

APPLICATION

Study field "Religion and Theology" for assessment

Study field	<i>Religion and Theology</i>
Title of the higher education institution	<i>Laterāna Pontifikālās Universitātes filiāle Rīgas Teoloģijas institūts</i>
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Self-evaluation report

Study field "Religion and Theology"

Riga Institute of Theology (under the Pontifical Lateran University)

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1. Information on the Higher Education Institution/College

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

The Riga Theological Institute (RTI) is a branch of the Lateran Pontifical University, founded by the Bishops' Conference of Latvia on the basis of the Concordat, an interstate agreement concluded between the Republic of Latvia and the Holy See.

[The Lateran Pontifical University \(LPU\)](#) is a Catholic university in Rome, under the direct authority of the Holy See, which is why it is also known as the 'Pontifical University'. Its Grand Chancellor is the Vicar General of the Holy Father in the Diocese of Rome. The University was founded by Pope Clement XIV in 1773 and since then has had Faculties of Philosophy, Theology, Canon Law and Civil Law. Over the years, these were joined by the Institutes of the Sciences of Peace and the Pastoral Institute. LPU has around 4000 students from 105 countries and professors from 20 countries. There are 39 institutes affiliated to LPU worldwide.

In 1918, Pope Benedict XV restored the ancient Diocese of Riga, and one of the first tasks was to provide for the training and education of priests. In 1920, Bishop Anthony Springovich founded an educational institution for the training of priests, first in Aglona, then in 1924 it was moved to Riga. In 1938, the Faculty of Theology of the University of Latvia was established on the basis of the seminary, which allowed to obtain licentiate and doctoral degrees in theology. During the Soviet occupation, students could not obtain a diploma and continued their studies underground. Since 1999, the Riga Theological Seminary has been operating as RTI, a branch of the Faculty of Theology at LPU. The Latvian Bishops' Conference is responsible for the activities and development of the RTI in Latvia.

RTI is attached to the Faculty of Theology of the LPU in Rome and guarantees the Congregation for Catholic Education the academic level of the Institute and its suitability to achieve its stated objectives.

In its research activities, RTI implements the LPU research setting based on Revelation, the teaching of the Magisterium of the Church and the Catholic academic tradition - "A New Anthropology for the Third Millennium", which envisages the renewal of the universal image of man in contemporary culture.

RTI's mission, vision and values are based on the principles of European Christian humanism.

RTI's mission is education and personal formation that:

- is grounded in the tradition of Christian theological and philosophical anthropology;
- pursues the ideal of Christian humanism as outlined in Revelation, Church teaching and Catholic academia;
- develops a comprehensive view of people and society;
- contributes to the revitalisation of Christian humanist ideals in Latvian society and culture.

RTI's **vision is one of** high quality studies, a supportive place and environment where everyone can educate their mind and heart, and learn the principles of a meaningful life - based on truth and love - and apply them in the professional sphere.

RTI **values:**

- Towards personal excellence
- Harmony of faith and mind
- Cooperation and interdisciplinarity
- Dialogue and openness
- Personal freedom

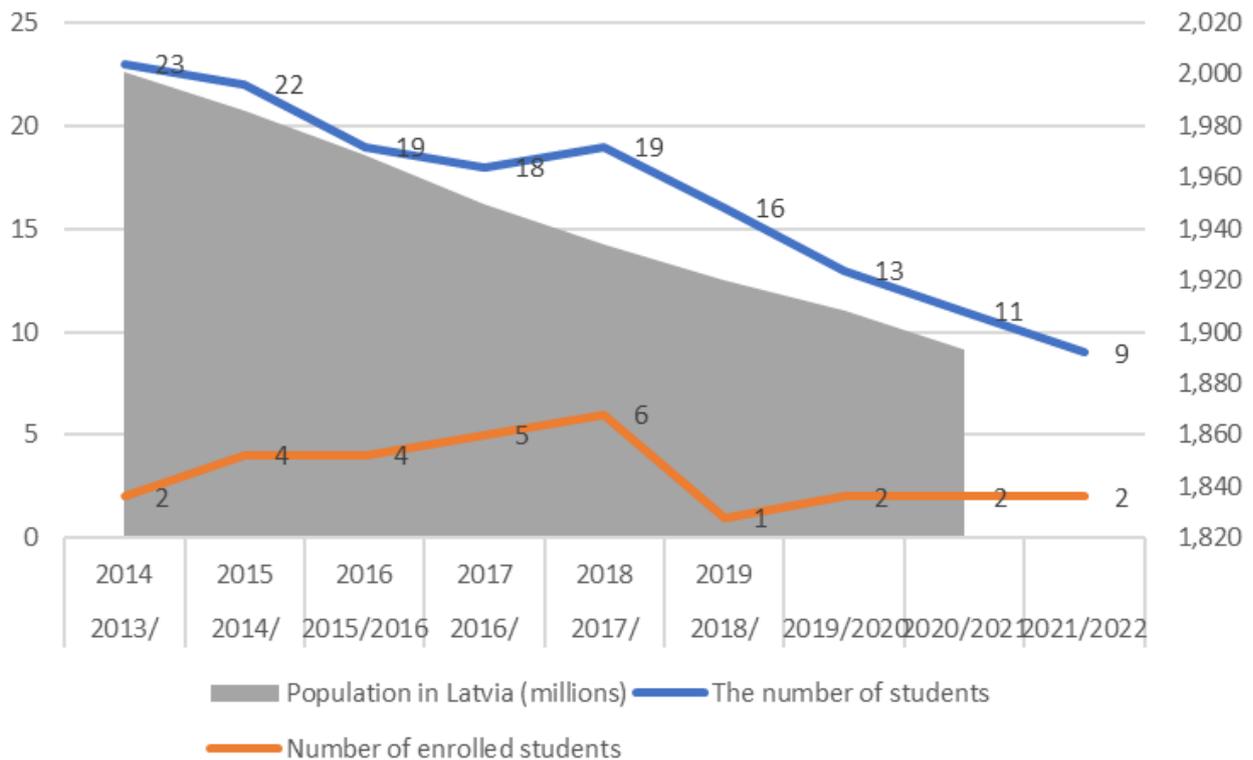
RTI recognizes that the shortcomings of modern education are the segregation of knowledge and the functionalism that has developed as a result of narrow and one-sided specialization. RTI therefore proposes a model of education in which the diversity of subjects included in the study process is harmonized with the aim of developing an integral view of the human person. Today, in Latvia and in Europe, which is experiencing a profound humanitarian crisis, it is important to rediscover Christ as the primordial source of true humanity.

Our educational orientation is based on the tradition of Christian philosophical and theological anthropology. It provides a comprehensive explanation of the human person and society and reveals the fundamental values that enable the fulfilment of the potential of human nature. The study of the various human sciences - theology, philosophy, ethics, psychology, social teaching, cultural and religious history - is subordinated to this anthropological framework. Their aim is to promote dialogue between Church and culture, fostering a balance of ethical and cultural values in society.

RTI implements one study direction - "Religion and Theology" and offers a study programme - Bachelor of Humanities in Theology (study programme code: 43221).

RTI graduates become Catholic priests, pastoral counsellors or chaplains in hospitals, the army, crisis and psychological help centers, prisons and other social institutions, as well as catechists in Church parishes. The RTI's task is therefore to prepare them for this work by providing knowledge and understanding of the human person as a whole and of the factors that distort the development of a full personality and society. RTI does not receive public funding. RTI studies are full-time and full-time.

At the time of writing, RTI has 10 students, with 2 new seminarians enrolled each year (see Fig.).



The number of students at RTI has shown a downward trend during the accreditation period, which can be explained by the crisis of values and *vocation*. A similar crisis can be observed in many other issues related to major decisions: marriage, family planning, etc.

Given the cyclical nature of the process and the intensity of the suffering caused by COVID-19 and the war, RTI expects an increase in interest in spiritual values and the revival of spiritual support in society, which could thus also actualize the use of the opportunities provided by the seminar.

In the next strategic period the Institute plans to expand its offer of higher education to the laity - thus making theological studies possible for non-priesthood candidates.

RTI Strategic Objectives Map, 2023-2027

Directions for development	Strategic objectives
I Study development	1. A strong offer of theological studies, grounded in the Catholic tradition, open to an expanded ecumenical dialogue and inclusive of the specific needs of society.
II Research	2. Effective cooperation and involvement in strengthening theological research and its use in the development of study content
III Mission Three	3. Develop active RTI participation in shaping public opinion and promoting well-being
IV Institutional development	4. Ensure institutional stability, infrastructure development and effective governance of the RTI

In the new strategic period, the merger of the two Catholic institutes RTI and the other LPU branch in Latvia, Riga Higher Institute of Religion and Science (hereinafter - RARZI), is planned, thus strengthening the direction of Religion and Theology and consolidating the professorship and academic forces. This will also strengthen institutional stability and create new study offers and opportunities.

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

As a branch of the Lateran Pontifical University, RTI is under the supervision of the Dicastery for Catholic Education and Culture and the Faculty of Theology at LPU. The RTI Moderator maintains the links with these institutions. The main decision-making bodies are the Bishops' Conference of Latvia and its representative - the Moderator, the RTI Council and the Director.

The main authority before the **Dicastery for Education and Culture of the Holy See** is vested in the Moderator of the RTI, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Riga, representing the Bishops' Conference of Latvia, and the Rector of the Pontifical Lateran University. The Dicastery for Catholic Education and Culture of the Holy See establishes universal norms and monitors their implementation for all higher education institutions of the Roman Catholic Church, especially the Lateran Pontifical University and its affiliates, and in relation to the Bologna Declaration and the Lisbon Convention. This Governing Body decides on the establishment of a branch and the approval of its Statutes, examines reports on the activities of the branch and establishes universal criteria for the selection and appointment of lecturers.

The Lateran Pontifical University (LPU) and the Faculty of Theology of LPU set norms for quality assurance and monitor their implementation, including the approval and implementation of study programmes, the approval of the Director, the approval of lecturers, and the final examinations of the Bachelor's Degree in Religion and Theology. The Rector of LPU signs the diplomas of the programme.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia (MoES) supervises the activities of the RTI in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Latvia. The main authority before the Ministry of Education is vested in the RTI Moderator, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Riga, representing the Bishops' Conference of Latvia, and the RTI Director.

The Latvian Bishops' Conference (LBC) is the founder of the RTI and is responsible for the activities and development of the Institute.

The moderator is the Archbishop of Riga:

1. Represents the Bishops' Conference of Latvia;
2. Propose the establishment of a branch;
3. Promote the activities of the RTI in accordance with its objectives and monitor the disciplinary and doctrinal development of the RTI;
4. Supervise the RTI's economic activities;
5. Appoint the Director, members of the Board of Directors and lecturers nominated by the RTI Council and approved by the LPU Faculty of Theology;
6. Approve changes to the RTI Statutes and its implementing rules;

7. Approve the RTI strategy;
8. Manage the emergency administration.

The RTI Council consists of: a representative of the Bishops' Conference of Latvia and the Faculty - Moderator and Director (elected for a term of five years, with a maximum of two terms), the Rector of the Interdiocesan Higher Theological Seminary of Latvia, permanent lecturers of the Institute, two representatives of non-permanent lecturers and two representatives of the Student Council (elected for a term of one year), the Registrar.

Director of RTI (elected, 5 years; maximum two terms):

- manage and coordinate the activities of the RTI in accordance with the RTI Statutes;
- Within the RTI A higher part of the governing body, which operates according to the RTI Statutes.

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

RTI has formulated and **made public a** Quality Policy, which sets out the attitude and commitment to quality that will be ensured in the pursuit of its mission and in promoting the balanced development of RTI, in line with the strategic development orientations and in accordance with the values set out.

The Quality Policy applies to all areas of RTI's activities and binds all RTI staff, including students and, as far as possible, other stakeholders.

RTI's quality policy is based on the Holy See Education Standards, the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), as well as the documents regulating the quality of higher education in the Republic of Latvia.

The RTI Quality Policy is driven by the aspiration to meet the binding requirements and the current needs and future expectations of stakeholders. The aim of the quality policy is to ensure the sustainable development of the Institute, to ensure that the Catholic culture and educational tradition is present in Latvia, and to support each student in his/her desire to acquire knowledge in Catholic theology, Christian anthropology and the qualification of pastoral counsellor in order to engage in work and make a professional contribution to the Latvian society and to the Church in Latvia.

The person responsible for the quality management of the RTI is the RTI Director, who ensures the management of the Institute and the functioning of the study quality assurance system, as well as the regular involvement of representatives of the main stakeholders in the RTI's activities in quality improvement.

The implementation **mechanism** of the RTI Quality Management and Quality Assurance System for Higher Education is based on Deming's continuous improvement cycle and follows the **ESG** standards and guidelines for quality assurance. It consists of the following planning documents and procedures:

- **Planned:** the RTI Strategies, the RTI Quality Policy, the RTI Code of Ethics.

- **Do:** Study programme descriptions and internal laws and regulations governing the study process.
- **Check:** Annual report to the Faculty of Theology of LPU; Five-year report to the Dicastery for Church Culture and Education (Vatican).
- **Act:** potential amendments to the Strategy and internal laws and regulations.

Plan: the Moderator and the RTI Director are responsible for strategic management. The strategy for 2023-2027 is up to date at the time of drafting. The moderator, the director, the lecturers, the professors were involved in its development. The views of students, alumni and employers were also taken into account throughout the process. The document was discussed at the RTI Council. The Strategy was approved by the Bishops' Conference of Latvia.

Dari: The RTI Director ensures operations and implements development plans. The Director, in cooperation with the Moderator, ensures liaison with the Dean of the Faculty of Theology and the Rector of the LPU, as well as the Dicastery for Catholic Education and Culture. The Director, in cooperation with the Moderator, shall also liaise with the Ministry of Education and Science. The Director is responsible for the development of the documentation regulating the content and process of studies, planning the study process and organising its implementation.

Check: at the end of each academic year, the RTI submits a full report on the past year to the Faculty of Theology of LPU. The draft report is prepared by the RTI Board and agreed with the RTI Council. Every five years, the RTI submits a full report on the activities of the Institute, first to the Moderator, then to the Dean of the Faculty of Theology at LPU, and then to the Dicastery for Catholic Education and Culture. This document is also approved by the RTI Council. The principle of RTI scrutiny is also implemented in the daily work process, including the regular meetings of the RTI Board (once a month). The Director meets with the students on a daily basis to listen to students' wishes, complaints, problems and to find solutions to them.

The implementation of the Strategy is subject to regular monitoring by the Board, the RTI Council (two or three times a year) and reports to the Latvian Bishops' Conference (once a year). The monitoring of the development plan is carried out in the RTI Council and in the Faculty of Theology of LPU. According to the results of the control of the RTI Strategy and the Study Direction Development Plan, amendments may be made to them and approved by the relevant bodies (Strategy - the Conference of Bishops of Latvia, Study Direction Development Plan - the RTI Council).

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

1.	The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.	RTI has formulated and made publicly available a Quality Policy. (see Part I, Chapter 1.3). The RTI quality assurance system is based on Deming's continuous improvement cycle and follows the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). (see Part II, Chapter 2.2.2).
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2.	A mechanism for the creation and internal approval of the study programmes of the higher education institution/ college, as well as the supervision of their performance and periodic inspection thereof, has been developed.	The mechanism for the establishment and internal approval of study programmes is laid down in the Regulations for the Management of the Study Direction and Study Programmes of the Lateran Pontifical University, RTI. (see Part II, Section 2.2.1). The monitoring and periodic review of the performance of the study programmes is carried out within the framework of the Quality Assurance System (see Part II, Chapter 2.2.2).
3.	The criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, have been developed and made public.	The procedure for the assessment of students is determined by the Regulations for the Assessment of Student Achievement. The learning outcomes of the course of study, the tests chosen for their assessment and the requirements for their assessment are specified in the course description, which is presented to students at the beginning of their studies. (see Part I, Chapter 1.3).
4.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.	The process of recruitment and employment of teaching staff (including the advertisement of vacancies, election procedures, etc.) shall be governed by the RTI Statutes. RTI has established a uniform procedure for the evaluation of the qualifications and performance of academic staff. This process is also contained in the RTI Statutes.
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.	RTI collects and analyses data on students' backgrounds, study progress and careers after graduation. The data are used to implement the study process, including the promotion of a student-centred approach, as well as to assess and improve the quality of studies. Satisfaction-related data are collected through individual interviews and consultations. The data are aggregated and the RTI's performance is improved on the basis of the analysis of this information. Data on academic staff qualifications, growth and research performance are collected and analysed. This data is used for the evaluation of academic staff and the definition of development objectives. Key performance indicators, including financial ones, are collected and analysed in RTI reports, including the annual report to the LPU.

6.	The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.	The RTI quality assurance system is based on Deming's cycle of continuous improvement. Various levels of reporting and regular evaluation at the Institute's Council meeting, at the LPU Faculty of Theology and at the Dicastery for Catholic Education and Culture provides an important role for the regular "review". The principle of RTI verification is also implemented in the daily work process, through the collection and analysis of data.
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2.1. Management of the Study Field

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

The foundation of RTI education is the tradition of Christian philosophical and theological anthropology. It provides a comprehensive explanation of the human person and society and reveals the fundamental values that enable the fulfilment of the potential of human nature. The study of the various human sciences - theology, philosophy, ethics, psychology, pedagogy, social studies, cultural and religious history - is subordinated to this anthropological orientation. Their aim is to promote dialogue between Church and culture, fostering a balance of ethical and cultural values in society. The objectives of the field of study are subordinated to this strategic orientation. The study programme "Religion and Theology" at RTI aims to provide the opportunity to obtain degrees at Bachelor and Professional Master level, based on the Catholic tradition and the study of Catholic theology, while providing for an ecumenical approach and respect for the needs of society, providing professionals to meet the needs of the Church and society.

The study process is student-centred, it involves active involvement of both students and academic staff in scientific research, studying, interpreting and translating Catholic doctrine, the Church's activity in society, Church history. In this way, it is ensured compliance with the objective of the Pontifical University Branch Prospective Development Plan *Effective cooperation and involvement in strengthening religious and theological research and using its results in the development of study content*

Students can study for a Bachelor's degree in Religious Studies. After graduation, graduates can become Catholic priests, as well as take the opportunity to continue their studies at Master's level in another higher education institution.

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

elaborated or the aims/ objectives are set for a shorter period of time, information on the elaboration of the plan for the development of the study field for the next assessment period shall be provided.

At Riga Theological Institute (hereinafter - RTI), the SWOT analysis of the field of study is updated regularly during the self-evaluation process of the fields of study in order to assess changes in the internal and external environment, to analyse one's strengths and weaknesses, to forecast possible threats and find ways to eliminate them, to evaluate development opportunities and to discuss how to purposefully realise these potentials.

An analysis of internal and external factors is carried out against the objectives set out in the RTI Strategy.

SWOT analysis of the study field "Religion and Theology"

Internal factors

Strengths

Weaknesses

- Uniqueness for becoming a Catholic priest and/or Catholic theologian in Latvia;
 - Graduates can receive both the internationally recognized Lateran Pontifical University Diploma and the Latvian Diploma
 - An ecumenical learning environment that fosters spiritual and human growth.
 - Links with churches of different denominations;
 - High level of student motivation
 - Some of the reflectants have a previous higher education - so are well prepared
 - Friendly and personal study environment
- Individual and student-centred approach
- All the necessities of life are provided for future priests
 - Balanced representation of older, middle and younger generations in the teaching staff
 - Mental and psychological support available for students
 - In theological subjects, most of the specialists are priests - teaching must be combined with pastoral work;
 - A high proportion of lecturers with international study experience in different European countries and the USA;
 - A location in the 'quiet centre' that is tailored to the university and convenient for students;
 - Well-equipped classrooms and spacious lecture rooms, student lounges, computer room, reading room

- Niche product - not in high demand;
- The university has no state support;
- Small number of students;
- A large number of the teachers are priests whose main ministry is the parish, hence the heavy workload of priests;
- Insufficient funding for research;
- The anonymized peer-reviewed journal is not in Scopus or Web of Science.
- Library divided into RTI and RARZI sectors until the universities are fully merged
- Limited administrative resources
- No suitable infrastructure for people with disabilities

External factors

Opportunities

- Development of academic staff competences and research activities in cooperation with LPU
- Sharing a broader resource and partner base with LPU
- Attracting patrons through public activities
- Merger potential with RARZI, thus expanding the study offer
- Use of the anti-plagiarism system
- Digitization of the study process.
- Attracting international students
- Developing and expanding access to infrastructure, implementing sustainable solutions
- Accessing funding for university development and research

Friends

- Demographic situation in Latvia - declining number of potential students
- The crisis of priestly vocation in Latvia and worldwide
- The Catholic Church declines in popularity.
- National economic situation - for donations

Analysis of internal factors

In terms of human resources, the strengths include the gender balance of the teaching staff - 8 women, 17 men (2023), the regular renewal of the academic staff, including PhD graduates and students, as well as practitioners and visiting lecturers from abroad. RTI has a very good psychological microclimate, which is positively evaluated by both students and lecturers and which contributes to the formation of a positive study environment and increases the motivation of applicants and students to study in the RTI study programme.

Weaknesses are the low number of students (10 - October 2022) and drop-out is not mainly due to failure or student dissatisfaction with the quality of studies. The reason for the dropout is the student's own desire not to continue studies because does not feel called to the priesthood or the institute's management's failure to see the vocation in a particular candidate. The management has information about potential students who are in danger of dropping out or who have expressed a wish to discontinue their studies, and formators talk to these persons, in some cases motivating them to continue their studies, thus implementing a student-centred approach.

Research is need to be strengthened. The opportunity to publish in the Catholic scientific journal *Terra Mariana* plays a special role here. Special efforts are being made to include the journal in the *Scopus* and/or *Web of Science* databases, thus improving both the competitiveness and the internationalization of the RTI field of study.

Internationalization is a strength and strategic priority for RTI. Our Institute is an affiliated university of the Lateran Pontifical University and it is positive that almost all of our lecturers have a foreign education, which improves the diversity of study content and formats, as well as increases the opportunities for successful integration into international networks, which in turn stimulates scientific research, exchange of academic experience and innovation in the study process.

Analysis of external factors

When thinking about opportunities for human resource development, the emphasis is on developing the competences of academic staff. As an example of good practice, our university has attracted guest lecturers from other Latvian universities. Young promising colleagues have been employed as assistants for several years.

The biggest threat to the field of study is the declining number of students, which is influenced by the critical demographic situation. Statistics show that Latvia's population continues to decline, but this is now largely due to low fertility rather than migration. Projections show that by 2040, the working-age population (19-64 years) will decline the fastest: from 1.14 million today to 0.93 million. The number of children and young people will fall from 0.38 million to 0.33 million, with the share of the total population rising slightly from 19.7% to 20.6%. (<https://emergingsolutions.eu/latvijas-demografiska-prognoze-2020-12-15/> - information only in Latvian). All this may undoubtedly have a negative impact on the number of RTI students.

RTI is financially supported by donations from Latvian believers. Three times a year, donations are collected in all Latvian Catholic parishes for the needs of our university. The demographic crisis is also affecting this factor, which is undeniably a threat to RTI's economic stability.

The threat to competitiveness can be seen in the rise of religious fundamentalism and populism in society, hindering the successful implementation of the study content. The bureaucratization of the administration of the education process at different levels also remains a problem, consuming a lot of time and human resources that could be better used to improve the quality of the study programme.

Opportunities for improving scientific activity can be seen in fostering cooperation with local and foreign universities (including Erasmus+ and various research centers), thus contributing to an increase in the quality and quantity of scientific publications.

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

With only one field of study, the Institute's activities and governance are focused on the implementation of this field of study. At the highest level, the management of the study direction is carried out through the leadership of the Grand Chancellor of LPU, the Rector of LPU, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology of LPU, which is carried out at RTI through the moderator, who is also a representative of the Bishops' Conference of Latvia. The Conference of Bishops of Latvia is responsible for the running of the Institute and is a co-decision-maker in the management of the field of study.

The moderator is also the head of the RTI Council, which oversees the quality of studies. The responsibility for the quality of the field of study and the study programmes within it lies with the RTI Director, who is the head of the field of study. This link ensures effective cooperation between the higher decision-making bodies and the institutions implementing the field of study

The Director manages the work of RTI's lecturers and guest lecturers. Each RTI lecturer and guest lecturer is responsible for the quality of the course content and delivery, research and professional development.

The Director of RTI also acts as the Head of the Study Area (hereinafter - Head of the Study Area), ensuring the management and development of the Study Area. For example, at the time of writing, the development of the programme to include Lays is under consideration.

The Director - Head of Direction is approved by the RTI Moderator after receiving *nulla osta* from the Dean of the Faculty of Theology of LPU. The Director is accountable to the Dean of the Faculty of Theology, the Moderator and the RTI Council.

The Director of the RTI, together with two lecturers and the Secretary, form the RTI Board, which provides the executive direction of the Institute.

The RTI Council is responsible for the evaluation and strategic development of the quality of the Institute and its studies. It is a collegial governing body. The RTI Council is composed of the Moderator, the Director, all professors and associate professors, representatives of the student self-government, representatives of employers. If necessary, a librarian is also invited to the meetings of the Council when issues of access to research literature are discussed. Also, when the RTI Council considers issues related to the development of the study programme, its composition may be supplemented with invited representatives of RTI alumni. The RTI Council shall review the Director's report on the Institute's activities on an annual basis for submission to the Faculty of Theology of LPU. After the review by the Faculty of Theology of the LPU, recommendations are received for further development and quality improvement.

The student self-government plays an important role in the management of the field of study by monitoring the quality process of studies and sharing its recommendations and proposals with the Director. Each student is also given the opportunity to personally submit his/her suggestions and complaints for consideration.

Employers, mainly Catholic Church leaders, also play an important role in the quality monitoring process of the study programme, with whom the RTI management keeps in touch by analysing feedback and recommendations.

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

The admission requirements and procedures are laid down in the [RTI Admission Rules](#) - only in Latvian. Admission to studies at RTI within the framework of these Regulations is based on the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No.846 of 10 October 2006 "Regulations on Requirements, Criteria and Procedure for Admission to Study Programmes", the Vatican Congregation for Education Instruction of 28 June 2008 on Higher Institutes of Religious Studies, the Statutes of RTI. Admissions are provided by the Admissions Committee.

Applicants who have obtained a higher or secondary education diploma abroad must have it assimilated. The RTI offers the possibility to recognize certain social sciences or humanities study courses taken at other Latvian or foreign higher education institutions.

The possibilities of recognition of previously acquired formal and non-formal education within the field of study are defined in the [RTI Regulations on the recognition of learning outcomes](#) (only in Latvian) to the Cabinet Regulations No 505 (adopted on 14.08.2018) "*Regulations on recognition of competences acquired outside formal education or in professional experience and study results achieved in previous education*"

(<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/301013-arpus-formalas-izglitibas-apguto-vai-profesionalaja-pieredze-ieguto-kompetencu-un-iepriekseja-izglitiba-sasniegtu> - only in Latvian), which states that "(...) when resuming interrupted studies, recognition of study results achieved in previous education, outside formal education and/or in professional experience may be carried out. The application must be accompanied by documents proving the study results achieved - certificates, employer's statements, references, project results, job descriptions, etc.

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

The procedure of student evaluation at RTI is determined by the "[Rules of Student Evaluation at the](#)

Lateran Pontifical University Branch "Riga Theological Institute"(only in Latvian), "Regulations and Methodological Instructions for Student Research Papers". These regulations determine the procedure, requirements and criteria for the assessment of final examinations (bachelor thesis, final examinations of the programme), study courses and their examinations, coursework and study practice. These standards have been developed in compliance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 240 of 13.05.2014 "Regulations Regarding the State Standard for the Academic Education": the principle of openness of assessment - in accordance with the set aim and objectives of the study programme, as well as the aim and objectives of study courses, the University has established a set of requirements for the assessment of study results; the principle of the possibility of revision of assessment - the University has established the procedure for revision of the obtained assessment; the principle of the obligatory nature of the assessment - it is necessary to obtain a successful assessment of the entire content of the study programme; the principle of the variety of types of assessment - different types of assessment are used to assess the learning of the study programme; the principle of the relevance of the assessment - the student is given the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, skills and competence in appropriate tasks and situations in the assessment work. The content of the examinations shall be consistent with the content of the course programmes.

The outcomes to be achieved, the examinations chosen for their assessment and the requirements for their assessment are specified in the course description, which is presented to students at the beginning of their studies. The teaching staff member in accordance with the RTI regulations and the above evaluation principles determines the type of midterm examination and examination, the evaluation procedure and criteria. The results achieved in the course of study are assessed both during the semester - in mid-term examinations, and at the end of the course of study, when the student takes an examination. The mid-term examination may include such forms of examinations as control work, independent work, presentation, essay, report, paper, etc., according to the study outcomes set in the course of study. Examinations may be written, oral or a combination of both. The number and type of intermediate examinations are specified in the course description. At the end of each course of study, the student shall take the final examination of the course of study - examination. In accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 240 of 13.05.2014 "Regulations Regarding the State Standard for the Academic Education", a 10-point scale is used for the evaluation of studies at RTI. The study course is completed and the credits for its completion are obtained by successfully passing, i.e. obtaining a grade not lower than "4", both in the mid-term examination and in the final examination of the course.

Explanation of the 10-point scale used by RTI to assess study results, in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 240 of 13.05.2014 "Regulations Regarding the State Standard for the Academic Education"

Note (transcription)	Explanation
10 (excellent)	knowledge, skills and competence beyond the requirements of the study programme, module or course of study, demonstrating the ability to carry out independent research and a deep understanding of problems
9 (theoretical)	knowledge, skills and competence fully meet the requirements of the study programme, study module or study course, and the ability to independently apply the acquired knowledge

8 (very good)	the requirements of the study programme, study module or course of study have been fully met, but there is insufficient depth of understanding in some areas to apply knowledge and skills independently to solve more complex problems
7 (good)	the requirements of the study programme, study module or study course are generally fulfilled, but sometimes there is a lack of ability to use the acquired knowledge and skills independently
6 (almost good)	the requirements of the study programme, study module or study course have been fulfilled, but at the same time there is insufficient depth of understanding of the problem and inability to apply the acquired knowledge
5 (mediocre)	overall mastery of the study programme, module or course, but insufficient knowledge of some problems and inability to apply the knowledge acquired
4 (almost average)	the study programme, study module or study course has been generally mastered, but there is insufficient understanding of some key concepts, and there are significant difficulties in applying the acquired knowledge in practice
3 (weak)	knowledge is superficial and incomplete, and the student is unable to apply it in concrete situations
2 (very weak)	only a superficial knowledge of some problems, most of the programme, module or course has not been covered
1 (very, very weak)	no understanding of the subject matter, almost no knowledge of the course, module or programme

The adequacy of the evaluation of the results of the study course to the achievement of the objectives of the study programme and the needs of the students is evaluated at the end of the study course by analyzing the results achieved by the students both for a specific group of students and by comparing the results over several years. At the same time, lecturers analyze the results obtained in the context of all study courses of the programme and their learning outcomes, discussing the success of learning outcomes with each other, assessing the learning of the programme outcomes. If necessary, the evaluation procedure of study courses is revised or changes are made in the content, organization and planning of the programme courses, developing learning and evaluation criteria appropriate to the planned study outcomes.

When starting work on the final thesis, students are familiarized with the methodological guidelines, which define the stages and procedures for the assessment of the final thesis. A final thesis defence committee, the composition of which is approved by the Board of the Directorate, evaluates final theses at RTI. The reviewer of the final thesis is selected by the study programme director and approved by the Directorate Board. The defence of the final thesis takes place in an open session of

the committee, and the 10 point evaluation is made by the committee in a closed session, taking into account the opinion of the supervisor and the reviewer, as well as evaluating the content, relevance, integrity, correct use of references, presentation, presentation of the student's defence and answers to questions, ability to discuss, using appropriate terminology. In cases where the panel is divided, the panel will take an open vote.

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

Academic integrity at RTI is based primarily on the "[RTI Code of Ethics](#)" (only in Latvian), which defines the principles of academic ethics, both in general and for faculty, students and staff. It also defines the procedure for dealing with breaches of the Code of Ethics. The RTI Code of Ethics specifically addresses the academic rules of faculty members: *The teaching staff member shall observe and maintain academic integrity, and shall not plagiarise, write-off, use intellectual property in bad faith or commit other breaches of academic integrity.*

The principles of *academic* integrity of students are specifically stated in the RTI Code of Ethics in the text: *In his studies and research activities, the student shall observe the principles of academic integrity and shall not use unauthorised aids, plagiarism, copying, falsification of data, dishonest use of intellectual property or fraud in the study process.*

To strengthen protection against plagiarism, RTI is working on a cooperation agreement to implement a common computerized plagiarism control system.

The works of the candidates are publicly available in print form in the RTI Library. Research theses at RTI are developed in close collaboration with supervisors and advisors. As the number of students at RTI is not large, the process and quality of the scientific work is well transparent. No cases of plagiarism have been detected at RTI so far. In addition, the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Lateran University shares the monitoring of the academic integrity and scientific quality of the scientific work.

Violation of the RTI principles of academic integrity, in particular plagiarism, is considered a very serious offence. If supervisors or referees suspect plagiarism, they have a duty to report it to the Director. The assessment of possible misconduct is carried out in accordance with the procedures laid down in the RTI Code of Ethics: 1) the Board, in consultation with the RTI Governing Board, composed of the RTI Director, the Head of the Department of Studies and the invited faculty representative (hereinafter referred to as the Ethics Committee), shall review the misconduct.; 2) the Ethics Committee draws up rules of procedure, which are approved by the RTI Board of Governors; 3) The Ethics Committee examines applications and complaints concerning established breaches of the principles of academic integrity; its task is to analyse in depth the texts relating to plagiarism; to decide on the action to be taken in response to the breach; 4) The Committee shall formulate a conclusion on the case in question. 5) If necessary, the committee may question the author of the scientific work in order to eliminate misunderstandings and errors; 6) If the committee confirms plagiarism, the student will not be allowed to defend the scientific work and will be expelled; 7) The student has the right to submit a new elaborated work, changing the topic, not earlier than after one academic year.

2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

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

Internal quality assurance is implemented in accordance with the RTI Quality Policy (see Chapter 1.3). Dialogue, prompt communication and regular performance reviews play an important role in RTI quality assurance. At the end of each academic year, the RTI submits a full report on the past year to the LPU Faculty of Theology. The draft report is prepared by the RTI Board and agreed with the RTI Council. Every five years, the RTI submits a full report on the activities of the Institute, first to the Moderator, then to the Dean of the Faculty of Theology at LPU, and then to the Dicastery for Catholic Education and Culture. This document is also approved by the RTI Council. The principle of RTI scrutiny is also implemented in the daily work process, including the regular meetings of the RTI Board (once a month). The Director meets with the students on a daily basis to listen to students' wishes, complaints, problems and to find solutions to them. During the accreditation period, no formal complaints were received about the content and quality of studies.

To improve quality, internal normative documents are regularly improved, the content of the study programme is revised (respecting the opinions of students, graduates and employers), course descriptions and study methodology are updated and supplemented.

The quality of RTI studies is monitored by working individually with each student and staff member.

Based on the analysis of views and the current situation, this accreditation period saw significant improvements in several areas of activity.

In order to improve the capacity of RTI lecturers in the field of didactics, RTI in cooperation with Riga Stradiņa University organized courses for lecturers in University didactics. New courses were introduced in civil and environmental protection; a course in prevention of vulnerable and juvenile persons was developed, validated and implemented.

In order to maintain the current quality of studies during the Covid-19 pandemic, the *online* training of lecturers, the partial renewal of computer equipment, student surveys were carried out to identify and address weaknesses; RTI rapidly restructured its previous face-to-face mode of operation and moved to distance learning, introducing the Google Meet platform. These measures ensured the continuity of the study process and guaranteed the maintenance of quality standards.

During the accreditation period, significant improvements were made to the study environment through renovation and refurbishment works, as well as the complete modernisation and refurbishment of classroom equipment, lighting and furniture; the student lounge was furnished and equipped. Student complaints received during the accreditation period related to the provision of facilities, to which the student lounge was refurbished. During the accreditation period, the reading room at the library was renovated and equipped. RTI has started work on the implementation of an anti-plagiarism system.

With a view to strengthening Catholic education in Latvia and improving its quality, a model for a merged RTI and RARZI was discussed and an action strategy for the implementation of this plan was developed.

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

RTI's quality assurance system is based on Deming's cycle of continuous improvement. It consists of the following documents:

- **Plan:** the RTI Strategies, the RTI Quality Policy, the RTI Code of Ethics.
- **Do:** Study programme descriptions and internal laws and regulations governing the study process.
- **Check:** Annual report to the Faculty of Theology of LPU; Five-year report to the Dicastery for Church Culture and Education (Vatican).
- **Act:** potential amendments to the Strategy and internal laws and regulations.

Plan: the Moderator and the RTI Director are responsible for strategic management. The strategy for 2023-2027 is up to date at the time of drafting. The moderator, the director, the lecturers, the professors were involved in its development. The views of students, alumni and employers were also taken into account throughout the process. The document was discussed at the RTI Council. The Strategy was approved by the Bishops' Conference of Latvia.

Do: The RTI Director ensures operations and implements development plans. The Director, in cooperation with the Moderator, ensures liaison with the Dean of the Faculty of Theology and the Rector of the LPU, as well as the Dicastery for Catholic Education and Culture. The Director, in cooperation with the Moderator, shall also liaise with the Ministry of Education and Science. The Director is responsible for the development of the documentation regulating the content and process of studies, planning the study process and organising its implementation.

The procedure for the establishment and review of study programmes is laid down in the [Study Programme Management Regulations](#) - only in Latvian.

Check: at the end of each academic year, the RTI submits a full report on the past year to the Faculty of Theology of LPU. The draft report is prepared by the RTI Board and agreed with the RTI Council. Every five years, the RTI submits a full report on the activities of the Institute, first to the Moderator, then to the Dean of the Faculty of Theology at LPU, and then to the Dicastery for Catholic Education and Culture. This document is also approved by the RTI Council. The principle of RTI scrutiny is also implemented in the daily work process, including the regular meetings of the RTI Board (once a month). The Director meets with the students on a daily basis to listen to students' wishes, complaints, problems and to find solutions to them.

Act: The implementation of the Strategy is subject to regular monitoring by the Board, the RTI Council (two or three times a year) and reports to the Latvian Bishops' Conference (once a year). The monitoring of the development plan is carried out in the RTI Council and in the Faculty of Theology of LPU. According to the results of the control of the RTI Strategy and the Study Direction Development Plan, amendments may be made to them and approved by the relevant bodies (Strategy - the Conference of Bishops of Latvia, Study Direction Development Plan - the RTI Council).

In accordance with the RTI Study Direction and Study Management Regulations, quality assessment

and improvement measures are regularly carried out in study programmes to ensure compliance of the study programme with the quality requirements and the needs of the stakeholders. In some cases, these require not only updating courses, individual improvements in content, streamlining procedures and introducing innovations, but also significant changes in the form or content of the study programme. Changes in study programmes may be initiated by the LPU Faculty of Theology, the Moderator, the RTI Council, the RTI Director or the students. Thus, in 2019, in response to Pope Francis' call for the world's clergy higher education institutions to open more widely to the public, the LPU Faculty of Theology encouraged the RTI to take the necessary steps to expand the programme of study for the lay education. Given the specific nature of the RTI programme and its rigorous requirements, the concept of such a programme transformation was discussed at length with RTI stakeholders at various levels. The RTI Council supported the proposal of the RTI Director to transform the type of study programme from professional to academic.

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

The procedure for submitting student complaints and proposals is laid down in the RTI normative act "Procedure for Submission and Consideration of Student Proposals and Complaints at the Lateran Pontifical University Branch "Riga Theological Institute"". The procedure determines the form in which students may submit proposals and complaints individually or in groups, in writing or electronically, as well as the procedure for their examination. Proposals and complaints may be submitted by students to the RTI Director, the Board or the Moderator. Proposals or complaints received shall be examined and responded to within a maximum of one month. If the proposer is dissatisfied with the response received, he/she has the right to resubmit his/her proposal or complaint to the RTI Council. If necessary, the matter shall be referred to the Faculty of Theology of LPU.

Examples of student complaints:

- Dissatisfaction with the lecturer's preparation and teaching methods. Solution: a lecture observer was brought in and after several warnings the lecturer was replaced. No further dissatisfactions were noted.
- Dissatisfaction with the list of lectures. Students expressed their very to change the lecture places. Solution: the lecture list was adjusted to the students' convenience through communication with the lecturers involved.

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

To ensure the quality of RTI activities and decision-making, the necessary data collection and analysis is carried out. Statistical data is obtained through individual discussions and consultations. The data are compiled and the analysis of this information is used as a basis for improving and developing the RTI's activities.

Applicants:

- Individual discussion on the motivation for choice and sources of information, quality of application and enrolment (with: Director);
- At the beginning of the academic year, a summary of the number of applicants and matriculants, as well as their profile data: previous education, degree, educational institution and year of graduation, examination grades obtained at the previous educational institution, is taken at the general meeting of lecturers. Data on the number of applicants are also collected;

Students and study programme:

- regular meetings with each course (attended by the Director) to jointly identify difficulties and problems in the study process, to encourage and motivate students to produce and submit research papers and reports on time.
- individual counselling (by a member of staff or the director) Individual counselling can be requested in person to discuss issues related to studies: individual tuition fee plans in case of financial difficulties; spiritual and psychological support in discussions with the RTI spiritual father; difficulties encountered in cooperation with supervisors or lecturers of a particular course. It is most often in individual conversations that the main reasons for dropping out of studies can be most fully explored. This aspect is of particular importance in RTI as it can contribute to reducing student drop-out. RTI is a small university, which allows for personal and individual work with each student. If there are no objective reasons for dropping out, solutions are found in an individual conversation.
- At the end of each semester, data on the progress of the scientific work is analyzed in collaboration with the supervisors of the Bachelor's theses.
- At the end of each semester, data on students' academic debt are collected in terms of credits and by course of study.
- the fulfilment of the payment schedule stipulated in the students' contract is reviewed before the examinations and the thesis defence or before the thesis defence.

Staff:

Data on academic and administrative staff are obtained through individual interviews and consultations, as well as demographic and other information. Academic staff meet regularly for consultations, where they are briefed and discuss current developments in the study process, as well as feedback from students, alumni and employers. Academic and administrative staff also come together for fellowship events.

Alumni:

RTI has information on the employment and service success of all its graduates.

Employers:

RTI works closely with employers. Feedback from employers helps to ascertain employers'

satisfaction with the relevance of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by RTI graduates to workplace requirements. This leads to good cooperation and familiarization already during the traineeship period. The Director maintains regular contact with the providers of internships and follows up employers' evaluations and recommendations on the quality of RTI graduates' work.

Implementation of strategic objectives:

At the end of the academic year, the Director prepares a report on the activities of the field of study and the programme within it during the academic year. This report shall also include a summary and analysis of statistical data. The information obtained shall be used for the evaluation and improvement of the activities of the field of study. It is presented both at the RTI Council and sent to the Faculty of Theology of LPU. The report provides data on the number of students in the programmes, the number of matriculated students, the number of graduates, the drop-out rate, the number of outgoing and incoming students, the mobility of students, the mobility of interns, as well as the results of the lecturers.

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

RTI website garigais.lv is designed to provide information on the RTI's mission, activities, opportunities and offerings.

The site is divided into:

- GARIGAIS.LV
- ABOUT THE SEMINAR
- MISSION
- TRAINING
- CONTACTS
- HOW TO ENTER
- PROGRAMME
- SEMINARIANS' DAILY LIFE

The RTI Director is responsible for the information available on the website, as well as for the consistency of the information with the information available in the official registers (VIIS and E-platform).

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

2.3.1. Provide information on the system developed by the higher education institution/college for determining and redistribution of the financial resources required for the implementation of the study field and the relevant study programmes. Provide data on the

available funding for the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities, its sources and its use for the development of the study field.

The activities of the RTI are financially supported by the Latvian Inter-Diocesan Higher Spiritual Seminary (LSAGS) on a contractual basis.

RTI depends heavily on donations collected 3 times a year from Latvian Catholic parishes, as well as external fundraising in the form of projects. The costs of the infrastructure necessary for the study programme are fully and directly covered by the Catholic Church in Latvia, which pays for the maintenance and improvement of the premises, as well as utilities.

The RTI is free of charge for students who commit to become Catholic priests after graduating from the RTI, and costs €800 per year for those who wish to study theology and not become priests during the academic year of the Bachelor's programme.

Successful implementation of a study programme requires financial resources that can support the entire study process. These include the salaries of academic and administrative staff, the replenishment of library collections and other direct and indirect costs related to the implementation of studies. Financial resources are also needed for the further development of the field of study. The main direct costs related to the implementation of the study process are the remuneration of the teaching staff and the costs related to the organization of the study process.

Academic staff remuneration includes: costs of contact hours (e.g. lectures, seminars); costs of conducting independent work, consultations and examinations; costs of methodological work (preparation of new courses, etc.); costs of conducting and evaluating student work, including peer review; costs of conducting and organizing internships; costs of research work by teaching staff to ensure the development of new study materials.

Costs related to the organization of the study process include administrative staff salaries, taxes; materials needed for the work; IT support. Other costs are other direct costs related to the study programme, such as property and services, which include the material and methodological support for the study programme, including technical equipment and teaching materials.

The RTI annual budget allocates funds each year for the purchase of literature and subscriptions to electronic databases and journals, which are available to both staff and students.

The cost per studio space in 2022 was EUR 5 528.75, consisting of:

1. Salary - 80%
2. Expenditure on materials for the training process - 17%
3. Other expenses - 3%.

RTI research is essentially a component of the employment contract.

Salary Fund	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	30 633 EUR	39 362 EUR	40 653 EUR	54 444 EUR	52 847 EUR

- Research is funded from external sources, mainly donations and project funds.

	External sources of funding	Amount committed to studies and research
2022	110 961 EUR - Donations	66 345 EUR
2021	85 308 EUR - Donations	67 282 EUR
2020	356 378 EUR - Donations, Funds	78127 EUR
2019	305927 EUR - Donations, Funds	49 795 EUR

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

The study programmes are implemented in suitable classrooms located in the building complex at Katoļu iela 16.

6 well-equipped classrooms (18.3 m² - 56.9 m²) for groups of 10 to 30 students are used for the study process. The classrooms were renovated in 2019 and can be easily transformed. Students and lecturers have comfortable lounges. Administrative and ancillary spaces cover 157.3 m².

The classrooms are equipped with information technology, as required for modern study. Three classrooms have stationary projectors and two have portable projectors. One room has an interactive whiteboard. All rooms have computers and wireless internet access.

A project has been developed and approved to equip one of the largest rooms in the complex with the fixed information technology equipment needed for conferences/videoconferences in 2023.

The material and technical support provided for the implementation of the field of study and the corresponding study programmes and its availability to students and teaching staff is assessed as adequate to the needs of the field of study. The RTI infrastructure and the material and technical equipment available there allow for successful implementation of study programmes of the field of study.

2.3.3. Provide information on the system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of the methodological and informative provision. Description and assessment of the availability of the library and the databases to the students (including in digital environment) and their compliance with the needs of the study field by specifying whether the opening times of the library are appropriate for the students, as well as the number/area of the premises, their suitability for individual studies and research work, the

services provided by the library, the available literature for the implementation of the study field, the databases available for the students in the respective field, the statistical data on their use, the procedures for the replenishment of the library stock, as well as the procedures and possibilities for the subscription to the databases.

Methodological and informational support corresponds to the content of the field of study. RTI students and lecturers have access to a library. The library's book collection contains about 80 000 books, including more than 10 000 books published before 1900; there is a rich selection of periodicals (more than 15 000). More than half of the books are in English, German, French, Italian or Polish, as the literature in theology has been translated and published in Latvian only to a limited extent. Some of the books in foreign languages have been donated from abroad. The book fund is regularly updated in line with the RTI development strategy, and necessary books in psychology and pastoral counselling are purchased.

The total area of the library is 339.6 m². It is housed in two buildings in a complex of 16 buildings on Katoļu Street. The opening hours of the library are adapted to the interests of the students. It is open weekday evenings from 17.00 to 20.00; Fridays from 16.00 to 20.00; Saturdays from 9.00 to 17.00. The library is open to students and lecturers from August until the end of June. As the number of students is small, it is possible to arrange individual library appointments with the librarian.

The library has a wide range of methodological materials. Students can consult them either on loan or on site in the reading room. Students can use the library's tutorials and order literature from other libraries. The reading room has a wide range of reference books, computers and Internet access. Some passages and methodological materials can be copied or scanned. Copying and scanning services are at cost.

RTI and RARZI subscribe to the EBSCO database, which is available to students and lecturers both in reading rooms and remotely. In order to improve the relevance of the library collection to the requirements of the Dicastery for Education and Culture of the Catholic Church, the Institute's strategy and the needs of the students, a bibliography of the courses is being developed, as well as cooperation with the lecturers to inform them about the situation of the literature provision of the courses... The choice of information resources is determined by the field of study and the Educational and Cultural Directory. In order to acquire the print or electronic resources necessary for the teaching of the intended courses, the course descriptions are studied and matched with the library holdings. A survey of lecturers is then carried out on the basis of the results obtained. The final decision on the addition of library resources is taken by the professor in charge, appointed by the group of professors, together with the librarian, and approved by the RTI Director.

The database to be subscribed to is selected by a group of professors after collegial consultation. The subscription database must meet a number of pre-defined criteria and must contain publications in the fields of philosophy, theology, including Catholic theology, as well as psychology, pedagogy and social sciences. The selection is subject to the approval of the RTI Director and the Moderator.

The library aims to develop the site as a specialized repository of religious and theological knowledge and to further develop the library's infrastructure by using the latest technology and collaborating with lecturers to provide the study process with the latest psychological, pedagogical, social science and research literature.

Using the EBSCO database RTI together with RARZI

Year	Database Sessions	Total Searches	Total Full-Text Requests	Abstract Requests
2022	476	1951	180	142
2021	201	661	57	70
2020	56	199	81	50

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

The study process focuses on face-to-face classes, as studies in religion and theology involve not only intellectual development but also spiritual formation. Therefore, opportunities for students to meet and be in dialogue with lecturers are of particular importance. *Zoom* platforms for distance learning are used where necessary.

Teaching materials are mainly delivered to students in printed form. Information on grades is communicated individually by means of an entry in the grade book.

RTI students and staff have the opportunity to work on computers in the Institute's premises using the *MS Office 365* application suite. Office 365 provides students and staff with the best tools for modern study work, such as Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Students and staff have access to 20 computers and can connect to the wireless internet (Wi-Fi) by bringing their own laptops.

Various multimedia facilities are used for the preparation and demonstration of teaching materials and for the visualization of data: classrooms with projectors, screens and sound devices; 2 portable projectors; 2 laptops that could be used with the portable projectors without additional stationary equipment.

From 2020, *Google Meet* and *Zoom*, a videoconferencing platform, will be used for distance learning. Auditorium computers are equipped with microphones, speakers and web cameras.

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

Vacancies for academic staff are advertised through public information systems of the Catholic Church. Applicants are also approached individually in consultation with the moderator. Applicants

are required to submit the necessary documents to the Institute's office and these are examined by the Institute's Council. For Lecturers in Catholic Theology, the application dossier is sent for further procedure to the LPU, which, after examining the documents submitted, gives an opinion, or declares that the Faculty has no objection (*nulla osta*) to the appointment of that candidate to an academic post, or rejects the particular candidature. Applicants shall be evaluated in an open competition on the basis of common criteria. The criteria for evaluation are: education, professional experience, teaching experience, scholarly and creative activity, communication skills, and compliance with the requirements of the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Lateran University for the '*zero port*'. In the case of a positive opinion of the Faculty, the Moderator (Archbishop) appoints the candidate to a specific academic post. Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, Lecturers are appointed by the Moderator after receiving a "*nulla osta*" (no objection) from the Faculty.

According to the Code of Canon Law, a member of the academic staff who, in addition to the requirements for associate professors, has taught in the discipline for at least three years as an associate professor; has published scholarly works demonstrating progress in the discipline; may be appointed as a full professor at RTI. Professors may not hold a permanent lectureship in other ecclesial or civil institutions.

A member of the academic staff who is distinguished by a broad knowledge, an exemplary record of moral life and a sense of responsibility for ecclesial and academic life; who has a doctoral degree from a canonically recognized faculty or equivalent; may be appointed as an associate professor of RTI; has demonstrated capacity for teaching by serving as a lector (*incaricato*) for at least three years; has demonstrated his/her capacity for scientific research through relevant scientific publications; has received the permission of bishop (*proprio ordinario*).

An RTI lecturer must have a doctorate from a canonically recognised faculty or equivalent, or a licentiate degree in cases where there is extensive practical experience.

A member of the academic staff who has obtained a doctorate or master's degree from a canonically recognised faculty, or its equivalent, and who has received the permission of the bishop (*proprio ordinario*), may be appointed as a lector at RTI. Exceptionally, the lector may have a bachelor's degree and extensive practical experience in a relevant field. The lector is appointed by the Moderator after receiving a "*nulle osta*" from the Faculty and in consultation with the Council of the Institute.

A special mention should be made of guest lecturers. These are mostly specialists who are needed to teach specific study courses and do not require Faculty approval. For example, for a civil protection course. They may be appointed by the Moderator and in exceptional cases by the RTI Director, in accordance with the RTI Regulations.

Visiting professors, visiting associate professors and visiting lecturers are members of the academic staff invited from other universities.

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

evaluated.

To promote the development of the teaching staff, the RTI organizes lectures and seminars in which the moderator, director or professors share their experiences after attending conferences organized by the Pontifical Lateran University and present to their colleagues the Church's documents and guidelines for the further development of the Institutes. Eight RTI lecturers have participated in person in conferences organized by the LPU in Rome during the reporting period. Individual assistance is provided to the lecturers in working with information resources, the Google Meet *online* work platform and other issues.

In 2022, RTI and RARZI faculty members were organized a sixty-hour continuing education course "Student-centred Teaching and Learning in Higher Education", led by Riga Stradiņš University Pedagogical Development Centre lecturers. The participants took part in face-to-face and remote classes, dialogue and discussions, got acquainted with the aims and objectives of student-centred study work, various didactic methods and techniques. The content of the courses included an introduction to the philosophy of learning and teaching, evidence-based learning, the Bologna Process and the European Education Area, the higher education system in Latvia, internal and external quality assessment. Lecturers had the opportunity to develop their skills in formulating and mapping learning outcomes, to learn about the characteristics of backward learning design. The courses included the opportunity to learn active learning and teaching methods, interactive learning and teaching tools, principles of study material design. Special attention was paid to the assessment of learning outcomes, the importance of feedback and feedback loops. RTI lecturers successfully completed this continuing training course.

RTI regularly evaluates the activity of its teaching staff, assessing the results of research work, project activities, as well as pedagogical and organizational work. The content of studies requires continuous work on updating the courses, responding to the current problems of public life and viewing them in the context of the teaching of the Catholic Church, therefore the academic staff participates in various projects, the results of which are used to supplement and update the content of study courses. The lecturers participate in research, speak at scientific and practical conferences and seminars, take part in the work of non-governmental organizations - societies, organizing scientific and educational events, in which graduates are also involved. The information and experience gained in scientific events are used in the management of study courses and theses, as well as in the preparation of teaching materials. This adds value to the quality of the study process and helps students to gain an understanding of processes and current events in the Church and society.

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

Seventeen of the twenty-six academic staff members (including visiting professors, visiting lecturers and guest lecturers, as well as guest lecturers) have a doctorate. Most of them have obtained their degrees abroad (Italy, etc.). The lecturers who have obtained a Licentiate degree are continuing their studies or working on their doctoral theses in Italian or French universities. The

specific nature of the field of study requires the involvement of high-level theological specialists. These are mainly Catholic priests elected to the Riga Theological Institute. Elected teaching staff: fourteen in total. Eight of them are PhDs, four are Licentiates, two are Masters. Of the fourteen elected members of the teaching staff, four are professors, one is an assistant professor and nine are lecturers.

The implementation of the study field and programmes involves lecturers whose qualifications and abilities are at a high level and have been evaluated over a long period of cooperation, therefore changes in the staff composition are not significant. There are also guest lecturers. They have a Master's degree and teach specific courses, such as civil protection, or cover for temporarily absent lecturers.

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

RTI students receive support both at the start of their studies and throughout their studies. Students meet the RTI Director at the start of their studies. During these meetings, students are informed about the study procedure, office and library work, and other issues of interest to students. During the study process, students are encouraged to address their questions to both the lecturers and the administration.

All RTI students have access to spiritual and psycho-emotional support. This helps students to overcome adaptation problems when starting their studies, to reduce emotional manifestations of stress, to overcome difficulties in building relationships and crisis situations. This is also done through *retreats* for students and staff, which are organized on a regular basis. They are an opportunity to relax together, to reflect and discuss issues of spiritual life, to build fellowship, to discuss current issues individually or in groups. RTI students have a specially equipped student lounge. The Student Lounge also hosts fellowship evenings, which encourage students to get to know each other and exchange ideas.

2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

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

The RTI is fundamentally collaborative, as defined by its institutional status, its fields of activity and the values of the Strategy - "Collaboration and Interdisciplinary" and the objectives of "developing a strong offer of studies in religion and theology, grounded in the Catholic tradition, open to extended

ecumenical dialogue and inclusive of the specific needs of society" and "active participation in shaping public opinion and promoting well-being". RTI's basic and applied research is in line with the objectives of the field of study and the priority areas of scientific research. This is reflected in the projects, publications and other scientific activities carried out by the faculty members and researchers involved in the field of study (see CV). RTI research is interdisciplinary in nature, centred on the ideal of Christian humanism, which is also defined in the RTI Mission Statement - "to implement the ideal of Christian humanism as outlined in Revelation, Church teaching and the Catholic academic tradition; to develop a comprehensive view of man and society; to contribute to the embodiment of the ideals of Christian humanism in Latvian society and culture." The aim of the study and research is thus aligned with the basic objective of the RTI Strategy to create a dialogue between Church and society.

RTI's research activities include both fundamental and applied research. The topics of scientific research are topical, relevant to the priority research directions and provide the thematic coverage necessary for the implementation of the study process. RTI, in collaboration with RARZI, has built up a team of lecturers who have been able to produce high quality annotated scientific translations of theological works and documents of the Magisterium of the Church, which primarily develop the field of religion and theology and the development of scientific terminology; moreover, these publications are an important contribution to the field of Latvian humanities and social sciences. As an example, three publications whose launch became an important cultural and historical fact and which are included in the international [Vatican National Information Network](#) :

- Bilingual - Latin/Latin annotated edition of the documents of the Second Vatican Council "[Vatican II: Constitutions, Declarations, Decrees](#)", Riga, 2016.

- [Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church](#), Riga, 2019. The publication of this document gained significant importance in the Latvian academic environment, becoming the basis for two international academic events.

In its scientific and research activities, RTI, guided by the values of dialogue and openness, cooperates with higher education institutions of similar profile in Latvia: the closest scientific and academic cooperation RTI has with RARZI. RARZI lecturers teach theology courses at RTI. International scientific conferences, seminars, fellowship events, scientific conferences of RTI and RARZI are organized jointly. The two universities have one scientific journal "*Terra Mariana*", whose scientific editorial board includes professors from both institutes. In 2022, RTI, RARZI and Luther Academy participated in the lecturers' courses organized by Riga Stradiņa University. In 2023, both universities organized an international ecumenical conference "Ecology of the Spirit". The RTI's openness and dialogue with society is vividly illustrated by the book launch event organized by the RTI in collaboration with RARZI and the Embassy of Latvia to the Holy See and the University of Latvia and the academic lecture by Cardinal Pēteris Turksons at the University of Latvia.

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

The study process in the RTI study programme is related to scientific research, as the teaching staff involved in the study process incorporate the research results and developed approaches into the study courses, thus ensuring students continuous acquisition of the latest knowledge and skills. The RTI education is underpinned by the tradition of Christian philosophical and theological

anthropology. An interdisciplinary approach to scientific research and its creative connection with the dynamics of the study process enable a profound and comprehensive explanation of the nature of the person and the processes of society, as well as the formation of an understanding of fundamental values. RTI subordinates the study of the various human sciences - theology, philosophy, ethics, psychology, pedagogy, social studies, cultural and religious history - to this anthropological orientation. Their aim is to promote dialogue between Church and culture, fostering a balance of ethical and cultural values in society. RTI's scientific research emphasizes the link between research results and the study process. In collaboration with RATZI, the RTI lecturers have built up a team that has been able to produce high quality annotated scientific translations of theological works and Church magisterium documents, which primarily develop the field of religion and theology and scientific terminology and are an important contribution to the field of Latvian humanities and social sciences. The projects for the development of these publications are centred on the RARZI Book Office (where RTI is involved) and the publishing house Vox Ecclesiae, which attracts international funding for the projects and manages the projects. Since 2012, major editions of annotated translations have been produced.

Books published by RARZI and RTI Book Bureau:

- Dominic Barthelemy "God and His Image", 2012
- Bernard Ssebouet "Mary in the Light of Faith", 2012
- Joseph Marie Verlander "100 Questions on New Religious Movements", 2013
- Margarita Peters "Global Ethics", 2014
- Proceedings of the International Conference "Identity and Openness". Cardinal Koch in the framework of the International Conference on "Openness and Identity" held during the visit of the President of the Vatican Council for Promoting Christian Unity to Latvia, 2014
- Congregation of St Clare "General Directory for Catechesis", 2015
- Cardinal Danjello "A culture betrayed by its own", 2018
- Hrostovsky "Pentateuch", 2017
- Pope Francis, Apostolic Constitution "Veritatis Gaudium", 2021
- Latvian edition of the Church documents on the protection of minors and vulnerable persons "To them belongs the Kingdom of Heaven", 2021
- Teaching tool for the preparation of candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation "Witness", 2023

Books published by VOX ECCLESIAE:

- Pope Benedict XVI "Apostles and Witnesses of the Church", 2012
- Pope Benedict XVI "The Ministry of Priests", 2012
- Paul VI's apostolic exhortation Evangelii nuntiandi and
- John Paul II, Redemptoris missio, 2012
- Pope Benedict XVI "Jesus of Nazareth", 2014
- Pope Benedict XVI "Saint Paul. Apostle", 2015
- Pope Benedict XVI "Jesus of Nazareth II", 2016
- Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si", 2016
- Pope Benedict XVI "Catechesis on Prayer", 2016
- Vatican II "Constitutions, Declarations, Decrees", 2016
- Pope Benedict XVI "Catechesis on Prayer", 2016
- "Vatican II: Constitutions, Declarations, Decrees" - First Latvian edition, 2016
- "Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, 2019

- "Pope Francis' Apostolic Visits to Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia: addresses, homilies, interviews", 2019
- Pope Benedict XVI "The Childhood of Jesus", 2020
- Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation "Gaudete et exultate", 2021
- In process: Pope Francis' encyclical "Lumen Fidei"
- and Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical "Spe salvi", 2023
- RTI, in collaboration with RARZI, regularly publishes a collection of scientific papers, *Terra Mariana*, which includes conference proceedings and scientific articles.

These publications are crucial for the study of theological subjects and for the production of scholarly works. For example, in the fields of canon law and jurisprudence, spiritual theology, anthropology and psychology, the interdisciplinary project carried out by RTI and RARZI on the protection of minors and vulnerable persons is of great importance. RTI and RARZI have developed a study course on prevention in collaboration with RARZI and Gottfrid Ugolini, an international expert in trauma psychology and crisis intervention and a lecturer at the Child Protection Centre of the Pontifical Gregorian University, and in consultation with experts from the Dardedze Crisis Centre.

In most of the study courses, RTI faculty members introduce students to scientific articles relevant to the content of the study courses. The courses include the selection and analysis of specialized literature, the methods used in research, and the processing, understanding and presentation of research results. Students are advised to choose a specific Master's thesis text as a basis for selecting a research topic. Prior to the Bachelor's thesis, students produce a study paper, which is analysed and evaluated and helps in the development of the Bachelor's thesis. Students' independent work includes activities that contribute to their scientific research competence, such as writing essays, developing presentations for seminars, developing and presenting theses. Students are assisted in this process by a special methodology lecture, where they learn and practice how to develop a scientific thesis in accordance with the Regulations for Scientific Work.

Students participate in scientific seminars and conferences as part of their studies. Every year in spring, the RTI and RARZI student scientific conference is held, where the work is carried out in the Philosophy, Theology and Social Sciences sections. The student scientific conference was also successfully held online during the Covid pandemic. The plenary sessions of the conference include scientific presentations by RTI and RARZI PhD students and special international guests. For example, the plenary session of the 2018 Student Scientific Conference was attended by special guests: Pr. Andris Marija Jerumanis (RARZI/Lugano University), prof. Prof. Benas Ulevicius (Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University), Brian Fox (University of Oxford), Ieva Rozenbach (JVLMA). The 2023 Student Scientific Conference was also held at the same time as the International Ecumenical Conference "Ecology of the Spirit". Student scientific conferences are increasingly popular among both students and lecturers.

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

RTI has scientific collaborations with Catholic universities in Rome, in particular the Lateran

Pontifical University, the Pontifical University of St Gregory, the Pontifical University of Anselm, the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. For example, RTI lecturers participate in conferences organized by LPU: XII International Symposium of University Professors "Culture for a New Humanism", Rome, 2015; XIII International Symposium of University Professors, 2016; International Conference "*Passione per Dio: Reform Spirituality and Theology after 500 Years*", Rome, Italy, 18-19 October 2017. The links with pontifical universities play an important role in the formation and scientific-research development of the new generation of RTI professors. For example, two RTI lecturers are currently engaged in doctoral studies in Rome. Mihails Volohovs at the Pontifical Gregorian University (*Gregoriana*); Liturgy lecturer Fr. Kārlis Miķelsons - Anselm Pontifical University (Anselmianum). In 2015, RTI hosted the rector of the Lateran Pontifical University, Bishop Enrico dal Covolo. This was an important event in the history of Catholic universities in Latvia, as this is the first visit of a Rector of LPU to Latvia. Representatives of the Faculty of Theology of LPU are also appointed as the heads of the commission for the defence of scientific theses. Also important for the development and cooperation between RTI and RARZI was the visit of the Director of RARZI, Ž. Narkēviča and RTI Director Fr. M. Lācis with the Rector of LPU prof. Vincenzo Buonomo and the Dean of the Faculty of Theology prof. Riccardo Ferri. Both study programmes benefit from international cooperation, as it ensures the scientific qualification of the teaching staff, inclusion in the world trends in the relevant fields and topics, ensuring that the study process and final theses cover and research topics relevant to the field. The following initiatives and activities are planned for future scientific research cooperation: the RTI Strategy sets out a plan to merge RTI and RARZI in order to strengthen Catholic education in Latvia; RTI will strengthen and promote greater opportunities for lecturers to participate in scientific conferences of Catholic universities, especially LPU, to use library and archive resources, and to submit scientific publications to pontifical university proceedings and journals.

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

RTI ensures and promotes the involvement of teaching staff in scientific research through the following means: promotion of academic career development through doctoral studies, participation in scientific conferences, as well as professional development and exchange of experience.

RTI academic staff publish annually, present papers at conferences and participate in various international projects. RTI uses only minimal funds to finance these activities. Lecturers are active in research projects and other ancillary activities.

In the long term, it is essential to attract more financial resources to this area, by raising the issue with the Pope's representative in the Baltic States, and by integrating LPU more closely into scientific research activities.

An important contribution to the field of fundamental theology is the scientific monograph by RTI moderator, Archbishop Zbignevs Stankevičs, "*Quo vadis The European world: B. Veltes Surprising Analysis*" in 2022 and the scientific conference dedicated to this event and organized by RTI with the participation of representatives of the Latvian Academy of Sciences at the National Library of Latvia. In the field of canon law and jurisprudence, spiritual theology, anthropology and psychology,

the interdisciplinary project carried out by RTI and RARZI on the protection of minors and vulnerable persons is significant. RTI and RARZI have developed a study course on prevention in collaboration with RARZI and Gottfrid Ugolini, an international expert in trauma psychology and crisis intervention and a lecturer at the Child Protection Centre of the Pontifical Gregorian University, and in consultation with experts from the Dardedze Crisis Centre. It has already gained wide application in the Catholic Church in Latvia. In the framework of this interdisciplinary project, an international scientific conference "*To them belongs the Kingdom of Heaven*" was held in 2021, and a publication with the conference materials was prepared in translation of Church documents on the protection of minors and the vulnerable. In the field of Scripture studies, RTI and RARZI, in collaboration with *Vox Ecclesiae* publishing house, are publishing the English translations of the trilogy "*Jesus of Nazareth*" by the great theologian of the 20th/21st century, J. Ratzinger-Pope Benedict XVI, with the assistance of Prof. Pauls Klavins. The Catechesis on Prayer by Benedict XVI is also being published. These publications are not only important for the scientific literature of students of religion and theology, but also an important contribution to the enrichment of Latvia's spiritual heritage.

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

RTI ensures and promotes students' involvement in scientific research, mainly in the following ways: Seminars, development and presentation of papers within the framework of a given course of study, development of theses and final papers, annual student scientific conferences, participation in projects implemented by RTI - for example in the organization of international academic lectures, book and journal launches and related conferences, preparation of catechetical courses, preparation of the RTI and RARZI scientific journal *Terra Mariana*, participation in Summer Music Academy events. In some cases, RTI invites foreign faculty members to conduct the work. In the process of thesis preparation, students have access to the resources of the RTI and RARZI libraries, a comfortable and modern reading room. When preparing scientific works, students attach a certificate in which they sign that the work has been prepared independently and does not contain elements of plagiarism. Bachelor theses are available in the RTI library.

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

During the reporting period, the innovations implemented by RTI are mainly related to the promotion of creativity in the study process and offering students new opportunities to renew their study environment and spiritual resources. Senior students receive practice-based training, for example, in the liturgy course, practicing with auxiliary materials in the celebration of the

sacraments. Students are offered unique opportunities to meet the hierarchs of the Catholic Church during their visits to Latvia. Alongside the study process, students had the opportunity to participate in the Summer Academy of Liturgical Music; every year on the 15th of August, during the Aglona Feast, RTI together with the lecturers create the RTI Tent. A successful creative cooperation between RTI lecturers and students was established with Radio Marija, where lecturers and students participate in broadcasts, interviews or produce a programme themselves. Several times a year, retreats are organized for students and lecturers, where students can renew their spiritual and psychological strength in a spirit of fellowship and prayer, and receive spiritual guidance from the RTI spiritual father. Advent fellowship events are also organized every year in cooperation with RARZI.

2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

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

Cooperation between the Study Area "Religion and Theology" and Latvian institutions takes various forms, including both formalized cooperation in the form of agreements and cooperation within the framework of various activities. The choice of cooperation partners is determined by several criteria: 1) common interest in the humanistic and ethical ideals of European culture; 2) desire to strengthen the spiritual and ethical foundations of Latvian society; 3) common research interests; 4) employment and career opportunities for graduates of the study programmes. Clearly, long-term cooperation is also based on positive experience of this cooperation.

Partners are selected according to the specificities and needs of the field of study, its study programmes and research, with attention paid to the partner's activity and reputation. Partner recruitment is carried out through a number of activities: the Director and faculty members participate in industry events (including LPU), organize seminars, guest lectures, conferences and other networking opportunities. This cooperation is aimed at achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of the field of study and its programmes.

RTI has signed cooperation agreements with all dioceses of the Catholic Church in Latvia (Riga, Liepaja, Jelgava, Rezekne-Aglona). They provide for academic cooperation and jobs for RTI students and graduates. Cooperation with employers is ongoing and takes place at several levels. The Archbishop of Riga is the moderator of the RTI. He represents the Bishops' Conference of Latvia, which is the founder of the RTI, which gives the RTI its tasks and supervises their implementation. The Moderator also publicly represents the RTI in society. Employers' representatives and/or proxies take part in admission interviews and in bachelor thesis defence committees.

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

RTI is a branch of LPU in Latvia, so the closest cooperation is with this university and similar branches in other countries. The Faculty of Theology of LPU, together with the Dicastery for Catholic Education and Culture of the Holy See, monitors and controls the academic quality of studies and their conformity to the teachings of the Church. Representatives of LPU participate in the defence of bachelor theses, and the RTI management works in close contact with the LPU Faculty of Theology. RTI has close cooperation with the Vilnius Theological Seminary. In case of unpredictable situations, our students can continue their studies in Vilnius - St Joseph's Seminary in Vilnius, after which the LPU diploma is awarded.

Mechanism for attracting cooperation partners: as a branch of the LPU, RTI has extensive opportunities for cooperation with LPU departments and external cooperation partners. RTI also cooperates with other universities, such as the Pontifical Gregorian University or the Institute of St Anselm in Rome, etc. In line with the policy of the Catholic Church, RTI is also open to cooperation with other denominations. In order to carry out its mission, RTI cooperates with various organisations in Latvia.

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

The recruitment of foreign students is done through the Bishops of the Catholic Church in other countries, in contact with the Moderator. For the attraction of a foreign student in Riga, the circumstances and reasons why the interested person is not studying in his/her own country are ascertained. In the future, in order to broaden the opportunities for the laity to be educated in the study programme, a campaign will be organized to attract foreign students through the Christian parishes of the cooperating churches abroad.

Latvian language tuition will be provided for foreign students. Learning the national language is a common practice in all such institutions worldwide.

The attraction of foreign faculty members is based on the principles formulated by the Faculty, i.e. compliance with the Faculty's requirements for faculty members' education and "*nulla osta*" approval. Consequently, only lecturers from Catholic universities may be invited and recruited for the main courses of study related to Catholic theology. Cooperation agreements with foreign universities are used to attract teaching staff. Foreign lecturers teach courses in Latvian.

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

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

The previous accreditation took place in 2011, after which the study programme "Religion and Theology" was accredited for the maximum period. Although no recommendations were made in the accreditation report, the experts had identified areas for improvement, which were taken into account in further strengthening and development of the RTI programme.

1. The University is financially dependent on the economic situation of the Latvian Catholic Church.

Our university has traditionally developed deep roots with the Catholic Church in Latvia. Aware of our mission (to prepare Catholic priests), we value this link with the Church and every believer in Latvia. It is important for us to live on trust and the donations of the people, because this constitutes the evangelical essence of the Catholic Church. Therefore, the economic aspect of this has not and cannot be changed. However, aware of the needs of the students and our responsibility for the future of the Catholic Church in Latvia, we have opened the premises of our Institute to RARZI, who use all the resources of our Institute. The feedback of this cooperation is that we use the fruits of the project funding prepared by RARZI to modernize the IT of the institute (computers, projectors.). We are involved in scientific conferences organised by RARZI using RTI resources.

2. Traditional education practices that may need to change in the future.

This observation touches deeply on the mission and essence of our Institute - to prepare Catholic priests after the example of Christ himself. We value our conservatism, the heritage of the Church, tradition and the deposit of faith we receive from the Apostles. This cannot be changed. Otherwise we lose the deeper meaning of our Institute. Our theological and philosophical lectures are deeply traditional, in line with the Gospel. However, in response to the rapid changes of the world, the Church goes hand in hand with the person she accompanies in all situations of life. Therefore, while maintaining the classical vector of education and responding to the call of the State and the universal Catholic Church, new lectures were introduced. First, a course on the environment and civil protection, as well as the protection of children and the powerless in the Church and society. Another important innovation is the opening of our Institute to lay people who wish to study Catholic theology. This innovation is in response and Pope Francis' call to open Catholic seminaries to the public, which he made in his 2019 Apostolic Exhortation "Veritatis Gaudium".

3. Seminarians have no contacts with other higher education institutions.

Our Institute is not only an educational institution, but also a seminary where future Catholic priests are formed. Candidates for the priesthood live in the same building where the lectures take place. Their life is strictly regulated by a seminary regulation, conceptually based on Pope John Paul II's document "Pastores dabo vobis" (The shepherds I give you). The years that seminarians spend here are a time of formation. There is a strong emphasis on silence, work and prayer. Alongside this,

seminarians study theology, philosophy, liturgy, ecclesiastical jurisprudence and other subjects that are necessary for Catholic priests in today's society. During this time, seminarians leave the world to return to the world prepared for their mission. Given this specificity, seminarians have limited contact with other students. However, recognizing that we are preparing the priests of the diocese who will live among the people in the future, we maintain a friendly and productive collaboration with other seminaries. Until the pandemic and the war, regular meetings were held with Catholic seminaries in Lithuania and Belarus, so that seminarians could make friends and develop themselves by drawing on the spiritual riches and experiences of other seminaries. Now this cooperation is being renewed. There is cooperation with the RARZI University and their students.

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

(Not applicable)

Annexes

I - Information on the Higher Education Institution/ College		
Information on the implementation of the study field in the branches of the higher education institution/ college (if applicable)		
List of the governing regulatory enactments and regulations of the higher education institution/ college	P 1_List of key RTI internal laws and regulations.docx	P 1 normatīvie akti_ abās valodās.docx
The management structure of the higher education institution/ college	Blank diagram (ENG).jpeg	Blank diagram (LV).jpeg
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.1. Management of the Study Field		
Plan for the development of the study field (if applicable)	P 3 ENG2.docx	Pielikums_Studiju virziena attīstības plāns_LV.docx
The management structure of the study field	P4_ENG.pdf	P 4_LV.docx
A document certifying that the higher education institution or college will provide students with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution/ college (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college) if the implementation of the study programme is terminated.	agreements.zip	Ligumi_agreements.zip
A document certifying that the higher education institution or college guarantees compensation for losses to students if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme license is revoked due to actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.	P 6_ENG.pdf	P 6_LV.pdf
Standard sample of study agreement	P7_Agreement_for_studies.docx	P 7 Studiju līgums.docx
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System		
Analysis of the results of surveys of students, graduates and employers	P 8 ENG.docx	P 8 LV.docx
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field		
Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field	P9-RTI-Acad.staff-ENG.xlsx	P 9 RTI-Docetāji-LV.xlsx
Biographies of the teaching staff members (Curriculum Vitae in Europass format)	CV pielikums ENG-labots.pdf	CV pielikums LV-labots.pdf
A statement signed by the rector, director, head of the study programme or field that the knowledge of the state language of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes within the study field complies with the regulations on the state language knowledge and state language proficiency test for professional and official duties.	P 11 ENG.pdf	P 11.pdf
A statement of the higher education institution/ college on the respective foreign language skills of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme at least at B2 level according to the European Language Proficiency Assessment levels (level distribution is available on the website www.europass.lv, if the study programme or part thereof is implemented)		
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation		
Summary of quantitative data on scientific and/ or applied research and / or artistic creation activities corresponding to the study field in the reporting period.	Summary of quantitative data on scientific_ENG.docx	Pielikumā pievienot kvantitatīvo datu apkopojumu par studiju virzienam atbilstošām zinātniskās un.docx
List of the publications, patents, and artistic creations of the teaching staff over the reporting period.	P 13_eng.docx	P 13_lv.docx
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation		
List of cooperation agreements, including the agreements for providing internship	P 14-eng2.docx	P 14-LV.docx
Statistical data on the teaching staff and the students from abroad	P15 eng.docx	P 15_LV.docx
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of students (by specifying the study programmes)	P16ENG.docx	P 16LV.docx
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff	P17 eng.docx	P 17.docx
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures		
Report on the implementation of the recommendations received both in the previous accreditation and in the licensing and/ or change assessment procedures and/ or the procedures for the inclusion of the study programme on the accreditation form of the study field.	Recommendation_implementation_ENG.docx	Rekomendāciju izpilde_LV.docx
An application for the evaluation of the study field signed with a secure electronic signature	Application.docx	Iesniegums.docx
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme		
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard		
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme		
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)		

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

Other annexes

Name of document	Document
RTI Strategy of development	Strategy of development final.docx
Statūti	Statūti_lv.docx
Articles RTI.docx	Articles RTI.docx
RTI Quality policy.docx	quality policy.docx
RTI ETHICS CODEX.docx	RTI ETHICS CODEX.docx
RULES FOR THE EVALUATION OF STUDENTS.docx	RULES FOR THE EVALUATION OF STUDENTS.docx
Admission rules.docx	Admission rules.docx
RULES FOR THE EVALUATION OF STUDENTS.docx	RULES FOR THE EVALUATION OF STUDENTS.docx

Religion and Theology (43221)

Study field	<i>Religion and Theology</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Religion and Theology</i>
Education classification code	43221
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic bachelor study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Andžejs Lapinskis</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Andžejs Lapinskis</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>AndzejsL@hotmail.com</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Dr. iur. can.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	25964842
Goal of the study programme	<i>To provide the opportunity to study Catholic theology, contributing to the further development of the human person. To prepare competent theologians for Latvian society and the Catholic Church, who are able to use their knowledge in leading or assisting the Church.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<p><i>Programme objectives</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. to acquire basic and specialized knowledge of philosophy, Catholic theology and, within these disciplines, the methodology of scientific research.</i> <i>2. to acquire the ability to apply the knowledge acquired to research activities.</i> <i>3. Acquire the capacity:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>- take a scientific approach to identifying and solving problems, based on Church teaching and Catholic theology;</i> <i>- to take responsibility and initiative in the service of the common good of society and the spiritual support of each individual;</i> <i>-to make decisions and find creative solutions in changing circumstances;</i> <i>- to lead and organize the life of the parish and ensure the functioning of the church</i>
Results of the study programme	<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Through the knowledge acquired, be able to defend and present divine revelation.</i> <i>2. Understand the needs and thirst for divine truth of contemporary people.</i> <p><i>Skills</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>3. be able to search for interrelationships and find a vector for the development of situations.</i> <i>4. use the acquired knowledge to help and serve the Latvian Catholic Church and society.</i> <i>5. Apply the language they have learned to the study of ancient biblical texts.</i> <p><i>Competences</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>6. When working with people, able to synthesize problems, helping to fix them.</i> <i>7. be able to identify reason about and fix problems.</i> <i>8. In response to the mission of the Church, offer their knowledge and experience for the common good of society.</i>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Keywords exam</i> ● <i>Bachelor thesis</i>

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 5 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>5</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>200</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education and negotiation</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor's degree of Humanities in Religion and Theology</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>-</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Riga Institute of Theology (under the Pontifical Lateran University)	RĪGA	KATOĻU IELA 16, LATGALES PRIEKŠPILSĒTA, RĪGA, LV-1003

3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

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

The name of the study programme has been changed. The name of the programme during the reporting period - "Theology", the name of the programme that is being considered for accreditation - "Religion and Theology". The new title better reflects the content of the programme as it includes a reference to the Catholic theology courses included in the programme, which form an important part of the study programme.

According to Pope Francis' instruction, every higher education institution in the country that offers studies for Catholic clergy must also be open to the laity. Therefore, the type of study programme is being changed from "professional bachelor's programme" to "academic bachelor's programme". In this connection, the previously obtainable professional bachelor's degree in theology and the qualification of priest are also being changed. In accordance with the changes, the "Bachelor of Humanities in Religion and Theology" will be assigned in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No 240 "On the State Standard of Academic Education" and the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No 322 "On the Classification of Latvian Education". This is being done because there are plans to adapt the programme in the future to accommodate those who do not wish to become priests after graduation.

As RTI is an affiliate of the LPU, we ensure that its requirements and recommendations are met: in 2020, the Congregation for Catholic Education issued a document asking for a review of the curricula of all universities. One of the changes concerns the scope of the curriculum. See LPU letter under other attachments.

Compliance with the national education standard is implemented through Article 57(3) of the Higher Education Law of Latvia.

The aims and objectives of the study programme, as well as the study outcomes to be achieved, have been updated in line with the Latvian Qualifications Framework.

Changing professional qualifications to academic qualifications will not change the employability of graduates who decide to become priests. The graduates - priests - serve in Latvian Catholic parishes. They will continue their priestly ministry as before.

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

Studies in the academic bachelor's study programme "Religion and Theology" allow for a deeper study of the guidelines, basic principles and research methodologies of religious sciences, philosophy and theology, the history of development and current problems in the interdisciplinary aspect, advanced studies in philosophy, dogmatics, moral theology and Church history, development of scientific research and analytical work skills in religious sciences, to study the sources of Christian faith and practice (New and Old Testament texts and their interpretations, the history of religious ideas and institutions, Christian practice - church leadership, worship leadership, pastoral care, parish pedagogy), based on the Catholic tradition and the study of Catholic theology, while adopting an ecumenical approach and respecting the needs of society, providing professional specialists to meet the needs of the Church and society. The aim of true education is the formation of the human person, taking into account his or her high purpose and vocation, and at the same time taking into account the vocation of the human person to serve the society of which he or she is a member.

The study programme corresponds to the study field "Religion and Theology". The title of the programme corresponds to the content of the programme. The programme code, the degree to be obtained, the aims and objectives, the learning outcomes and the admission requirements are interlinked. The title of the degree "Bachelor of Humanities in Religion and Theology" is formulated in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation of 13 May 2014 No 240 "Regulations on the State Standard of Academic Education" and the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation of 13 June 2017 No 322 "On the Classification of Education for the Thematic Groups in Latvia" and the requirements of the Faculty of Theology of the Lateran Pontifical University.

Study programme code is 43221

The admission rules define common admission criteria: prior secondary education and an admission interview on the motivation for the choice of studies. This ensures that all students are equally able to enter the study programme. The aims, objectives and outcomes of the study programme meet the requirements of level 6 of the Latvian Framework of Educational Classification for students' knowledge, skills and competences. On the other hand, the aim, objectives and outcomes of the study programme meet and are in line with the requirements of the Faculty of Theology of LPU. The aim of the study programme is to provide an opportunity to acquire Catholic theology, contributing to the further human development of the personality. To prepare competent theologians for Latvian society and the Catholic Church who are able to use their knowledge in leading or assisting the Church.

The Bachelor's programme is oriented towards the training of young professionals in Catholic theology, with a view to continuing their studies at the Master's level, followed by a PhD at the Lateran University. The didactic concept of the programme is based on the objectives of the Institute as formulated by the Vatican Congregation for Education, which envisage not only academic results but also personal formation in the process of study. The mission of the programme, which supports the development of the researcher's competences, is also in line with the objective of training specialists. Graduates of the programme are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the guidelines of Catholic theology, the methods of research characteristic of the humanities, and the ability to independently plan, organize and manage their own research and professional activity. The implementation of the study programme is closely related to the spiritual formation of students, their involvement in the leadership of parishes, Church movements and groups.

The study programme is full-time and full-time over 5 years, during which time the programme

content is covered in 200 CP. This study duration and number of credits is determined in accordance with the LPU regulations. The scope, structure and content of the study programme are designed to enable students to achieve the knowledge, skills and competences defined in the learning outcomes in the highest possible quality. All lecturers have relevant degrees in theology, philosophy, psychology, law. The scope of the study programme allows for the study of courses related to all sub-disciplines of the field. The duration of the study programme thus ensures that the aims and objectives of the programme are fully and qualitatively achieved.

The amount of study credits and the duration of the programme are strictly according to the LPU rules. In 2020, the Congregation for Catholic Education issued a document asking for a review of the curricula of all universities. More important changes:

1. The academic and scientific nature of studies is established;
2. Opening up to ecclesial and lay students;
3. The duration of studies will no longer be a four-year cycle, but a five-year cycle with 300 ECTS.

Request for negotiation in the admission process submitted to AIP.

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

The Bachelor's programme in Religion and Theology offers a high-level humanistic education related to the study of Catholic theology today and in history.

The study of theology provides insights into human history and the present, and develops key skills such as critical thinking and analytical writing. One of the most important skills developed in the process of study, and one that is essential for everyone's career, is the ability to learn (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/324332-par-izglitibas-attistibas-pamatnostadnem-2021-2027-gadam>) (only in Latvian).

Learning is commonly associated with the process by which we acquire new knowledge, improve certain skills and form or adjust attitudes towards what is happening. In other words, the purpose of learning is to increase one's competence (knowledge, skills, attitudes) in a particular area of life. The learning process also has a direct impact on the quality of our daily life and our emotional well-being, and improved competence is not the only tangible result of learning. Learning makes us happier and helps to maintain mental and physical health. It is important for the all-round development of the individual and for active participation in society.

Graduates of study programme can work in the Church parishes, making a unique contribution to the development of the Latvian humanities. They can work in fields related to religious research and analysis of current events or processes (universities, institutes, media), administration (public administration, religious organizations) and practice (churches and other religious organizations), as well as in religious education and non-governmental organizations (e.g. in fields related to human rights and social work).

Employment of RTI graduates:

Year	Number of graduates	Employment
2021	1	Preili Catholic Church
2020	-	-
2019	2	Ludza Catholic Church, Jelgava Catholic Church
2018	1	Rezekne Catholic Church
2017	1	Liepaja Catholic Church, after leaving the serving, continues his studies at the University of Latvia
2016	1	Chaplain of the National Armed Forces
2015	1	Ludza Catholic Church, continues doctoral studies at LPU
2014	4	continues doctoral studies at LPU, Riga Anton Catholic Church, Zilupe Catholic Church, Archbishop's Secretary
2013	2	Ludza Catholic Church, continues doctoral studies at LPU; left the serving - Head of the Daugavpils Municipality Youth Department
2012	4	Director of RTI, Head of Church Court, Seminary Inspector, Lecturer at RTI, Daugavpils Catholic Church, Liepaja Catholic Church, left the serving - self-employed
2011	3	Barkava Catholic Church, Balvi Catholic Church, Rezekne Catholic Church

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

At the time of writing, the programme has 10 students, three of whom are in their final year. The average age of RTI students is thirty-two years, and RTI is exclusively male (see Annex 20).

During the accreditation period, the number of students tends to decrease. A breakthrough can be observed in enrolment results from 2019 onwards. Whereas previously between four and six students were admitted in the 1st year, after 2019 the Institute is admitting around two students

per year through careful selection. One student leaves the RTI each year, either by choice or by being withdrawn. Interest in studying at RTI depends on the activity of the Latvian Catholic Churches and the maturity of society in general.

Every year, one future priest graduates from RTI. In 2023, three priests are planned. After graduation, they are placed under the authority of the Latvian diocesan bishops.

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

3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

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

The content of the Bachelor's study programme "Religion and Theology" is developed in accordance with the requirements for Bachelor's study programme set out in the Law of the Republic of Latvia on Higher Education Institutions as well as in the Statutes of RTI. The structure, course offer and content of the BSP have been developed in accordance with the current needs of the field, development trends in the field of religion and theology, as well as in accordance with the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No 240 "Regulations on the State Standard of Academic Education", Regulations No 322 "Regulations on the Latvian Classification of Education", Annex 1 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) level 6 study outcomes description and taking into account the aims and objectives of the study programme.

During the reporting period, the study programme has made deliberate changes to its purpose, objectives, deliverables and, to a minimum, content, taking account of current developments. The content of the courses has been updated to include current documents of the Catholic Church and papal encyclicals, focusing on issues relevant to contemporary society. The RTI Council monitors changes in the BSP in relation to changes in the aim, objectives and outcomes of the field of study; course content is monitored through the updating of content, literature and other resources, the application of student-centred learning and teaching methods both in class and in the planning and organisation of students' independent work. The course descriptions and final theses are of high quality and in compliance with the requirements of the regulatory enactments, the content is up-to-date, mutually complementary, meets the objectives of the programme and ensures the

achievement of the study outcomes, as well as meets the needs of the field and scientific trends. Students' evaluation, opinions and suggestions also play an important role in the development of study courses. Cooperation and exchange of ideas on current developments in the field in practice is an important factor in updating study courses.

The study programme consists of compulsory (hereinafter referred to as A), restricted elective (hereinafter referred to as B) and free elective (hereinafter referred to as C) study courses with a total of 200 CP (300 ECTS). The BSP consists of: Church History (A), Dogmatic Theology (A), History of Philosophy (A), Fundamental Theology (A), Theology of Spiritual Life (A), Introduction to the New Testament Books (A), New Testament Exegesis (A), Canon Law (A), Moral Theology (A), Old Testament Exegesis (A), Environmental Sustainability and Civil Protection (A), Bachelor Thesis (A), Final Examination (A), Gnosyology (B), Metaphysics (B), Polish (B), Patrology (B), Latin (B), Greek (B), History of World Religions (B), Psychology (B), Study Seminar (B), Liturgical Singing (B), Pastoral Theology (B), Logic (B), Cosmology (B), Social Doctrine of the Church (B), Homiletics (B), Cultural History (C), Liturgy (C), Hebrew (C), Latgalian (C), English (C), History of Christian Art (C), Sacred History (C), Biblical Archaeology (C), Modesty (C). The content and scope of these courses are coordinated with the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Lateran University.

The arrangement of courses by year is characteristic of the traditional approach to the study of religion and theology. It involves an initial focus on philosophy (History of Philosophy, Gnosyology, Metaphysics) and spiritual formation (Theology of the Spiritual Life, Seminar in the Theology of the Spiritual Life) and a gradual introduction to theological studies (Introduction to Biblical Exegesis, New Testament Exegesis, Moral Theology, Liturgy, Dogmatic Theology). In addition, in the first year, students begin to study Church History and Patrology, Psychology, Cultural History and English.

According to the requirements of the Faculty, Dogmatic Theology is studied in three years, Moral Theology in four years. The study continues with philosophy courses, theology courses (Dogmatics, Moral Theology, Fundamental Theology, New Testament exegesis), Old Testament exegesis and a study seminar, which allows students to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for research.

Courses are designed to avoid duplication of content. The design of courses is such as to ensure continuity of study. The mapping of the courses of study included in the programme shows that the courses of study ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme of study. The Bachelor's study programme provides students with the opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and competence in a sequential manner and in accordance with the requirements of the faculty.

In pursuit of its mission in Latvia to offer Catholic education to the Latvian society, RTI is affiliated to LPU with the LPU study programme, which provides 300 ECTS (200 CP). Compliance with the national education standard is implemented through Article 57 (3) of the Law on Higher Education.

In response to the urging of the Congregation for Catholic Education, our university will also be open to non-seminarians, that is, to anyone who wishes to acquire Catholic theological knowledge and a diploma. Given that the studies will be academic and scientific, the lays will study the same subjects as the seminarians.

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

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

Methods of delivery, including assessment, are conducive to the achievement of course and programme objectives and outcomes, taking into account the requirements of student-centred teaching and learning. The study programme is delivered in full-time, face-to-face mode. The principles of student-centred learning shall be taken into account in the study process.

The programme is delivered in a supportive and inspiring way. The small number of students allows for an individual approach; lectures and classes are organized interactively using modern technologies.

The student-centred approach is followed when updating the content of study courses, with special attention paid to the meaningful formulation of study outcomes, thus promoting a dialogue between lecturers and students on study content, forms of organization and methods. Correctly formulated learning outcomes, in turn, promote students' understanding and ownership of their own learning, self-assessment and understanding of the assessment received.

Oral, written and combined study and assessment methods are used during the study courses, mid-term examinations and final examinations. Teaching staff predominantly use methods that encourage students' active participation, critical thinking and reflection. A wide variety of methods are used to acquire and consolidate knowledge: lectures, seminars, individual and group work, discussions, etc. In order to achieve the learning outcomes - to acquire and consolidate knowledge, skills and develop competence - the study process is dominated by methods in which students' activity plays an important role. In classes, lectures and seminars, students are encouraged to engage in dialogue and discussion, and small group work is used. Lecturers encourage students to ask questions, explain what they do not understand, and help them to find additional materials if necessary. In the study process, lecturers use methods, forms of examination and assessment criteria that are appropriate to the aim of the study and the planned study outcomes. Students receive support and feedback from lecturers during the study process, and lecturers inform students at the beginning of each course of study about the necessary requirements, independent work and criteria for passing the course. The assessment criteria are made public in advance. Assessment provides insight into the extent to which students have achieved the expected learning outcomes. Both formative and summative assessment are used in the studies. Formative assessment takes place during the study process, by asking students control questions during contact hours and by discussing students' independent work which is practiced during the study process. Summative assessment takes place at the end of each study course in the form of a credit or examination. Summative assessment tests are organized in the form of written (paper-based or electronic) or oral discussions. For courses of study lasting more than one academic year, several summative assessments are possible. At the end of the studies, the student chooses a topic of

interest and, in cooperation with a supervisor of his/her choice, develops and defends a bachelor thesis. In this the student demonstrates the ability to relate theoretical knowledge to research using theological methodology. In the thesis and in the final examination (keyword examination), students demonstrate an integral view of the human person, synthesizing the knowledge and skills acquired in philosophy, theology, ethics, psychology, pedagogy, cultural studies and the history of religions.

Following the introduction of the state of national emergency in March 2020, significant changes were introduced to the distance learning process. During the *Covid-19* pandemic, lectures and classes were held remotely using *Google Meet* and other online tools available to RTI. Although practice proved that face-to-face interaction is an essential part of the study process, we concluded that an e-learning platform was also necessary. The development and implementation of such a platform is being worked on with the hope of having it in place from the academic year 2023/2024.

In response to the urging of the Congregation for Catholic Education, our university will also be open to non-seminarians, that is, to anyone who wishes to acquire Catholic theological knowledge and a diploma. Given that the studies will be academic and scientific, the lays will study the same subjects as the seminarians.

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

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

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

The final part of the degree consists of two parts:

1. Students defend a bachelor thesis.
2. Students take a final test (oral: keyword exam).

The Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Lateran University (hereinafter "the Faculty") determines the procedure for such final examinations. The thesis topics are chosen by the students during their fourth year of studies. The compulsory elective units and the thesis work included in the programme of study help students to choose a topic that is relevant to Catholic theology and to their own research interests. The Bachelor's thesis involves close collaboration between the student and the supervisor throughout the thesis process. The seminar in theological methodology included in the programme contributes to the production of a high-quality study. The thesis is defended in the presence of a committee in an open session. The thesis is evaluated by the supervisor, the reviewer and the members of the committee. The mark for the bachelor thesis shall be on a 10 point system, agreed by the members of the committee after hearing the views of the supervisor and the reviewer. If necessary, the final mark is obtained by voting.

The aim of the bachelor thesis is to apply, systematize and extend the theoretical knowledge and practical skills acquired during the studies, to use them in carrying out independent scientific or practically significant research, as well as to summarize and analyze the obtained results, draw conclusions and formulate recommendations for further work. In the period 2013-2022, 18 bachelor theses were defended at the BSP. Their grades range from 7 to 10. The most frequent choice of students is to study ecclesiastical, social and human issues in their bachelor theses. Overall, the choice of themes and the process of elaboration and defense of bachelor theses show that students have achieved the expected results of the study programme, have acquired knowledge in philosophy and theology, have acquired sufficient skills in research, information technology and foreign languages and are able to demonstrate an integral view of the human person.

For the final examination, the RTI sends a set of 30 topics (keywords) to the faculty, which the faculty approves for the following three years. At the beginning of each academic year (by 15 September), the RTI management selects 10 topics from the approved list to be used in the undergraduate oral examination session of the following calendar year. This selection and the content must be approved by the faculty; once approved, the information is immediately communicated to the students. The oral examination lasts about 30 minutes and is held in front of a committee of three teachers and its chairperson (the Dean of the Faculty or his delegate).). 24 hours before the examination, students each choose a topic from the keywords approved for the year. This topic is presented by the student in front of the members of the committee; at the end, the members of the committee may ask questions on the topic presented as well as on a second topic chosen by the student from the list approved for the year. The student's answer will be evaluated on a 10-point scale, as adopted by the jury. The marks received during the reporting period range from 6 to 10, mostly 7-8.

2021.-2023. The following topics (keywords) have been approved for the oral examination: Faith and mind, image and likeness, love, holiness, life, righteousness, body, person, faith and history, revelation, hope, Word, knowledge, man, salvation, faith, original sin and sin, marriage, communion, dialogue, incarnation, Church, eschatology, Trinity, sacraments, grace, justification, Eucharist, resurrection.

In covering these topics, the student needs to demonstrate an integral view of the human person, synthesizing the knowledge and skills acquired in the study of philosophy, theology, ethics, psychology, pedagogy, culture and history of religions, and to express a personal understanding of and attitude towards the issue at hand.

3.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

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

The resources of the study programme and facilities meet the requirements for programme implementation. The programme is delivered in lecture and classrooms in the Katoļu iela 16 (Riga) building complex. The classrooms are equipped with modern technical solutions necessary for the use of information technologies. As already indicated in Part 2, Chapter 3, the infrastructure is used in cooperation with RARZI.

The study and research facilities meet the requirements of the Bachelor's degree programme. Students have access to a comfortable and well-equipped study environment throughout the University, i.e. an environment is available between lectures or at any other time to allow students to carry out their studies outside the library. There is free access to wireless internet, power points, etc.

The RTI Library/Reading Room is available to students 24 hours a day and the RARZI Library can also be used. The library has a wide range of subject-specific collections in different languages, as well as electronic resources.

Students are provided with accommodation, meals and essential daily services in a complex of buildings at Katoļu iela 16.

The financial resources required for the implementation of the programme are ensured within the study field. The funding of the programme, as well as the funding of the study programme, consists of the funds of the Catholic Church of Latvia and the funds of foreign Catholic foundations.

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

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

The BSP's own cost per student in the 2021/2022 academic year was EUR 5528.75. These costs include the salaries of the lecturers and the costs of materials for the teaching process. As RTI only runs one study programme, the information in Part 2, Chapter 3, sub-chapters 2.3.1 to 2.3.3 also applies to this chapter.

Given the Catholic Church's interest in the education of priests, the programme of study is carried out even if there is at least one student with the aim of becoming a priest, or at least 10 lay students.

3.4. Teaching Staff

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

The qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme comply with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements of the regulatory enactments, as well as ensure the achievement of the objectives and study outcomes of the study programme and the corresponding study courses. See Chapter 2.3.5.).

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

The composition of the teaching staff has been relatively stable over the period under review, with few changes. Changes in the composition of the teaching staff are mostly related to the process of generational change, to lecturers studying for doctoral degrees or to appointments to other positions of importance for the Church.

Since 2013, the professor who taught the courses "Exegesis of the New Testament" and "Exegesis of the Old Testament" has died. RTI invited a visiting professor to continue the courses she taught, as there are only a few specialists in Latvia who could teach such courses from the perspective of Catholic doctrine. The guest lecturer has a doctorate in theology and sufficient teaching experience, as well as extensive experience in translating biblical texts, so that the courses are taught at the appropriate level.

In view of the need for generational change, two new lecturers with a Licentiate in Theology were recruited to teach courses in Church History, Patrology and Liturgy. Both lecturers are studying for

their doctorates in Rome, with an expected completion date of 2024.

The changes that have taken place, as well as the entry of new professionals to RTI and their involvement in the study process, have not reduced the quality of studies; it is maintained at a consistently high level.

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

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

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

Cooperation between teaching staff is encouraged and ensured within the same or related study courses. This is particularly important in courses that are taught over a long period of time and where several lecturers are involved (e.g. Dogmatic Theology, Moral Theology, Theology of Spiritual Life). There is also collaboration between specialists teaching different courses. This allows to avoid overlapping of the content of the courses, to plan more successfully the students' independent work and research activities.

The collaboration of lecturers is facilitated by the activities of the group of professors, which defines its aims and objectives in the context of the development strategy. The activities include the mutual hospitation of lecturers and the joint discussion of current issues in Catholic education in continuing education courses and seminars.

The cooperation of the lecturers is promoted by regular lecturers' meetings, scientific conferences, joint participation in retreats and fellowship events.

If student suggestions are made in discussion with the Principal and relate to the teaching of a particular course, the course lecturer is informed at the outset and the students' comments are evaluated and solutions are sought to improve the course. Regular exchange of information, mutual understanding and clarification work between all parties involved has led to significant changes in content.

Significant changes in the mechanisms of faculty collaboration have occurred with the remote learning due to the *Covid-19* pandemic. The major changes have been in the patterns of action, such as the rapid adaptation of lectures, the application of materials to the study process, and the adaptation to the demands of technology. As a result of students' initiative, lecturers have been making lecture recordings and improving materials during this period. Collegiality issues were also important during this period to ensure the practical delivery of lectures. Particularly challenging were situations where the lecturer had to adapt to a hybrid delivery of lectures and practical work. Overall, the adaptability of the teaching staff is considered to be very high. In situations where process improvement has been necessary, this has been done in dialogue between lecturers, students, the Director.

The study programme involves various levels of cooperation, which enrich the study process and promote a diverse exchange of knowledge.

Student-faculty ratio: 26 faculty members per 10 students.

Annexes

III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme	P19 diploma supplement.docx	P 19_diploms_diploma_pielikums.doc
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period	P20 Statistics FIN MEN Eng.docx	P20_Statistikas dati par studējošajiem programmā FIN MEN (1).docx
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard	P21_conformity with the Bachelor Curriculum standarts2.docx	P 21_atbilstiba standartam2.docx
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	P22_eng2.xlsx	P 22_Kursu_kartejums_lv.xlsx
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	P 23_ENG.docx	P 23 studiju plāns_LV2.docx
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Pielikums_kursu apraksti_abās valodās (2).pdf	Pielikums_kursu apraksti_abās valodās (2).pdf
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)	P 25 (2).pdf	P 25.pdf