provision. The project was led by Riga Stradiņš University, and UL FSS was represented here by B. Bela, M. Niklass, and L. Rasnača;
- Cooperation with the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work of the University of Bucharest in implementation of the EU EC-funded project "*Probation Observatory. Networking and Training*" (PONT, 2017-2021), with an involvement of researchers from State Probation Service and Prison Administration. Leading researcher Līga Rasnača and researcher Anvars Zavackis in this project conduct the research of criminal justice in the field of social work;
- The team of lecturers and researchers of the UL FSS in a competition organized by the Ministry of Education and Science acquired the right to implement the project "On the development and publication of the social work terminology dictionary content", No. LR LM 2018/28-3-03/10 ESF. The project is led by Assoc. Prof. Baiba Bela and Līga Rasnača, the academic staff involved in FSS social work programmes participate in the implementation of this project: Ieva Ozola, Aiga Romāne-Meiere, Endija Rezgale-Straidoma, as well as Vita Roga-Wiles;
- Daina Vanaga, a professional social worker involved in the study programme, heads the study system improvement unit in the ESF project No. 9.1.3 "Increasing the efficiency of the resocialization system" (2017-2019) implemented by Latvian Prison Administration of the Ministry of Justice;
- Expert and lecturer Daina Vanaga performs training and development of methodologies for professional qualification improvement, education programmes and knowledge advancement education programmes in the framework of the ESF co-financed project No. 2.1.3/16/I/001 "Support systems development for children with communication difficulties, behavioural disorders and domestic violence";
- Gunta Kraģe has headed the ESF project No. 8.3.4.0/16/I/001 "Support for the reduction of early school leaving", as well as provided management and expertise to the ESF project No.2010/0328/1DP/1.2.2.4.1/10/IPIA/VIAA/002 "Establishing and Implementation of Support Programmes to Develop Support System for Young People at Risk of Social Exclusion";

The lecturers involved in the implementation of these and other projects (see attached CV, summary of research performance in Annex10) ensure students' acquaintance with current developments, project results, and thereby strengthen students' comprehension of principles governing implementation of research and applied projects, connection between knowledge and practice, as well as, wherever possible, ensure the involvement of students in particular projects.

The lecturers of the department are also actively involved in the improvement of their competencies within the European Social Fund project No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/010 "Academic Staff Renewal and Continuing Professional Development at the University of Latvia". For example, A. Romāne-Meiere, M. Niklass have attended the training "Scientific Activity and Publishing Skills", B. Bela, L. Rasnača, A. Romāne-Meiere have improved their professional foreign language skills,

while. E. Rezgale-Straidoma receives the support of a doctoral student within the framework of this project for the purposes of updating the studies in accordance with research interests, taking into account the latest theoretical findings

4.6. 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 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).

4.6. Assessment of teaching staff cooperation and student/ academics ratio in the study programme

The primary basis of the professional master's study programme "Social Work" teaching staff is the Department of Sociology Studies of the UL FSS. The mutual cooperation of the teaching staff takes place in the following forms: the department meetings, regular discussions on the achievements and problems of the study work, approval of the topics of the master's theses, analysis of the study process and study results. The Social Welfare study field council is a platform for discussions on the study content and study programme improvement. Lecturers of other UL faculties (Faculty of Law, Faculty of Business, Economics and Management, Faculty of Medicine) are also involved in the study programme, which promotes teaching staff cooperation, exchange of views and enriches the intellectual environment of study work.

An important partner in scientific work is the UL FSS Advanced Social and Political Research Institute. Forms of cooperation include performance of research, preparing project applications, involving students in this work, preparing publications, organizing conferences and participating in them. Cooperation with partners in the social welfare sector takes place mainly outside the University of Latvia, participating in the activities of professional organizations in the field of social welfare (e.g., collaboration in the activities of Latvian Social Workers' Association, development of code of ethics), cooperation with institutions (e.g., Riga City Council Welfare Department, Riga Social Service) and working groups in the Ministry of Welfare (e.g., in developing the professional standard). Cooperation with sector's professionals is strengthened in accordance with the regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers on final commissions in professional study programmes, involving the professionals in the work of final commissions.

It is planned that due to the growth and development of social work study programmes, the name of the department could be expanded – the Department of Sociology and Social Work Studies, while the relocation of FSS to the House of Letters at the University of Latvia Academic Centre in Torņakalns in 2023/2024 will improve cooperation with teaching staff and institutes of other faculties, as well as provide modern and advanced study environment, including a more convenient access to the wide range of scientific literature stored at the National Library of Latvia.

To characterise the cooperation of the teaching staff with the students, the most significant forms of cooperation are lectures, seminars, internships, practical work, group work, personal consultations, individual study assignments, supervision of the final theses. The student groups in the study programme are not large (10–15 students). This allows to create a personalised approach to each student, to implement interactive lectures (there is enough time and opportunity for everyone to ask clarifying questions and discuss the subject), as well as makes the seminars highly effective, because each student has a chance to speak at each seminar). With a small number of

students, it is possible for everyone to develop discussion skills and express an opinion, to actively participate in the study process. Some study courses use seating in a circle (e.g., in the course *Supervision in Social Work*), promoting an equal arrangement of participants and stimulating involvement in dialogue. Cooperation at an individual level takes place in the elaboration of the final thesis, where the successful collaboration of the scientific supervisor and the master's programme student is crucial in developing the master's thesis and preparing for its defense. On average, one lecturer supervises the development of 1–2 master's theses, which, taking into account the additional workload of the lecturers in the implementation of other programmes and management of the final theses, altogether amounts to a reasonable workload and enables high quality work with the necessary personal approach.

At the beginning of the spring semester of 2021, there are 20 students in the programme (including those on academic leave), as a result of which the total proportion of lecturers and students is 1 to 1. Taking into account only the elected teaching staff of UL FSS, the proportion of lecturers is lower – 1 to 2.5.

Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	Statistics on students in the reporting period M.doc	Statistika par studējošajiem pārskata periodā.doc
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	Annex 30. Compliance of PMSP Social Work with the state education standard.doc	30.Pielikums. Profesionālās maģistra studiju programmas "Sociālais darbs" atbilstība valsts izglītības standartam.doc
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)	Annex 29. Compliance of qualifications to be acquired in the study programme with the occupational standard (LABOTS).doc	29. Pielikums.Studiju programmā iegūstamās kvalifikācijas atbilstību profesijas standartam PMSP (LABOTS).doc
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	Annex 31. Professional master's study programme Mapping of the learning outcomes of the respective study programme and study courses.doc	Pielikusm31PMSPkursukartējums.doc
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	Annex 32 Plan of the professional master's study programme_Social Work.docx	32.Pielikums.Profesionālās maģistra studiju programmas Sociālais darbs plāns (1).docx
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Professional Masters SP Course descriptions.docx	kursu_apraksti_LV_magistri.docx
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	PMSP Social Work sample of the issued diploma and diploma supplements_ENG.pdf	PMSP Sociālais darbs diploma un pielikuma paraugs.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	ARRANGEMENTS on the continuation of studies Nr. 1-13-371.docx	Vienošanās par izglītības ieguves turpināšanu (LU_RSU.edoc
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	Rector's certification on compensation_ MSP.doc	APLIECINĀJUMS_par kompensāciju_maģistri.edoc
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.		
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education		
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	Sample of the Study Agreement.doc	Studiju līguma paraugs.doc
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.		

Social Work (42762)

Study field	*Social Welfare*
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	*Social Work*
Education classification code	*42762*
Type of the study programme	*Professional bachelor study programme*
Name of the study programme director	*Baiba*
Surname of the study programme director	*Bela*
E-mail of the study programme director	*baiba.bela@lu.lv*
Title of the study programme director	*Dr.sc.soc*
Phone of the study programme director	*+ 371 29447405*
Goal of the study programme	*To ensure the acquisition of the second level professional higher education, professional bachelor's degree in social work and the fifth level professional qualification "Social Worker", providing the necessary knowledge, skills and value base for qualified professional activity in the field of social work at micro, meso and macro levels and for continuing education.*

Tasks of the study programme	1. To provide an opportunity to acquire a profession in ac-cordance with the approved professional standard of a social worker, to prepare highly qualified and competitive social workers in accordance with the needs of the social sphere in various institutions; 2. To develop the basis of theoretical knowledge, skills and values necessary for social work for working at the level of individual, family, group, community and society; 3.To implement the study process, providing knowledge and skills in accordance with the latest trends in the professional environment of social work, the needs of employers, theoretical findings and processes in society, as well as using student-centered teaching methods; 4.To supplement the content of study courses with current developments in the field, encouraging active participation of the teaching staff in solving the problems of the social work sphere, research, conferences, summer schools, seminars, development of scientific publications, as well as teaching and methodological materials. 5.To promote lecturers' research activities and development of research in the field of social work on approbation of various theories and methods, social changes, development of social services, work with various target groups and other topical issues, motivating students to participate in research. 6. To organize professional internship in institutions where it is possible to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the study process, to implement one's own initiatives in compliance with the principles of social work ethics. 7. To involve advanced teaching staff and professionals with practical experience in the field of social work in the implementation of the study program. 8. To ensure cooperation of the teaching staff and students of the program with employers, social organizations and foreign partners.

| Results of the study programme | Knowledge
1) To understand the terminology of social work and to describe the diversity of theories, approaches and methods;
2) To know the development tendencies, ethical principles, values of the social work profession and to understand the multidisciplinary nature of social work;
3) To comprehend the causal relations of social problems at the level of an individual, a group and a community, to know the intervention methods of different levels for solving problems;
4) To understand the social policy process, the social security system, legislation of social work and the possibilities of implementing social rights.

Skills
1) To identify individual and social problems and promote their solution at the individual, group and community level applying theories, approaches and methods of social work appropriate to the situation;
2) To have a good knowledge of social services and other resources and attract them in accordance with the needs of clients, as well as to develop new innovative social services;
3) To apply the knowledge of other fields in the context of social work;
4) To plan one's own and team professional and research activities in order to promote people's empowerment and self-determination, to defend and represent the interests of clients.

Competences
1) To comply with professional values, ethical principles and solve ethical dilemmas;
2) To become creatively and innovatively involved in development of the scientific theoretical basis of social work and social pedagogy. |
| Final examination upon the completion of the study programme | Bachelor's thesis
State examination |

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 4 years - latvian

Study type and form	Full time studies
Duration in full years	4
Duration in month	0
Language	latvian
Amount (CP)	160
Admission requirements (in English)	Secondary education
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	Professional bachelor's degree in social work
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	Social Worker

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address

University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, CENTRA RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1050

Part time studies - 4 years, 5 months - latvian

Study type and form	*Part time studies*
Duration in full years	*4*
Duration in month	*5*
Language	*latvian*
Amount (CP)	*160*
Admission requirements (in English)	*Secondary education*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional bachelor's degree in social work*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*Social Worker*

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, CENTRA RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1050
Alūksne branch of University of Latvia	ALŪKSNE	PILS IELA 21, ALŪKSNE, ALŪKSNES NOVADS, LV-4301
Bauska branch of University of Latvia	BAUSKA	RĪGAS IELA 8, BAUSKA, BAUSKAS NOVADS, LV-3901
Cēsis branch of University of Latvia	CĒSIS	LIELĀ KATRĪNAS IELA 2, CĒSIS, CĒSU NOVADS, LV-4101
Jēkabpils branch of University of Latvia	JĒKABPILS	RĪGAS IELA 210A, JĒKABPILS, JĒKABPILS NOVADS, LV-5202
Kuldīga branch of University of Latvia	KULDĪGA	KALNA IELA 19, KULDĪGA, KULDĪGAS NOVADS, LV-3301
Madona branch of University of Latvia	MADONA	VALDEMĀRA BULVĀRIS 6, MADONA, MADONAS NOVADS, LV-4801
Tukums branch of University of Latvia	TUKUMS	PILS IELA 14, TUKUMS, TUKUMA NOVADS, LV-3101

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme)

1.1. Description and analysis of changes in study programme parameters that have taken place since the issue of the previous accreditation certificate of study direction or the license of study programme if study programme is not included in the accreditation page of the study direction

1. Characteristics of the study programme

1.1. Changes in the professional bachelor study programme "Social Work" parameters

Changes in the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" concern the programme implementation location, the aim and objectives of the programme to be achieved. Part-time regular studies are also planned at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Riga, Tukums branch, Bauska branch and Jēkabpils branch. Branches shall be accredited taking into account the lack of qualified social workers and the opinion expressed by employers that the studies should also be provided in other regions.

The objectives of the programme have been updated considering the social work development trends at the international and national level. The results to be achieved have been defined in accordance with the renewed social work professional standard.

1.2. Analysis and assessment of the 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 in the different study forms, types, and languages.

1.2. Statistical data on the students of the study programme

In 2012, the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" (hereinafter – the study programme) was successfully accredited with the highest assessment results among the programmes implemented at the UL Faculty of Social Sciences. The study programme was assessed as sustainable and socially significant in terms of content quality and professionalism of the teaching staff, however, since 2009 budget places have been allocated to the master's programme, offering the possibility to admit paying students to the bachelor's level programme. As the number of applications was below the number stipulated by the UL, no new first year students were admitted. In 2012, the last 19 students graduated from the programme. It should be noted that since 2008 a stagnant stage has prevailed in the field of social work in Latvia, without a clear definition of the social policy development direction, when support to social care and social assistance became dominant, providing the population with minimum support. As a result of the state policy, School of Management and Social Work "Attīstība" discontinued its operation in 2015.

In recent years, the need for qualified social workers has become relevant, and in 2019 LU responded flexibly to the request of local governments to provide local governments with necessary specialists in social work, commencing implementation of part-time regular social work bachelor's

study programme at the UL branches. In the spring of 2019, in the later stages of studies, 11 students were admitted to the Alūksne branch and 7 students to the Cēsis branch; In the autumn of 2019, 19 students in the Alūksne branch and 18 students in the Kuldīga branch were admitted to the 1st year. During the implementation of the programme, 1 student has been expelled in Cēsis branch, 3 students in Alūksne branch and 1 student – in Kuldīga branch. All students in the UL branches use personal funding for studies, because the state budget-funded places for part-time regular studies are not available. In the academic year 2020/2021, 18 students have been admitted to full-time regular studies within the framework of the state budget and the UL FSS budget. In 2021/2022, 12 more budget-funded places have been allocated, ensuring the sustainability and successful development of the programme.

The main reasons for dropping out are the discrepancy of the study programme with the student's idea of the tasks, responsibilities and specifics of the social work profession, as well as various personal reasons, most frequently – difficulties in combining studies and work. It should be taken into account that sometimes the dropout rate is also formed by those students who do not participate in the study process from the very beginning (sometimes students have concluded an agreement with the University of Latvia in the summer, but failed to turn up for lectures in September). Additionally, given that the part-time regular programme in branches is implemented only from 2019, and full-time regular programme in Riga from 2020, the conclusions on dropout are currently based on particular cases and it is not yet possible to identify general trends.

Despite the lack of professionals of the sector in the country, it should be taken into account that full-time regular programme studies are chosen by secondary school graduates, and the number of secondary school graduates in recent years tends to decrease. Since 2009, the number of students in secondary school classes has decreased from 60 475 to 36 018[1].

Moreover, the country's unstable economic situation, remuneration of social workers, prestige of the profession and the extent of social problems to be solved lead to forecast (as suggested also by the answers received in the student focus group) that the dropout rate from full-time regular study programme will be higher than from part-time regular studies provided at the branches, as these are most often used by practitioners already working in the field of social welfare who lack the necessary education.

According to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance[2], persons who have acquired a second level vocational higher or academic education in social work or in caritative social work have the right to perform social work, however, employers recognise that due to the lack of qualified social workers, they are compelled to employ persons who are only planning to begin acquiring the necessary education or have obtained first level professional higher education in the field of social care, social rehabilitation or provision of social assistance. The reason why these students to drop out could be the difficulty of combining studies with a full-time job.

The study programme is implemented in Latvian with guest lectures in English.

In order to attract potential social work students, the "School of Young Social Workers" (SYSW) for secondary school students has been implemented since 2021, offering joint lectures of the faculty's bachelor's programmes and separate social work programme lectures and practical tasks. At the conclusion of SYSW, participants demonstrate their comprehension of the key ethical aspects of the social work profession. During SYSW, participants have open discussions with existing students, thus ensuring that their idea of the study programme is as close as possible to its actual implementation. In 2021, 24 people applied for SYSW. The second direction for informing potential students is the exchange of information and strengthening cooperation with organizations that implement youth volunteering in the field of social welfare.

The pupils' scientific research work competition organised by UL FSS is also used to attract students, and the winners of the 1ˢᵗ place during the last two years have been awarded additional points upon admission. The pupil's research work must be an original research submitted only to the UL FSS competition. This form of student involvement has not yet yielded the expected results.

[1]Central Statistical Bureau (2021). Retrieved from: http://data1.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/sociala/sociala__izgl__vispskolas/IZG070.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=43a9a758-d8b6-4eed-87d4-aa557c1ce39b

[2] Sociālo pakalpojumu un sociālās palīdzības likums (Law on Social Services and Social Assistance), 2003. Retrieved from: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/68488-socialo-pakalpojumu-un-socialas-palidzibas-likums

1.3. Analysis and assessment of the interrelation between the name of the study programme, the degree or professional qualification to be acquired or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements.

1.3. Linking study programme parameters

The title of the study programme indicates the profession to be acquired – a social worker. The social work professional standard stipulates that a social worker identifies and analyses social problems of an individual, family, group, community and society, promotes their prevention, solves them in cooperation with clients and representatives of other professions, attracting or creating appropriate resources (financial, human resources, organizational potential, etc.); in professional activity implements social justice, promotes the client's self-determination; represents the interests of the client; observes the norms of professional ethics, constantly improves one's own professional competence, as well as contributes to the development of social work practice and research[1]. The aim, objectives and learning outcomes of the programme are aimed at enabling students to implement the basic tasks and responsibilities of a social worker.

The title of the study programme, the degree to be obtained, the aims and objectives, the learning outcomes, as well as the admission conditions are interrelated and appropriate, taking into account the implementation time of the study programme – eight semesters (part-time regular programme – nine semesters). The conditions and requirements for admission to the study programme are in accordance with the aim and objectives of the study programme. Secondary education, knowledge of Latvian and at least one foreign language are necessary for students to be able to achieve learning outcomes.

The title of the study programme is directly related to its *aim* – to ensure the acquisition of the second level professional higher education, professional bachelor's degree in social work and the fifth level professional qualification "Social Worker", providing the necessary knowledge, skills and value base for qualified professional activity in the field of social work at micro, meso and macro levels and for further education.

The following *objectives* have been set in order to achieve the aim and learning outcomes of the study programme:

1. To provide an opportunity to acquire a profession in accordance with the approved

professional standard of a social worker, to prepare highly qualified and competitive social workers in accordance with the needs of the social sphere in various institutions;

2. To develop the basis of theoretical knowledge, skills and values necessary for social work for working at the level of individual, family, group, community and society;
3. To implement the study process, providing knowledge and skills in accordance with the latest trends in the professional environment of social work, the needs of employers, theoretical findings and processes in society, as well as using student-centred teaching methods;
4. To supplement the content of study courses with current developments in the field, encouraging active participation of the teaching staff in solving the problems of the social work sphere, research, conferences, summer schools, seminars, development of scientific publications, as well as teaching and methodological materials;
5. To promote lecturers' research activities and development of research in the field of social work on approbation of various theories and methods, social changes, development of social services, work with various target groups and other topical issues, motivating students to participate in research;
6. To organize professional internship in institutions where it is possible to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the study process, to implement one's own initiatives in compliance with the principles of social work ethics;
7. To involve advanced teaching staff and professionals with practical experience in the field of social work in the implementation of the study programme.
8. To ensure cooperation of the teaching staff and students of the programme with employers, social organizations and foreign partners.

The study courses ensure the achievement of the study programme learning outcomes: the student acquires **knowledge**: 1) to understand the terminology of social work and to describe the diversity of theories, approaches and methods; 2) to know the development tendencies, ethical principles, values of the social work profession and to understand the multidisciplinary nature of social work; 3) to comprehend the causal relations of social problems at the level of an individual, a group and a community, to know the intervention methods of different levels for solving problems; 4) to understand the social policy process, the social security system, legislation of social work and the possibilities of implementing social rights.

As a result of programme acquisition, the student obtains **skills** 1) to identify individual and social problems and promote their solution at the individual, group and community level applying theories, approaches and methods of social work appropriate to the situation; 2) to have a good knowledge of social services and other resources and attract them in accordance with the needs of clients, as well as to develop new innovative social services; 3)to apply the knowledge of other fields in the context of social work; 4) to plan one's own and team professional and research activities in order to promote people's empowerment and self-determination, to defend and represent the interests of clients.

The learning outcomes of the study programme provide for **competences:** 1) to comply with professional values, ethical principles and solve ethical dilemmas; 2) to become creatively and innovatively involved in development of the scientific theoretical basis of social work and social pedagogy.

Acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences of the programme is possible if the student has previously acquired secondary education. Competition criteria for persons who have acquired secondary education since 2004: 1) Centralized examination (CE) in Latvian; 2) CE in English or CE in French or CE in German; 3) CE in mathematics. For persons who have completed secondary

education before 2008, the centralized examination in mathematics may be replaced by the annual grade in mathematics (or the average grade in algebra and geometry) of the secondary education document.

Competition criteria for persons who have completed secondary education before 2004 (excluding), as well as for persons who have acquired secondary education abroad or for persons with special needs:

- average annual grade in Latvian language and literature

- the annual grade in English or French, or German

- annual average grade in particular subjects

Additional points are awarded to the winners of the 1st to the 3rd place at the School of Young Social Workers organized by UL FSS over the past year. Additional points are also awarded to the 1st place winners of the pupils' research competition in sociology organized by the UL FSS during the last two years. The pupil's research work must be an original research submitted only to the UL FSS competition

The degree to be obtained as a result of the programme completion – the 2nd level professional higher education, professional bachelor's degree in social work and fifth level professional qualification "Social Worker" – confirms the knowledge and skills acquired by the student in the study programme – various aspects of social work as science, practice and research, also a basic understanding of social processes, their impact on individuals, groups and communities, and the potential for promoting change at different levels.

The study programme prepares graduates for further education in master's programmes, as well as for employment in the field of social work at the micro, meso and macro levels.

[1] Sociālā darbinieka profesijas standards [Social work professional standard], 2020. Retrieved from

https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-145.pdf

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof)

2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In 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.

2. Content and implementation of studies

2.1. Assessment of the topicality of the study courses / modules and their relevance to the needs of the sector, labour market and scientific trends

Social work globally is assessed as one of the fastest growing professions. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) of the USA forecasts that by 2028, the demand for social workers will increase by 11% (*National Association of Social Work. 2020. Retrieved from:* https://www.socialworkers.org/News/Facts). There is already a shortage of at least 500 social work specialists in Latvia (*Labklājības Ministrija (Ministry of Welfare, 2019). Retrieved from:* https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/sabiedribas-vajadzibam-atbilstoss-sociala-darba-profesijas-standarts) and it is expected that the demand for specialists in the field of social welfare will continue to grow. Firstly, the medium-term national development planning document "National Development Plan for 2021–2027" (NDP 2027) defines the priorities, directions and measures, which indicate the growing importance of the role of social work. NDP 2027 projects improving the motivation system of social work specialists, and strengthening their professional competence to provide and improve innovative, client-based social services that meet demographic trends and the needs of the population or target groups and ensure availability of social services in the regions of Latvia. Furthermore, Latvia's population is aging rapidly, the number of occupational diseases related to burnout and depression is increasing, "the mental health of young people is deteriorating and a significant number of people remain addicted to substances and processes, such as gambling. Additionally, the number of cases of domestic violence does not diminish and many families with children need intensive support. However, in a situation when the population is greatly in need of help in solving all these problems, there is a lack of more than 500 social work specialists in Latvia" (*Labklājības Ministrija (Ministry of Welfare) (2019). Retrieved from:* **http://adm.lm.gov.lv/lv/aktuali/presei/91397-sabiedribas-vajadzibam-atbilstoss-sociala-darba-profesijas-standarts**). The jobs of social workers are most often in the state, local government institutions and the non-governmental sector, and the providers of social services in the private sector are also developing rapidly. The professional work of social workers and their cooperation with public health professionals has been obvious and important in the conditions of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, which shows that employees are also practically involved in solving global challenges and problems. The improvement of the course content of the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" and the development of new courses is based on the aforementioned tendencies and forecasts.

The strategic objectives of second-level professional higher education are to provide professional studies corresponding to economic, cultural and social needs of the state, based on the theoretical foundations provided by the sciences of the sector, corresponding to professional standards and applicable in practice (*Noteikumi par otrā līmeņa profesionālās augstākās izglītības valsts standartu (Regulations on the state standard of second level professional higher education). 2014. Retrieved from:* https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761-noteikumi-par-otra-limena-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitibas-valsts-standartu). This strategic objective has been followed

in the work on the improvement and development of the programme content. In recent years, significant changes have taken place in the field of social work education in terms of practice both worldwide and in Latvia. At the international level, the most notable document is "Global Standards

for Social Work Education and Training" (*IFSW. (2020). Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training. 01.08.2020. Retrieved from:* https://www.ifsw.org/global-standards-for-social-work-education-and-training/#4corecurricula) revised and released on 1 August 2020 by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), while in Latvia – the new standard of social work profession approved on 14 October 2020. A. Romāne-Meiere, study director of the programme, I. Ozola, assistant professor and internship manager, L. Rasnača, associate professor and director of the master's programme, have participated in the development of the professional standard, representing the University of Latvia. The involvement of the management and teaching staff of the study programme at all stages of the standard development provided an in-depth understanding of the interconnection of knowledge, skills and competences defined in the standard.

The tasks of the study programme, the content and results of the study courses have been developed in accordance with the current developments in the sector, the main planning documents and professional standard, in compliance with the needs defined by employers and in line with social work development trends not only in Latvia, but also on the international level, taking into account the conclusions obtained from the completed research. Not only the improvement of the course content, but also the organization of the study programme and process is designed to respond in a timely manner to changes in the social work sector and labour market – study field council meetings, department meetings and methodological consultations of teaching staff are held to discuss the topicalities in the sector, organisation of the study process, tasks for independent study assignments, internships, term papers and final theses. For example, in accordance with the demand of employers, it is possible to admit students in the branches of the University of Latvia, the established cooperation with the specialists of the field enables attracting guest lecturers and contract (hourly-paid) lecturers who are experts in topical issues.

In improving the content of study courses and developing new ones, first of all, international recommendations for the implementation and development of social work education have been taken into account, which indicate the need to strengthen the role of practice, interdisciplinarity of practice, social work education integrity, self-directed learning, reflexivity, as well as to consider the latest global trends in the development of social processes (*IFSW. (2010). Standards in Social Work Practice meeting Human Rights. Retrieved from:* http://cdn.ifsw.org/assets/ifsw_92406-7.pdf). Summary of international trends in social work education and programme compliance assessment see in table "Compliance of the study programme with recommendations of educational development".

Compliance of the study programme with recommendations of education development

International recommendations for development of education	Compliance of the study programme with the recommendations for development of education
To emphasise the role of practitioners in education of social work students	Professionals in the field are involved in teaching the study courses, meetings with practitioners in guest lectures, visits to institutions and internships in the amount of 26 CP are integrated in the study process.
Evaluate interdisciplinary practice, the use of the contribution of other fields of science to achieve the goals of social work	Students are provided with a wide variety of subjects in addition to major field of study in the amount of 20 CP (basics of philosophy, introduction to communication science, introduction to sociology, introduction to economics, etc.), which provide an insight into other fields of science. Several courses consolidate interdisciplinarity in the field of social work – projects in social work, social entrepreneurship, supervision, social pedagogy, social psychology, inclusive and special pedagogy, social gerontology.

Students must be able to implement theoretical knowledge, methods, skills and ethical behaviour as a whole	The mapping of the programme results and the descriptions of the study courses confirm that the study results are focused on the holistic integrity of knowledge, skills and competences.
To promote self-directed learning in accordance with one's chosen career perspective, emphasis should be placed on learning rather than teaching	The greatest opportunities to implement self-directed learning are in the development of term papers, bachelor's theses, independently drafted study papers and in the framework of internships, when students can choose research questions according to their interest.
Within the study courses it is necessary to plan sufficient time for reflexive learning periods in conditions of practical work	Students' reflexivity is developed in the process of programme acquisition. Elements of reflection are included in such study courses as "Supervision in Social Work", "Inclusive and Special Education", "Values and Ethical Principles in Social Work", "Communication in Social Work", etc.
Social work education must reflect global changes and include gender, sexual orientation, multicultural society and intercultural relations, the environment, sustainability and other themes	Topics related to global change are integrated into the topics of the study courses (e.g., gender studies in the course "Family Sociology" and biological and social differentiation of gender in the course "Introduction to Sociology"). The integration of current topicalities can also be implemented by regularly updating and improving the course content, if necessary, developing and introducing a new study course (e.g., "Social Entrepreneurship").

Secondly, in the improvement of the course content and development of new courses, the findings of the research of the Ministry of Welfare have been taken into account, in which the opinion of employers in the field of social welfare has been clarified. Research shows that employers are quite critical of the performance, which the graduates of social work programmes offered in Latvian higher education institutions demonstrate in the labour market. The results of the research show that both the directors of social services and the cooperation partners of social services have pointed out the good theoretical training of young specialists, however, simultaneously also the shortcomings in applying theoretical knowledge in practice, insufficient professional suitability and motivation (*BISS (2017). Ex-ante izvērtējums pašvaldību sociālo dienestu darbības efektivitātes novērtēšanai [Ex-ante assessment of operational efficiency of local government social services]. Riga.*). The evaluation of social work study results commissioned by the MoW in 2019 shows that the situation in social work education results has not improved since 2012, and finds the following shortcomings: *inconsistency of theory and practice, lack of understanding of holistic approach, difficulties of cooperation and communication, difficulties of constructive emotional management, insufficient digital skills, lack of critical thinking, lack of specific skills, e.g., risk assessment, case management, assessment of client's social situation, social service planning, advocacy, application skills of legal and regulatory framework.*

It should be emphasized that the University of Latvia professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" at the time of evaluation in abovementioned research had no enrolled students, however, the shortcomings identified in the results of these studies regarding social work study programmes in Latvia are overall taken into account in renewing study courses and developing new courses. The content of the programme strengthens the focus on practice, the integrity of theoretical knowledge and practical competences.

Thirdly, the content of the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" has been improved and developed in accordance with the requirements of the social work professional standard adopted in 2020, as well as integrating the recommendations of various stakeholders and the latest findings offered by literature of the field:

Recommendations of experts and professionals of the field (obtained in focus group discussions with the professionals, questionnaires, as well as formal and informal interviews),

2) Findings obtained from professional and academic conferences in Latvia and abroad, as well as from publications in scientific journals on the development trends of the social work sector (e.g., *British Journal of Social Work, European Journal of Social Work, Journal of Social Work Education, Journal of Social Policy, Child and Family Social Work, international social Work*), and the most recent theoretical literature of social work,

3) Findings published in leading documents in the field of social work (for example, the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training (Global *standards for the education and training of the social work profession (2004). Retrieved from:* https://www.iassw-aiets.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Global-standards-for-the-education-and-training-of-the-social-work-profession.pdf), the NASW Code of Ethics (*NASW Code of Ethics (2017).* https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English), etc.),

4) Opinions of foreign higher education institutions (as a result of cooperation projects), and study plans of related universities, which are available on the institutions' websites,

5) Recommendations of students, which are regularly obtained as a result of surveys at the end of each semester and after graduation of the study programme, as well as recommendations of course lecturers,

6) Recommendations provided in the study "On assessment of the study programmes of social work at the higher education institutions of Latvia" (*The study "Par Latvijas augstskolu sociālā darba jomas studiju programmu izvērtējumu ["On assessment of the study programmes of social work at the higher education institutions of Latvia"], 2021. Retrieved from:* https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/petijums-Par-atvijas-augstskolu).

The mandatory structure of the study programme consists of study courses (122 CP/183 ECTS), including term papers), internship (26 CP/39 ECTS) and a final examination, which includes the elaboration and defense of a bachelor's thesis (10 CP/15 ECTS) and a state examination in social work (2 CP/3 ECTS).

The course structure of the study programme consists of: mandatory courses (A), limited electives (B) and free electives (C):

1) Study courses of a wide variety of Social Sciences subjects in addition to major field of study content (in part A, in the amount of 20 CP/30 ECTS);

2) Study courses of the study field (parts A – 36 CP/54 ECTS and B – 66 CP/99 ECTS), which are divided into the following subgroups:

- **theoretical foundations of social work** (introduction to social work, theories of social work, basics of law);
- **social work at micro, meso and macro level** (social work process and methods, communication in social work, social work with individual and family, social work with group, community social work, multicultural social work, social work with children and youth, development and evaluation of social services);
- **research, interdisciplinarity and development of the social work profession** (research in social work, qualitative and quantitative research methods, projects in social work, social entrepreneurship, supervision, social pedagogy, social psychology, inclusive and special pedagogy, social gerontology).

3) Study courses – free electives (part C).

According to Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 512 "Regulations on the state standard for the second level professional higher education", the study programme includes courses for *the*

development of business professional competence – basics of economics (4 CP, part B), social entrepreneurship (2 CP, part B), social work project management (4 CP, part A). Additional courses for the development of business professional competence are available as elective courses (part C).

During the acquisition of the bachelor's programme, the student develops and defends three study papers – two term papers (each in the amount of 2 CP) and a thesis in the course "Theories of Social Work", in which a comparative analysis of theories must be performed. The work should include the historical development of the selected theories, the most important authors, the possibilities of practical application, application in social work research, as well as the limitations of the theories.

During the study process, students are introduced to the current and significant challenges for the Latvian society in the field of welfare defined by the MoW, which should be taken into account when proposing the topics of a course paper and bachelor's thesis. Here are some of them (*Ministry of Welfare (2020). Latvijas sabiedrībai labklājības nozarē aktuālie un būtiskie izaicinājumi 2018. – 2021. gadam un tēmas izpētei [Current and significant challenges for Latvian society in the welfare sector for 2018–2021 and topics for research]. Retrieved from:* https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/labklajibas-nozares-aktualas-izpetes-temas):

- Challenges of active aging for a longer and better working life in Latvia;
- Common European challenges: demography and prosperity, sustainability of social systems;
- Community and environmental social sustainability (development of community social work);
- Reducing social inequalities and promoting the inclusion of marginalized groups;
- Evaluation of outputs and outcomes of social services;
- Providing independent living opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- Comparative analysis of activation and support models for young people who are not engaged in any form of employment, education or training , etc.

Foreign experience has also been taken into account in developing new and improving the existing programme courses. It suggests that social work study programmes include the following dimensions: social sciences, research, ethics, communication, social work methods, legal framework, social services, development and change, leadership and management, advocacy of client's interests (*Lähteinen,S., Raitakari,S., Hänninen,K., Kaittila, A., Kekoni, T., Krok, S., Skaffari, P. (2017). Social Work. Education in Finland: Courses for Competency. SOSNET julkaisuja 8.*). In the social work bachelor's study programme at the Nottingham University, the assessment of study courses is based on the assessment of student's competence, attitude change and behaviour (*Univeristy of Nottingham. Social Work BA. Retrieved from:* https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/ugstudy/course/Social-Work-BA).This approach is integrated into the programme, emphasizing the understanding of professional ethics in several study courses (e.g., introduction to social work, basics of psychiatry, social work in a multicultural society).

In the improvement of the study programme, the content of the courses has been updated in accordance with the current needs in the field, knowledge, skills and competences specified in the professional standard, as well as taking into account the latest trends in the professional environment of social work, theoretical conclusions and processes in society. In accordance with the development trends in the field, recommendations of professionals, lecturers and students, the study programme has been improved and new study courses have been developed, for example:

- Social Work with Children and Youth (*By 2023, according to the informative report "Priekšlikumi konceptuāli jaunas kompetencēs balstītas izglītības prasībām atbilstošas skolotāju izglītības nodrošināšanai Latvijā" ["Recommendations for Ensuring Conceptually New Competence-Based Teacher Education in Latvia"], the study programmes for the preparation of social teachers are to be closed, providing that the acquisition of social*

teachers' competences will be ensured in social work study programmes.) (B, 2 CP),
- Development and Assessment of Social Services (B, 2 CP),
- Social Entrepreneurship (B, 2 CP),
- Work (A, 4 CP).

Experts in the specific field are involved in the development of the course, for example, the course "Social Work with Children and Youth" has been developed in cooperation with the State Inspectorate for Protection of Children's Rights and organizations that provide social services to young people. Some courses are excluded from the programme, including particular current topics of these courses in other related courses. Information about the changes is summarized in table "*Changes in the bachelor's study programme "Social Work" after the accreditation of the programme*"

After mastering the study programme, a professional bachelor's degree in the field and a fifth level professional qualification is awarded. Furthermore, on the condition of fulfilling the admission requirements, the professional bachelor's degree gives the right to continue education in the social work master's programme.

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. In 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.

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation of study courses / modules and the alignment of study course / module goals with the learning outcomes of the study programme

The results of the study courses of the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" are planned and improved in mutual cooperation and conformity with the aim of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved. Study results are formulated at the level of the study programme, study course and classes. The study programme and study course learning outcomes are formulated, taking into account their achievability, the possibility to certify and evaluate them, they are understandable to all parties involved in the study process.

In order to ensure that the learning outcomes formulated in the study courses and at the level of the study programme are mutually consistent, a mapping matrix of study programmes has been used during their development, in which the learning outcomes of the corresponding study programme courses are considered in comparison with the programme results. The mapping of study courses according to the study programme results confirms that the content of the courses ensures integrated acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences of the programme, and thus enables to effectively achieve the defined aim of the study programme. By acquiring the planned courses, students achieve all the planned learning outcomes. The mapping of the study course results also demonstrates the compliance of the planned results with the development trends of social work and the professional standard, the needs of employers and students' recommendations, and indicates the integrated connection of knowledge, skills and competence.

The mapping matrix shows that most courses provide knowledge about the development trends of the social work profession, ethical principles, values and understanding of the multidisciplinary

nature of social work (32). Courses help to understand the social policy process, the social security system, legislation of social work and the possibilities of implementing social rights (18) and the causal links of social problems at the individual, group and community level, as well as to choose intervention methods of different levels (16).

At the level of skills, the predominant number of courses provide the skills to identify individual and social problems and promote their solution at the individual, group and community level applying theories, approaches and methods of social work appropriate to the situation (27). The second most frequently indicated learning outcome at the skill level is skill to plan one's own and team professional and research activities in order to promote people's empowerment and self-determination, to defend and represent the interests of clients (23). A sufficient number of courses provide skills to attract social services and other resources according to the needs of clients, as well as to develop new innovative social services (17). In line with the new requirements for the importance of research, courses provide knowledge about the organization of research and develop research skills. Many of the courses provide students with opportunities to acquire general skills and knowledge – they apply knowledge from other fields in the context of social work (17). For example, search for information and data in different databases, repositories, data archives using different strategies.

2.3. Assessment of the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) by providing the analysis of how the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) used in the study courses/ modules are selected, what they are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

2.3. Assessment of study implementation methods (including assessment)

A student-centred approach is used in the implementation of **the professional bachelor's study programme.** The goal of the student-centred approach is to focus on the learning needs of students in order for the student to achieve the planned learning outcomes. In the student-centred study process, the study content corresponding to the goal and planned results, the interactivity of the study process is ensured and appropriate teaching and learning methods are selected. In order to reinforce the student-centred approach, the dialogue between the programme director, lecturers and students on the study content, organizational forms and methods is promoted. Comprehensible and correctly formulated results of the study programme and study courses encourage students' understanding and co-responsibility for their own learning, self-evaluation and comprehension of the received assessment.

The following study principles of student-centred education are integrated into the programme, which are followed in the study organization, teaching methods, forms of testing and final examinations:

- interactivity (*g., involvement in social activities of the sector, gaining personal experience in promoting social change*);
- individuality (e.g., *the opportunity to engage in activities or research initiated by the academic staff, appropriate to the research interests of the particular student*);
- flexibility of the programme (*student mobility, recognition of learning outcomes*);
- supportive and inspiring study environment (quality teaching and learning, course content,

pedagogical innovations, digital technologies, innovative learning methods);
- involvement in governance structures.

Varied methods of acquiring, consolidating and reinforcing knowledge are used in the implementation of the study programme, involving various forms of lectures (*introductory lectures, interactive lectures, summary lectures, problem-oriented lectures*), seminars, practical classes, as well as various forms of independent work by students (*reports, micro-studies, analysis of case studies,* etc.). Teaching methods are chosen according to the goals, specifics and planned learning outcomes of each course. According to the specifics of the course, lecturers create lectures using the latest pedagogical approaches. Professionals from various institutions are invited to teach particular lectures in study courses (e.g., social work with various target groups, social work in the community, organization and management of volunteer work) in order to promote the connection between theory and practice. Practical tasks, research assignments, seminars, individual, pair and group work, discussions and project development, study tours to organizations of the sector, including state, municipal institutions and non-governmental organizations, are used extensively. Students have a chance to meet with leading people in the sector (e.g., meeting with the Minister of Welfare). Employers are involved in the implementation and improvement of study courses, they are invited to teach particular seminar classes, classes are also organized as study tours in the workplace (e.g., at the non-governmental organizations that provide social services – association "Resiliences centrs", "Rūpju bērns"). During the program evaluation talks, students have pointed out the need to organize study tours as often as possible. In addition to exploring and reinforcing the correspondence of theory and practice, these visits are an insight into the professional environment, current problems.

To aid students in achieving learning outcomes – in acquiring and consolidating knowledge, skills and competence – **the methods in which student participation, interactivity and individuality are important prevail in the study process**. The study process is supported by methods that facilitate students' communication in the implementation of study tasks, solving real-world problems, modelling situations.

In the study process, preference is given to study forms that allow students to actively participate in the study process; these are *seminars, workshops, study tours and internship placements*. The content of most study programme courses is made up of lectures and seminars in equal proportions to ensure a student-centred approach and active participation of students in the study process. In addition to developing student's professional competences, preparation for seminars also enhances general competences (e.g., *teamwork, time planning*). Work in seminars promotes students' presentation, presentation and discussion skills, which are essential for the implementation of inter-institutional and inter-professional cooperation. Many courses of the study programme also include practical classes, which, using role-playing games and simulation methods, allow to develop the skills necessary for the professional activity of a social worker. Reflexive discussions facilitate formation of a professional identity already during the study process, to accept different perspectives, as well as to create a network of mutual support among students in study programmes of different levels. In order to reinforce the connection between theory and practice, the study programme includes three study internships in the amount of 26 CP – 6 CP in the first year, 10 CP in the second year, 10 CP in the third year, which are implemented in one of the social work institutions. In the development of study courses, lecturers ensure the connection of tasks in independent assignments with the development of professional skills. By combining methods, a practical, professional and democratic atmosphere prevails in the study process, students gain confidence that the learning process is oriented towards their personal growth, and learning outcomes depend on person's individual involvement in the learning process.

One of the forms that promotes student participation, which also advances the development of

students' research competence, is the opportunity for students in successive courses to analyse and exhaustively study topics, problems and current issues of their interest in the field of social work, such as domestic violence, social work with problematic adolescents, socially pedagogical work. Senior year students are involved in peer teaching-learning. Study courses in seminars promote students' presentation and discussion skills.

In the study process and **for the promotion of independent studies, the e-learning environment is used**, which is one of the most important innovations in the modern educational process focused on cooperation and interactivity. The University of Latvia uses the MOODLE platform (the title is an abbreviation for "Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment"). MOODLE is currently the most extensively used open-source e-learning solution in the world and is fully in line with the education policies of the European Union and the European Commission. Each study course has an e-learning environment on MOODLE platform, where students have access to lesson materials, task descriptions in addition to course-related materials (*presentations, literature, video materials, lecture recordings, etc*.), as well as study tasks (*tests, forums, seminars, conferences, etc*.). Course lecturers regularly supplement the content of e-studies and update it with current information (*theoretical literature, publications, normative acts, video materials, tasks for self-examination*). All interim and final assessment grades of the study courses are recorded, justified and made available to students in the e-learning environment (in the assessment book, supplementing the relevant test or task). In the study process, students use digital technologies, for example, develop digital content in various formats (text, table, image, audio and video file) corresponding to the task of the study course. The use of digital technologies became relevant during the emergency situation caused by Covid-19 in 2020, when the learning process was organized remotely using the *MS Teams* platform.

The student-centred approach study principles are complied with throughout the organisation of the study process. Student-centred approach is followed in updating the study programmes and the respective study courses, paying special attention to meaningful formulation of study results, thus promoting dialogue between lecturers and students on the content of studies, forms and methods of organization. Purposeful, well-formulated learning outcomes, on the other hand, promote students' understanding and co-responsibility for their own learning, self-evaluation, and understanding of the assessment they receive. During the study process, lecturers use methods, examination forms and criteria for evaluation that are appropriate to the study goal and planned learning outcomes. Following the principles of student-centred studies, student mobility (recognition of learning outcomes acquired during the mobility period) is promoted, students engage in academic research and social activities initiated by the academic staff, thereby gaining significant experience through testing gained knowledge and skills in practice. By implementing internal quality assurance policies, study programmes are implemented to encourage students to actively participate in the improvement of the study process. There are procedures and regulations for submitting student proposals, resolving complaints, and reviewing of student appeals. The results of student surveys are evaluated and taken into account for the improvement of the study process. Students readily express their suggestions for the improvement of study programmes and process in discussions with lecturers and programme directors. Students also have the opportunity to become involved in student self-government (directly addressing issues related to the study process, study quality, representation of students' interests at the level of FSS and UL), furthermore, the student representative is included in the study field council, thereby ensuring student representation in governance institutions.

The physical environment of studies is also gradually changing, promoting interactivity and a personal approach: classrooms are easily transformable for the purposes of group work and independent work. Possibilities of adapting the room are especially important in study courses,

where the space must be adapted to the professional environment as much as possible, for example, seating of participants in a circle is predominantly used in the acquisition of the course "Supervision".

Within the framework of student-centred education, the programme is particularly geared toward **the adaptation of students to the study process**. Special attention is paid to the adaptation of first-year students in the study environment at the Faculty of Social Sciences. During the first study week, a programme of events is developed for first-year students, similarly to first-year students of other FSS programmes, during which students are introduced to the key people of the programme (programme director, methodologist) and study plan, FSS premises, auditorium location and geographical surroundings of the faculty, the work of student self-government; during this week, lessons are designed to introduce students to the study process (introductory classes for work in the e-learning environment, informative classes on the work of the University of Latvia library, etc.), to become acquainted with the opportunities provided by the University of Latvia, FSS and the Department of Sociology, as well as help to get acquainted with other students in the course.

Throughout the study process, students have **access to consultations of course lecturers** both in person and remotely, support and feedback are received in the study process. A set consultation time of at least one hour per week is mandatory for each lecturer during the course, but in certain situations (especially during the internship and in cases when the lecturer is not a full-time employee of the UL) consultations can also take place remotely using technological tools (e-mail or chat, *Skype*, *MS Teams*, etc.). Students can also receive advice and counselling from the study methodologist and programme director. Extensive support for students is also provided by the Department of Student Services. The students in greater difficulties can benefit from counselling and support of a psychologist provided by the University of Latvia.

When describing the **learning outcome assessment**, lecturers in the study process use methods, forms of testing and assessment criteria corresponding to the study aim and planned learning outcomes. Oral, written and combined evaluation methods are used during the acquisition of study courses and examinations. In order to test and control the acquisition of knowledge in study courses, quizzes and tests with various specific tasks are organized. Course lecturers have indicated that most students prefer written methods. In order to balance this preference and ensure the development of communicative competence, students' public speaking, presentation and discussion skills are promoted in study course seminars. Lecturers mostly use methods that encourage active student participation, critical thinking and reflection. Students receive support and feedback from the lecturers during the study process. Grading criteria for marking are made public in advance. Assessment gives students an opportunity to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the expected learning outcomes.

Requirements for obtaining credit points and information about the forms of testing and assessment used in the course are indicated in the description of each study course, which is available in the UL Information System (LUIS) and e-learning environment. Students are introduced to the criteria of evaluation for final grades in the first lectures.

The lecturers of the study programme use the **assessment system** procedure adopted by the University of Latvia (*Studiju kursu pārbaudījumu organizēšanas kārtība Latvijas Universitātē [Procedure for the organization of examinations of study courses at the University of Latvia]. Available at:*

https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti_EN/3/nr_211_parbaudijumu_organizesana_eng.pdf

aiming for the most objective possible evaluation:

- Learning outcomes are assessed according to two indicators: <u>quality indicator</u> – a grade on a 10-point scale (in accordance with the requirements of National Standard of Academic Education); <u>quantitative indicator</u> – credit points according to the total number of hours in each subject.
- In order to obtain credit points, the final assessment received by a student each study course must indicate passing the course (assessment is not lower than 4 (almost satisfactory)). Special attention is also paid to the satisfactory assessment of the examination paper.
- The final assessment consists of the final examination (written or oral examination), together with the regular examinations of the study course (intermediate examinations) – various forms of tests, individual assignments, presentation in seminars and performance of seminar tasks, reports, etc. (in determining the total assessment of the study course acquisition, the intermediate examinations must make up at least 50% of the total assessment, whereas the examination assessment – not less than 10%).
- The frequency of assessment depends on the scope and specifics of the course. In all courses, the final assessment (grade) is formed cumulatively, i.e., by assessing the student's work during the entire semester and the examination paper. When assessing students' performance, course lecturers also provide their comments and justification for the assessment.

Acquisition of the programme concludes with **a final examination**, which includes a state examination and the elaboration and defense of a bachelor's thesis, which are assessed on a 10-point scale. The criteria of evaluation formulated in the FSS Methodological instructions are applied to defence of a bachelor's thesis (*University of Latvia Faculty of Social Sciences. 2018. Metodiskie norādījumi kursa, bakalaura, maģistra darba un diplomdarba izstrādāšanai un aizstāvēšanai [Methodological instructions for the development and defense of course paper, bachelor's, master's and doctoral theses]. Riga*.). In order to ensure successful elaboration of bachelor's thesis, in addition to the theoretical knowledge and skills to use research and data analysis methods acquired within the course, the programme includes elaboration of two course papers that prepare students for bachelor's thesis development through implementing smaller-scale academic research papers. The course papers, similarly to the bachelor's thesis, are defended in public, adhering to the regulations prepared for the defense of the bachelor's thesis. During elaboration of course papers and bachelor's theses, students have access to regular, personal and in-depth consultations with supervisors. In addition, during elaboration of research papers, the programme offers an introductory lecture on academic work development issues – work structure, planning, design, selection of the theoretical basis, research design development, work with academic databases. The progress of the bachelor's thesis preparation is monitored by providing for pre-defense. The pre-defense of the first three parts of the bachelor's thesis (*concept, theoretical part and description of the methodology*) forms a part of the pre-defense assessment. Pre-defense reduces the risk that due to the student's failure to plan the work, the final paper is not performed or falls short of a satisfactory academic level. The bachelor's thesis is defended at an open meeting of the final examination commission. The elaboration of the final thesis is determined by the current Methodological instructions for the development and defense of course paper, bachelor's, master's and doctoral theses, as well as the academic calendar.

Assessment procedure of bachelor's theses:

1. After defending all the bachelor's theses scheduled for each commission meeting, the members of the final examination commission in a closed session hear the (recommendatory) assessment of each thesis given by thesis' reviewer and supervisor;

2. The members of the final examination commission, the reviewers and supervisors of theses assess each work according to 7 categories in a 10-point system (70% of the assessment). Students

are introduced to the criteria of evaluation in the introductory seminar of the bachelor's thesis development:

- Choice of topic, clarity of wording and logic of the paper
- Theoretical substantiation of the paper
- Research methodology and application of research methods
- Analysis of results and conclusions:
- Quality of language
- Compliance with norms and technical requirements for scientific paper
- Correspondence to the social work sector

3. Thesis defense (30% of the assessment). The author's report (ability to present the research, formulate conclusions, show the novelty, validity, etc. of his/her work). Answers to questions, ability to discuss, substantiate one's opinion.

State examination. The content of the state examination consists of 3 thematic blocks: (1) theoretical foundations of social work; (2) social work at micro, meso and macro levels, (3) social work values, ethics and interdisciplinarity of the profession, and 1 practical task: (4) case study. The first and third question blocks consist of 10 questions each, the second question block consists of 15 questions. Students are introduced to the topics of the blocks 20 weeks before taking the state examination. The examination is held in writing, its duration is 2 hours. The student pulls out the tickets with examination questions from each block – one question from the first and second block each, and three questions from the third block (one question each about social work at the micro, meso and macro level). During the examination, the lecturer may permit the use of additional materials for 10 minutes at a specified time, however, the text may not be copied from them, it will be considered plagiarism. The final test is assessed on a 10-point scale, the answers are assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- the answer to the question is logical and structured;
- appropriate terminology is used;
- the answer is substantiated and reveals the essence of the question;
- the volume of answer to each question is at least 1500 characters;
- the answer reveals basic knowledge of the specific issue;
- the answer demonstrates an understanding of the theoretical and practical issues necessary for the professional activity of a social worker.

Student knowledge assessment in the state examination and the results of the bachelor's thesis assessment are discussed at the meetings of the department and the conclusions are used for improvement of the study work.

The implementation of the study programme in the branches is prepared in line with the requirements set for the provision of the study programme at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Riga.

The organization of the study process in the branches is planned while taking into consideration the study days in each branch of the University of Latvia. The study programme can be implemented in several branches simultaneously as branches implement studies on different days, thus allowing for flexible lecture scheduling; moreover, it is possible to adapt to changing demand in municipalities, by not announcing annual admission in each branch, but only where there is a demand at a given time. A flexible planning approach allows to recruit motivated applicants, not to overload the teaching staff, but also not to lose them, to maintain high quality and full-fledged investment in working with students.

The planner of the Faculty of Social Sciences prepares a list of teaching staff, who are transported to the place of implementation of the study programme in one of the branches of the University of

Latvia by the transport of the University of Latvia. The UL transport is ensured by the UL Department of Infrastructure.

The second level professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" implemented in the UL branch will be implemented according to the same part-time study plan and with the same composition of teaching staff to ensure the study process as in Riga. Increasingly, distance learning platforms for online classes such as Microsoft Teams and ZOOM are used in the study process, maintaining a balance with face-to-face classes where direct contact is required in human resource professions.

2.4. If the study programme entails a traineeship, provide the analysis and assessment of the relation between the tasks of the traineeship included in the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study programme. Specify how the higher education institution/ college supports the students within the study programme regarding the fulfilment of the tasks set for students during the traineeship.

2.4. Bridging of students' internship tasks with the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study programme

The study programme includes three study internships in the total amount of 26 CP: 6 CP in the first year, 10 CP in the second year, 10 CP in the third year, which is a mandatory part of the study programme. The proportion of credit points allocated for internships exceeds the minimum requirements of the Cabinet of Ministers regulation and the justification is the need to strengthen skills for practical application of theoretical knowledge, which several studies on social work education in Latvia have shown as insufficient.

The internship is implemented in accordance with the internship regulations and the internship agreement on the provision of the internship placement. The university concludes a tripartite internship agreement with the employer and the student. The internship agreement includes the objectives of the internship, tasks, internship progress plan, the procedure for assessment of the results achieved by the internship, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the parties. The student receives and peruses the instructions of the organization's internship supervisor on work safety, data protection, ethics and other regulatory documents that must be complied with during the internship. If the student has entered the current internship placement for the first time, then he/she becomes acquainted with the history, mission, vision, values and principles of the institution, as well as the organizational structure.

In order to support students in achieving the tasks set within the study internship, the UL internship supervisor organizes regular internship seminars for students, organizes introductory seminars to internship for internship supervisors in organizations, provides personal consultations, visits students at their internship placements. In order to ensure timely prevention of inconsistencies in the implementation of the internship, pre-defense of the internship are organized, in which participation is mandatory.

In order to shape and consolidate the students' idea of the profession to be acquired, the first practice is organized as early as the second semester of studies.

The internships are thematically categorised, as follows: 1) social work target groups and social services; 2) social problems; 3) social case work (see Table Thematic caregorisation of internships)

Table "*Thematic categorisation of internships*"

Social work target groups and social services	Social problems	Social case work
Part A	Part A	Part A
Sem. 2 (full-time regular) Sem. 2 (part-time regular)	Sem. 4 (full-time regular) Sem. 4 (part-time regular)	Sem. 6 (full-time regular) Sem. 7 (part-time regular)
Study courses to be acquired before the internship or in parallel with the internship implementation		
Introduction to Social Work Introduction to Psychology Introduction to Studies and Academic Writing	Theories of Social Work Introduction to Sociology Values and Principles in Social Work Communication in Social Work	Social Work Process and Methods Social Casework

The implementation of internships in the study process ensures the achievement and consolidation of the study programme results. The aims and tasks of the internship directly correspond to the results of the study programme.

Table "*Bridging internships with study programme results*" *(in the attachment)*

The amount and quality of internship is highly valued by both employers and students, as students develop an understanding of the link between practice and theory, the insufficiency of which has been pointed out by employers as one of the main problems of social work education programmes. Some students already after the first internship receive an employment offer from the internship placements, thereby the programme directly promotes the integration of students into the labour market in the social work sector.

Information about regulations on student`s internship available https://www.szf.lu.lv/en/studijas/svarigakie-dokumenti/

2.5. 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 evaluations of the final theses.

2.5. Analysis and assessment of students' final thesis topics

The topics of the bachelor's thesis can be offered by the MoW and other organizations of the social welfare sector, sector's professionals, employers, lecturers of study courses, or students can choose them according to their interests and / or needs of the workplace. Thus, it is possible to ensure that the topics are compelling and correspond to the needs of the labour market, as well as current processes in society.

The final theses have not been developed and defended in the last six years. In the spring of 2021, at the time of drafting the self-assessment report, the topics of the final theses thematically cover a wide range of social work, thus the range of bachelor's theses reflects the specifics of social work – interdisciplinarity, diversity, dynamic development, response to changes in society. As the studies

are implemented at the branches of the University of Latvia, the bachelor's theses reflect a wide range of regional communities, providing a significant contribution to the research of social work problems in the regions of Latvia (in 2021 mainly in municipalities of Vidzeme planning region). Some of the registered bachelor's thesis topics:

- The role of a social worker in working with persons with mental disorders in a long-term social care institution
- Social work with families with children in the social service during the Covid-19 epidemic
- Work of social workers in out-of-home childcare institutions at the macro level
- Solution-oriented approach in social work with young people
- The role of a social worker in the transition to a service of family-like environment for children in social care centres
- Preparation of halfway house clients for independent living in a group house
- Reducing the risk of dysfunction in single-parent families
- Domestic violence, its causes, consequences and possible solutions
- Social work with juvenile offenders
- Research of the economic situation and financial provisions of the unemployed
- Access to and need for social services for people with mental impairment and their support persons in a rural community
- Analysis of inter-institutional cooperation, perspectives and prevention in work with families at social risk
- Social work resources for improving the quality of life of seniors.

2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

2.6. Analysis and assessment of survey results (students, graduates and employers)

Student surveys in the programme are conducted centrally, using the UL electronic system. At the end of each course, students fill in a questionnaire, evaluating their study experience on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), as well as provide their evaluation in freely formulated comments. Students are asked questions about the study environment (auditorium, technical base, availability of study materials, support), as well as about the lecturer's pedagogical and professional skills and the quality of the study course (compliance with the plan, comprehensibility). Using the electronic system, lecturers, the study director and the programme director can systematically analyse the assessments provided by students, and on this basis to improve the content of study courses or the methods used.

In the period from 2018/2019 to 2020/2021, the following courses are rated the highest (in the 7-point system): Supervision in Social Work 6.80, Family as a System 6.69, Social Psychology 6.6, Social Work Methods and Process 6.73, Family Sociology 6.83%. The courses taught by Assistant Professor Ieva Ozola and Aiga Romana-Meiere, who holds a master's degree in social work have received a high assessment. In general, students comment positively on the ability of course lecturers to link theory with practice, use of practical examples, variety of methods, provision of appropriate information materials and supportive attitude, e.g., "*Lectures are interesting because the lecturer shares practical examples from her own practice*", "*Very competent lecturer. The study material was clear, the lectures were interesting, the materials were prepared in an appropriate*

amount", "The course was interestingly presented, with examples from life, video materials were used, which were later analysed together", "A lecturer with substantial experience, which is proven by theoretical knowledge. Very interesting teaching methods, their application. Handouts are well-organised, useful".

Evaluations and comments provided by students are used to ensure the improvement of the course content and teaching process. For example, the number of lectures and seminars dedicated to specific topics are increased, if students evaluate them as important. If the average grade for the course is below 5 and students have critical comments, programme director holds a conversation with the course lecturer to assess the situation and provide the necessary methodological support.

Taking into account the limitations imposed upon the answers by the questionnaire in the electronic system and the lack of more detailed explanations, in February 2021 a focus group discussion was held with full-time students from Riga on the *Zoom* platform. During the discussion, students' opinions about the study environment, acquired knowledge and skills, study process and necessary improvements in the organization of the study process were clarified. Positive feedback was received on the availability of materials on the e-learning website, the successfully organized launch of the studies. The professionalism, responsiveness and regular feedback of the course lecturers are also positively assessed.

Improvement was suggested with regard to the coherence of the courses with regard to the deadlines for the submission of independent assignments in order to avoid situations when several large assignments have to be submitted at the same time. In some courses, students have had difficulty linking some topics to the study programme to be acquired. The situation can be explained by the inclusion of general education study courses in the study plan. In order to ensure a sense of wholeness and integrity of the programme, a meeting of students and the programme director will be organized in the first weeks of each semester to discuss the significance of the courses for that semester in the context of the field of social work. Furthermore, to promote the integrity and wholeness of the programme, online meetings of lecturers will be organized in the first weeks of each semester, as the programme involves elected academic and research staff of FSS, lecturers from other departments, as well as sector's professionals working in various institutions.

In order to understand the needs of employers in the regions and plan the further development of the study programme in the branches of the University of Latvia, a meeting of employers was organized on the *Zoom* platform, in cooperation with the Director of the Regional Centre of the University of Latvia G. Kraģe and directors of UL branches. This meeting was attended by:

- Romanovska, the head of the Bauska municipality institution "Bauska Municipality Social Service"
- Laškova, deputy head in operational matters of Jelgava city municipality institution "Jelgava Social Affairs Administration"
- Brūvere, head of Rundāle Municipality Social Service
- Randoha, director of Engure municipality social care centre "Rauda"
- Behmane, director of Saldus municipal agency "Social Service"
- Hodakovska, head of the Social Services Department of the Tukums Region Social Service
- Gora, deputy chairperson of Madona municipality Council for Education, Culture and Social Affairs
- Serzane, head of Madona municipality Department of Education
- Zeile, director of Madona municipality residential care institution "Mārciena"
- Fārneste, deputy head of Madona municipality Social Service, member of the board of the Latvian Association of Social Workers
- Izkalna, deputy director of residential care centre "Zemgale"

- Ozola, head of Jēkabpils Social Service Department of Social Support
- Segliņa, director of Kuldīga municipality agency "Social service"
- Zeļģe, head of Talsi municipality Social Service
- Kārkliņa, deputy director of the Cēsis municipal agency "Social Service"
- Astahovska-Eglīte, head of Priekuļi Municipality Social Service
- Upīts, head of Alūksne municipality Department of Social Affairs
- Čerbakovs, head of Viļaka municipality Social Service.

The aim of the meeting was to find out the opinions of employers about the current processes in the social work sector, the needs of the labour market in the sector, the topicality of the offered study programmes and the necessary improvements. During the meeting, employers expressed their opinions regarding UL graduates, their readiness for social work practice, planned development trends and forecasted vacancies, knowledge and skills required from social workers, as well as opportunities for further strengthening of cooperation with UL social work study programmes. Interest in the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" was expressed by employers in all regions and managers of all branches. Therefore, in the next reporting period a more flexible offer in branches must be planned, where the demand and the number of students will be appropriate and economically justified to ensure high quality of studies. Meetings with employers are planned to be organized on a regular basis once a year.

The most important aspects emphasised in discussions with employers:

Human-centred approach and attitude	Integrating ethical principles and values in practice, in everyday professional activity, showing respect and acceptance to every client.
Negotiation management skills of social workers	In practice, difficulties in counselling skills of employees have been observed, counselling in these cases is replaced with giving instructions or aimless conversations which have lost focus.
Social work at schools	Employers are concerned about the possibility of including the competences required for social work at schools into social work programmes.
Accessibility of studies	Employers emphasized the need for study programmes in the regions, as there is already a shortage of employees, and in the near future it is planned to launch new social services, which will further exacerbate the staff shortage problems.

The responsiveness of employers regarding the provision of internships and readiness to engage in research, offering study tours and supporting the study programme implementation at the UL branches, as well as the involvement of practitioners in teaching courses is to be positively assessed.

2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.

2.7. Analysis and assessment of incoming and outgoing student mobility

Despite the fact that the admission of students to the bachelor's programme was resumed only in academic year 2019/2020, and, furthermore, in the spring semester of 2019/2020 and throughout the academic year, and 2020/2021, the inbound and outbound mobility was significantly hampered

by the restrictions of the emergency situation declared due to the Covid-19 pandemic, one student from the Alūksne branch went on an *Erasmus+* internship. The internship was implemented from 16.03.2020. to 12.06.2020. at *St. Elizabeth Kinder und Jugenhaus* (The St. Elisabeth Children's and Youth Center) in Hamburg, Germany. During the internship, the student enhanced her socio-pedagogical skills, inter-institutional co-operation skills, as well as communication skills with children placed in care outside family. The student assessed her internship abroad positively, emphasising the established contacts and acquired understanding of how out-of-home care services should be developed in Latvia. The internship tasks performed during the mobility were recognized in accordance with the relevant UL procedures.

In order to promote inbound and outbound mobility, in the next period, purposeful work will be invested in the development of students' English language skills and motivation for a much broader use of the mobility opportunities, as well as in the development of the programme content in English.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

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. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

3. Provision of resources and support for study programme

3.1. Compatibility of resources with the requirements set for the programme implementation and achievement of learning outcomes

The full-time regular bachelor's study program is implemented at the University of Latvia, Faculty of Social Sciences (UL FSS) and therefore uses the material and technical support of the faculty and library resources. The resources and provision of UL FSS have already been widely discussed in Part II, Section 3, Subsections 3.1–3.3. The part-time regular form of the Bachelor's study programme is implemented in the branches of the University of Latvia. The detailed description of the material and technical provision of the branches is enclosed in Annex 15. The available material and technical resources correspond to the requirements of studies – environmental accessibility issues are addressed, layout and equipment of premises meet the standards of contemporary study environment, the faculty and branches have computer classes, premises are equipped with wireless internet, students have access to appropriate computer software (Microsoft Office 365 online package, quantitative data analysis software SPSS, qualitative data analysis program NVIVO (this option is provided only at the UL FSS computer class). More flexible opportunities for rearranging

the premises in providing particular courses should be considered (for example, seating the participants in a circle in the course on supervisions). It will be possible when the faculty enters its new premises at the House of Letters in Torņakalns UL Academic Centre in 2023. In the spring semester of 2019/2020, and almost throughout 2020/2021, the study process was provided online, using *MS Teams* and *E-study* facilities, as well as providing access to the printed resources of the UL library. The University of Latvia IT department ensures the constant uninterrupted functioning of *MS Teams*, permitting to hold all classes in their entirety according to the usual lesson plan, only in online environment. Both lecturers and students are provided with additional support, which is supplemented by active mutual learning in the field of technology application, which allows to ensure high quality of the study process.

Once more, the study process has been implemented to a high standard also due to the excellent provision of information resources and scientific literature, which is ensured by the University of Latvia Library (ULL). The premises of the FSS library, where the collection of the social sciences branch is located, are open at a convenient time to students and lecturers 55 hours a week. Library users can benefit from an open access collection where they can choose the publications they need. The FSS library offers students 84 workstations, including 18 workstations for working with a computer. The library has three scanners, two printers and a copier.

Basic library services free of charge

- *Electronic ordering / reservation / loan period extension of information resources in Electronic Union Catalogue of Latvian libraries of national significance* (hereinafter – Union Catalogue) and receipt of information resources for on-site use in the library reading room or for borrowing. The service is available to users registered with the UL Library.
- *Delivery of information resources.* UL academic staff, researchers and doctoral students, when ordering information resources in the Union Catalogue from any library, have the opportunity to indicate the most convenient place to receive the required information resource – the corresponding branch library.
- *Self-service scanning.* Users have access to a self-service scanning facility.
- Use of *open access reading rooms*, *computers and the Internet*. The reading rooms provide access to a collection of reference literature and periodicals, stationary and portable computers (both the property of UL Library and the possibility to connect the users' personal equipment), Internet connection, including WI-FI, which works in all UL buildings.
- *Night-time subscription, advance reservation of information resources*. The purpose of the "Night-time Subscription" service is to provide an opportunity to use certain information resources outside the University of Latvia Library free of charge from the time of its closure until the opening time. The information resource can be reserved in advance for certain hours.
- *Delivery of information resources in summer.* Once a week, users can receive the information resources reserved in the Union Catalogue from the Repository in the most convenient branch library (Library on Raiņa bulvāris, Library of Natural Sciences, Library at the House of Science).
- *Inquiries and consultations.* Information service for users – consulting, reference, training and support in research is one of the main areas of work of the University of Latvia Library. The UL Library consultant provides bibliographic, thematic, factual, clarifying, etc. references and consultations to UL students, academic, research and general staff. Students use consultations more frequently during implementation of independent assignments, writing term papers and bachelor's theses.
- *User training.* The training is organised with the aim to develop users' skills of independent work, ability to find, evaluate and use information resources and e-environment tools. The

library actively works with target audiences – students of all study levels, academic, research and general staff to promote information literacy simultaneously with providing in-depth knowledge and skills in working with electronic resources. In the first semester of studies, the library organizes and conducts presentations, classes in auditoriums and computer classes for students of social work programme. The students of branches can attend these meetings remotely. The aim of the training is to provide users with the skills to work with open access collections, self-service equipment and office equipment – self-service scanners, copiers, thus improving the competence of independent learning.

The following classes are planned for the students of the bachelor's study programme: presentation "Step by step: Library for you", classes "Electronic Union Catalogue and Primo for the success of your studies" (90 min.), "Get to know e-resources" (90 min.), "E-resources of the sector" (90 min.), e-course "Introduction to Information Literacy" (Part C course).

The printed information resources required for the accreditation of the UL study field **"Social Welfare"** available at the UL Faculty of Social Sciences library make up **67%** of the total number of resources available at the UL Library, selected and specified according to pre-defined criteria – time period and keywords in this field. Of the total number of resources by languages, the following are available: in English – 71%, in Latvian – 24%, other – 5%.

The concept of social welfare includes a number of cross-cutting or intermediary sectors, including psychology, medicine, pedagogy, etc. and therefore cannot be considered in a narrow sense.

Table 23. Information resources of the study field "Social Welfare", published in the period from January 1, 2015 to December 30, 2020 and available in the collection of UL Library (ULL).

Table 24. Information resources available at the UL Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) Library collection.

Students of UL branches can request the necessary information resources, as follows:

1. By reserving them in the joint catalogue or PRIMO, and picking them up in person afterwards. Information resources are issued through ALEPH. If the student contacts the librarian and informs about his / her wish to receive books in one of the branches, then they are sent to the required branch by UL transport.
2. By writing an e-mail to info.bibl@lu.lv or szf-bibl@lu.lv, indicating the necessary information resources on the list. A request is then prepared, and the status of the selected books in the ALEPH system is changed to the specific branch. In the ONE DRIVE document, the student's name, surname, ID number, book titles, barcodes and issue date are marked in the table next to the respective branch. The prepared package is delivered to the respective branch by UL transport on certain days, while the student is sent an e-mail with information about the term of book loan, usually for a month with the possibility of extension.
3. Students can also submit their request to the study methodologist of their branch, who will then contact the University of Latvia faculty library employee and inform about the necessary books. In this case the books are also prepared and delivered using the procedure described above.
4. In cases when the director of the branch travels to Riga, she/he offers to bring back the books ordered by the students. Likewise, in these situations, e-mails are previously sent informing of the requests and preparations are made in a timely manner.
5. If the requested book is located in another library, for example, the National Library of Latvia, then an Interlibrary loan request is sent. The student or branch methodologist is informed about it by e-mail. When the UL library receives the requested book via the Interlibrary loan, the table of contents is scanned and the required book section is sent separately

electronically.

6. If all copies have already been loaned, the librarian offers to scan the required section of the book from the available reading room copy.
7. If there is no reading room copy, the student is informed that currently the required book is not available, but will be sent as soon as possible.
8. The students at the UL branches can to order scanned book sections both pertaining to the study course topics and for elaborating term papers and bachelor's theses.

ULL also provides access to electronic resources:

1. UL e-resource repository;

2. Databases of journals, publishers, etc.;

3. E-book platforms.

Subscribed electronic information resources (databases, e-book platforms) can be used both in the UL network and outside the UL computer network by connecting with the LUIS username and password.

For easier access to electronic resources, ULL has introduced the latest technology web service Primo Discovery and SFX. They provide access to search results retrieved from all the databases available to ULL through a single interface.

The library collection on the whole meets the study and research requirements. It is annually supplemented with the most up-to-date information resources according to the information needs of the academic staff and students.

The bachelor's study programme "Social Work" in Riga (full-time regular studies) is funded both from the state budget and the UL FSS funding, while the branches provide only the studies for a fee (part-time regular studies). The tuition fee for the academic year 2020/2021 for full-time regular studies is set at EUR 1 900 per year, at the branches for part-time regular studies – EUR 1 200 per year. The costs of the programme are influenced by the qualification of the course lecturers. Professors (6%), associate professors (15%), assistant professors (27%) and contract (hourly-paid) lecturers (52%) are involved in the implementation of the programme.

The general financial indicators of the bachelor's programme were discussed in Part II, Section 3.1. of the current report. In 2020, the funds allocated to the Faculty of Social Sciences to cover the direct costs of the study direction "Social Welfare" comprised EUR 80 732 from the state budget grant for bachelor's and master's programmes together, where, according to the data of 1 January 2021, the study field "Social Welfare" comprises 17 students enrolled in the second semester of full-time regular studies, and 20 students enrolled in higher level studies, a total of 37). On the other hand, the Regional Centre income generated by tuition fees in 2020 amounted to EUR 62 400 (only the bachelor's programme, which, according to the data of academic year 2020/2021 spring, comprised 55 students enrolled in the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" part-time regular studies at the branches of Kuldīga, Cēsis and Alūksne). For a detailed calculation of the cost of the bachelor's study programme, see Annex 39.

Starting the admission process of new students at the University of Latvia the Regulation for the minimum and maximum number of students in each study program is issued. The minimum number in this study program is indicated - 15 students in each of the study program implementation places, including branches.

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

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)

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

4. Teaching staff

4.1. Analysis and assessment of the changes in the teaching staff during the reporting period

Attracting teaching staff with a view of updating the study programme commenced in academic year 2018/2019. 28 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the study programme, with a particular attention to the quality and constancy of the teaching staff. In situations when changes in the staff composition are necessary, the quality of studies must not suffer, therefore, in the process of course revision and updating, mutual cooperation of lecturers is promoted to ensure that, if necessary, the course can be taken over without reduction in quality. Changes in the composition of lecturers are to be supported in the following cases: if there is no security about the perspective of long-term cooperation; significant improvements in the quality of studies are needed, which the professional development of the current lecturer cannot provide; or long-term cooperation is established with a professionally better-trained lecturer who has received positive feedback and evaluation of students. New lecturers can be involved in the process of improving the study programme and course content to develop new study courses. For example, in 2020 the study courses of the programme have been renewed in accordance with the revised professional standard of social worker. Some courses, such as *Social Entrepreneurship* and *Development and Evaluation of Social Services* are being devised to encompass the knowledge, skills and competences defined in the standard. In accordance with these changes, alteration in the teaching staff of the programme is permitted, providing the most suitable lecturers for teaching of a specific course.

The programme management deliberately attracts highly sought-after professionals and experts of social work sector. However, there is a risk that career development or involvement in other projects may induce them to reduce their pedagogical workload or even give up teaching. In order to reduce the risks to the programme, in addition to considering the needs of students and the internal logic of the programme content, the management in the implementation of study organisation ensures that the study plan is designed so that it can be realistically implemented by specialists in the field. It is possible to plan the lessons of the courses of the field in a concentrated manner – for example, in a 2 CP course not a single lesson per week, but instead three lessons once in three weeks.

In planning the composition of the programme teaching staff, teaching staff renewal and the

change of generations are also considered. Doctoral degree candidates in sociology and social work A. Romāne-Meiere and E. Rezgale-Straidoma are involved in teaching the courses, ensuring the long-term development of the academic staff and the programme as a whole.

The teaching staff of the programme for both full-time regular studies in Riga and part-time regular studies in branches is constant and the courses are taught by the same lecturers in branches, as well as Riga, thus ensuring that the quality of studies in branches is of the same standard as in Riga. Contract (hourly-paid) lecturers and guest lecturers may differ, allowing students to gain an in-depth understanding of the specifics of a particular region.

4.2. 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.

4.2. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme with the requirements set for the study programme implementation and the regulatory enactments

The study programme courses are taught by academic staff, as well as social work professionals and experts. The complementary interaction of academic staff and practitioners ensures the development of the programme in accordance with the latest scientific and professional trends.

The qualification of the teaching staff is adequate to achieve the objectives and results of the programme. The teaching staff consists of 3 lecturers with the academic position of professor, 2 lecturers with the academic position of associate professor, another 6 have a doctoral degree (5 of them are assistant professors) and 15 lecturers have a master's degree in the field corresponding to the study course (1 of them is an assistant professor in social work, using the option specified in the regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers that in the professional programme a professional with relevant experience may hold the position of an assistant professor. It must be emphasised that at the University of Latvia there are only two assistant professors of this kind). According to the course themes of the study programme, the courses are taught by the teaching staff of different faculties: UL Faculty of Social Sciences (9), Faculty of Business, Management and Economics (1), Faculty of Law (1), Faculties of Education, Psychology and Art (2), Faculty of Medicine (1), Faculty of Humanities (1).

Some courses are taught and practical skills, including internships, are provided by social sphere professionals and experts from institutions such as the Ministry of Welfare, the State Probation Service, as well as from non-governmental organizations that provide social services. Attraction of professionals enables to achieve the results of the study programme more effectively, and particularly – to integrate communicative competence in interprofessional cooperation based on mutual respect and tolerance of diversity of opinion, as well as to improve professional competence by assessing the impact of one's professional activities on society and participating in professional development.

Professionals in the field are involved in the management of students' course papers, as well as

participate in the final thesis defense commissions. Both the professional standard and the study results are largely focused on the integration of theory and practice, therefore the involvement of appropriate guest lecturers – practitioners in theoretical courses is also facilitated. For example, in the course *Introduction to Social Work* the theoretical analysis of social problems is combined with discussions with the specialists of the non-governmental organization "Resiliences centrs", which provides social services for adolescents with behavioural problems. In parallel, the study programme courses of the field include study tours, thereby ensuring communication with the professionals of the sector. When implementing the programme at the UL branches, cooperation is established with regional organizations and professionals, such as *SOS bērnu ciematu asociācija* (SOS Children's Villages Association) in Kuldīga.

4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the 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 may be additionally specified (if applicable).

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).

4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.

4.5.Examples of academic staff engaging in scientific research and / or artistic creation, both nationally and internationally

This section will consider only the involvement of the academic staff in scientific research in the field of social welfare corresponding to the field of study. The programme teaching staff is involved both in research projects in accordance with their scientific interests and in the development of practically applicable methodologies, for example, "Methodological material for social work with families with children" (I. Ozola, A. Romāne-Meiere). The main research topics of the academic staff are social security, social policy and social sustainability (L. Rasnača, B. Bela), provision of social services during the Covid-19 pandemic (L. Rasnača, B. Bela, M. Niklass), migration (B. Bela), social inclusion (B. Bela, L. Rasnača), specific research of social work target groups (G. Kraģe), sustainable

development of the nation and quality of life (A. Romāne-Meiere, E. Rezgale-Straidoma). Various research topics ensure development of new knowledge, which in turn allows to fully achieve the learning outcomes of the study programme. More extensive information regarding involvement in research, including publications, is summarized in Annex 10. Here is a brief illustrative insight into the research implemented by elected academic staff and the research by contract (hourly-paid) lecturers. Given the high proportion of contract lecturers in the implementation of the programme, which is very important for integration of practice and theory, as well as linking the programme content with topical developments in the field, high quality of the programme can be ensured only if lecturers are involved in research and international cooperation. Some examples of teaching staff involvement in research:

- Cooperation with the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work of the University of Bucharest in implementation of the EU EC-funded project PONT. Leading researcher Līga Rasnača and researcher Anvars Zavackis in this project research criminal justice in the field of social work;
- The team of lecturers and researchers of the UL FSS in a competition organized by the Ministry of Education and Science acquired the right to implement the project ''Par sociālā darba terminoloģijas vārdnīcas satura izveidi un publicēšanu'' ["On the development and publication of the social work terminology dictionary content"] No.
  LR LM 2018/28-3-03/10 ESF. The project is led by Assoc. Prof. Baiba Bela and Līga Rasnača, the academic staff involved in FSS social work programmes participates in the implementation of this project: Aiga Romāne-Meiere, Endija Rezgale-Straidoma and Ieva Ozola (ex. Lāss), as well as Vita Roga-Wiles;
- From 2017 to 2019, the study programme expert and lecturer Daina Vanaga heads training programme approbation within the framework of the ESF programme "Growth and Employment" project No. 9.1.3.0/16/I/001 "Raising the efficiency of resocialization system" implemented by Latvian Prison Administration of the Ministry of Justice;
- In the framework of the ESF co-financed project No. 2.1.3/16/I/001 "Support systems development for children with communication difficulties, behavioural disorders and domestic violence", training and development of methodologies for professional qualification improvement, education programmes and knowledge development education programmes and educational programmes are performed by expert and lecturer Daina Vanaga;
- Gunta Kraģe has headed the ESF project No. 8.3.4.0/16/I/001 "Support for the reduction of early school leaving", as well as provided management and expertise to the ESF project No.2010/0328/1DP/1.2.2.4.1/10/IPIA/VIAA/002 "Establishing and Implementation of Support Programmes to Develop Support System for Young People at Risk of Social Exclusion";
- Veispale has ensured the implementation of numerous projects in cooperation with non-governmental organisations – "Alternative Child Care Alliance – supporting the rights of children in alternative care" (OAK Foundation), "Promotion of youth securitability in out-of-home care" (2013–2015) (Association "Latvijas SOS Bērnu ciematu asociācija"), "Support system for Latvian foster families, adopters, guardians and host families" EEA Financial Mechanism, (2014–2015) (association "Sociālo pakalpojumu aģentūra");
- The synthesis of research and human rights activism, as well as extensive international cooperation have been established by L. Ose in the framework of "SIRIUS – Policy Network on Migrant Education" project "European policy initiatives for the education of children and young people with a migrant background" supported by the European Commission (2012–2014).

In order to advance research at the international level, the study director of the programme Aiga Romāne-Meiere has become a member of ESWRA (European Social Work Research Association) in 2021 and participated in the conference "Social Work Research: Contributing to Innovations in Practice, Policy and Social Development". The information acquired at the conference on current

issues in research in the field of social work is integrated into the content of study courses.

Lecturers involved in the implementation of the abovementioned and other projects (see attached CV and Annex 10) ensure students' awareness of current events in the field as well as research, promote research-based studies, integrate scientific project results into curricula, thus creating and reinforcing students' understanding of project implementation principles, links between knowledge and practice, and, as far as possible, promoting student participation in research projects. For example, within the course "Research in Social Work", students must, under the supervision of the lecturer, develop a section of a topical research project, such as a description of ethical principles, a review of previous research or part of fieldwork that helps to understand the interrelationships among the elements of research work.

The scientific activity of the academic staff is also shown in publications, which include scientific monographs and journals of the field (a list of publications is available in Annex 10, as well as an overview of the academic staff research performance in detail in Part II, Section 4). Among other things, the lecturers of the programme regularly author publications in the professional magazine of social work released by the Ministry of Welfare "Sociālais darbs Latvijā" ("Social Work in Latvia"):

- Ozola, I. (2020). Supervīzija sociālajā darbā ārkārtējos apstākļos: supervizora pārdomas (Supervision in social work in exceptional circumstances: Supervisor's reflections). Labklājības ministrijas periodiskais izdevums "Sociālais darbs Latvijā", No.1.-R.:, BSA, pp. 46–47.
- Romāne-Meiere, A. (2020). Sociālā dzīvotspēja ārkārtas situācijā profesionālajā darbībā (Social viability in professional activity in an emergency situation). Labklājības ministrijas periodiskais izdevums "Sociālais darbs Latvijā", No.1.-R.:, BSA
- Ozola, I. (2020). Palīdzētāja gēns (Gene of helper). Labklājības ministrijas periodiskais izdevums "Sociālais darbs Latvijā", No. 2.-R.:, BSA, 2018, pp. 31–33.
- Lāss I. (2017). Sīzifa darbs jeb sociālais darbs ar ģimenēm un bērniem Latvijā – aptaujas rezultāti (Labour of Sisyphus work social work with families and children in Latvia – survey results). Labklājības ministrijas periodiskais izdevums "Sociālais darbs Latvijā", No. 3 -R.:, BSA, pp. 17–23.
- Romāne-Meiere, A. (2017). Sociālā darbinieka kompetence darbā ar aizbildņu ģimenēm (Competence of a social worker in work with guardian families). Labklājības ministrijas periodiskais izdevums "Sociālais darbs Latvijā", No.1.-R., BSA.

The teaching staff also makes a significant contribution to the development of scientific literature of the field in Latvian language. In the period from 2019 to 2021, two monographs are being elaborated, which are significant to advancement of the social work profession in Latvia – "Social Case Work" and "Theories of social work", co-authored by programme lecturers I. Ozola, E. Apine, A. Romāne-Meiere, L. Ose.

4.6. 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 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).

4.6. Assessment of teaching staff cooperation and student / academics ratio in the study programme

In order to ensure the cooperation of the teaching staff and the interconnection of study courses, topical issues are discussed in the department meetings, which take place once a month. Additionally, all lecturers of a particular semester meet once a semester online. Cooperation of teaching staff can take various forms: 1) guest lectures, when a colleague is invited to give a lecture within the course on a topic in which that colleague is more knowledgeable (e.g., the course "Social work with children and youth" – a topic on violence in adolescents); 2) planning and organising joint study tours, if the course topics complement each other; 3) cooperation in joint social actions or research projects (e.g., in the course "Research in social work"). Regular communication is also maintained with the branch methodologists, who can directly provide students with explanations about the specifics of the study process in the branches.

In 2020, a study field council was established, which includes lecturers of the programme, employers and students. Since 2020, informal meetings of lecturers are organized for discussing the study process, including the study process and cooperation with students in branches, the methods, especially ensuring the distance learning process during the restrictions of emergency situation. Furthermore, a shared knowledge development platform is devised.

The ratio of students to lecturers is 72:28 (2.57 students per 1 lecturer). This proportion is due to the circumstance that students are admitted to branches only since 2019 and in Riga – since 2020. When implementing a student-centred approach, one of the basic principles is cooperation between students and lecturers, which is feasible with an appropriate number of lecturers. The planned number of students per lecturer is no more than 10 students.

Lecturers of other UL FSS departments (Department of Political Science, Department of Communication Studies), lecturers of other UL faculties (for example, Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art, Faculty of Humanities) are also involved in the bachelor's study programme "Social Work", promoting cooperation and discussions of the teaching staff and shaping a common platform for improvement of the theoretical basis of social work. Important partners in the implementation of the study programme are the organizations in which students carry out internship tasks.

Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	Statistical data on students in the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work".doc	Statistikas dati par studējošajiem profesionālajā bakalaura studiju programmā "Sociālais darbs" L.docx
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	Compliance of the professional bachelor's study programme "Social Work" with the state education standard.doc	Profesionālās bakalaura studiju programmas "Sociālais darbs" atbilstība valsts izglītības standartam BA.doc
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)	Compliance of the qualification obtained in the study programme with the occupational standard.doc	Studiju programmā iegūstamās kvalifikācijas atbilstību profesijas standartam (BA).doc
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 the learning outcomes of the respective study programme and study courses.doc	Profesionālās bakalaura studiju programmas Studiju kursu-moduļu kartējums studiju programmas studiju rezultātu sasniegšanai (3).doc
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	Study programme plan _for each type and form of the study programme2021.doc	Profesionālās baklaura studiju programmas "Sociālais darbs" plāns2021.doc
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Descriptions of study courses of the professional bachelor's study programme "Social work".docx	Profesionālās bakalaura studiju programmas "Sociālais darbs" studiju kursu apraksti.doc
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	Diploma_ENG.pdf	Diploms_pielikums.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	ARRANGEMENTS on the continuation of studies Nr. 1-13-371.docx	Vienošanās par izglītības ieguves turpināšanu (LU_RSU.edoc
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	Annex 24_Rector's certification on compensation.doc	Rektora apliecinājums par kompensāciju bak..edoc
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.		
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education		
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	Sample of the Study Agreement.doc	Studiju līguma paraugs.doc
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.		