

## APPLICATION

### Study field "Architecture and Construction" for assessment

Study field	<i>Architecture and Construction</i>
Title of the higher education institution	<i>Latvijas Universitāte</i>
Registration code	<i>3341000218</i>
Legal address	<i>RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, CENTRA RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1586</i>
Phone number	<i>67034301</i>
E-mail	<i>lu@lu.lv</i>

# **Self-evaluation report**

Study field "Architecture and Construction"

University of Latvia

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# I - Information on the Higher Education Institution/College

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

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

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

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

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

Currently the UL main activities take place in Riga, Raiņa Boulevard 19 and Torņkalns Academic Centre, as well as in various faculties in Riga and in UL regional branches in Aluksne, Bauska, Cēsis, Jekabpils, Kuldīga, Madona and Tukums.

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

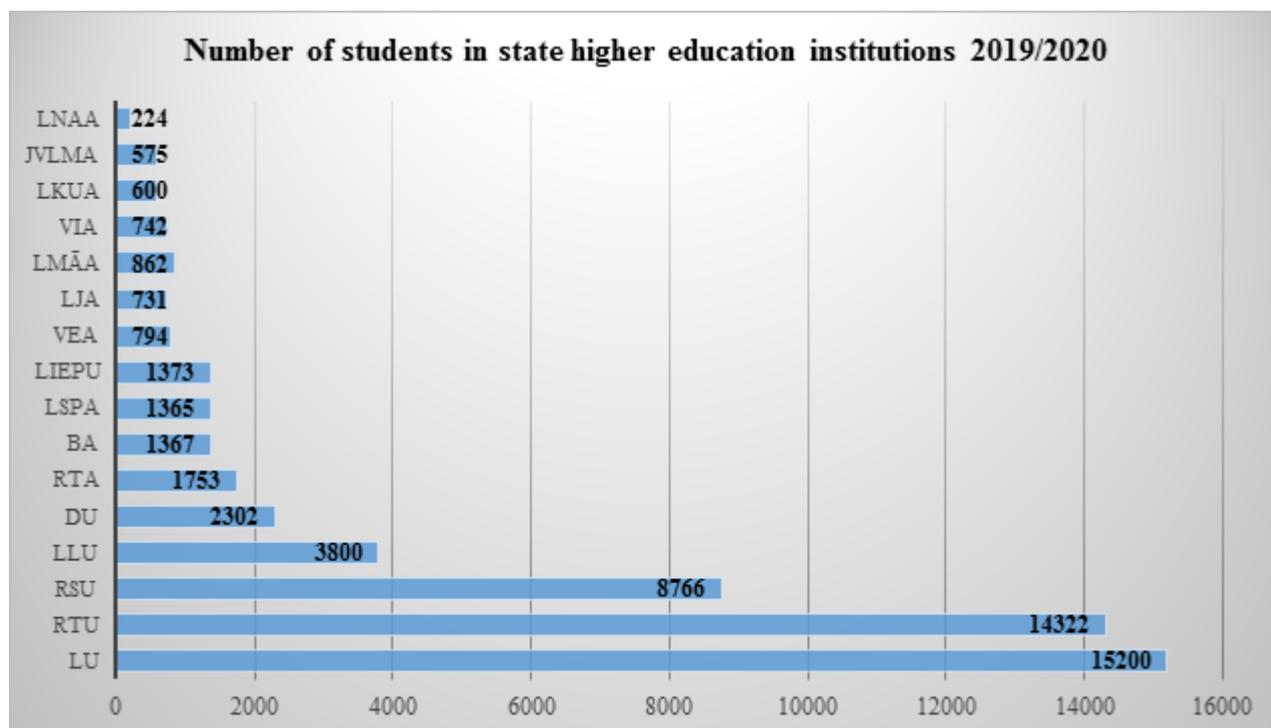


Figure 1. Number of students in state higher education institutions in the academic year 2019/2020

<https://izm.gov.lv/lv/publikacijas-un-statistika/statistika-par-izglitiba/statistika-par-augstako-izglitiba>

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

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

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

No.	Study fields	Number of study programmes	Accreditation period

1.	Architecture and construction	1	31.05.2013-30.06.2022.
2.	Life sciences	3	29.05.2013-30.06.2023.
3.	Economics	12	26.06.2013-30.06.2021.
4.	Physics, Materials Science, Mathematics and Statistics	7	29.05.2013-30.06.2023.
5.	Geography and Earth Sciences	6	24.04.2017-24.04.2023.
6.	Information technology, computer engineering, electronics, telecommunications, computer management and computer science.	5	29.05.2013-22.08.2023.
7.	Internal security and civil defence	3	29.05.2013-22.08.2023.
8.	Information and Communication Sciences	6	05.06.2013-30.06.2024.
9.	Education, Pedagogy and Sports	24	24.05.2013-30.06.2021.
10.	Chemistry, chemical technologies and biotechnology	3	12.06.2013-30.06.2024.
11.	Arts	1	24.05.2013-30.06.2023.
12.	Psychology	3	16.10.2015- 02.06.2021.
13.	Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology	9	21.06.2019-21.06.2025.
14.	Social welfare	2	12.06.2013-30.06.2024.
15.	Religion and Theology	3	14.05.2013-30.06.2022.
16.	Law	4	22.05.2013-30.06.2023.
17.	Translation	2	21.06.2019-21.06.2025.

18.	Management, administration and real estate management	13	14.05.2013-30.06.2024.
19.	Language and cultural studies, native language studies and language programmes	21	26.06.2013-30.06.2021.
20.	Health Care	13	26.06.2013-30.06.2024.
21.	History and philosophy	6	31.05.2013-30.06.2022.
22.	Environment protection	3	24.05.2013-30.06.2023.

The University of Latvia[1] conducts international-level fundamental and applied research in 4 science groups, 12 priority research areas, and 22 areas of excellence. In addition to research work and the provision of studies, the university contributes to knowledge and technology transfer. The University conducts a range of contract research projects worth more than a million euros. The UL intellectual property portfolio has 24 valid Latvian patents (the UL being the sole owner) and 10 valid European patents. In order to promote economic development, the University has set more than sixty potential cooperation solutions for different industries. The UL scientific activities are conducted in 17 scientific institutes <https://www.lu.lv/en/about-us/structure/institutes/>, while various studies, training and counselling are offered in 28 study centres <https://www.lu.lv/en/about-us/structure/ul-centres/>.

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

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

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

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

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

Figure 2 shows the dynamics of the number of students at the University of Latvia and the

population of Latvia over a 6-year period, and the respective correlation trends.

[1] Latvijas Universitātes 2019. gada publiskais gada pārskats

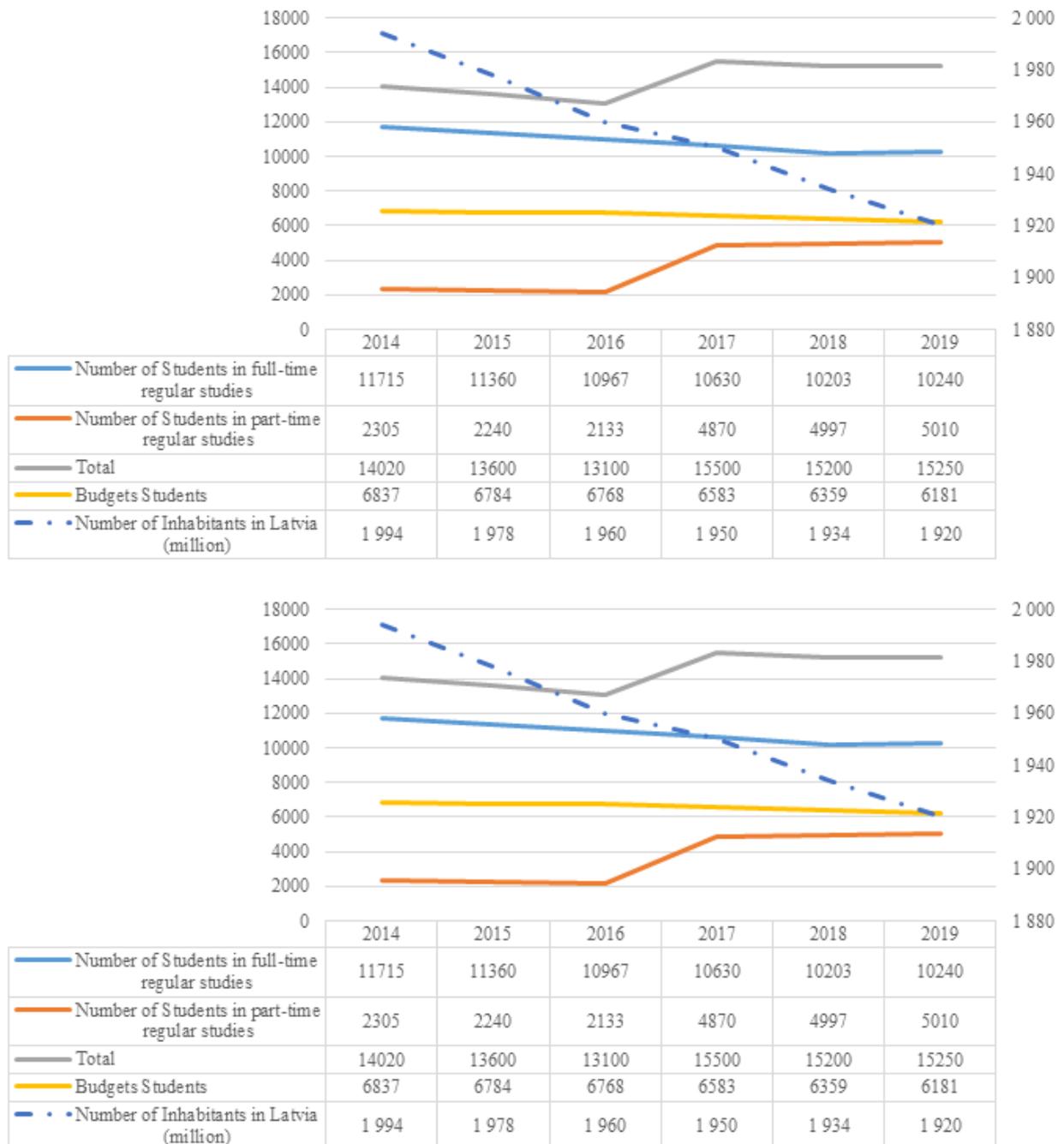


Figure 2. Number of students at the University of Latvia compared to the population of Latvia, 2014-2019

### UL vision, mission and values

**Vision:** In 2020, the University of Latvia is one of the leading research universities in the Baltic region and is recognized among the European and global research and innovation centres.

**Mission:** The University of Latvia trains human resources that would meet the demand of the Latvian and global labour market and the needs of society; it expands the knowledge base, provides knowledge transfer by promoting sustainable development of the national economy and the society at large in compliance with the development priorities set by the Smart Specialisation

Strategy of the Republic of Latvia or in the areas of smart specialization. The University of Latvia guarantees the students an opportunity to acquire high quality higher education and professional skills, as well as pursue personal development through scientific and creative work.

**Values:** People, Excellence, Development, Creativity, Responsibility, Openness, Cooperation.

### **General information about UL branches**

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

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

*Table 2. Year of establishment of branches*

	<b>Branches / Foundation year</b>
Cēsis	1995
Kuldīga	1996
Tukums	1996
Bauska	1997
Jēkabpils	1996
Madona	1997
Alūksne	1999

The development of the UL branches is linked to the UL strategic goals and development plans of the municipalities of the region. It is essential for the development of municipalities to maintain the working population levels. The study programmes implemented in branches are actively supported by the local governments, as they promote the development of Latvian regions by offering higher education close to the place of residence, thereby facilitating the development of human resources in the regions. The students combine studies with work, thus preserving jobs and connection with their family. Accordingly, the opportunity to study in the closest proximity to the place of residence and work offered at the branches facilitates the implementation of the Latvian National Development Plan 2014-2020. In line with the plan priority "Growth-Supporting Territories", it should be emphasized that "Our mission is to achieve sustainable growth by strengthening the capacities of the regions and making the most of their strengths and resources. In contrast to the current monocentric population structure, a balanced polycentric approach should be developed." [1] As expected, the graduates of the programmes do not change their place of residence and continue their professional activities in their region when studies are over, thus contributing to the development and growth.

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

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

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

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

[1] National Development Plan 2014-2020.

[http://www.varam.gov.lv/lat/pol/ppd/ilgtsp\\_att/?doc=13858](http://www.varam.gov.lv/lat/pol/ppd/ilgtsp_att/?doc=13858)

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

*data as of 2019*

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

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

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

### ***UL development strategy - key objectives and directions***

The Strategy of the University of Latvia for 2021-2027 was approved on the 28th June of this year (2021) by the Senate decision No 2-3/90.

<b>DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS</b>	<b>STRATEGIC GOALS</b>
<b>Development of principal activities</b>	
Scientific excellence	1. The university as an internationally recognized science centre
Study development	2. Unique study offer and high competitiveness of graduates
Contribution to society	3. University activities as a basis for Latvia's growth
<b>Institutional development</b>	
Talent development	4. Development- and excellence-oriented personnel policy
Environment and governance	5. Green thinking, attractive, sustainable university environment and effective administrative support
Organizational culture	6. Inclusive, collaborative and innovative culture

Figure 3. UL Strategic development directions and goals 2021-2027.

1. Goals of strategic direction “The university as an internationally recognized science centre”:
  - 1.1. Research excellence
  - 1.2. Interdisciplinary research
  - 1.3. International recognition
2. Goals of strategic direction “Unique study offer and high competitiveness of graduates”:
  - 2.1. Studies based on science and practice
  - 2.2. International and interdisciplinary study offer
  - 2.3. Student-centred and inclusive approach
3. Goals of strategic direction “University activities as a basis for Latvia's growth”:
  - 3.1. Preservation, strengthening of national values and creation of know-how
  - 3.2. Creating sustainable values and public good
  - 3.3. Strengthening university as a value in society
  - 3.4. Successful transfer of know-how and technology
4. Goals of strategic direction “Development- and excellence-oriented personnel policy”:
  - 4.1. Academic and general staff development

#### 4.2. Growth and renewal of the academic staff

5. Goals of strategic direction “Green thinking, attractive, sustainable university environment and effective administrative support”:

5.1. Sustainable governance and the move towards a climate-neutral university

5.2. Innovative and digital study, research and work environment

5.3. Effective organizational management and integrated quality management

6. Goals of strategic direction “Inclusive, collaborative and innovative culture”:

6.1. Student and staff well-being, value-oriented and inclusive culture

6.2. Innovation and creativity-friendly mindset and environment

6.3. Internationalization and openness to cooperation

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

In the Annex 1.1. a list of documents is attached, indicating the main internal regulatory enactments and regulations (for example, the Constitution of the University of Latvia, Code of Ethics, Study regulations, etc.), indicating the institutions that have approved the document, as well as a link where these documents are available electronically, and in English). The UL is governed by the main decision-making bodies, governance and administration, as well as the councils of the core structural units. The UL students are represented in the main decision-making bodies by the Student Council, while employees are represented by trade unions (See *the Organizational chart of University of Latvia* in Annex No 1.2.)

<https://www.lu.lv/en/about-us/structure/university-structure/>

The key UL governance, administration and **decision-making bodies** (Constitution, Article 5.1) are: Constitutional Assembly, Senate, Rector and Academic Court of Arbitration. The **highest representative institution** of the University of Latvia is the Constitutional Assembly (Constitution, Article 5.3). The **Senate is a collegial administrative and decision-making body elected** by the UL staff (Constitution, Article 5.6). The **Rector is the senior official** of the UL (Constitution, Article 5.10). The UL **is also governed** by vice rectors, directors, chancellor and a collegial advisory body – the Deans Council. (Constitution, Article 5.2; Council of Deans regulations). The UL leadership is represented by Rector, Vice Rectors, Chancellor, Head of Administration and other staff members. It has authority to rule on all issues that are not within the specific competence of the Constitutional Assembly of the University of Latvia, the Senate or the Rector of the University. (Administration regulations, pp. 7-8). The UL governance, the Rector's office and the UL administration units are constitutive bodies of the UL administration (Administration regulations, Art.6). The UL Administration responsibilities are defined at five hierarchical levels, the subordination of which to the Rector may be changed for the attainment of the UL mission, strategy and objectives (Administration regulations, Art.35). The collegial advisory

bodies of the Rector and Governance of the University of Latvia are the Advisory Council, the Council of Science, the Strategic Board, Quality Consultative Committee and the Study Programme Quality Assessment Board. The Rector may form advisory councils and **employ experts to coordinate the activities of the University** and to address various issues. Regulations proposed by the Councils are approved by the Senate (Constitution, Article 5.2).

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

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

**The UL Faculty** is an academic unit established for the implementation of academic activities in one or several branches of science. In this field the Faculty fulfils the common tasks of the University of Latvia and adheres to its principles. In matters of relevant academic and professional activities, the UL Faculty plays the role of an organizational, methodological and ideological think-tank, without prejudice to the competence and responsibility of the governing bodies of the University of Latvia. In order to achieve the objectives of its activities, the faculty develops, coordinates and implements academic, doctoral and professional studies, as well as interest and continuing education programmes, supervises scientific, pedagogical and methodical activities in the respective branches of science in the UL, coordinates the scientific, pedagogical and methodical activities of its departments and ensures adequate conditions and resources, as well as stimulating academic environment. **The functions of the institutes** include the organisation of fundamental and applied research in one or several branches of science, as well as the implementation of study programmes, the coordination of scientific and pedagogical activities, while providing the necessary conditions and resources.

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

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

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

members and the efficient use of the material resources available to the unit (Constitution, Articles 6.12 to 6.14).

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

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

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

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

**The training laboratory** is a training unit that ensures the implementation of the experimental or practical part of study programmes. Centres, chairs, research and training laboratories are established on the proposal of an individual professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher by the Faculty Council or Scientific Council of a research institute. They are reorganized or liquidated on the initiative of the department or Faculty Council or the Scientific Council of the research institute. Chairs, research laboratories and professors' groups decide on all issues of their academic activities, which, by Constitution, have not been placed under the responsibility of the Faculty Council (Research institute Council) or the Senate. The sub-units of several branches of science operating in one branch at the faculties or research institutes unite in a department. The academic potential of each department should be sufficient to provide for at least one study (research) programme. The Faculty (UL research institute) may delegate some of its functions and powers to the departments. The academic departmental sub-units may delegate to the department the powers referred to in the preceding paragraph. The department is governed by its regulations, approved by the Faculty Council or the Scientific Council of the research institute. The decision on the establishment, reorganization or liquidation of a department, a research institute, a centre is taken by the relevant Faculty Council or by the Scientific Council of the research institute, which comes into force upon an order issued by the UL. (Constitution, Art. 6.8.-6.11.).

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

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

**Department Directors** - ensure the compliance of UL operation with the requirements of internal and external regulatory acts, develop, improve and implement the internal UL regulations, control their execution, coordinate management and provide services to the staff and UL structural units. The departments, in accordance with their competence and functions, implement the UL Strategic Plan, UL Development Strategy, UL Rector's Programme and other UL Development Planning

Documents, as well as initiate and implement projects of the European Union and other funds related to the improvement of the Department performance. (Administration regulations, Art.61).

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

The University of Latvia has the **Student Council**, which is a self-governing student body, an independent decision-making body of the University of Latvia, representing the rights and interests of students. Its purpose is to represent the UL students and defend their rights and interests, as well as to promote the development of education and science in Latvia. (Constitution of the Student Council of the University of Latvia, Art. 1-2). The Student Council operates in accordance with the Student Council Constitution, which is developed by the students and approved by the Senate. Within the framework of self-government, the students have the right to form faculty (institutes) student councils and other bodies. The student self-government of the University of Latvia represents the students of the University of Latvia domestically and internationally, advocates and represents the interests of students in academic, material and cultural issues in the UL and other state and economic institutions, determines the procedures for the election of students at the Constitutional Meeting and the Senate. The decisions of the Student Council of the University of Latvia after their approval by the Senate must be observed for their duration by all students. The student self-government is entitled to request and receive information and explanations from authorized representatives of any structural unit of the University of Latvia on all issues affecting students' interests. The students' self-government representatives have the right to participate in decision-making bodies of the UL at all levels, as well as to participate as observers in examinations. The University of Latvia supports and facilitates the activities of the UL Student Council, including financially. The student self-government uses the funds for the fulfilment of the functions specified in the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Constitution, art.7).

*Table 4 - Description of the main institutions involved in UL decision making, their composition and powers - is attached in Annex No 1.3.*

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

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

### **Description of the quality policy implementation mechanism**

**UL quality assurance policy** is a continuous development of excellence to ensure a balanced and sustainable outcome that meets the needs of all stakeholders. Quality policy[1] and Quality Action Policy[2] is a set of quality-related principles, goals and actions required to achieve them and implemented by the University of Latvia in accordance with internationally recognized standards in higher education and organization management. The aim of the quality policy is to contribute to the implementation of the UL mission, the achievement of strategic goals and sustainable development by defining guidelines and principles for ensuring a consistently high quality of operations. Quality policy and Quality Action Policy, together with other policies and a set of processes, ensures the coherent planning and implementation of UL activities. Quality policy and Quality Action Policy are an integral part of the quality assurance system and applies to all areas of UL and is to be implemented at all levels of UL governance.

**The UL quality management system** is implemented in accordance with the TQM (Total Quality Management) principles, integrating the excellence approach to UL corporate culture. The UL uses the internationally recognized and practically applicable quality management methodology - the EFQM (European Foundation of Quality Management) model of excellence for the implementation of comprehensive quality management. In some areas, the quality management system is enhanced to ensure compliance with current standards and frameworks, including: Adherence to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in the provision of the study process. The University of Latvia uses the internationally recognized methodology "Results - Approach - Implementation - Evaluation - Review" to ensure cyclical and continuous quality management. RADAR, *Results - Approach - Deployment - Assessment and Refine*). Scheme of the UL Quality Management System - Figure 4.

[1]

[https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user\\_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti\\_EN/2/Kvalitates\\_politika\\_majas\\_lapai\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti_EN/2/Kvalitates_politika_majas_lapai_ENG.pdf)

[2]

[https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user\\_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti\\_EN/2/Kvalitates\\_riqipolitika\\_majas\\_lapai\\_ENG\\_new.pdf](https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti_EN/2/Kvalitates_riqipolitika_majas_lapai_ENG_new.pdf)

## GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT MEGATRENDS

Social Trends, Globalization, Disruptive Technologies, Climate Change etc.

## INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

EU Directives, Common Higher Education Standards, Trends in Education and Economic etc.

## NATIONAL DIMENSION

Development Documents, Policies, Sector Planning Documents, Legislation, Trends in Education and Economic etc.

### UL QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

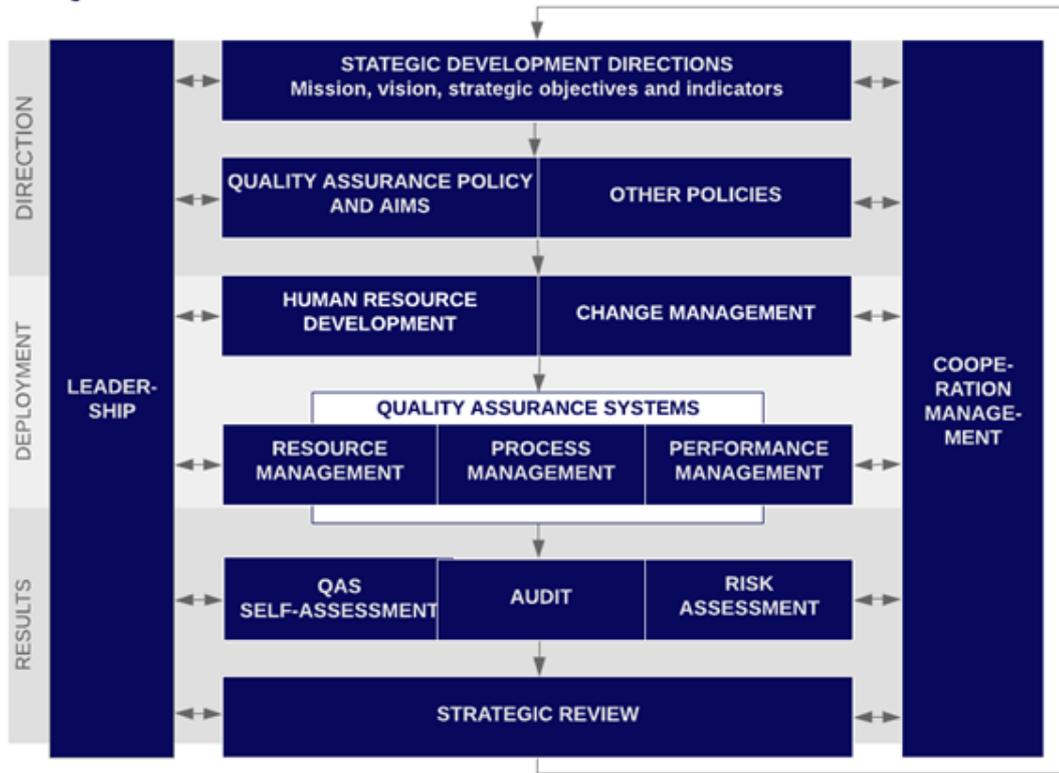


Figure 4. UL Quality Management System Diagram

The UL strategic development directions and the expected results or the intended operational goals are defined in the UL Development Strategy 2021-2027. (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy). The strategy has been developed taking into account the development directions and priorities set in the planning documents of the European Union and Latvia. Based on the analysis of competitiveness and SWOT, the University of Latvia has defined an action plan and various programmes for achieving the strategic development goals. The strategy also defines the tasks to be performed and the tools needed to achieve the strategic goals. According to the development directions, the UL position and commitment are formulated in policies, incl. Quality Policy, Personnel Policy, etc. Expected results are defined in key areas of activity as well as in financial and governance areas and are aligned with the interests of UL stakeholders. The results describe the achievements, efficiency and sustainability as well as long-term performance. Achievements are benchmarked against others, especially those in the industry, domestically or internationally.

In order to achieve results in selected strategic directions, the UL is developing effective and innovative approaches and solutions integrating up-to-date standards and guidelines, as well as state-of-the-art methods in resource management, process management and quality measurement. The UL management ensures the creation of the prerequisites for achieving the results, awareness of the need for quality, as well as passing the policies to the employees and ensuring that they are

followed. The University of Latvia has been implementing a process management system (*QuPeRs*), which provides for the identification, structuring, process development, measurement, analysis and improvement of processes necessary for the quality management.

In order to implement activities aimed at **the achievement of strategic objectives**, the UL ensures the use of previously agreed policy approaches and solutions. The actions are planned, coordinated and evaluated through the development and implementation of action plans and operational actions coordinated with strategic action plans and programmes. Effective operation of the quality management system is ensured by regular supervision of the introduced quality management system, continuous improvement, as well as by performing internal audits. The UL uses a fact-based decision-making approach through process measurement and result management. The UL assesses and improves the approaches and solutions implemented against the indicators of strategic goals and quality goals. Internal control is ensured through reviews and self-assessments, risk assessment, as well as through planned internal quality audit. Based on the results of internal control, the UL management makes appropriate decisions on the necessary improvement of internal control system and quality management system. The UL has a performance management system in place to monitor and analyse the performance of the UL, its departments and staff, to assess the UL's progress towards the goals set in the strategy, and to compare UL performance with that of other higher education institutions in different areas and scales (intra-UL within different structural units, nationally, internationally). Structured management of results ensures constant monitoring of the results achieved by the University of Latvia and the possibility to use the obtained information in making decisions on the necessity to implement appropriate activities. The main users of results management are UL management, vice-rectors, heads of faculties, institutes and departments. Other employees of different levels of the UL organizational structure involved in the performance of the indicators, though indirectly, are also the users of the performance indicator system.[1] Internal control and result management ensure identification of improvements and preventive actions, as well as determination of the level of achievement of strategic goals, i.e. annual strategic review, the results of which might determine whether changes in strategic goals, action plans, programmes, incl. indicators are required.

The guidelines for the development, maintenance, improvement and evaluation of the UL quality management system are summarised in the Quality Management Manual, which is binding on each UL employee.[2]

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

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

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

- Saeima and Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, Ministry of Education and Science and other public administration institutions,
- higher education quality assurance organizations and their associations,
- UL students, Latvian students and students abroad, student representations,
- potential students in Latvia and abroad,
- parents (guardians) and patrons of students and potential students,
- Higher education institutions/ colleges in Latvia and abroad, scientific institutes, networks,

- associations, academic organizations,
- UL academic and general staff,
- Industries, companies and professional associations (employers),
- UL graduates,
- non-governmental organizations,
- mass media,
- society

Employees, students, graduates, employers, business partners and other clients are key stakeholders in the design and development of our quality assurance system.

[1] [https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user\\_upload/lu\\_portal/zinas/2018/julijis/LUstrat\\_Kopsavilk\\_250517.pdf](https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/lu_portal/zinas/2018/julijis/LUstrat_Kopsavilk_250517.pdf)

[2]

[https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user\\_upload/lu\\_portal/dokumenti/strategijas-un-koncepcijas/lu\\_izcilibas\\_modelis.pdf](https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/lu_portal/dokumenti/strategijas-un-koncepcijas/lu_izcilibas_modelis.pdf)

*Table 5 - Description of the main stakeholders involved in UL quality management and their role - is attached in Annex No 1.4.*

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

### ***Procedures for Quality Assurance in Higher Education***

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

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

- development of new study programmes;
- admission requirements, matriculation and enrolment;
- planning, implementation and updating of study courses and modules, internships/placements;
- organization of examinations, final examinations and rotation;
- exmatriculations and issuance of diplomas and certificates;
- recognition of prior education or professional experience;

- self-assessment of study programmes;
- submission of student proposals and complaints, appeals against administrative decisions;
- promotion process.

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

- elaboration of the study programme concept in agreement with the Vice Rector and the Dean of the Faculty, and its approval by the Faculty Council;
- evaluation of the study programme concept with the assistance of experts and subsequent approval by the UL Study Programme Quality Assessment Board (SP QAB);
- elaboration of the full study programme, evaluation of the same with the assistance of experts, and subsequent approval by the Faculty Council, the SP QAB and UL Senate.

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

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

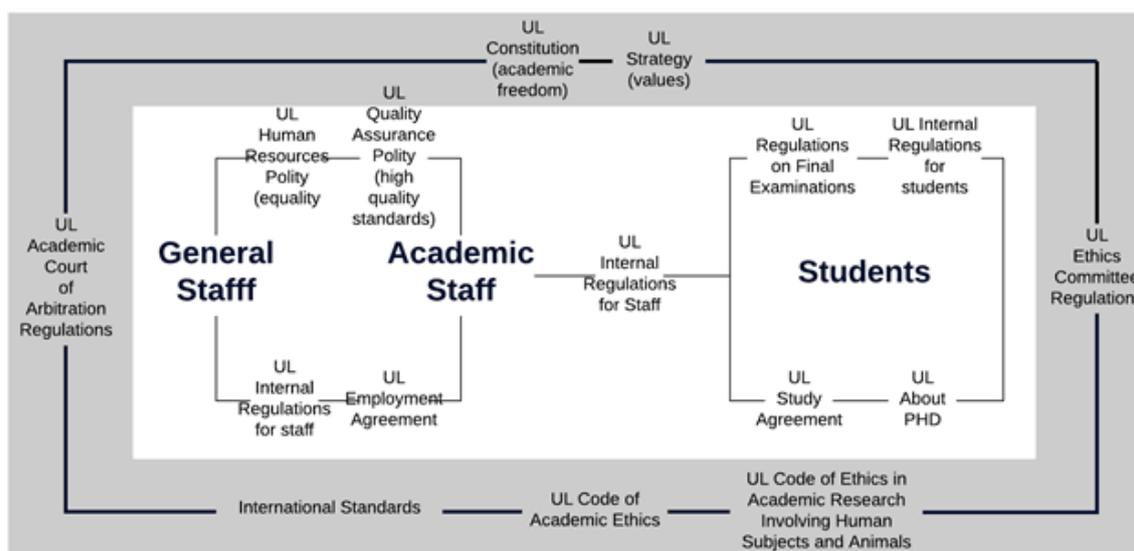


Figure 5. UL academic integrity documentation

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

- first year students survey on the commencement studies;
- first year student survey on first study experience;
- survey on study courses and the work of the teaching staff, including a survey on study internship and a survey on course papers and final papers (hereinafter - Study Course

Evaluation Survey);

- last year students survey on study programme content and learning outcomes;
- survey for students who have decided to discontinue their studies at their own discretion or for those who have already stopped their studies, hereinafter referred to as a “Attrition Survey”;
- graduates survey;
- employers survey.

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

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

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

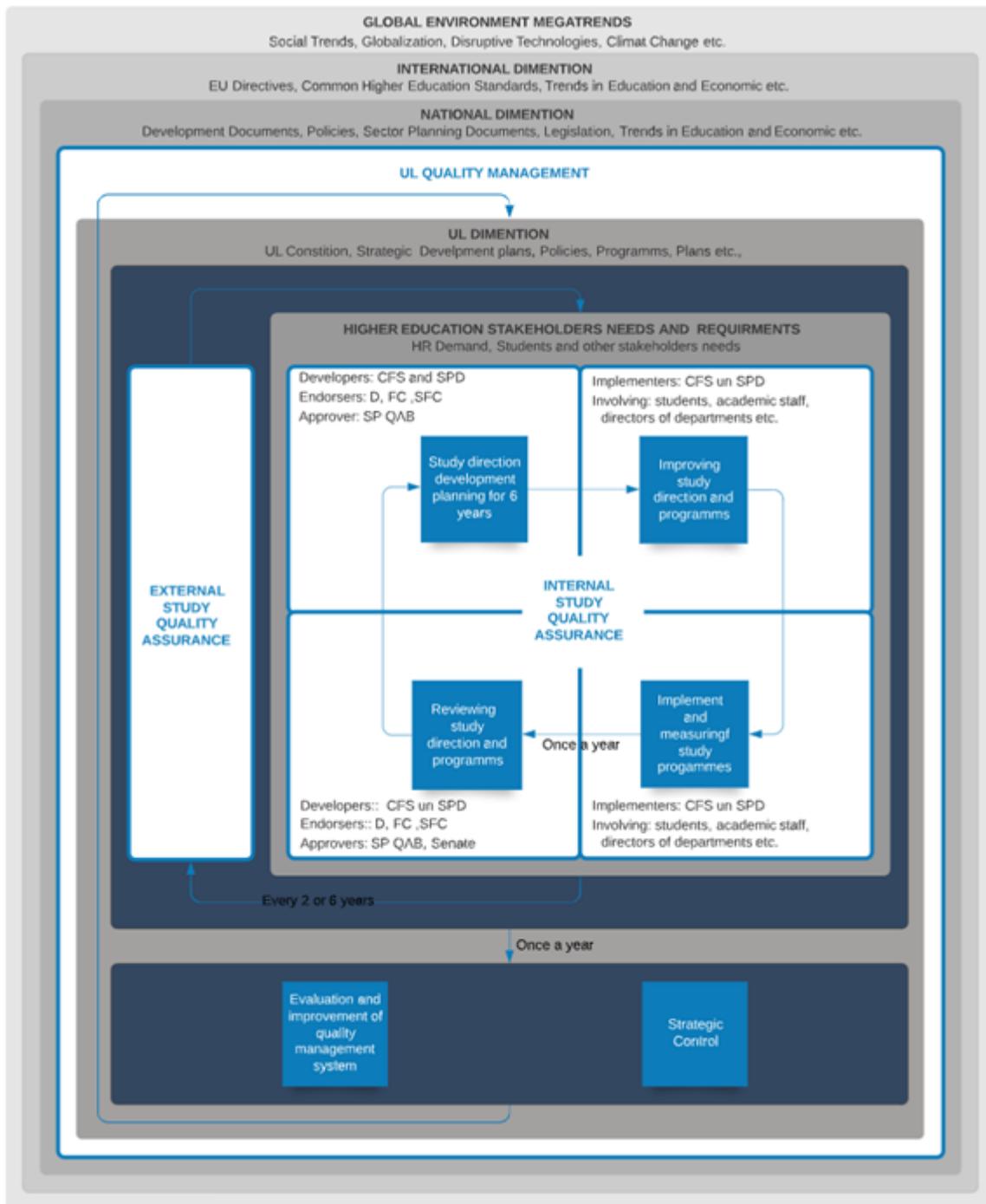


Figure 6. University of Latvia study quality assessment and improvement system

Abbreviations:

CFS - Coordinator of the field of study,

D - Faculty Dean,

FC - Faculty Council,

SFC - Study Field Council,

SP Director - Director of the Study Programme,

SP QAB - Study Programme Quality Assessment Board

In order to ensure the functioning of the system of internal quality assessment and improvement of study fields, the UL provides for the planning of the development of the study fields and the

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

**1.4. Fill in the table on the compliance of the internal quality assurance system of the higher education institution/ college with the provisions of Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education by providing a justification for the given statement. In addition, it is also possible to refer to the respective chapter of the Self-Assessment Report, where the provided information serves as evidence for the full compliance, partial compliance or non-compliance.**

<p>1. The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.</p>	<p>Complies</p> <p>The University of Latvia's Quality Policy sets out a set of quality principles, goals and actions required to achieve them, which the University of Latvia implements in accordance with internationally recognized standards in higher education and organization management. The aim of the quality policy is to contribute to the implementation of the UL mission, the achievement of strategic goals and sustainable development by defining guidelines and principles for ensuring a consistently high quality of operations. The policy, together with other policies and a set of processes, ensures the coherent planning and implementation of UL activities. This policy is an integral part of the quality management system, it applies to all areas of UL and implements them in a unified system at all UL governance levels.</p> <p>The UL quality management system is implemented in accordance with the TQM (Total Quality Management) principles, integrating excellence approaches to the UL corporate culture. By implementing quality management, the UL provides a set of activities and methods by which quality is planned, implemented, systematically evaluated and continually improved, thus contributing to the achievement of the goals set by the UL and meeting the needs of stakeholders. For the implementation of comprehensive quality management, the UL uses the internationally recognized and practically applicable quality management methodology - EFQM Excellence Model. In some areas, the quality management system is enhanced to ensure compliance with current industry standards and frameworks, including: provision of study process - ESG.</p> <p>The UL has identified, formalized and implemented procedures for quality assurance in higher education in accordance with Latvian legislation, European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), as well as internal necessity.</p> <p>The UL has a system of quality assessment and improvement of study fields and study programmes included therein, which, when integrated into the UL quality management system, guarantees responsible involvement of all study management levels in the regular study quality assessment, planning and improvement. The internal quality control of the study field is carried out by the directors of the study programmes, the director of the study field, the c, the dean, the faculty councils, SPQAB and, in case of external quality assessment, the UL Senate. The assessment of study quality is based on planning and review cycles both in the study field and in each study programme dimension.</p>
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<p>2. A mechanism for the creation and internal approval of the study programmes of the higher education institution/ college, as well as the supervision of their performance and periodic inspection thereof has been developed.</p>	<p>Complies</p> <p>The design, internal approval, supervision and periodic inspection of the UL study programmes is set in accordance with the relevant external regulations of the Republic of Latvia and the UL internal regulations.</p> <p>The aim of the “Regulations of the University of Latvia Study Programmes and Continuing Education Programmes” (UL Senate Resolution No. 102 of 24.04.2017) is to determine the requirements for the content and implementation of study programmes and continuing education programmes developed and implemented by the University of Latvia. that would ensure the provision of high quality, domestically and internationally competitive, modern study programmes with high added value, continuing education programs for students, as well as efficient implementation of resources. The Regulations establish the principles of the structure, content and management of study programmes and continuing education programmes at the University of Latvia. The regulations include the description of the study programmes and continuing education programmes implemented by the University of Latvia and their structure, as well as the rules of programme development. The Regulations stipulate that the design of the study programme concept and the full study programme development may be initiated by the UL staff representatives and employees, the UL collegial decision-making institutions, as well as non-UL members (e.g. employers). The evaluation of the development of new study programmes according to UL procedure takes place across several successive stages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) elaboration of the study programme concept;</li> <li>2) coordination of the study programme concept within the council of study field or councils and with the heads of the structural units involved;</li> <li>3) submission of the study programme conception to the Department of Studies, submission of the application to the Head of the Study Programme Quality Assessment Board (SP QAB) for evaluation of the conception by external experts and receipt of the opinion;</li> <li>4) elaboration of a full-time study programme in accordance with external and internal regulations and submission for evaluation and approval to the council of study field and faculty council or councils or scientific councils of scientific institutes.</li> <li>5) Submission of full-time study programme to Department of Studies for evaluation and approval by two independent experts and at SP QAB. To advance to the UL Senate.</li> <li>6) The examination and approval of study programmes in the Senate of the University of Latvia and advancement of the study programme license application.</li> </ol> <p>The annual evaluation of the existing study programmes of the University of Latvia is carried out in accordance with the “Procedure for Preparing the Annual Reports of the Study Fields of the University of Latvia” (UL Order 1/290 of 14.07.2020), which determines the functioning of the system of internal quality assurance of the study fields of the University of Latvia.</p>
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3.	The criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, have been developed and made public.	<p>Complies</p> <p>“Procedure for Developing and Updating Study Courses at the University of Latvia” (UL Order No.1 / 277 of 10.08.2018) stipulates that the description of each study course includes the planned learning outcomes and the criteria for their assessment, as well as publication in the e-learning environment.</p>
4.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.	<p>Complies</p> <p>In order to ensure modern and effective HR management practice in the organization in accordance with the UL strategy, vision, mission and values, the UL has developed and implemented the “Human Resources Management Policy of the University of Latvia” (UL Senate Decision No 264 of 28.01.2019). It describes the principles and procedures of the University of Latvia in personnel selection, employment relations, provision of motivation system and personnel development. In order to ensure purposeful professional development of the UL academic staff, the University of Latvia elaborated “University of Latvia Academic Staff Development Action Plan 2018-2020” within the framework of the project operational programme “Growth and Employment” 8.2.2. Specific Objective “Strengthening Academic Staff of Institutions of Higher Education in Strategic Specialization Areas”.</p>
5.	The higher education institution/ college ensures the collection and analysis of the information on the study achievements of the students, employment of the graduates, satisfaction of the students with the study programme, efficiency of the work of the academic staff, the study funds available, and the disbursements thereof, as well as the key performance indicators of the higher education institution/ college.	<p>Complies</p> <p>The Procedure for Organizing Regular Surveys for the Evaluation of the Study Process at the University of Latvia (UL Order No. 1/334 of 22.08.2016) stipulates that the Department of Studies of the University of Latvia organizes surveys for students, graduates and employers centrally each academic year. The summary of the results of the course and lecturer work is available at three levels: lecturers, study programme directors, deans. The results of the study surveys are described and analysed in the annual reports of study fields. Information about student achievements is collected at the LUIS. It is available in various sections for analysis of study field programme development.</p>

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

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

### ***Significance of the UL study field Architecture and Construction and the Professional master's study program Spatial Planning.***

In the study field *Architecture and Construction* of the UL (hereinafter - field) one Professional master's study program *Spatial Planning* (hereinafter - study program) is implemented. In 2013, the program corresponding to the study field was accredited by the *Ministry of Education and Science* for a maximum term of 6 years. It is implemented by the University's *Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences* (hereinafter - FGES). The study content of the field is based on the *Professional Standard*. Its improvement takes place in close co-operation and receiving support from the *Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments*, emphasizing the importance of practically trained and highly educated planners entering Latvian municipalities, as well as from well as from NGO *Latvian Association of Spatial Planners* representing the professional field. The study direction *Architecture and Construction* is managed by the Council of the Study Field, which in accordance with the UL Vice-Rector V.Seglin's 28.05.2020 order, works in 14 members: four representatives of the employers (including one graduate of the study program), one representative of the social partner (*Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments*), three student representatives, as well as the chairman of the Council and five representatives of the academic staff.

The study content of the field has been improved over time in accordance with the *Professional Standard of the Spatial Planner* (the first standard was approved in 2004, the new one - in 2019), which is developed based on current trends in the sector, while evaluating the recommendations of

lecturers, students, employers, planning professionals and graduates and comparing with similar study programs in foreign universities. The profession standard defines the various areas of activity of the spatial planner. The spatial planner organizes and manages the spatial planning process of the international, national, regional and local level and territorial communities; develops and participates in the elaboration of spatial development planning documents at all levels - strategies, programs, plans and others, creating a sustainable, integrated vision of the space and activities in it; organizes public participation in planning, coordinates and manages the implementation and supervision of policies and actions specified in planning documents, preparation of project applications and development of projects; advises on planning issues; conducts applied research. Spatial planners work in the public, private and non-governmental sectors.

The importance of the field and the study program included in it in the development of the state, planning regions and local governments is justified by the fact that great emphasis is placed on the formation of a critical creative personality with diverse skills, broad horizons and analytical abilities to analyze the situation in the economy, society and living environment. The study process corresponding to the direction is designed so to develop the ability to analyze spatial structures and put forward spatial development proposals for places and territories both in the urban space and in the rural environment. Upon successful integration into the local labor market, graduates must be able to contribute to the achievement of the goals set in the *Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia 2030* (LIAS2030), planning regions and local government development strategies, the National Development Plan (NDP) and local government and planning regions development programs. Graduates have to be prepared to work in an international environment.

**The economic and social substantiation of the study program of the field is determined by:**

1. Insufficiency of specialists who have acquired professional higher education in the field of spatial planning in the public sector - local governments and state institutions, in the private sector - in planning offices, enterprises and the non-governmental sector. This is confirmed by the representatives of the *Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments* in the Council of the Study Field, and by the fact, that municipalities are requiring students who are still studying.
2. According to the estimates made in the labor market research, approximately 200-250 specialist work in the field of spatial planning in Latvia. Many of them do not have special education in planning. Over the last decade, the professional requirements for work in planning institutions have significantly increased. With the establishment of a new administrative-territorial division in 2021, it is expected that the planning capacity of local governments will be increased in order to ensure a continuous and modern planning process, development supervision and project work in accordance with the requirements of integrated development management. Thus, it is expected that the demand for specialists corresponding to the field of study will increase.
3. Uniqueness of the study program of spatial planning, the only study program in the field of planning in the country, providing knowledge, skills and competencies corresponding to the labor market.
4. Due to the fact that UL is one of the largest universities in the Baltic States, it has a wide range of resources (academic staff, international cooperation, guest lecturers, library resources, internships, participation in projects, etc.), which provides the diverse and integrated study opportunities.

In the organization of the study field, the emphasis is put on involvement of professionals in the field of planning in the study process, incl. those with international experience; various guest

lectures and practical classes of planners working in practice take place on regular basis as well as representatives of the field are involved in the development and teaching of study courses, representatives of employers are included in the master's thesis examination commission. It allows to follow the current labor market trends and to improve the field, its program and the content of study courses.

Graduates of the study field are working in the public, private, non-governmental sector and in the international environment, are also self-employed. The largest number of graduates who graduated from the program in the reporting period work in local governments (41% or 39 graduates). Graduates of the program work in four of the five Latvian planning region administrations and line ministries and state companies, eg the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (hereinafter – MEPRD), the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Economics, Joint Stock Company *Latvia's State Forests*, etc. Graduates of the program are requested in Latvia's leading spatial planning offices, eg societies with limited responsibility Ltd. Regional Projects, Ltd. Metrum, Ltd Grupa93, etc. Graduates also work in an international environment, eg in the Secretariat of the Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea (VASAB), in the Joint Stock Company Rail Baltic Rail and abroad (see Annex No. 2.14 Graduate employment and professional development, November-December 2020 data).

Students also regularly go on internships to various state, planning region and local government institutions and private planning offices in Latvia, and also abroad within the framework of Erasmus+ internships. Constant contacts and cooperation are maintained with graduates, including in providing student internships.

<b>The title of the study field</b>	<b>Architecture and Construction</b>
<b>Accreditation term</b>	From 30.05.2013 to 30.05.2019, prolonged to 30.06.2022
<b>Head of the field:</b>	Asoc. professor P.Šķiņķis

<b>List of study program</b>								
<b>No</b>	<b>LRI code</b>	<b>The title of study program</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Degree</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Type of studies, form</b>	<b>Volume of studies (CP)</b>	<b>Director</b>
1	47581	Professional master's study program <i>Spatial Planning</i>	7 LKI/EKI	Master	Spatial planner	Full time	80 CP (120 ECTS)	P.Šķiņķis

**Actuality and uniqueness of study program. Comparison of the content, study results, structure and scope of the study program with other similar study programs in Latvia and abroad.**

The Professional master's study program *Spatial Planning* is the only study program in the field of development planning in the Latvian higher education system. Other higher education institutions in Latvia have several master's study programs in the field (see Table 4), which, according to the current content scope, cannot be directly assessed as competitors of the field and Professional master's study program *Spatial Planning*. Their profiles are significantly different and only certain

study courses are related to planning. Graduates of these study programs form a part of the applicants of the *Spatial Planning* program, thus supplementing their knowledge and skills in the study process in the development planning of integrated, different scales (places, territories, regions) and a wider thematic spectrum.

The special significance of the Professional master's study program *Spatial Planning* in Latvia is evidenced by the fact that year after year (except for the 2017/2018 academic year, when the number of budget places decreased from 10 - 12 places to 5 budget places per year) 15 - 20 students, among whom there are students with not only a bachelor's degree, but also a master's or even doctoral degree (for example, 2 students with a doctoral degree entered in the academic year 2019/2020). The attractiveness of the study program is also evidenced by the fact that there are those who are working in the professional field of planning among the students.

Table 4. The place of study field in the offer of Latvian higher education

A Higher education institutions (HEIs) where the field of study is implemented						
	University of Latvia UL	Riga Technical University RTU	Latvia University of life Sciences and Technologies LLU	School of Business, Arts and Technology RISEBA	Rezekne Academy of Technologies RTA	Riga Building College RCK
Number of college level programs		1	2		1	2
Number of undergraduate study programs		6	6	1		
Academic / professional programs (number)	x	1	5	2	4	1
Number of top-level programs	1	8	4	1		
Academic / professional programs (number)	1	3	5	2	2	1
Number of doctoral study programs		3	3			-
TOTAL number of programs	1	18	15	2	1	2
Total number of HEIs in which the field of study is implemented	39					

The content and structure of the study program of the field has been improved in accordance with the standard of the Spatial Planner agreed at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council for Vocational Education and Employment on February 6, 2019 (<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-106.pdf>), which was prepared by the working group established in 2017 by the order of the MEPRD (No.1-2 / 110, 17.07.2017).

The content of the study field program developed in accordance with the professional standard corresponds to the modern market trends and the requirements of employers, as well as to the development of research (which can be seen in detail in the sections on the study program). Acquisition of study subjects allows to understand not only the awareness of the problems of sustainable development, but also the possible solutions. The study direction program includes the acquisition of such study courses that help to form or deepen the mutual interaction of academic and professional competencies to be acquired in bachelor's and master's studies and to skillfully realize the field of scientific research in doctoral studies and achieve success.

In order to identify international competitiveness, the UL study program was also compared with the spatial planning programs of leading universities in their respective countries: Oxford Brook University (hereinafter - OBU), Great Britain, and Dortmund Technical University (hereinafter - DTU), Germany, master's study programs (see Annex No 2.13 Comparison of the study program included in the study direction with similar spatial planning study programs in other universities abroad). For comparison, universities from European countries with the richest spatial planning traditions and the greatest diversity of planning studies were selected, thus representing the study relevant to today's needs.

Comparing the mentioned study programs with the study program of the UL, it can be stated that the program is basically similar both in terms of content and their structures. The duration of

studies in UL full-time studies in spatial planning is two academic years. It is longer than the DTU study program, which lasts 18 months, and significantly longer than the full-time study planning at OBU, where 12 months are allocated for studies. The final examinations are similar for all of three study programs. The approach of study programs to applied studies is similar - in the study program of the University of Latvia, just like DTU, the third semester is dedicated to practice. In the case of the UL study program, the third semester is intended for practice in Latvia or with the support of the ERASMUS + program for the practice abroad.

The study programs have a similar theme of study courses, including the acquisition of the basics of natural sciences, social, economic, legal and engineering sciences. As at Oxford Brook University, the emphasis in the UL study program is on both theoretical and practical knowledge, studies take place together with professionals in their field and students are given the opportunity to study not only in the study premises, but also in a real environment.

There are also several differences between study programs. DTU applies a system of modules, in the first semester a large module Climate change and natural resources is implemented - in the amount of the 30 ECTS, in case of UL study program climate and natural resources topics are integrated in several separate study courses in I and II semesters. Similarly, in the study program of the UL, the topics of the DTU module Landscape, Land Use and Environment (20 ECTS) are integrated in different study courses in the first and second semesters.

A significant difference between the UL study program and the OBU and DTU study programs is that the number of students in them is significantly higher (eg more than 100 students each year start their studies at OBU in the last five years period), which provides students with the opportunity to specialize in different fields / specializations each year. In the study program of the UL, the number of students ensures specialization in one or two directions per year.

***Advantages of international competitiveness of the study field:***

- *Knowledge of Eastern European planning practices and development issues.*
- *Study environment, material, and technical provision of the UL Academic Centre.*
- *Large proportion of practice and practical classes in the structure of the study program.*

***Weaknesses of international competitiveness of the study field:***

- *Insufficient number of budget places and consequently a small number of students studying at their own expense, thus the total number of students limits the opportunities for students to choose from a wider choice of Part B courses.*
- *The number of study courses that can be provided in English is still insufficient, although during the reporting period conditions have been created (language skills for lecturers, updating study courses, attracting new lecturers, development of new study courses) to provide at least 30% of study content in both Latvian and English language.*

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

### ***The aim and tasks of the study field***

The mission of the study field *Architecture and Construction* of the *Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences* (hereinafter - FGES) is to provide highly qualified specialists in spatial planning, based on the acquisition of research and practical skills required in the labor market, as well as to promote research and contemporary practice in spatial planning:

- In the field of spatial planning, the study field is implemented based on integrated cooperation of lecturers of the FGES and the *Faculty of Law* and the *Faculty of Social Sciences* of the UL according to the scientific and applied content of sustainable and innovative development, mainly using FGES technical and methodological support.
- Studies in the field of spatial planning are a part of the implementation of the UL Strategy and they are implemented in harmony with the Strategy, in accordance with its goals, integrating the potential of several branches of science and creating ever closer links between research, education and the labor market.
- Studies at the UL are implemented and developed in accordance with the need in several directions important for Latvia: spatial planning, strategic planning, territorial development, territorial management, environmental assessment and development, etc. areas.

***The aim of the development of the study field is*** - to strengthen and expand research-based integrated and interdisciplinary, practice-related studies in place, urban, regional planning for the maintenance, creation and development of the quality of human living environment in accordance with the demand for wide-profile planning specialists in Latvia and the Baltic Sea region.

### ***The tasks of the study field UL is:***

- To strengthen knowledge and practice for the development of civil society structures and culture in Latvia, the Baltics, the Baltic Sea Basin, the EU and other territories.
- To prepare at an academically high, modern professional level and to direct specialists leading in the professional labor market for integrated, creative planning of development of Latvia and other EU territories.
- To promote and develop the amount of knowledge, research base and discussion in the field of cultural places, cities, regions development and planning in Latvia and internationally.

The aim and tasks correspond to the *Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia 2030* and the *UL Strategy*, ensure the successful integration of its graduates into research and professional activities in the research of natural, social and economic conditions, changes and their causes, human economic structures as well as in development planning, in the field of rational use and protection of places, territories in Latvian public administration, local governments and other organizations and planning consulting companies, thus promoting the growth of Latvian society and the state.

Studies in spatial planning at the UL are a part of the set of engineering, natural sciences and social studies, therefore the study development strategy envisages strengthening the material and technical provision of the study program, promoting the recognition and prestige of the study field, as well as activating research. In general, it complies with the Education Development Guidelines for 2014-2020, which envisage continuing the necessary modernization of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, including medicine and creative industries) learning environment in educational institutions that implement the functions of the methodological center

STEM and ICT (information communication technologies). Studies in Latvian promote its evolution and functioning, ensure the development of spatial development planning terminology in Latvian, but lectures by study guest lecturers and teaching study courses or parts of courses, increasing their acquisition in English allow to ensure the internationalization of studies.

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

**SWOT analyses of the study field and development plan** The evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the study field *Architecture and Construction* (SWOT analysis) was performed in the Council of the Study Field (hereinafter – Council) in order to assess:

- Content, organization and practical implementation of the study program.
- Material, technical and methodological support.
- Information obtained from the students, employers, publications, references.
- Proposals made by students, lecturers and graduates for the improvement of the study process.
- Opportunities for the development of studies and applied research.

*Table 5. Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the study field*

<b>Internal factors</b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>

- Correspondence and development of study content in accordance with the demand of the labor market.
- Topical goal and tasks of the study program.- Balanced theory and practice within the program, with a large proportion of practical work.
- Provision with a wide range of teaching staff,
- in research and planning experienced academic staff of UL faculties, guest lecturers and planning professionals involved in the implementation of the study program (experienced planners).
- Establishment and equipping of the UL Academic Centre with a large laboratory and library capacity and accessibility
- The basis for training and research of planners, ensuring wider accessibility and more rational use of infrastructure for research and studies, as well as cooperation with other students directions.
- High-quality provision of resources available in the library and access to many electronic databases of publications and e-resources in the world.
- Good provision with databases, cartographic, etc. materials.
- Good and constant co-operation between the UL and state institutions, planning regions and local governments, as well as co-operation with employers has been established in the process of implementation of the study program.- Close cooperation with other Latvian higher education institutions (School of Business, Arts and Technology RISEBA, Latvian University of Agriculture LLU and Riga Technical University RTU), research institutions and agencies, as well as support of these institutions.
- Development of cooperation (projects and agreements) with various foreign educational and scientific research institutions, state institutions, local governments and planning offices; providing internship opportunities abroad; student exchange with foreign universities.- Participation in international and national level scientific cooperation.
- Opportunity for students to participate in the implementation of Latvian and European research and applied projects.
- Financing of the study program, providing only partial (approximately 50%) provision of state-subsidized study places (despite the support of the ministry responsible for the sector (MEPRD)); consequently, insufficient financial resources for the provision of the study process, applied and scientific research.
- Limited ability of potential students to pay for studies at their own expense.
- Overload of a large number of students - the need to work in parallel with studies and as a result the time for studies is limited and the quality of study work decreases.
- Relatively low (in recent years) student activity in international mobility programs (Erasmus +, etc.) due to job responsibilities in the workplace.
- Insufficient original teaching aids in Latvian;
- Applicants who have not graduated from the UL FGES are relatively poorly prepared for the acquisition of the geographical information systems (GIS) and other technical knowledge.
- Excessive bureaucratization of the study process and procedures complicates the course and development of studies.

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## External factors

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### Opportunities

- The use of the UL Academic Centre allows to significantly strengthen interdisciplinary studies and research, as well as to implement wider cooperation with other higher education institutions.
- Attracting qualified Latvian and foreign guest lecturers and foreign students using EU funds.- Attracting EU funds to increase the quality of studies, as well as the availability of EU and national funds for applied and research projects.
- Expansion of cooperation with foreign universities, increasing the attractiveness of the program for foreign students; study and internship opportunities abroad within the framework of Erasmus and other programs; opportunities to create courses in English and other languages.
- Development of study modules for cooperation with Latvian and foreign universities.
- Creation of marketing and financial attraction plans acquisition of budget places and attraction of additional funding for the development of technical support of the study program, mobility of students and lecturers.
- Attracting financial support from local governments to pay for the studies of their employees.

### Threats

- Due to demographic shrinking processes, the number of students and, consequently, graduates of undergraduate study programs decreases, which in turn decreases the number of people wishing to study in the program.
- Development of normative practice in the development planning sector - excessive formalization of processes and procedures.
- Demand of Latvian employers for specialists with knowledge that meets short-term needs (mainly technical knowledge).
- Decrease in the level of knowledge of bachelor's graduates in exact fields, which can seriously endanger the training of highly qualified specialists.
- Long-term and irreversible reduction of the budget allocated to studies and scientific research.
- Insufficient resources for further education of the academic staff.
- The intentions of the Ministry of Education and Science to achieve the consolidation of the study program subsidized by the state budget with a small number of students, thus exposing the risk of interrupting the training of specialists in the field of development planning vital to the Latvian economy.

The SWOT analysis of the study field partly serves as a basis for the improvement of the quality and operation of the study field (see Annex No 2.1 *Study field development plan*). The development plan of the study field in connection with the SWOT analysis envisages:

- To increase the possibilities for acquiring study courses in English (at least one study course, in amount of the 10 credits (15 ECTS)).
- In the medium term, increase the number of students enrolled to at least 20 each year.
- Increase the number of students using Erasmus + support.
- To activate communication about research and mobility opportunities in the study program, attracting foreign lecturers and students.
- To constantly supplement the descriptions of methodological materials of study courses in LUIS e-environment.
- To prepare changes in the structure of the program and documentation for accreditation of the study field in 2021.

- To strengthen interdisciplinary studies and research in the use of the *UL Academic Centre*, as well as to implement wider cooperation with other universities.
- To activate the attraction of qualified Latvian and foreign guest lecturers and foreign students.
- Development of cooperation (projects and agreements) with various Latvian and foreign educational and scientific research institutions, state institutions, local governments and planning offices; providing internship opportunities abroad; student exchange with foreign universities.
- Expanding cooperation with foreign universities, increasing the attractiveness of the program for foreign students; study and internship opportunities abroad within the framework of Erasmus+ and other programs, opportunities to create courses in English and other languages.
- Development of study modules for cooperation with Latvian and foreign universities.
- To develop a marketing and financial attraction plan, in addition to obtaining budget places and attracting additional funding for the development of the technical provision of the study program, as well as the mobility of students and lecturers.
- Attracting EU funds to increase the quality of studies, as well as the availability of EU and national funds for applied and research projects.- Attracting financial support from local governments to pay for the studies of their employees.

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

Collegiate responsibility for the administration of the study field lies with the UL decision-making bodies - the Senate, the *UL Study Programme Quality Evaluation Board* (SP QEB, headed by Vice-Rectors), faculty Council and Council of the Study Field, which evaluate study quality and decide on study quality assurance measures (see Figure No 7 *UL study field and study program management scheme* included in it, also Annex 2.2 *Organizational chart of study field*).

**The Council of the Study Field Architecture and Construction** supervises the study program corresponding to the study field. The Council is chaired by its chairperson prof. A.Briede, director of the study program P.Šķiņķis is a member of the Council. Representatives of the students in the program - M.Markova, M.Fonteina-Kazeka, J.Stankunas and representatives of employers - J.Butņicka, Deputy Head of the State Sustainable Development Planning Department of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, G.Ruskuls, Head of the Strategic Management Department of the Riga City Development Department, S.Skudra, Head of the Spatial Planning Department of the Riga Planning Region (graduate of the program), I.Urtāne, Head of the Construction Board of Ādaži Municipality and I.Peipiņa, Regional Development Adviser to the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, work in the Council. The composition of the Council is supplemented by professors of the field - prof. V.Segliņš, prof. Z.Krišjāne, prof. O.Nikodemus and associate prof. A.Zariņa.

The Council approves the development strategy of study program, evaluates and submits for approval to the faculty Council the annual reports of the study field, as well as changes in the study

program.

Responsibility for the quality of the study field and the study program implemented therein lies on the Head of the study field, Director of the study programme and Dean.

**Head of the study field** - assoc. prof. P.Šķinķis (approved by the order of the UL 05.03.2020, No 1/91). The competence of the head of the field (assoc. prof. P.Šķinķis is also the director of the study program included in the field) includes the supervision of the study program, ensuring the compliance of the study field with the UL *Development Strategy*, topicality and development. Head of the study field ensures the improvement of the study program of the field, planning and implementation of its development, organizes the work of the study field Council, as well as regularly organizes the development and submission of the annual study field report for review and approval by the *Council of the Study Field* and the faculty Council, ensures accreditation and re-accreditation of the study field in cooperation with the UL Study Department.

**Director of the study program** assoc. prof. P. Šķinķis manages the implementation of the study program. He has been approved by the Senate upon the proposal of the *Council of the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences* of the UL, which represents the relevant field of science. The director of the study program coordinates his activity with the *Council of the Study Field*. The director is responsible to the Dean, *Council of the Study Field*, the faculty Council, the Vice Rector, and the Rector. The responsibilities of the director of the program are specified in the *Regulations on the director of study programs of the University of Latvia*. The director of the study program ensures the compliance of the content of the study program with the regulatory enactments, and the improvement of the study program, incl. development of changes in study programs, in accordance with the trends of the industry and the labor market, as well as taking into account the needs of the involved parties. The duties of the director of the study program also include ensuring co-operation with Latvian and foreign higher education institutions and directors of other UL study programs on issues of study content coordination and experience exchange, as well as with employers and internships on study content issues to ensure employment results.

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

The implementation of studies are ensured by the teaching, research and support staff of the UL FGES. The teaching support staff consists of laboratory technicians and technicians necessary for the study and research work process, study methodologists, staff of the Study Center of the UL FGES, employees of the *Map Library* and computer classes.

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

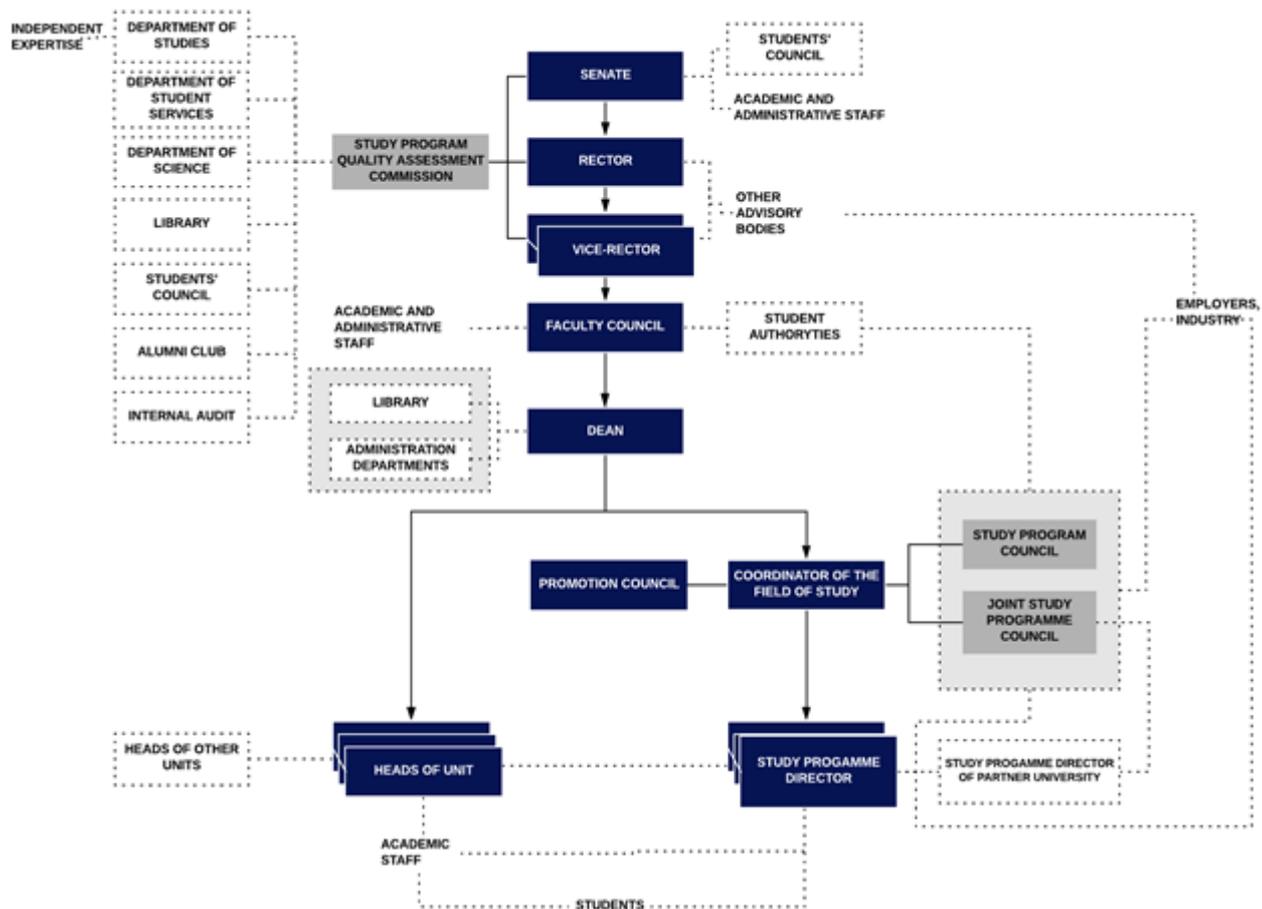


Figure 7. UL study direction and the study program management scheme

**The Council of the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences**, consisting of representatives of the academic and general staff, and representatives of the students (not less than 20 percent of the Council members), elected for three years, decides on the academic work, as well as economic, financial and other activity issues of the faculty, that are within the competence of the faculty or can be forwarded to the Senate.

The study fields and study results of the University of Latvia are evaluated, as well as proposals for the further development of the programs are provided by the **Study Program Quality Assessment Commission** (hereinafter - SP QAC). This commission reviews and provides opinions on study programs', incl. evaluates applications for new study program concepts, new study programs and proposals for closing programs, significant changes in accredited study fields that require a decision of the SP QAC as well as applications for new study modules and sub-programs. SP QAC consists of Vice-Rectors, Chairman of the Academic Commission of the Senate or his authorized person, Director and representatives of the Study Department, representative of the Student Service Department, internal auditor, quality manager, representative of the Science Department, representative of the LU Library, delegated representative of the Student Council and UL Alumni Club delegated representative.

In the implementation of the management of the study field, support functions are provided by the **UL Administration**, the main goal of which is to ensure legal fulfillment of the UL mission, goals and strategy, as well as to provide support to UL staff and other UL employees. The UL Administration implements the administrative functions specified in the legal acts of the UL: administrative process, administrative decision-making, creation of regulatory enactments, internal control, accounting, supervision, quality control, etc., insofar as they are not performed by other UL

basic structural units (institutions). The administration manages the activities of the UL in the field of private law, manages communication and cooperation between the basic structural units (institutions) of the UL, as well as the public, natural and legal persons, and also provides support to the basic structural units (institutions) of the UL. The Administration of the UL includes the following structural units: Science Department, Study Department, Student Service Department, Communication and Innovation Department, Finance and Accounting Department, Legal Department, Personnel Management Department, Information Technology Department and Infrastructure Department.

An important role in the management of the study field is played by the **Department of Studies**, whose main functions are to develop legal acts and documents related to study activities, coordinate and control their implementation and further development, ensure planning of study processes in accordance with UL mission, goals and strategy, organize new study offer design, preparation and conduct of licensing and accreditation, monitoring of further implementation and development of programs, monitoring and analyzing the content of study courses and programs, organizing regular updating of study courses and programs, ensuring their quality and cost-effectiveness, widely used skills and practical skills acquisition in studies, development of e-studies.

The **Department of Science** is involved in the organization of study-related research and the promotion of student involvement in research.

The main functions of the **Student Services Department** are to organize and ensure the matriculation and exmatriculation of Latvian and foreign students, the circulation of study documents and its registration, to maintain the register of final documentation (qualifications), including the register of diplomas and graduates, to provide students with social, cultural and other support functions, as well as to provide consultations and information to students on social security, to inform potential students and applicants about the study process and study organization, as well as to ensure the administration and implementation of mobility programs. The quality manager and the internal auditor of the UL also participate in the development, maintenance, implementation, evaluation and improvement of the study quality management system.

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study quality management system.

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

The procedure and requirements for admission of UL students are specified in the Admission Regulations at the University of Latvia (approved by the Senate on 30 May 2016, Decision No 15 and issued in accordance with Section 65, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Cabinet Regulation No 846 of 10 October 2006 and procedures for admission to study programs") -

[https://www.lu.lv/portals/nas/?tx\\_lunas\\_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=Front&tx\\_lunas\\_pi1%5Bfilter%5D%5Baccepted\\_date\\_from%5D=&tx\\_lunas](https://www.lu.lv/portals/nas/?tx_lunas_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=Front&tx_lunas_pi1%5Bfilter%5D%5Baccepted_date_from%5D=&tx_lunas)

The admission process is governed by the Admission Rules and subordinate orders that determine the procedures for the current academic year:

1. Admission requirements and criteria for undergraduate programmes.
2. Admission requirements and criteria for higher-level study programmes.
3. Admission requirements and criteria for doctoral programmes.
4. Admission requirements and criteria for residency study programmes.
5. Admission procedure for the academic year.
6. An estimate of the registration fee.
7. Tuition fees in programmes.
8. Number of study places for admission.
9. Procedure for the preparation of entrance examination materials.
10. Composition of the Admission Board.
11. Composition of the entrance examination commissions.
12. Date and place of entrance examinations.

Enrolment in master's level study programs is decentralized in each faculty, but within the same deadlines. Enrolment is based on assessments obtained during the undergraduate studies. In the study program, taking into account that it allows applicants with previous education in various fields (see also Part III, Subchapter 1.3), the entrance examination is used to determine the compliance of the applicant's prior knowledge with the field of the study program. In accordance with the admission regulations of the University of Latvia, the entrance examination questions and entrance examination evaluation criteria of the *Architecture and Building field study program Spatial Planning Professional Master's study program Spatial Planning* - have been approved, which are generally aimed at providing academic and professional education to acquire modern theoretical and methodological knowledge. spatial development planning. Information is available on the UL website

([http://www.lu.lv/gribustudet/katalogs/programmu-mekletajs/?user\\_phpfileexecutor\\_pi1\[program\\_id\]=21104](http://www.lu.lv/gribustudet/katalogs/programmu-mekletajs/?user_phpfileexecutor_pi1[program_id]=21104)).

Enrolment requirements include general and additional conditions. UL evaluates and recognizes study courses acquired in other accredited and state-recognized higher education institutions (Procedure for recognition of study courses at the University of Latvia (approved by the decision of the Senate of the University of Latvia No. 190 of 29.12.2008)), study results achieved in previous education or professional experience (Regulations on evaluation and recognition of study results achieved in previous education or professional experience at the University of Latvia (approved by the Senate of the University of Latvia decision No.201 of 26.03.2012)) in accordance with the established procedure.

The normative regulations that regulate the recognition procedures at the UL are Regulations on the Evaluation and Recognition of Study Results Achieved in Previous Education or Professional Experience at the University of Latvia

[https://www.lu.lv/portals/nas/?tx\\_lunas\\_pi1%5B\\_\\_referrer%5D%5B%40extension%5D = LuNas & tx\\_lunas](https://www.lu.lv/portals/nas/?tx_lunas_pi1%5B__referrer%5D%5B%40extension%5D = LuNas & tx_lunas)

When making a decision on the right of holders of documents obtained abroad to continue education in the study programs of the UL, the UL observes the principles of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications. If necessary, in order to find out the status of the educational institution in the host country and the level of the acquired program, the UL requests the opinion of the Academic Information Center.

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

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

In the study program, there was no need for students to use the opportunity to recognize the study results obtained in previous education (including further education program) or professional experience.

All procedures related to the enrollment of students are published and available in the system of regulatory enactments of the University of Latvia, which is available to every employee and student of the University of Latvia.

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

In conformity with the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia, the UL internal regulation *Procedure for Development and Updating of Study Courses at the University of Latvia* stipulates that information on the conditions, aims, tasks, requirements for obtaining credit points, study content, organization and tasks of the students' independent work, planned learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, competence) and their assessment methods and assessment criteria are included in all study course descriptions, which are available to students in the UL Information System (LUIS) and UL e-learning environment.

The recording of the assessment of the students' results takes place in the respective study course e-environment. The UL has formulated the learning outcomes for each study programme and for each study course as a set of knowledge, skills and competences. The courses in study programmes are developed in accordance with the principles of gradation and succession. To that end, the study programmes map the expected learning outcomes (see Annex No 3.5 *Study course mapping*).

At the beginning of studies, students are informed of the organisation and implementation of studies in the relevant study programme, but when commencing the acquisition of each individual study course, the academic staff inform students specifically about the organisation, content, requirements, learning outcomes, examinations and evaluation criteria, as well as explain the integral quality of the study course for achieving the overall outcomes of the study programme.

The students can familiarize themselves with the criteria and conditions for assessment of student achievement and the binding procedures in the course descriptions and e-learning environment, as well as at the beginning of each course during the first lecture, when each lecturer introduces students to the course organization, briefly describes the requirements for intermediate and final examinations, describes grading criteria and examination procedures, without changing these requirements and grading criteria throughout the semester.

In the study field program, along with a large proportion of practical work, the assessment of students' progress takes place throughout the semester, where the final assessment consists of practical and mid-term tests.

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

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

Taking an examination is a mandatory requirement for obtaining credits for the acquisition of a study course. The procedures and criteria for the assessment of interims are determined by the responsible department in accordance with the profile of the study course. The study course

acquisition rating is calculated in the UL centralised recording system according to the algorithm specified in the course description, taking into account the assessments obtained in the interims and examination, and recorded in the examination report.

Types of interim assessment are: independent work, practical work, individually or in a group developed course work, laboratory work, report, interim report and other types of work according to the profile of the study course. The number and type of interim assessments are specified in the description of the study course. To be assessed on the acquisition of a course, the assessment obtained for the examination is to be positive. The acquisition of a course may be positively assessed even if the examination has been failed but this possibility has been specified in the study course description.

The overall assessment of course acquisition is calculated in the UL e-studies environment according to the algorithm specified in the course description, taking into account the assessments obtained in interim tests and examinations.

In accordance with the profile of the study courses of the study field, the requirements for attending classes are also determined. For example, a visit is obligatory for the development of independent work, practical work, laboratory work. At the end of each study course there is a final examination: examination or defence (course work, final project, term paper, field course, internship). The procedure of defence and assessment of course paper, final thesis project, term paper, field course and internship is stipulated in UL normative acts.

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

For the evaluation of students' knowledge, skills and competence in each study course, the 10-point scale criteria described above are used. The criteria for each study course are based on the learning outcomes and assessment descriptions (see *Table 6*). published in "Procedures for the Development and Actualization of Study Courses at the University of Latvia".

*Table 6. Assessment descriptions*

<b>Acquisition level</b>	<b>Grade notations</b>	<b>Explanation</b> (pursuant to Cabinet Regulations No 141, 512, 240 and the UL Senate Decision No 211 of 29.06.2015)
<b>very high acquisition level</b>	<b>10 (with distinction)</b>	knowledge, skills and competence exceed the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course and testify to the ability to carry out independent research and deep understanding of problems
	<b>9 (excellent)</b>	knowledge, skills and competence fully comply with the requirements set for the study programme, study module or the study course and the students possess the ability to use the acquired knowledge independently

<b>high acquisition level</b>	<b>8 (very good)</b>	the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course are completely met, though in certain issues the students do not have an understanding deep enough to use the knowledge independently for solving more complex problems
	<b>7 (good)</b>	in general the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course are met but occasionally the inability to use the acquired knowledge independently is established
<b>average acquisition level</b>	<b>6 (almost good)</b>	the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course are met, but there is a lack of deep understanding of the problem and inability to use the acquired knowledge
	<b>5 (satisfactory)</b>	in total, the study programme, the study module or the study course is acquired but there is insufficient knowledge of certain issues and inability to use the acquired knowledge
	<b>4 (almost satisfactory)</b>	in total, the study programme, the study module or the study course is acquired, however, there is insufficient understanding of some basic concepts and there are considerable difficulties in practical application of the acquired knowledge
<b>low acquisition level</b>	<b>3 (weak)</b>	the knowledge is superficial and incomplete; the student is unable to use it in specific situations
	<b>2 (poor)</b>	here is superficial knowledge of only some issues; most of the study programme, study module and the study course is not acquired
	<b>1 (very, poor)</b>	there is no understanding of the fundamentals of the course and there is almost no knowledge of the study programme, study module or the study course

The relevance of assessment methods and procedures to the achievement of the objectives of study programmes and the needs of students are analysed and developed, taking into account the experience of academic staff, by analysing the results achieved by students and the results of surveys conducted over several academic years.

Students in the surveys recognise the importance of clearly formulating the results of the studies and defining the evaluation criteria, as well as the regular feedback on student achievements in the study process. In order to ensure this, the academic staff systematically analyse their experience, collaborate with colleagues, analyse student achievements and develop course descriptions by investing the description of the results of studies and their evaluation criteria, thereby providing justification for the assessment.

In evaluating the results of studies, compliance with the basic principles for the valuation set by the Cabinet regulations of the Republic of Latvia No 141 Regulations on the State Standard for First Level Professional Higher Education of 20.03.2001, No 512 Regulations on the State Standard for Second Level Professional Higher Education of 26.08.2014 and Regulations on the state standard of

the academic education of 13.05.2014 is considered:

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

The basic criteria for the evaluation of final papers are determined by the UL Decree No 1/38 of 03.02.2012 (Amendments: UL Order No 1/69 of 26.02.2015) *On the development and defence of the final papers (bachelor's, master's, diplomas and qualifications) at the University of Latvia.*

Additional criteria may be determined for the evaluation of final papers, which should be approved by the FGES Council on a proposal from the study field Council.

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

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

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

The UL as the developer of the System and its operator constantly updates the System and provides other higher education institutions with the opportunity to use the System on the basis of a cooperation agreement. Currently, based on the cooperation agreement, seven higher education institutions in Latvia, Daugavpils University, Liepaja University, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Riga Stradins University, Rezekne Academy of Technologies, University College of Economics and Culture and Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration use the System.

The system automatically compares the final theses uploaded to these university systems, incl. material available on the Internet, and in the event of a certain percentage match, the study programme directors are sent an overview of these test results, whereby the same text snippets from different authors are simultaneously viewed. The programme directors pass this information on to the appointed supervisor and reviewer for review and, in the event of a suspected breach of academic integrity, pass on the results of the analysis to the final examination panel for final consideration.

Throughout the implementation of the field's studies, when checking the final - master's theses, the plagiarism control system did not reveal any violations.

The co-operation of several higher education institutions in the field of unified computerized plagiarism control facilitates more effective control of the study process at every higher education institution and in Latvia in general and this system works well in practice, raising the importance and quality of the diploma papers.

**1.8. Specify the websites (e.g. the homepage) on which the information on the study direction and the relevant study programmes is published (in all languages in which the study programmes are implemented) by indicating the persons responsible for the compliance of the information available on the website with the information published in the official registers.**

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

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

The site consists of the following sections:

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

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

The STUDIES section in Latvian provides information on programme goals, objectives, study outcomes, programme volume and duration, programme study language, information on job

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

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

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

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

Other Sections - Science, Cooperation, About Us. They provide more information about UL activities in research, projects, conferences, cooperation partners, normative acts, strategy.

The website [www.lu.lv/par-mums/dokumenti/pasnovertejuma-zinojumi/](http://www.lu.lv/par-mums/dokumenti/pasnovertejuma-zinojumi/) contains annual study field self-assessment reports.

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

Information on the programs offered by the specific faculty and on the scientific activities of the faculty is prepared on the websites of the structural units and faculties. The content blocks are exactly like the official website of the UL, only more specific information is prepared directly about the activities of the faculty.

From the UL website, you can go to the faculty website via the faculty business card. The faculty website can be reached from the UL website via the faculty reference.

The website of the FGES is [www.geo.lu.lv](http://www.geo.lu.lv). The site consists of 5 large sections: the first section "I want to study at FGES" - information for study interested people - descriptions of study programs, admission procedures, study booklets, information about the School of Young Geographers and the Environmental Academy, the next section "Studies" - information for existing students - study plans, lesson schedules, scholarships, studies abroad.

The third section "Research" follows with information about the doctoral school, projects and programs implemented by the faculty, defended doctoral theses, the UL scientific conferences, map service, postdoctoral support, Geographical articles "*Folia Geographica*", the UL Foundation-supported projects, in the fourth section "Traditions" - information about the traditions of the faculty, *Latvian Geographical Society*, *Latvian Quaternary Research Association*, in the fifth section "About us" you can find information about the faculty, its departments, contacts, photo gallery,

Natural Sciences Library, logos, cooperation partners, job opportunities, useful links and information for graduates. In the news and calendar events section of the website the most current events of the faculty, news useful for information and interest are regularly published.

If the submitter of information submits a text for publication in a foreign language other than English, a translation of the text into Latvian or a short summary is required. If the text to be posted on the site is submitted in a language other than English, a translation of the text into Latvian or a short summary is to be attached.

The heads of the UL departments are responsible for the preparation, accuracy and updating of the information within the competence of the departments they manage. The content administrators of the structural units' websites are responsible for website maintenance, posting the updated information and updating it on a regular basis. The persons responsible for the content posting at the FGES is Indra Baltmane un Madara Rakšte. They are responsible for the maintenance of the website, the posting of the prepared information and its regular updating.

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

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

The study field quality management is ensured in accordance with the quality assurance mechanism and procedures established by the UL (see Chapter 1). The students, teaching staff, study programme directors, etc. are involved in study field management.

Review of study courses is regularly ensured in accordance with the procedure, regular compulsory student surveys (every semester) and their evaluation determined by the UL take place, as well as student surveys on the quality of the study course and the organization of the study process at the initiative of the study program director.

Surveys of students of the field on the quality of study courses and organization of the study process are held every semester, after each course - every academic year students have to fill in each course evaluation questionnaire, as well as program evaluation questionnaire, the evaluation of which facilitates study process, obtaining more feedback on the quality of the study process. The results of the surveys are compiled, evaluated, for the improvements in the program and study courses. Also, in the autumn and spring semesters, roundtable discussions and individual surveys of students of the study program and program management are organized every year, which allows to identify students' opinions about the implemented study course and summarize students' proposals for improving course content (see also Part III, Chapter 2.6. *Analysis and evaluation of survey results (students, graduates and employers)*).

Various activities are implemented for the regular analysis and updating of the study field, as well as for identification of necessity of the study process improvement, including consistent purposeful cooperation with the employers and professional organizations in the field (*Latvian Association of Spatial Planners (LASP) Urban Institute (UI) Riga, etc.*), formal and / or informal surveys of

graduates, employers and social partners, discussions, questionnaires of graduates on the quality of the study program, career monitoring of graduates, etc.

Significant involvement of employers and social partners takes place in the implementation of studies, their proposals are evaluated in the improvement of study content, employers participate in the implementation of study courses and classes, participate in the assessment of students' achievements during the whole study process, lead the development of students' master's theses research planning projects. Thus, for example, LASP members discuss the necessary knowledge and skills for planners, proposals are evaluated in the development of study content, while the *Urban Institute, Riga*, provides *Practice in Regions - Types of Planning Profession*, conducts practical classes. M.Kalvāne, Head of the Spatial Planning Department of society with limited responsibility *Metrum* leads the course work in spatial planning, gives lectures, Acting head of Riga Planning Region Administration R.Cimdiņš leads the elaboration of master's theses, I.Circene, a senior expert at the *Spatial Planning and Land Management Department* of the *Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development*, evaluates master's theses, participates in the final examination commission. Employers, eg *Riga City Development Department, Riga Energy Agency*, involve students in the implementation of their projects (eg *Baltic Urban Lab* (brownfield regeneration) project, INTERREG BSR project *Green Mobility for Senior's (GreenSAM)*).

There is a constant monitoring of the career of the graduates of the program, identifying the graduates every spring in order to find out their professional work (see Annex No 2.14 *Employment and professional growth of the study field graduates*). The growth of graduates is then evaluated, in many cases finding satisfaction in the contribution of graduates in the field of spatial development planning. Graduates are regularly asked about the proposals for the growth of the program. The opinions of graduates who have become employers in the field of planning are taken into account especially (eg, M.Trukšāns, D.Šēle, A.Vitāls, etc.).

Extensive surveys of graduates on the quality of study program take place every three to four years. Data from survey results are evaluated and compared (see, for example, data analysis in Part III, Chapter 2.6 *Analysis and assessment of survey results (students, graduates and employers)*). The survey data have been analyzed in depth by developing a master's theses on the labor market of planners (K.Muravjova, 2017).

The implementation of studies of the field takes into account the results and recommendations of surveys, eg recommendations of employers and graduates to pay more attention to regional and rural development, stronger acquisition of new technologies, methods and communication skills in studies, integration the issues of housing and quality of life (for example, in 2020, three master's theses on housing were elaborated and defended).

In the improvement of the study content, for example, the conclusions and recommendations of the graduates expressed in 2016 that "knowledge and process analysis in the study process take place more in the context of Riga City and Pierīga" have been taken into account. In the following academic years the analytical information on the development of regions and rural territories in Latvia has been expanded, course works have been developed for rural territories. The graduates' recommendation to "devote more time to the section on territorial planning" was also assessed in the improvement of the program - in the course Spatial Planning the section on local planning and detail planning was strengthened and expanded, M.Kalvāne, a professional practitioner, was invited to teach the course.

Also taking into account the recommendations, more attention in the following academic years, evaluating the recommendations, was paid to improving students' skills in moderation, inviting students to practice leading the seminars themselves - course member presentations, part of questions and subsequent discussions.

An important recommendation of employers has been taken into account in the improvement of the content of the study program. For example, in a 2020 survey provided suggestions for improving the study program to strengthen graduates' knowledge, abilities and skills. Employers recommended that students have to strengthen their skills and abilities in spatial analysis with a greater emphasis on GIS and the analysis opportunities it offers. Taking into account the recommendations, which largely coincides with the recommendations of the members and graduates of the *Council of the field*, at the beginning of 2021 a new study course *Spatial Analysis and Modeling Methods* was prepared in the amount of 4 CP, as an elective course in the III semester. On the basis of this course it is planned to create a new Part B course in the amount of 10 CP by expanding and improving it, as well as strengthening the GIS component (evaluation of employers and graduates, proposals and their integration into the study program, please see also section 2.4 and in Part III, Subsection 2.7 and Annexes 3.8.2 and 3.8.3).

Continuous feedback is provided to inform the involved parties about the study results and competence achieved by students and graduates. Every academic year, the report of the study field *Architecture and Construction* is prepared (for the report, see also Part II subchapter 2.2. *Assessment and analysis of the design and review of study programmes*).

Topicalities of quality assurance of the study field and results of the study program, annual report, changes in the study program, etc. issues are regularly reviewed and discussed in the study field Council and the FGES Council. Consequently, the regular annual report, changes in the direction program and accreditation self-assessments are evaluated by the Study Program Quality Assessment Commission (SP QAC) of the UL, including independent experts who evaluate the documentation before approval by the Senate of the UL.

Study field improvement activities are planned for a six - year period based on the UL Development Strategy, spatial development planning area / sector and labor market trends and demand, as well as evaluating the study field results and recommendations provided in internal and external accreditation for quality assessment (see Annex No 2.1 *Study field development plan* ).

Quality assurance of the study program is also based on long-term and active international cooperation with analogous programs and similar study content directions abroad. For example, with the London South Bank University (Great Britain), Klaipeda University (Lithuania) and from 2020 to 2021 acad. year a new collaboration was launched with the Bauhaus - University of Weimar (Germany).

Good co-operation ensured between the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study field program, including mutual evaluation of the teaching staff (hospitalization) and regular evaluation of the teaching staff in the Department of Geography of the Faculty.

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

The establishment of UL new study programmes is performed in accordance with the procedure

specified in *Regulations on study programmes and continuing education at the University of Latvia* (relevant documents in Latvian and English are available at <https://www.lu.lv/par-mums/dokumenti/>) and include the following steps:

- Elaboration of the study programme concept in agreement with the Vice Rector and the Dean of the Faculty, and its approval by the Faculty Council.
- Evaluation of the study programme concept with the assistance of experts and subsequent approval by the UL Study Programme Quality Assessment Board (SP QAB).
- Elaboration of the full study programme, evaluation of the same with the assistance of experts, and subsequent approval by the Faculty Council, the SP QAB and UL Senate.

The process of reviewing the study programs of the UL is based on internal normative regulations, where the procedures and activities that must be observed during the process of reviewing the study programs are determined (relevant documents are available in Latvian and English at <https://www.lu.lv/par-mums/dokumenti/>).

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

The reviewing of study programmes involves (Decision No 6 of the *Constitutional Assembly of the University of Latvia* of 10 May 2001 "*Regulations of the Senate of the University of Latvia*"):

- **Study Programme Director** - responsible for ensuring the operation of the study programme, reviewing, evaluating and developing of the same, while reflecting it in the annual self-assessment report and preparing the analysis of the evaluation as expressed by the parties involved in the programme, viz. students, alumni, employers, etc.; responsible for discussion of the programme's activities at the meetings of the council of study field, etc. (*Senate Decision No 70 "Regulations on the University of Latvia Study Field Management" as of 27.01.2020*).

- **Head of the Study Field** - its responsibilities include elaboration of the study field strategy, provision of accreditation and re-accreditation, in cooperation with the program directors - annual self-assessment of the study field study quality and development, improvement, etc. (*Senate Decision No 70 "Regulations on the University of Latvia Study Field Management" as of 27.01.2020*).

- **Dean of the Faculty** - responsible for the organization of the study work of the faculty, economic, financial activities and record keeping; annually reports on the studies and scientific activities of the faculty to both the faculty council and the rector, etc. (Constitution of the University of Latvia, approved at the sitting of the Constitutional Assembly of the University of Latvia on March 29, 1996).

- **Council of the Study Field** - functions include development of study program development

strategy, evaluation of annual study field reports and evaluation of program changes, etc. (Decision No 70 of the Senate of the University of Latvia of 27.01.2020 "[Regulations on the University of Latvia Study Field Management](#)").

- **Faculty Council** - evaluates and approves changes to study programmes, study field self-assessment reports, etc. (*UL Constitution, approved at the session of the UL Constitutional Assembly as of 29.03.1996*).

- **Department of Studies** - analyses study programmes and courses, makes proposals for their development, reorganisation or closure (Regulations on the Administration to the University of Latvia approved by the UL Order No 1/244 on July 17, 2017).

- **Quality Assessment Board (QAB) for UL Study Programmes** - evaluates new study programmes, major changes to existing study programmes, annual self-assessments of study fields, outcomes of study fields and programmes and prepares proposals for the Faculty Council and UL leadership on the future development of programmes, etc.

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

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

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

The results of the surveys regularly organized by the University of Latvia are analyzed and discussed within the study field, they are reflected in the annual self-assessment reports of the field. When preparing the self-assessment student survey results data - summary and analysis of the results of the student survey on the study courses of the program and the summary of their results, and analysis of the student survey on the program as a whole - are collected, evaluated and reviewed by the study council.

The self-assessment includes the description of the study field *Architecture and Construction* and basic information in the reporting period - acad. Activities performed during the year for the improvement of the study field and promotion of competitiveness, list of higher education institutions in Latvia that implement study fields. The self-assessment includes the implementation plan of the study field expertise recommendations and its implementation, description of the study program, basic program information, goals and tasks, study results, number of students in the program, faculty mobility and employers' involvement in the program during the reporting period and other information.

The self-assessment of the field is evaluated in the study field Council and approved by the FGES

dossier, subsequently submitted to the *Department of Studies*. The Department evaluates the adequacy of the self-assessment and submits the self-assessments for evaluation to the SP QAB. Based on the decision of the SP QAB, the self-assessment of the direction is improved; a draft plan for the implementation of expert recommendations is prepared. In the next step, the opinions on self-assessment prepared by the experts are evaluated, discussed in the study field Council, the council evaluates and approves the implementation plan.

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

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

The right of UL applicants to lodge complaints regarding irregularities in the admission procedure are governed by Admission Regulations at the University of Latvia (30.05.2016), specifying the procedures for the lodging, processing and appeal of the complaint.

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

The *Procedure for the organization of study course examinations at the University of Latvia* has been developed and implemented for the comprehensive evaluation of UL study processes, where the right of students to file complaints regarding the procedures for interim and final assessment and the procedures for resolution of these complaints have been determined. The complaint is submitted by the student to the member of academic staff who has evaluated the examination, on condition that the student has requested a justification for the assessment from the academic staff

prior to submitting the complaint. The lecturer must review the application within 5 working days. If the lecturer considers that the student's application is not substantiated, they shall submit the application to the Head of Department for consideration and decision.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Issues of implementation and quality of the study program are discussed at least once a month in direct conversations with students of the study field. Solving issues related to studies is primarily performed in cooperation with the director of the study program; if necessary, the director of the study program solves the issue with the FGES. Issues related to studies are also solved with

lecturers of specific study courses.

Students are informed about the decisions made, for example, taking into account the students' recommendations, starting from 2019/2020 academic year, more attention is paid to practical training. The number of practical classes in planning courses has been increased and the amount of group work has been reduced. Students are given more detailed work tasks. Upon receipt of students' comments, discussions are held on the work done, resulting in a larger number of classes from 2019/2020 academic year devoted to mobility and transport planning issues.

The management of the study field is always open to the views of both individual students and groups of students. Information on the necessary changes in the implementation of study courses in the study program has been obtained through direct consultations, discussions with students during the semester and written surveys. Special attention is paid to the progress of the study process during the Covid-19 pandemic - regular (every or every other week) online interviews are organized with students of the field, so that students can express their objections or suggestions to the program management immediately.

Once a semester, the opinion of all students on the quality of the study organization and study program, as well as on the quality of individual courses is clarified by organizing surveys at LUIS (UL Information System), as well as in interviews, roundtable discussions and written surveys organized by the program management.

Students can also make recommendations for the improvement of the content of the study program through their representatives in the faculty *Council*, as well as directly as recommendations of the *Student Self-Government*. No written information about the student proposals was received during the reporting period, i.e. student self-government, to the Council of the UL FGES or the Council of the field *Architecture and Construction* regarding the necessary improvements in the program. Regular discussions with students, hearings, immediate resolution of study-related issues, evaluation of the survey and its results, and providing feedback have created a situation where students did not have to complain about the program and its implementation.

Scholarships are available to students for motivation and support measures in accordance with the procedures specified in the regulatory enactments of the UL, as well as an opportunity to apply for patronage scholarships. All students have the opportunity to use the help of a psychologist.

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

In order to control, analyze and forecast the dynamics of the number of students, the UL collects data:

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

compliance, ex-matriculated on the grounds of completion of studies, on academic leave.

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

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

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

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

In order to prevent violations of the principles of academic integrity in the UL students' final theses and promotion papers, the UL ensures automatic examination of all submitted final theses and doctoral theses by using the unified computerized plagiarism control system, by comparing the works with the final works accumulated in the information systems of the University of Latvia and other higher education institutions.

During the reporting period, there have been no cases of plagiarism in the master's theses of the study field.

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

- A freshman survey of the first-year students on the commencement of studies, which is conducted electronically once a year. The aim of the survey is to find out the motivation for choosing the study field and program and sources of information, as well as to evaluate the application and registration process in order to improve the student engagement package. Data is collected and analyzed by the UL Department of Studies, but the necessary improvement measures are proposed by the UL governance, faculty governance, program directors, in cooperation with the UL administrative departments.
- A freshman survey of the first-year students on the first study experience, also conducted electronically once a year. The aim of the survey is to obtain an evaluation of the first study experience at the UL and study support measures to improve the study environment and facilitate student adaptation. The data are collected and analyzed by the UL Department of Studies and presented to the faculty governance and departments. The necessary improvement measures are proposed by the faculty governance and the Department of Studies in cooperation with other departments of the University of Latvia.
- In order to find out the students' opinion about the content of the study courses and to obtain the evaluation of the work of the teaching staff, every semester an electronic survey is conducted on the study courses, including study internship, term papers and final papers.

Data is collected by LUIS and is available to faculty, program directors, and the Dean of the Faculty, as well as the Department of Studies. The data is analyzed by the program directors, the dean, and the necessary improvement measures are proposed by the program director, the dean, and the council of study field. The results are used to prepare annual reviews of study areas, as well as to develop study program development plans.

- In order to obtain students' evaluation of the study program for its further development, improvement of the study process, improvement of the quality and study environment, a survey of the students of the last study year on the study program as a whole are conducted. The survey is conducted electronically once for each study program. The results are compiled by LUIS and made available to program directors and the Dean of the faculty. The data is analyzed by the program directors, the dean, and the necessary improvement measures are proposed by the program director, the dean, and the council of study field. The results are used in the preparation of annual study field reviews, study field self-assessment reports for the field accreditation and re-accreditation, and in the preparation of study program development plans.
- In order to identify the main reasons for discontinuation of studies and to facilitate the reduction of drop-out rates, a survey is conducted of students who have expressed a wish to discontinue studies or have already discontinued studies. The survey is conducted throughout the academic year, while the are compiled by the Department of Studies once a semester.
- The aim of the graduate survey is to obtain an assessment of graduates' satisfaction with the quality of the acquired program, the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired at the UL, the contribution of the graduated study program to their employment, as well as study continuation plans.

### ***Graduate surveys***

Extensive surveys of graduates take place organized by the management of the study field. They are performed periodically. The aim of these surveys is to obtain data for qualitative analysis and the questions are specified according to the field of the professional study program. The results of the surveys are constantly discussed and evaluated in connection with the compliance of studies with the requirements of the labour market, the required knowledge and skills at work. The survey of graduates was conducted in 2011 while preparing the program for accreditation, the following survey was conducted in 2014, conducted in writing, in the middle of the next reporting period in 2016, the last survey was implemented at the end of 2020. In 2016 and 2020, the surveys were conducted in the same period from November 14 to December 4. In both latter cases, the questionnaires were available on the website [www.webanketa.com](http://www.webanketa.com). In 2020, they were also sent in separate letters.

In 2014, graduates mainly prove their readiness for the labor market as very good. Responses were received that 1 is fully satisfied, 6 graduates are rather satisfied (out of 8 graduates), and graduates were satisfied that they have chosen this study program for their studies (5 graduates are completely satisfied and 2 are rather satisfied). In terms of what skills and knowledge are required by today's planning labor market - the graduates emphasized that the labor market requires a considerable amount of knowledge and skills, first of all, it requires communication skills. Graduates' suggestions that the theory should be more interconnected with the practice, reinforcing practice in real situations, were subsequently assessed in the program, as well as co-operation with practitioners in practice, and more attention was paid to transfer of the foreign experience in the following years.

In both cases, the surveys of graduates conducted in 2016 and 2020 received positive answers (89% and 76% of answers) to the question whether graduates would like to recommend the

program to other students, as well as whether the knowledge acquired by graduates was prepared for the labour market (see Part III, subchapter 2.7).

Many conclusions and suggestions made by graduates in 2016 have been evaluated and many taken into account in the improvement of study content and organization, such as that “knowledge and process analysis in the study process is more in the context of Riga and Pierīga”, information on the development of regions and rural territories in Latvia, the recommendation “to devote more time to the section on territorial planning” was also evaluated - in order to strengthen and expand the part of spatial planning in the course *Spatial Development Planning*, professional planner M. Kalvāne was invited to teach the course, who work in this field on a daily basis. More attention is paid to the development of skills in moderation (for other proposals taken into account and their integration into the field program, please see Part III, subchapter 2.7).

### **Employer surveys**

Simultaneously with the graduate surveys, the management of the program also conducts employer surveys (the survey was conducted in 2011 in preparation for the accreditation of the program, the next employer survey was implemented in the middle of the reporting period in 2016, the last survey at the end of 2020). In 2016 and 2020, the surveys were conducted in the same period from November 14 to 4 December 4 with the similar questions. In both latter cases, the questionnaires were available on the website [www.webanketa.com](http://www.webanketa.com). In 2020, they were also sent out in writing (for more detailed information and comparative analysis in 2016, see Part III, subchapter 2.6 *Analysis and assessment of survey results (students, graduates and employers)*).

The aim of the employer surveys has been to find out how the compliance of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by the graduates of the UL with the requirements of the labour market.

In 2014, the student of the program E.Pudzis conducted a special labor market research of a spatial planner “*Evaluation of the labor market of planners: employers' requirements regarding the knowledge and experience of development planning specialists, 2014.*” At total of 60 (sixty) questionnaires / interviews were conducted in the study (the results of the study are available in the report of the study field *Architecture and Construction* for the 2014-2015 academic year). Almost all respondents to the study indicated that municipal development planning specialists need strategic and analytical thinking, at the same time communication skills and knowledge of the legal system are important, which indicates that the planner must be able to make correct and fact-based decisions, as well as to substantiate them with the regulatory framework, as well as to explain and convince the public about the validity of the decisions. The results of the research justified the development of the program.

The results of the surveys show that employers are generally satisfied with the quality of the program - how graduates of the study program are prepared to enter the labour market. The evaluation of the qualification of the graduates of the program is high, acknowledged that the graduates have good theoretical and practical training, the ability of the graduates to acquire new knowledge and skills and to work independently had been appreciated.

In 2016, the theoretical knowledge of graduates is “completely satisfied and rather satisfactory” in general (86%), in 2020 the positive assessment has increased - the theoretical knowledge of graduates satisfies all employers. Graduates' practical skills rated slightly lower. In 2016, 71.5% of the respondents are satisfied with the skills of graduates (completely satisfied and rather satisfied), in 2020 the significantly positive evaluation has significantly increased - 71% of employers fully satisfy the practical skills of graduates and together with the evaluation “rather satisfied” - 95% of employers.

In the 2020 survey, answering questions about proposals for improving the study program of the

field and improving the knowledge, abilities and skills of graduates, employers recommend that future students should strengthen their skills and abilities in spatial analysis with a greater emphasis on GIS (hereinafter - geographic information systems) and the analytical capabilities it offers, for example, focus on technologies and solutions that could be used in planning - learning interactive public engagement tools, as well as other data processing software, *3D urban planning*, developing GIS expertise in strategic planning; greater attention to risk analysis and analysis of various spatial development scenarios, to continue and expand practical opportunities as much as possible, both by practicing in potential workplaces and by doing practical work themselves. It was pointed out that graduates need management skills "to be able to take the lead", moderator skills.

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

The University of Latvia applies the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)* to ensure the quality of studies. Information on how the ESG are respected when assuring the quality of studies is reflected in the table Annex No 2.11.

The main directions of activities in compliance with ESG continuous quality advancement at the UL are as follows: design and approval of programs; *student-centered learning, teaching and assessment; teaching staff and teaching resources and student support.*

In the implementation of the study field, ESG quality standards and guidelines serve as a framework for continuous improvement of the organization of the study process, its supervision and resource management. The management of the field pays special attention to the implementation of the study program of the field so that students are encouraged to actively participate in the study process and its improvement, and evaluate the program in order to make sure that the set goals are achieved and meet the needs of students and society.

In the study process corresponding to the field, ESG quality standards are implemented and assessed in the following main ways: constant exchange of views between students and management, lecturers (1-2 times a month); constant exchange of views between lecturers in general (3-4 times a semester) on the methodology of study implementation and thematic harmonization of course content, constant exchange of views between lecturers and lecturers of multi-author study courses (throughout the course implementation); in the development of the annual study field report; providing and exchanging information on conferences, seminars, job vacancies, etc. Council of the Study Field is especially important for discussing, evaluating the content and results of the study process and defining guidelines for improvement. Collegial participation of academic staff, professional practitioners and students ensures coherent, discussion-based decision-making.

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

### **3.1. Provide information on the system developed by the higher education institution/college for determining the financial resources required for the implementation of the**

**study direction and the relevant study programmes. Provide data on the available funding for the relevant study programmes, as well as the sources of the funding for the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities and their use for the development of the study direction. Provide information on the costs per one student (for each relevant study programme of the study direction) by specifying the headings indicated in the calculation of costs and the percentage of the funding among the indicated headings.**

The system of the UL for determining the study field and the necessary funding for the implementation of the corresponding study programs has been developed on the basis of the *Law on Higher Education Institutions*, Cabinet of Ministers 05.07.2016. *Teachers' Remuneration Regulations* No 445, internal regulatory enactments of the University of Latvia, etc. Every year, the Senate of the UL approves the budget of the University of Latvia, which includes the annual revenue and expenditure plan of each structural unit, which is divided into items: state budget funding for studies, tuition fees and other own revenues, science base funding, performance funding, project funding.

Financial resources for the implementation of study programs corresponding to the study field are provided mainly by the state budget financing for studies and the faculty's own revenues and tuition fees. UL Senate 29.04.2020 Decision No 113 approved the budget of the University of Latvia, which envisages EUR 45,005,254 for study activities, while the budget of the FGES has been approved in the amount of EUR 2,880,817, of which EUR 910,397 or 32% is state budget funding for studies, faculty own revenues and tuition fees.

The financial resources at the disposal of the faculty are planned every year in accordance with the UL budget and are used in accordance with the estimates approved by the UL management, which ensure the control of the use of financial resources. Rational use of financial resources in accordance with the regulatory enactments and financial management at the faculty is ensured by the Dean and Executive director. Support for ensuring and controlling the sustainability of financial resources is provided by the *Finance and Accounting Department* of the UL and the *Science Department* of the UL.

At the faculty, scientific activities are financed from several sources: UL as basic and performance funding allocated to a scientific institution, contract research attracted by the faculty, Latvian Science Council funded projects, state research program funds, international projects, as well as faculty own revenues and state grants. Base and performance funding at the UL is granted in accordance with 12.11.2013 Cabinet Regulation No 1316 *Procedures for Calculating and Granting Basic Funding to Scientific Institutions*, while the internal regulatory enactments of the UL determine the amount of funding for each structural unit; order No 1/241 *On the use of the basic funding and performance funding of a scientific institution allocated for the UL for 2020*. In the same way the research staff of the faculty can apply for the centralized support in accordance with 20.04.2018 order No 1/148.

According to the regulations on *Approval of the Procedure for Support for the Development of Scientific Activity*, support is available for: participation in international events, publication of scientific articles, preparation of international project applications, organization of scientific events at the UL, implementation of scientific activity development projects and fulfillment of long-term obligations. On November 29, 2019, UL Order No 1/435 *On Approval of the Use of Unit Costs* was issued, which provides for additional funding for the development of international project applications.

Research funding also provides an indirect contribution to the development of the field of study, ensuring an increase in the number of printed media and electronic books, as well as subscriptions to the most important databases, the materials of which are used in students' research and final theses.

When planning the financial resources of the faculty every year, funds are provided for study, work and service business trips. These funds are used to pay for student and staff missions with participation in international conferences.

The faculty implements several study and scientific projects, with the help of which the transfer of best practices from the cooperation partners, improvement of the study quality and exchange of experience is ensured. The self-government funding of students, which complies with Article 53 of the *Law on Higher Education Institutions*, is also important, and it is not less than one two hundredth of the annual budget of the higher education institution. Students' self-government is financed from the centralized funds of the UL in accordance with the *Law on Higher Education Institutions*, while the faculty provides self-government with the necessary premises (infrastructure).

The funds available for the study field *Architecture and Construction* implemented by the UL are determined by the state budget financing (grant) and income from tuition fees provided for the specific field of study.

Calculation of study place costs per student in the study field *Architecture and Construction, Spatial Planning* study program is 2602 EUR (Two thousand six hundred two euros, 40) (see Annex No 2.15 *Calculation of the cost of the study program "Spatial planning"*).

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

In the reporting period, the insufficient material and technical base for the study process and research has been improved with the move to the UL *Academic Center* (hereinafter - AC) in Torņakalna neighbourhood, Jelgavas Street 1 in 2015. The spatial planning study infrastructure consists of the UL available research base of other faculties and institutes. The work in strengthening the infrastructure of studies and research work takes place in several directions:

- 1) by participating in joint projects of the faculty in the financing of which the budget funds of the faculty are used;
- 2) participating in scientific grants and contract work;
- 3) participating in the projects of various structural funds of the European Union, in the performance of the tasks of the Research Center of National Importance. In accordance with the principles of budget formation approved by the UL FGES Council, this academic year part of the faculty development funds is also allocated for department budgeting and thus directly used for the development of studies and research work.

The material and technical provision of the UL is adequate to ensure the qualitative implementation

of a study field in the premises of the UL AC. The *Nature House* on the new AC campus of the UL is one of the most modern university buildings in the Baltics, it was put into operation in 2015. Its total indoor area is 18,540 m<sup>2</sup>. It has a total of 30 auditoriums, 45 student study laboratories and 69 research laboratories. Both Windows and Linux operating systems are available in computer classes. Available Microsoft Office office applications, statistical programs (R, SPSS, PC-Ord), geoinformatics specific programs (ESRI ArcGIS, QGIS, PostgreSQL / postGIS, Bentley MicroStation, etc.). All auditoriums have a projector and a laptop for presentations, whiteboards. Interactive whiteboards are also available in some auditoriums and laboratories.

LU AC provides wireless network coverage. The building has a cafe, *Natural Science Library*, individual work booths. The building is accessible to people with disabilities - the building has several elevators, properly equipped sanitary facilities. The first two floors of the *Nature House* are available to students 24 hours a day.

UL offers students and employees a free opportunity to use Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus and SPSS software, as well as GIS software for a personal computer for a study (or employment contract) period.

Successful studies have the necessary material and technical support:

- UL AC - in the Academic Center at Jelgavas Street 1 - provision of computer classrooms and geoinformatics software - at least 5 auditoriums with 75 workplaces, which are available to students and lecturers.
- One of the computer classes provides specialized acquisition of geoinformatics IT technologies (installation of software and servers, creation of databases and their data structures, especially for geospatial data); software update takes place in cooperation with SIA Envirotech and SIA Mikrokods.
- The Map Browser prepared by the FGES provides extensive spatial data (topographic and thematic maps of Latvia for more than 100 years, orthophoto maps, digital terrain models, etc.) for studies and research from all UL computers to all UL students and employees and from their personal computers with LANET VPN connection, the Card Browser allows to quickly integrate various spatial data and can be successfully supplemented in the study process (in addition, about the Card Browser, see also Part III, Subchapter 3.1. Compliance of resource provision with the study program implementation conditions and study results).
- A variety of original spatial data from manufacturers and maintainers which are available allows to use of real data in the study process.

The UL FGES improves the range of available hardware; the FGES has several drones at its disposal, incl. DJI Matrix600 with multispectral camera and interchangeable cameras, several real-time GPS receivers, surveying equipment, etc.

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

**well as the procedures and options for the subscription to the databases.**

### ***UL Library general description***

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

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

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

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

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

The premises of the *Library of Natural Sciences*, which houses the collection of literature in the field of planning and related fields, such as the collection of geography, geology, environment and Earth sciences, are open to students at a convenient time 24/7 hours a week. Open access collection is available to users. The *Library of Natural Sciences* is located in the premises of the UL AC Nature House (Jelgavas Street 1), the total area of which is 662.80 m<sup>2</sup>.

More than 100 workplaces are available to users in the *Library of Natural Sciences*, incl. 20 workstations for computer work.

### ***Free services***

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

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

Delivery of information resources

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

#### Self-service

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

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

In the reading rooms it is possible to use a collection of reference literature and periodicals, stationary and portable computers (both *LU Library* and users' personal), Internet connection, including WI-FI, which operates in all LU buildings. *The Library of Natural Sciences* has more than 100 workstations available to users (20 computerized and more than 100 workstations without computers).

#### Night subscription, pre-booking of information resources

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

#### Delivery of information resources in summer

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

#### Information and consulting

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

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

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

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

#### User training

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### ***Paid services***

The list of paid services and price list of the *UL Library* is approved by the UL Rector's order No 1/111 of 07.03.2016.

#### Compiling a list of information resources

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

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

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

### ***Library collection, collection replenishment procedure***

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

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

The Library provides the purchase of information resources on the orders of the UL academic staff, the proposal of the students' self-government or the proposals of the Library staff, which are entered into LUIS and approved by the Dean or Executive director of the faculty.

In 2021, 1.8 million information resource units is available to the users of the *UL Library*. According to the study and research infrastructure of the UL, the collection of the Library is located in 8 branch libraries and in the *Repository*.

### **Literature available in the Library for the implementation of the studies**

See the number of literature available in the library for the implementation of the study field - in Table 7 *The literature available in the UL Library for the implementation of the field* and in Table 8 - *Literature available in the Library of Natural Sciences for the implementation of the field*.

*Table 7. The literature available in the UL Library for the implementation of the field*

Printed publications			Breakdown of expenditure by language			
Books	Serial editions, periodical * editions	Other types of publications	Latvian	English	Russian	other languages
50/147	6/10101	15/26	25/10223	46/51	-	-
Total: 71 titles in 10,274 copies						

\* journals *Latvijas Arhitektūra*, *GEO*, newspapers *Diena*, *Dienas Bizness*, *Latvijas Avīze*

*Table 8. The literature available in the Library of Natural Sciences for the implementation of the field*

Printed publications			Breakdown of expenditure by language			
Books	Serial editions, periodical * editions	Other types of publications	Latvian	English	Russian	other languages
Total: 71 titles in 10,274 copies						

Books	Serial editions, periodical * editions	Other types of publications	Latvian	English	Russian	other languages
19/43	4/620	-	4/646	19/17	-	-

Total: 23 titles in 663 copies

\*journal *GEO*, newspapers *Diena*, *Dienas Bizness*, *Latvijas Avīze*

### **The level of digitisation of the collection**

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

At the moment they consist of more than 150 publications, specifically, in the field of *Spatial Planning*.

### **E-resources**

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

By modernizing the availability of electronic resources, the latest technology web service *Primo Discovery* and *SFX* has been introduced in the *UL Library*.

In 2020, the UL subscribes to 34 e-resource platforms (which contain e-book platforms - *VLeBooks*, *ProQuest Ebook Central*, and e-journal databases - *Cambridge Journals Online* (archive available until 31.12.2018), *Emerald eJournals Premier* (archive available until 22.04.2020), *JSTOR I-XII, XIV, XV* and *Life Sciences Collections*, *Oxford Journals Online*, *Sage Journals Online*, *ScienceDirect*, *SpringerLink Contemporary Journals*, *Taylor & Francis Social Science & Humanities Library*, *Physical Review Journals* and separately purchased e-journals and reference resources - *LETA online news*, *LETA Archive and Nozare.lv*, *Letonika*, and tools - *SAGE Research Methods*, *Passport*, *Orbis*, *MarketLine*, and mixed format databases - *ClinicalKey*, *EBSCOhost* (available until 31.12 .2020.), *European Pharmacopoeia*, *LVS Latvian Standards Online Reading Room*, *OECD iLibrary*, *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*, *ScienceDirect*, *Scopus*, *Time Higher Education*, *Web of Science Core Collection*, *ZentralBlattMATH*). They make available 21,069 full-text e-journals (including individual subscriptions), almost 5 million full-texts of doctoral and master's theses from around the world. The UL also connects to 121 credible open access databases with multi-format materials.

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

Once a year the *UL Library* evaluates and analyses the usability of the subscribed databases as well as regularly provides its users with trial access to various databases. Information about the e-

resources is available through the *UL Library* webpage "E-resources from A to Z" (<http://www.biblioteka.lu.lv/e-resursi/a-z/a/>).

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

### **Subscribed e-resources of the study field**

The subscribed multidisciplinary e-resources, which include materials for the study direction *Architecture and Construction* at the University of Latvia, are:

- **Cambridge Journals Online** - Cambridge University Press is a full-text database of multidisciplinary e-journals that offers information in more than 300 scientific journals, as well as related online resources. The database contains full texts in such fields as spatial, regional planning, urban design, ecology, geology, etc. c. The e-resource archive is available at the University of Latvia until 31.12.2018.
- **EBSCO Academic Search Complete** - a scientific information resource with information from more than 12,500 full-text, including 7,300 scientifically peer-reviewed journals. The database also offers the ability to view annotations from 12,500 journals and 13,200 books, reports and conference proceedings. *The resource UL is available until 31.12.2020.*
- **Emerald eJournals Premier** - the full-text e-journal database provides access to a total of more than 1 million full-text e-journal articles in urban planning, etc. sectors. *The e-resource archive is available at the University of Latvia until 22.04.2020.*
- **JSTOR** - database of journals, books and primary sources. JSTOR has access to journals from leading publishers: *Sage Publications, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Blackwell Publishing, Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, John Wiley & Sons*, and more. The chronological coverage of magazines goes back to the beginning of their publication.
- **LVS Latvian Standards Online Reading Room** - a set of documents of the Latvian National Standardization Institution.
- **Oxford Journals Online** - the collection provides access to 350 authoritative and leading journals published in collaboration with the world's leading scientific organizations. The database includes full-text journals with high citation index indicators in various fields of science - applied sciences, environment and its preservation, interdisciplinary studies, etc.
- **ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global** - The world's largest database of dissertations and master's theses contains almost five million works in various fields, including applied sciences.
- **SAGE Journals Online** - SAGE's full-text journal database, featuring articles from more than 1,100 journals. Various sciences are represented in the database - applied sciences and including social sciences and humanities, etc.
- **SAGE Research Methods** - a library of research methods with more than 1,000 books, - reference books, journal articles and other resources from the world's leading scientists in the social sciences and humanities. *SAGE Research Methods* is a no-brainer online tool for researchers. LU has two collections available - *SAGE Research Methods - Books and Reference* and *SAGE Research Methods Cases*.
- **ScienceDirect** - *Elsevier* publishing database in the natural and technical sciences, life sciences and medicine, and the humanities and social sciences. The database contains information on several thousand magazines and books published by Elsevier. The full texts of about 2650 journals are available at the University of Latvia, mostly available from 2002 to the latest issue of the journal, as well as more than 350 e-books.
- **SpringerLink Contemporary Journals**- full-text database of *Springer Nature* It offers the

UL research, academic staff and student access to more than 6 million articles from more than 3,000 journals, covering the fields of eco-social sciences, social sciences and humanities.

- **Taylor & Francis Social Science & Humanities Library** provides access to full texts from more than 1,100 scientific journals. The broad thematic coverage includes sectors: regional, spatial planning, as well as sustainable development planning, and others.
- **Scopus** – database of bibliographic and citation information of multidisciplinary scientific publications of the publishing house
- **Web of Science** – *Clarivate Analytics* database, which contains the most important scientific information about more than 12,000 journals in social, educational, humanities and exact sciences, offering bibliographic and citation information, summaries and other information of articles. The database offers extensive search, selection and analysis of results, including information from 1990 onwards.

(see Annex 2.16. *Statistical data on the use of UL subscribed e-resource (databases)*)

### **E-books purchased by the UL Library in the study field**

E-book platforms are available in the *UL Library*, which include materials for the UL study field *Architecture and Construction*:

- **VleBooks** – an e-book platform with 20 publications from the world's leading publishers (eg *Cambridge University Press, Elsevier, Routledge, Springer*).
- **ProQuest Ebook Academic Complete** – e-book platform with 910 editions of the Master's study program *Spatial Planning* from the world's leading publishers (eg *Cambridge University Press, Elsevier, Morgan & Claypool Publishers, Routledge, Packt Publishing, Sage, Springer, Taylor & Francis Group, Wiley,* ).

Free access resources are available for the UL study field *Architecture and Construction*:

*Bookyards, Bookboon, Cambridge Dictionaries Online, De Gruyter Open, Directory of Open Access Books, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), EBSCO Open Dissertations, Europeana, Encyclopedia of Life, Eurostat Data EUscreen, Google Scholar, Latvijas Vēstnesis, LR Centrālās Statistikas Pārvaldes datubāze, OAPEN, Open Access Research Database (OARD), Palgrave Open, Periodika.lv, Project Gutenberg, Science Books Online, SpringerOpen, World Digital Library, Zenodo.*

The informative provision of the study field, including the library, periodicals and electronic resources, complies with the current scientific findings and the requirements of the professional field in order to successfully implement studies and develop scientific research. The library of the *Academic Center of Natural Sciences* of the University of Latvia is the first and only one in Latvia, which is open to students 24 hours a day, including Saturdays, and its services and equipment with modern computer equipment and copying equipment promote independent studies.

During the reporting period, UL FGES has invested heavily in the development of library infrastructure. The provision of study courses of the field program with study literature is approaching 90%. The study courses are mainly provided with study literature in English. In addition to study literature, study course materials are placed in the university's E-study (Moodle) environment.

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

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

In the case of elected academic positions, as well as the acting academic staff, the recruitment and selection are regulated by the *Regulatory enactments on academic and administrative positions at the University of Latvia*.

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

According to the regulations, the following academic positions exist at the University of Latvia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher, lecturer, researcher, assistant, research assistant.

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

The applicants for academic positions must deliver an open lecture, which is evaluated by two reviewers, who issue their opinion on the quality of the lecture. The electoral procedure is carried out either by the decision-making body of the relevant department (in the case of teaching staff, the Faculty Council) or, in the case of associate professors and professors, by the Council of Professors of the relevant field. Elections must take place within three months of the date of the invitation to tender. The candidates are voted by secret ballot. An applicant who has received more than half of the votes of the members present with the right to vote shall be considered elected. According to the Law on Higher Education Institutions, lecturers are elected for a term of 6 years. At the end of the term, the faculty decides on the need to announce a new competition. There are no restrictions on the term of office.

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

If the Senate chooses to decline the proposal from the department and not to publish vacancies, a visiting academic may be recruited; while if the respective department considers a member of hourly-paid staff to be more relevant to the development plans and needs of the faculty, the prospective employee concludes a contract for a specified period (usually for the duration of the study course).

In such cases, the decisions relating to the candidates' recruitment and selection are taken by the structural units, i.e. faculties. Centralized in these cases is only control that ensures that the unit's

remuneration is in compliance with internal and external laws and regulations. The Rector of the UL concludes an employment agreement with the person elected for the entire term of office.

The specifics of professional master's studies determine the need to attract specialists in the field, thus both lecturers elected to academic positions (provides more than 70% of the amount of contact hours) participate in the implementation of the program, and lecturers are invited every year. The academic (60%) and research work (40%) of the lecturers elected to the academic position of the FGES providing the study field is formed.

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

One of the key aspects of *Human Resource Development* as stipulated in the *UL Strategy* for 2021-2027 is the advancement of the UL academic staff professional development system. The UL is aware of the changes in the role of academic staff, who play a key role in ensuring the quality of studies and acquisition of knowledge, skills and competence, and therefore, in line with the UL Strategy a single UL academic staff professional development system is introduced by amending internal regulatory documents and offering to academic staff professional development opportunities. The professional development of the UL academic staff is organised in accordance with the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No 662 of 11.09 2018., Regulation on Requirements for Necessary Education and Professional Qualification, and Procedure of Continuing Professional Development of Educators where paragraph 16 states: "Educators of higher education and colleges shall, by the end of the term of their election, undertake a vocational development programme on innovations in the higher education system, or the higher education didactics, or the management of educational work at 160 academic hours (including at least 60 contact hours). Professional development may include international mobility and participation in conferences and seminars, as attested by the documents submitted, and is in line with the objective of professional development."

The *Department of Studies* of the University of Latvia and the *Adult Education Centre* of the *Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art* of the University of Latvia provide informative, consultative and methodological support to the UL academic staff in the field of the higher education didactics. The *Adult Education Centre* of the *Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art* of the University of Latvia offers a vocational development program "Didactics of Higher Education: modern theories and practices", as well as continuing education programs "Pedagogical aspects of the development of study programmes in higher education", "The professional development of the competence of the student trustee", etc.

On the completion of the continuing education programme "Methodology for the formulation and evaluation of the learning outcomes", programme directors and academic staff target the updating of their study courses and the mapping of the learning outcomes of the respective study programmes and study courses.

The UL academic staff has the opportunity to advance the English-language skills by completing the continuing training programme “Professional English Language Enhancement Course for Academic Staff” at the Centre for Applied Linguistics of the UL Faculty of Humanities.

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

To promote collegial learning and identify good practices in teaching, the continuing education programme “Promoting the colleague experience exchange of academic staff” where academic staff carries out peer observation, thereby directly promoting the exchange of teaching experience among academic staff and contributing to the UL organisational development has been developed.

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

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

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

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

During the preparation of the study field self-assessment report, information about the growth and qualification opportunities used by the lecturers involved in the UL study field *Architecture and Construction* during the reporting period was collected and summarized in the Table 9. *Promoting the growth of teaching staff - assessment of improvement of didactic skills and qualification improvement.*

During the reporting period, the teaching staff of the field is actively participating in professional development. The main directions of improvement work: attendance of courses, qualification improvement events, which is confirmed by received certificates. For example, several representatives of the academic staff took part in foreign languages courses; participation in international projects, research; participation in professional organizations, councils, committees, commissions, associations, participation in various international scientific editorial boards, committees.

Five lecturers (assoc.prof. I.Šteinberga, assoc.prof. P.Šķinkis, assoc.prof. A.Zariņa, assist.prof. J.Paiders, assist.prof. I.Grīne) UL project *Renewal of academic staff and improvement of competencies at the University of Latvia* have attended English language skills development courses organized by the University of Latvia, assoc. prof. A.Zariņa. In 2020 assist.prof. S.Meiere attended the public speaking, speech art and presentation bases for cooperation with industry and audience training within the same mentioned UL project. Prof. A. Briede studied Commercialization

in 2019.

Thanks to the support of the UL project *Renewal of Academic Staff and Improvement of Competences at the University of Latvia* assoc. prof. P. Šķinķis in the 2018/2019 acad. year had internship in the leading Latvian planning company Ltd Metrum, while assoc. prof. A.Zariņa in the 2019/2020 acad.year - in JSC "Latvia's State Forests".

The work of the study program lecturers for the European Commission and participation in professional international cooperation networks should be noted, for example, participation of assoc. prof. I.Kudrenickis in the European research cooperation network ODYSSEE-MURE since 2007, the task of which is to create a scientific methodological basis for energy efficiency management and to improve energy efficiency assessment methods, and doc. E.Spiriajeva's work since 2019 as a certified expert of the European Commission in the field of territorial cooperation, sustainable mobility and sparsely populated areas.

During the reporting period, there was active participation of lecturers in professional organizations, for example, prof. O.Nikodemus - member of the Latvian Soil Society; Member of the Latvian Geographical Society; Member of the European Landscape Ecology Association, member of the Council of the Latvian Environmental Protection Fund, lecturer G. Lukstiņa - member of the Latvian Association of Spatial Planners; Member of the Board of the Urban Institute, Riga. until 2019, from 2019 member; member of the Latvian Landscape Association.

The academic staff has actively attended international scientific conferences, participated in development programs and scientific editorial boards. Curricula vitae of the teaching staff (in the Curriculum Vitae in the Europass format, see Annex No.2.4. *CV of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field*).

*Table 9. Promoting the growth of teaching staff -assessment of improvement of didactic skills and qualification improvement*

<b>No</b>	<b>Criteria / academic year</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>1.</b>	Improving language skills <small>[1]</small>						4	1
<b>2.</b>	University didactics (training) <small>[2]</small>							2
<b>3</b>	Internships in companies						1	1
<b>4.</b>	Attendance at various summer schools				1	1		
<b>5.</b>	Teaching lectures and study courses within the framework of Erasmus and Erasmus + programs			2				
<b>6.</b>	Participation in Erasmus or other staff development programs	5	2	2	1	1	5	5
<b>7.</b>	Participation with reports in various international and national conferences and seminars	8	11	12	20	27	30	16

8.	Work in EU commissions, participation in professional international cooperation networks	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
9.	Membership in professional organizations	35	34	34	34	36	37	38
10.	Participation in councils, committees, commissions, associations	11	15	18	21	20	20	21
11.	Participation in the preparation of the Latvian National Report (UN)				1		1	
12.	Participation in the organization of continuing education and its provision	1					1	1
13.	Participation in various international scientific editorial boards, committees	3	4	4	5	5	5	
14.	Membership in a national editorial board		1	1	2	2	2	2
15.	Participation in various international organization committees, scientific commissions, organization of international conferences			1	2		1	2
16.	Participation in various international and national juries				1			1

[1] For example, learning foreign languages in courses, trainings.

[2] Professional development courses, trainings, lectures in pedagogy, university didactics, work with students, etc.

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

In the academic year 2020/2021 21 lecturers participated in the implementation of the study field - 12 lecturers from UL FGES, 1 lecturer from UL Faculty of Law, 1 from RTU; 1 lecturer from Klaipeda University and visiting professor from Weimar Bauhaus University: a total of 3 professors, 1 visiting

professor, 5 associate professors, 4 assistant professors, assistant professor, lecturer, and 5 lecturers - planning professionals.

It is envisaged that in the academic year 2021/2022 23 lecturers - 12 lecturers from UL FGES, 1 lecturer from LU Faculty of Law, 1 lecturer from LU Faculty of Social Sciences, 1 lecturer from RTU, participate in the implementation of the study direction. 1 lecturer from Klaipeda University (3 professors, 5 associate professors, 4 docents, lecturer, researcher, assistant professor, lecturer, 68.8% are elected at the University of Latvia) and 7 lecturers - professionals in the field of planning participate in the implementation of the study field, see Annex 2.3 *Teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field*.

In the Annex No 2.3. table additionally includes 2 lecturers involved in the implementation of the study field and the study courses to be implemented by them in addition - additional courses *Environment Protection* and *Civil Protection*, which must be acquired in addition to the master's program if the student has not mastered the requirements of the *Environmental Protection Law* and *Civil Protection Law* (the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 512, Article, p. 25).

During the reporting period, local planning specialists from professional organizations, such as *Ltd Metrum*, *Ltd Edgars Bērziņa's office*, *Riga Energy Agency*, *Riga Planning Region*, and the *Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development* of the Republic of Latvia, were involved in teaching study courses and lectures, seminars and practical work.

The structure of the academic staff is favourable and reflects the integration with other UL, RTU and international study programs, however, the academic staff of FGES provides the largest amount of studies - 73% (see Annex No 2.3 *Teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field*).

The structure of the academic staff complies with Article 55 of the *Law on Higher Education Institutions* regarding the development, submission for approval, implementation of the study program and on taking over the study program in case of its liquidation.

The structure of the academic staff ensures a high quality of academic education, which is ensured mainly by highly qualified and internationally recognized experts in their field. According to the data of the external audit of the functions and tasks of the scientific institutions to be reorganized at the University of Latvia, in comparison with other academic structural units, the age composition of the academic staff of the FGES has a good intergenerational structure and growth potential. The professional qualification fully corresponds to the implementation of the study program planned in the study field, the academic staff with a doctor's degree makes up 67%. Knowledge of the state language complies with the Regulations of Cabinet of Ministers 7.07.2008. No. 733 [Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language](#).

Fourteen lecturers (14) have a doctoral degree, the rest have a master's degree. Ten lecturers have a doctoral degree in geography, one lecturer has a doctoral degree in geology, one in architecture, one in engineering and one in law. Among the lecturers there are four graduates of the study program (N. Kotoviča, J. Sperga, M. Vološina, E. Taurene). See Annex 2.4. *CV of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field*.

All of the academic staff speak English, several lecturers (A.Zariņa, P.Šķiņķis, I.Grīne) in the reporting period have supplemented their knowledge with English language courses (see Annex 2.4., CV are also available on the FGES website <http://www.geo.lu.lv>) at a level to implement studies in English. Currently, 16% of study courses are conducted in English. For the third academic year in a row, the professional English language skills of the academic staff are being improved for work in the study environment. During the reporting period, the study course *Practice in*

*Specialization (6 CP)* in the specialization *Urban Studies and Planning* was taught in English.

In Annex No. 2.3 *Teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field*, a table is attached, which provides basic information about the teachers involved in the implementation of the field of study, indicating their degree / qualification, election status at the university, knowledge of foreign languages, study courses.

The academic qualifications of the teaching staff and the academic staff, as well as the diversity of professional competencies and knowledge of the field help to achieve the expected study results. It is substantiated by the evaluation of students, graduates and employers (see the results of the survey in Part III, *subchapter 2.6. Analysis and evaluation of the results of surveys (students, graduates and employers)*) and the successful integration of graduates into the labor market (See Annex No 2.14. *Employment and professional growth of the study field graduates*).

### **Teaching staff mobility**

Active mobility of lecturers and students is based on the support of the ERASMUS program, long-term cooperation links, and support of various other funds and programs.

In addition to the ERASMUS program, funding from various projects (*NordPlus Higher Education, Nordplus Horizontal, Baltic-German Higher Education Office*, etc.) is also used to attract foreign lecturers. For example, with the support of the *K. Adenauer Foundation*, co-operation in the field of internship planning and urban regeneration studies with the Technical University of Dortmund was continued. Within the framework of the ERASMUS bilateral agreement between the UL and the Catholic University of Leuven, and in cooperation with the NGO Urban Institute (Riga), research has been carried out, as well as the preparation of a doctoral student (1). For the statistics on incoming and outgoing mobility of teachers in the reference period see Annex No 2.5 *Incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff during the reference period*.

**Incoming mobility.** During the autumn semester of 2014, an international study course - Practice in the specialization *Urban Studies and Planning* was implemented in Riga and Talsi town thanks to the support of the *Baltic-German Higher Education Office* project *Urban Quality Assessment for Integrated Spatial Planning*. Thanks to the possibilities of the project resources, several guest lectures and participation in practical classes took place within it: Dr. Kataikko Paivi (Technical University of Dortmund) - lecture on planning the Ruhr region in the framework of the project *Urban Quality Assessment for Integrated Spatial Planning*; Dr. Haas E. Dirk (Technical University of Dortmund) - on urban planning practice in the framework of the project *Urban Quality Assessment for Integrated Spatial Planning* and the use of the Methodology "LEGEND" for the study of the urban environment; prof. Christa Reichel (Technical University of Dortmund) on today's approach to urban planning and research; and assist. prof. Eduardas Spiriajevas (Klaipeda University) on evaluation and planning of tourism development resources.

In turn, thanks to the activity of the lecturers of the program gaining funding from the *K. Adenauer Foundation*, during the autumn semester of 2015 it was possible to continue this international specialization practice study course *Urban Studies and Planning*, the lecturer and students of the program went to Kamen, Germany. Within the framework of this, several joint lectures of lecturers of the Technical University of Dortmund (Dr. Haas E. Dirk; Prof. Crista Reichel) and students took place in Germany.

In the academic year 2016 - 2017, summer of 2016, close cooperation with the Estonian University of Life Sciences in Tartu and the University of Turku was started with the support of the *Nordplus Higher Education 2016 program* in the framework of the project *Localized Learning Approach to Urban Studies&Planning in the Baltic Sea Region* in collaboration with NGO Urban Institute, Riga, and municipalities of Rezekne (Latvia), Narva (Estonia) and Turku (Finland). Thanks

to the qualitative implementation of the first project, the continuation of the international course *Urban studies and Planning* was supported in the next 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 acad. years. To 36 students from three universities (12 from each university) lectures were given and field studies, workshops and seminars were led by an international team of lecturers - Sampo Ruoppila and Jani Vuolteenaho University of Turku (Finland), Friedrich Kuhlmann and Jekaterina Balicka, Estonian University of Life Sciences (Estonia) and Pēteris Šķiņķis, Gunta Lukstiņa, University of Latvia (Latvia).

UL project *Renewal of academic staff and improvement of competencies at the University of Latvia* provided an opportunity to invite E. Spiriajevas from Klaipeda University (2019-2020) as a guest lecturer and prof. F.Eckardt as a visiting professor from the Bauhaus - University of Weimar (2021).

During the reporting period (2013 - 2021) a significant number of planning professionals from different countries, such as J.Buechel from Germany, A. Roze and K. Drabic from Canada, M. Geldof from the Belgium have given guest lectures and led classes within the thematic study courses of the study program for spatial planning students.

**Outgoing mobility.** During the reporting period, actively participated in ERASMUS and other mobility projects, as well as thanks to other funds, assoc. prof. P.Šķiņķis, assoc. prof. A. Zariņa, as well as other members of the academic staff. As a result of cooperation with other universities, they have lectured at European universities, e.g. P.Šķiņķis has given lectures at the Catholic University of Leuven, the University of Bergen and the Technical University of Dortmund; associate professor A.Zariņa at the University of Bergen and Tallinn University.

In the 2014, thanks to the international project *Urban Quality Assessment for Integrated Spatial Planning*, in cooperation with the Dortmund Technical University and Klaipeda University, the intensive course *Practice in Specialization* with the specialization *Urban Studies and Planning*, was implemented. P.Šķiņķis gave lectures and led practical studies with participation of the Klaipeda University students. In the autumn of 2015, within the framework of the mentioned intensive study course, which was implemented in cooperation with Dortmund Technical University, P. Šķiņķis gave lectures and led practical classes, in which students from the Dortmund Technical University took part. In the following years (2016 - 2019) P.Šķiņķis gave lectures and led practical classes, seminars in the practice course in specialization *Urban studies and Planning* which was attended by students of the University of Turku (Finland) and Estonia University of Life Sciences (Estonia).

Teacher mobility in the reporting period 2019/2020. and 2020/2021. acad. years was significantly affected by the *Covid-19* emergency situation, which reduced the mobility of teachers. Lectures, classes and joint co-operation events between foreign students and UL lecturers were organized online (eg lectures and participation in the course and practical work by assist. prof. E. Spiriajevas, quest lectures by prof. F.Eckardt, the participation of Bauhaus - Veimar University students in program classes, and guest lecturers and students from the London South Bank University together with the lecturers of the UL, jointly implemented studies and distance learning excursion in Latvia, Riga (Riga, Imanta, Āgenskalns, Cēsis)).

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

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

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

Academic support in academic matters is managed centrally by the UL Department of Student Services and the responsible persons with the respective faculties: director of the study program, study advisor, trustee, mentor, coordinator, academic staff, and the UL Students' Council and Faculty Students' Councils. Advice on the use of library and Internet resources is provided by the UL Library. The ULatvia Library provides consultations on the use of the library and Internet resources. Table 10 shows examples of key tasks to be performed by student support units / staff.

Table 10. Examples of key tasks to be performed by student support units / staff

<b>Structural unit / staff</b>	<b>Key responsibilities</b>
Faculty Student Council	
Coordinator, study advisor	Provides study advice, assists in day-to-day issues related to the study process, files study records, advises on the Information System of the University of Latvia (LUIS).
Mentor	A senior student who helps freshman students adapt to the study environment and share their experience.
Director of the study program	Organises and manages the development of a study program in accordance with the requirements of the specific scientific or economic sector, cooperates with employers and internship sites in matters of study content, evaluates and approves individual study modules and individual study plans, etc.
Department of Student Services	Organises the admissions process, advises the Faculty and students on mobility program, study, social and cultural issues, advises and organises career coaching and consultancy. Organises adaptation measures for students, provides training for trustees, mentors, organises cooperation with employers, etc.

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

The Career Centre provides the following services to students:

- Individual counselling for future studies and careers, setting up an individual career plan, providing support for the transition between different levels of education and from education to the labour market.

- Workshops for career planning skills (“Career planning and development skills”, “My first job interview”, “Stress management”, etc.).

- Internet resource - Career Centre home page (information available in both Latvian and English) <https://www.karjera.lu.lv/> and <https://www.karjera.lu.lv/eng/> provides up-to-date information on career planning issues, occupational information and the labour market.

- The “E-career” electronic resource <https://ekarjera.lu.lv/lv/login> and <https://ekarjera.lu.lv/login>, which enables students to quickly find their internship opportunities and jobs by adding their CVs to a database and employers to recruit employees by listing information on job vacancies in the database.

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

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

The assessment of infrastructure accessibility for persons with disabilities has been conducted in cooperation with the NGO Apeirons (organization of people with disabilities and their friends). The results obtained are considered both in the construction of the new infrastructure and in the provision of study program.

During the study start period, students in the field are informed about the UL Student Support Institutions and opportunities to use support measures. Participation in events outside the UL FGES is carried out by students individually and information about it is limited. In its turn, the use of support measures within the UL FGES is constant, especially in cooperation with the director of the study program.

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

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

In accordance with the data of the external audit of the functions and tasks of the scientific institutions to be reorganized at the University of Latvia, the staff of the FGES provides sufficient scientific capacity to perform scientific activities.

The audit report indicates that the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences is one of the two faculties of the UL, which has a large proportion of scientists, which has been achieved through the implementation of successful scientific activities and large-scale scientific projects. During the reporting period, the academic staff carried out research activities mainly in significant international and several projects financed by the *Latvian Council of Science (LCS)*, as well as was involved in applied research commissioned by state institutions and commercial companies.

A total of 91 scientific articles were published in the reporting period from 2014 to 2021 (see Annex 2.6 *Publications of the teaching staff, participation in the project implementation and international conferences*), of which 23 were in internationally peer-reviewed publications (SCIs), including those with a high citation index. During the reporting period, the academic staff has been active, providing at least 67 field-related reports at conferences, symposia and congresses. Thematic research cover various directions of geography and environmental science sub-branches approved by *Latvian Academy of Sciences*. Most of the research is carried out in the departments of Geography and Environmental Science of the FGES. Due to the fact that the *Latvian Council of Science* has changed the procedure for awarding grants, during the reporting period the number of Latvian state-funded research projects implemented by the staff involved in the implementation of study programs has significantly decreased, while the number of international projects has increased.

During the reporting period, the academic staff carried out research activities mainly in significant international and several projects financed by the *Latvian Council of Science*, as well as was involved in applied research commissioned by state institutions and commercial companies. Thematic research directions cover various directions of geography and environmental science sub-branches approved by Council (Annex 2.6.). Most of the research is carried out in the departments of Geology, Geography and Environmental Science of the FGES. During the reporting period, the number of Latvian state-funded research projects implemented by the staff involved in the implementation of study programs has significantly decreased, while the number of international projects has increased.

#### **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 research activity of the academic staff, participation in the development of international and *Latvian Council of Science* funded projects directly and promotively influences the study process. Research activity provides an opportunity to provide insight into the latest research directions, current scientific and practical solutions related to the study content both in individual study courses and in general issues of planning field. Improving the content of study courses is also directly related to the lecturer's research work.

Students are involved in various research projects developing master's theses. Supervisors of master's theses (academic staff of the UL) often direct students' research work in connection with the topic of the research work itself, if possible, lecturers also involve students in the work of research projects (O.Nikodemus, A.Briede, I.Kudreņickis, A.Zariņa, I.Vinogradovs, P.Šķiņķis).

The main directions of linking research and student work are:- Land use change and development of ecological succession of landscapes.

- Improvement of landscape assessment and planning methodology.
- Climate change management tools and their application in Latvia.
- Regeneration of urban areas.- Population mobility and population development.
- Development and planning of traffic infrastructure.

Evaluating the use of research results in the study process, it should be noted that the findings of scientific research and current information obtained at international conferences are regularly reflected in lecture materials of lecturers and discussed with students in practical classes. It allows to create higher quality study courses and better communication with students, helps to provide students with a deeper understanding of planning theory and knowledge of modern spatial development trends, stimulates the acquisition of research methods and skills to apply them.

**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.**

During the reporting period, the recommendations of the accreditation expert group on increasing the internationalization of the program and expanding research activities were continued. The implementation of several study courses in English has been continued.

The teaching staff of the field has ensured the management of international (52) or local (12) projects important for the program or participated in their implementation, including:

- EU URBACT II program project *USEAct (Urban Sustainable Environmental Actions) - Sustainable Urban Environment Renewal, Latvian sub-project Riga Metropolitan Area Urban Development Action Plan*, G.Lukstiņa national expert, 2014 - 04.2015.

- Norwegian Financial Mechanism project *Latvian Local Government Training Program Project Increasing the Territorial Development Planning Capacity of Latvian Planning Regions and Local Governments and Development of Planning Documents (No.4.3.-24 / NFI / INP-002)*, 2013-2016. P.Šķiņķis, G.Lukstiņa - experts.

- Project *GrassLIFE, LIFE16NAT / LV / 000262 Restoration of grasslands and promotion of their various uses*, in the framework of which the University of Latvia, non-governmental organization Latvian Fund for Nature (Lead Partner), farmers and landowners (...) cooperate.

- *Three Nordplus Higher Education projects (2017, 2018, 2019) Localized Learning Approach to Urban Studies and Planning in the Baltic Sea Region (NPHE-2018/10222)* (P.Šķiņķis, G.Lukstiņa).

- *Nordplus Horizontal 2019 - 2021. - Sustainable Cities in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, NPHZ-2019/10030, (P.Šķiņķis, G.Lukstiņa), (full list of projects see Annex 2.6 *Teaching staff publications, participation in the project implementation and international conferences*). In Annex No 2.6. is attached the list of scientific publications of the teaching staff related to the study program in peer-reviewed publications.

At the beginning of 2021, a new cooperation with the Catholic University of Leuven is being developed in the implementation of several applied research projects, for example, preparation of the project *Radi Rīgu II*, within the framework of bilateral doctoral studies - psychological motives in the decision-making planning process. In co-

operation with Klaipeda University, a study is being developed on the efficiency of territorial governance in Latvia and Lithuania and the territorial (peripheral) processes of demographic decline.

**4.4. Specify the way how the higher education institution/ college promotes the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research and/or artistic creation. Provide the description and assessment of the activities carried out by the academic staff in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation relevant to the study direction by providing examples and the summary of the quantitative data on the activities in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation relevant to the study direction over the reporting period, for instance, the publications, participation in conferences, activities in the field of artistic creation, participation in projects by the academic staff members, etc., by listing the aforementioned according to the relevance.**

The thematic range of research corresponding to the study field is wide. Representatives of the academic staff in the reporting period (2014 - 2020) have actively published the research results, in total - 141 publications (see Appendix 2.6. *List of publications of the academic staff of the teaching staff, participation in project implementation and conferences*).

The main research directions are the following:

- Sustainable development and territorial management;
- Assessment, management and planning of territorial development potential;
- Community development, evaluation of public participation and social capital;
- Climate change management tools and their application in Latvia;
- Landscape, ecosystem assessment, management and planning methodology.

First, the involvement of academic staff in research is strengthened by encouraging them to engage in international thematically diverse research projects and to develop publications at the appropriate level. Teachers of the field have participated in the implementation of more than 52 different international scientific projects (Horizon 2020, EU 7th Framework Program projects, Latvian-German Higher Education Office (DAAD) program, Interreg Central Baltic, BONUS project BaltCoast, Nord Plus projects, etc.)

Secondly, research opportunities expand the resources of national, Latvian Science Council (LSC) as well as individual local government support funds for the implementation of research projects and publication of their results. LSC support has been implemented for climate change and its impact assessment (A.Briede), ecosystem resource assessment and management solutions (O.Nikodemus). Applied research projects have been financed by the City of Riga (P.Šķiņķis, J.Paiders).

Thirdly, the promotion of the involvement of the teaching staff in research is realized by strengthening the development of the study content with the solutions of research-relevant topics, mainly necessary for the development of municipal territories. Master's students are often involved in these projects. Mention should be made here of the development of research-based strategic development documents for planning regions (P.Šķiņķis, A. Zariņa), development of local government development documents (P.Šķiņķis, G. Lukstiņa, Zariņa, O.Nikodemus, E.Taurene, I. Kudreņickis, M. Kalvane). These activities create a more direct transfer of lecturers' knowledge to

students by involving them in their work or using the analysis of specific examples in the learning process. In co-operation with local governments, local case and thematic research is carried out in the study process, which is developed by the student under the guidance of lecturers. These studies are often the initial work for the continuation of research in specific areas carried out by lecturers, and also students in the development of master's theses. These activities create a more direct transfer of lecturers' knowledge to students by involving them in their work or using the analysis of specific examples in the learning process.

The range of research is characterized by publications in accordance with the above research directions.

**In the field of sustainable development and territorial management** in 2014-2015, new approaches were developed for solving territorial management issues in the context of sustainable development. Šķiņķis P., Cimdiņš R. 2015; Ham P., Wolf I., Glove R., Ušča M. 2015, Ham P., Glove R. (2015). (see list of publications in Appendix 2.6.)

The topic of integrated sustainable development management is covered by several studies and publications (Ernstein, R., Kudrenickis, I., Kaulins, J., London-levina, A. 2017 .;) Kaulins J., Ernsteins R., Kudrenickis I. 2018; Lagzdina E., Kudrenickis I., Ernstein R., London A. 2018.) In 2018-2019, an applied research dedicated to the problems of integrated territorial management was carried out in connection with the prepared new administrative-territorial division in Latvia (Šķiņķis P., Miglavs, A. 2019.) Another range of work includes the development of an indicator system for municipal sustainability development management (Kaulins, J., Ernsteins, R., Kudrenickis, I., London, A., Zīlniece, I. 2017; Kaulins J., Ernsteins R., Kudrenickis I. 2018; Kaulins, J., Ernstein, R., Kudrenickis, I. 2017). There are also works of practical significance for local governments in the topic of sustainable development assessment and regeneration of territories. The development of territorial regeneration approaches was implemented in the analytical and methodological recommendations (Gūtmane, H., Geldofs, M., Šķiņķis, P., Pužulis, A., Spiriājevas, E. 2020).

**The assessment of the development potential of territories, management and planning** is a constant focus of research related to the field of study. The assessment of the economic development potential of territories in recent years has been largely related to the problems of population movement and economic development (Apsīte-Berina E., Paiders J., Dahs A., Berzins M. 2020; Paiders, J. 2019; Grube G., Paiders J. 2020; Zarins E, Paiders J. 2020), as well as the impact of small and medium-sized enterprise development on territorial development (Spiriājevas, E. 2016). Research on the community development, public participation and the evaluation of social capital should be mentioned as an investment in the development of socially rooted communicative planning, which has also been developed in close cooperation with state and municipal institutions. A methodology for assessing the development potential of local territories was developed (Šķiņķis P., Vilka I., Cimdiņš R., Ušča M. 2015), which was based on a qualitative assessment of community activity opportunities (Cimdiņš R., Šķiņķis P., Kaugurs K. 2015), as well as using a quantitative approach (Cimdiņš R., Šķiņķis P., Ušča M. 2015). The social potential of territorial development has been analyzed in connection with the ongoing demographic processes (Grube G., Paiders J. 2020, Zarins E, Paiders J. 2020), territorial belonging factors (Spiriājevičē, I., Spiriājevas, E. 2015), management possibilities (Ernsteins, R. Kudrenickis, I., London-levina, A., Kaulins, J., Urtāns A., V. 2017), Lagzdina, E., Kudrenickis, I., Ernstein, R., London, A. 2018. Research on the legal provision of public participation and decision-making rights has been conducted by S. Meiere 2014, 2018).

**Climate change management tools and issues of their application** are of particular importance in the context of global processes. Climate change assessment (A. Briede 2016; Apsīte, E., Nikodemus, O., Brūmelis, G., Lagzdina, A., Elferts, D., Rendenieks, Z., Klints L., 2017; Briede A., Claremar B., Hanssen-Bauer I., Holopainen J., Moberg A., Nordli Ø., Rimkus E., and Wibig J. 2015;

Steinberga I., Bikse J. Jr., Kleperis J., Bikse J. 2016) is the basis for applied climate change adaptation (Kule L., A.Briede, M.Klavins, G.Eberhards & A.Locmanis 2013) and management research (Ernšteins, R., Lontone, A., Kauliņš, J., Zvirbule, L., Strazdiņš, J., Šteinberga, Z., Kudrenickis, I., Zīlniece, I., Ķepals, A. 2014; Kudrenickis, R., Ernstein, R., Lagzdina, E. 2016).

**The field of landscape, ecosystem assessment, management and planning methodology** is closely related to the “territorial” or land use planning practice. The research covers landscape ecological assessment of territorial resources (Reķe, A., Zariņa, A., Vinogradovs, I. 2019; Vinogradovs, I., Nikodemus, O., Tabors, G., Krūze, I., & Elferts, D. 2016; (Zariņa, A., Vološina, M. ; Lukstina, G. 2018; Ušča, M., Vinogradovs, I., Reķe, A., Immurs, DV, & Zariņa, A. 2019; Printsman, A., Lincola, H., Zariņa, A., Vološina, M., Häyrynen, M., Palang, H. 2019, Nikodemus O., Brūmelis G., Ruskule A., Auniņa L., Ikauniece S., Mendziņa I., Račinska L., 2015), development and application of ecosystem service methodology in planning (Ušča, M., Vinogradovs, I., Reķe, A., Immurs, DV, & Zariņa, A. 2019; Villoslada M., Vinogradovs I., Ruskule A., Veidemane K., Nikodemus O., Kasparinskis R., Sepp K., Gulbinas J. 2018; Vinogradovs, I., Nikodemus, O., Villoslada, M., Ruskule, A., Veidemane, K., Gulbinas, J., Morknenas, J., Kasparinskis, R., Sepp, K., Järv, H., Kliimask, J., Zariņa, A., Brūmelis, G. 2020), transformation of territories and value analysis in connection with anthropogenic intervention and its influences (Zariņa, A., Vološina, M. 2018; Zariņa A., Vinogradovs I., Šķiņķis P. 2018), landscape planning (Vološina, M., Zariņa, A., Nikodemus, O., Vinogradovs, I. 2018) and land-use planning (Veidemane, K., Nikodemus, O., 2015).

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

Students are involved in various research projects developing master's theses. Supervisors of master's theses (academic staff of the University of Latvia) often direct students' research work in connection with the topics of the research work itself, lecturers also involve students in the work of research projects (O.Nikodemus, Z.Krišjāne, A.Zariņa, I.Vinogradovs, P.Šķiņķis). The main directions of linking research and student work are:

- Land use change and development of ecological succession of landscapes.
- Improvement of landscape assessment and planning methodology.
- Climate change management tools and their application in Latvia.
- Regeneration of urban areas.
- Population movement and population development.
- Development of territorial communities.
- Development and planning of traffic infrastructure.

The research activity of the academic staff, participation in the development of international and *Latvian Council of Science* funded projects directly and positively influences the study work. Participation in conferences and project development or their management gives an opportunity to provide insight into the latest research directions, current problems of scientific and practical work

and their solution. Improving the content of study courses is also directly related to the teacher's research work and scientific activities.

The students of the program with the presentations and reports (providing both individual reports and together with the lecturers) actively participate in conferences, mainly in the annual scientific conferences of the University of Latvia in the subsection *Spatial Planning* (e.g., at the 79th International Scientific Conference of the University of Latvia in 2021 M. Fonteina-Kazeka, together with the co-authors Dr. geogr. I.Vinogradov, A. Ločmanis). Students are involved in various research projects while developing master's theses.

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

Many innovations are applied in the study direction both in the international joint cooperation of students and lecturers, and in developing proposals for specific places or territories in response to the invitation of local governments, participating in joint international events, and gaining other practical experience in studies outside the faculty.

For example, with the support of the URBACT program, in the autumn semester of 2019, innovative methods for communicative urban studies were implemented in Riga under a study tour / workshop (walkshop) led by lecturer N.Adams from London South Bank University. They were implemented in cooperation with the representatives of the *Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development* within the framework of the *European Cooperation Day* urban environment events.

Innovative international cooperation experience was gained by the students and lecturers of the program participating in the international urban planning event *Knowledge and City* (MadCity), working in creative workshops together with lecturers, students and foreign experts from other Latvian universities.

In order to gain more practical knowledge experience, a new innovative approach to studies was implemented in the spring of 2019 - two days of lectures and practical classes were implemented in the leading planning company *Ltd Metrum*, with students leading the company's professional representatives.

Since 2013 in the autumn semesters (except for 2020), internship in the specialization "Urban Studies and Planning", with financial support of the *NordPlus program*, *Adenauer Foundation*, etc. Inter-university (with the participation of the universities of Liepaja, Klaipeda, Dortmund, Tartu, Turku) settlement planning and urban regeneration studies was implemented. In the implementation of these studies, new methods were used to create work for small groups of international interdisciplinary students, to analyze places in urban areas, integrating different students' knowledge, and to develop practical proposals (projects) for specific municipalities (Liepaja, Talsi, Kamene, Rezekne, Narva and Turku).

Since 2015, as a special activity is implemented - a planning plein air study for 2-3 days in Latvia or Lithuania (e.g., Dobele city, Viesīte region, Telšiai city (Lithuania), etc.), where students work in a specific place under the guidance of lecturers and prepare planning proposals for the municipality. Proposals, the knowledge and skills acquired during all study courses during the academic year are

applied and integrated.

In 2018, responding to the call of the *Riga City Development Department* within the project *Baltic Urban Lab*, a student applied research and regeneration proposals were developed for the Riga city part (Mūkusalā), in which new methods for stakeholder involvement were applied.

In the 2020 academic year, in cooperation with the *Riga Energy Agency*, a project for the development of public transport (Interreg BSR project *Green Mobility for Seniors (GreenSAM)*) was implemented, using specially adapted methods for senior participation - students and seniors worked in joint working groups both in a face - to - face seminar and online event.

In the autumn semester of 2020, within the study course *Principles of Spatial Planning*, the study process and acquisition of knowledge / skills, in response to the invitation of Bauska municipality, was adapted to support the planning process for the needs of the newly formed Bauska municipality. In the spring semester of 2021, the work of developing applied study solutions for Bauska region and Bauska city is continued within the framework of the course work *Territorial Development Planning*.

Every year the course work *Territorial Development Planning* is constantly developed for a specific territory, in cooperation with the local government, according to its needs (e.g., Lielvārde municipality, Skrīveri municipality, Ķekava municipality, Mārupe municipality, etc.). The development of an annual course paper for a specific place requires innovations of the study organization in order to develop practical, feasible proposals for different territories and planning situations.

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

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

The circle of cooperation partners of the study field is wide. Among them are international cooperation partners (universities and institutions), which are selected taking into account mutual interest, similar study and activity profiles, quality of knowledge and experience in the field of spatial planning, as well as cooperation experience in implementing joint projects.

Among the study program partners, "key" institutions forming and implementing national level development policy, whose involvement in cooperation with the UL is based on the principle of "gain to gain", are interested in the study program teaching staff and students investment in research, elaboration and transfer of new policies, while LU - to get the latest information from the institution for example on topical issues of regional development and planning, incl. legislation and

development support instruments.

Latvian municipalities and planning regions have an important place among partners, whose choice for cooperation is also based on mutual interests and qualities - professional competence of municipalities and regions in the field of spatial development, planning and management, needs to gain new knowledge and knowledge transfer from the LU lecturers. The criterion of cooperation on the part of the UL is that the respective local governments and regions provide students with full-fledged internship places, followed by job proposals.

The study field of the UL, especially for the transfer of practical knowledge, forms close cooperation with companies and Latvia's strongest, most professional planning offices and international and local level public organizations active in the field of spatial planning and urbanism.

**International cooperation of the study field.** The development of the study field largely takes place on the close established basis of international relations and cooperation. Research work and further education of the academic staff largely takes place using the opportunities offered by international cooperation.

The Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences (FGES) cooperate with various foreign universities and research institutes (University of Bergen, University of Turku, Klaipeda University, Catholic University of Leuven, etc.). According to the study field, the FGES has cooperation agreements with the Catholic University of Leuven, Tallinn University of Technology, University of Bamberg, Klaipeda University, St. Petersburg University, University of Tartu, University of Tübingen, University of Turku, Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University. Exchanges of guest lecturers and students are taking place with these universities, especially in the Eastern Baltic Region, which has become particularly active in recent years. Joint international projects and studies are carried out, the results of which are published in SCI publications. There is a particularly FGES close cooperation with the universities of Tartu, Turku, Bamberg, Bergen, Warsaw and Klaipeda.

In its turn, in the reporting period, the study field, including the faculty's international cooperation, implemented significant cooperation with own partners, which implement similar study fields and similar study programs - Dortmund Technical University, Klaipeda University, University of Turku, Estonian University of Life Sciences in Tartu, London South Bank University, Windesheim University of Applied Sciences and a new collaboration with Tallinn University, Stockholm University and Bauhaus - University Weimar was launched.

The international cooperation of the field is strengthened by the participation of lecturers in conferences (for example, the lecturers of the field have participated in the conferences of the Association of European Planning Schools (AESOP in Naples and Helsinki)) and thematically diverse projects. The lecturers of the field have participated in the implementation of more than 52 different international scientific projects (Horizon 2020, EU 7th Framework Program projects, Latvian-German Higher Education Office (DAAD) program, Interreg Central Baltic, BONUS project BaltCoast, Nord Plus projects, etc.) (see Annex 2.6 *Teaching staff publications, participation in the project implementation and international conferences*).

The recommendations of the accreditation expert group on increasing the internationalization of the program were continued, the implementation of several study courses or their parts in English was continued. For both lecturers and master students had the opportunity to acquire new skills, abilities and also competencies by participating in international intensive courses, classes with students from other foreign universities, meeting in joint events and studies, and working in an international environment.

For example, specially close cooperation with the University of Turku and the University of Estonian University of Life Sciences in Tartu has continued for several years thanks to *Nordplus Higher*

*Education projects Localized Learning Approach to Urban Studies and Planning in the Baltic Sea Region.* The course *Practice in the specialization "Settlement planning"* was implemented by lecturers in international cooperation with the participation of 12 students from each mentioned university and UL - joint field studies, lectures, seminars, workshops and applied research in Rezekne (Latvia), Narva (Estonia), Turku (Finland).

In order to improve the study content, a new collaboration was launched with the support of the *Nordplus Horizontal 2019 project Sustainable Cities in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, PHZ-2019/10030, with the University of Tallinn, Aalto, Helsinki and Tampere Universities and the Stockholm Resilience Center to jointly implement an innovative multidisciplinary international course foreseen for the Baltic Sea Region master and PhD students in socio-ecological urbanism.

In the spring semester of 2019, in order for students to gain experience working in an international environment, a 3 day student study was prepared and implemented in cooperation with Klaipeda University and Telšiai Municipality (Lithuania) - a pleinair event in Telšiai town developing and presenting concrete proposals for Telšiai town development. Subsequently, in the summer of 2020 students researched the development possibilities of the Nemunas river delta area, Kintai town (Lithuania), giving recommendations to the district municipality at the end of the study visit.

The lecturers of the programme provide lectures and place studies for foreign students who come to Latvia. For example, in April 2016, assoc.prof. P. Šķiņķis gave lectures and conducted city studies to students of Human Geography and Planning from Utrecht University in the Netherlands; in 2016, students of architecture from the University of Munich (Hochschule München) visited Riga, a joint workshop and lectures were organized with the students of the program, in the spring of 2017 lecturer G. Lukstiņa led a place study for students of the University of Erfurt.

Several study visits of student groups were prepared and implemented for the London South Bank University (in the 2017/2018, 2018/2019; 2020/2021 academic years) and Windesheim University of Applied Sciences (in the 2017/2018, 2018/2019 academic years), lectures, workshops and guided study tours - city studies (assoc. prof. P.Šķiņķis, lecturer G.Lukstiņa), joint classes of foreign students with students of the field study program.

In cooperation with representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia, and with the participation of foreign lecturer N.Adams from the London South Bank University, European Cooperation Day urban environment events were implemented in the autumn semester of 2019 (within the URBACT program) and Study tour / workshop (walk-shop) and classes was led by N.Adams.

International cooperation was also implemented with participation of the foreign spatial and urban planning professionals as the guest lecturers, for example, city planner A.Roze and participation expert K.Drabic from Canada, spatial planner M.Geldof from Belgium, social planner J.Buechel from Germany.

In Annex No 2.7 *List of the cooperation agreements* is accompanied by information on the concluded cooperation agreements of the field.

**Cooperation of the field with employers - municipalities and planning regions.** During the reporting period, the co-operation with the representatives of the public sector, who are one of the main employers of the graduates of the program, was continued and expanded (see Annex No. 2.14. *Employment and professional growth of the study field graduates in 2009-2020*). Permanent cooperation takes place with many local governments, both with those with which cooperation agreements have been concluded (Riga city, Ķekava and Babīte county municipalities) and with many others (municipalities of Liepāja city, Cēsis, Mārupe and Ogre counties, etc.) and Riga, Kurzeme, Vidzeme, etc. Planning regions, thus providing a permanent framework for

communication for information exchange and places of practice.

Bilateral cooperation agreements have been concluded with the Riga City, Ķekava and Babīte Municipality Councils. The longest cooperation is implemented with the local governments of Riga City and Ķekava local governments, the internships of the students of the program, mutual consultations take place in them on a regular basis, in cooperation the master's and course works required by local governments are developed (for example, the *Sustainable development strategy of Kekava county until 2030*).

The study field cooperation with the Riga City Council City Development Department is especially close. During the reporting period each academic year practice for several students in the Riga City Development Department was organised, as well as development of course works and master's theses corresponding to the themes and needs of Riga City development and planning, e.g. on the possibilities of creating a sustainable transport system in the City of Riga (J.Sperga) and green infrastructure planning at Avotu neighbourhood (U.Kancāne). Students of the field are invited to participate in international projects of the Riga City Development Department and Riga City Energy Agency helping to implement them (eg Interreg BSR project *Green Mobility for Seniors (GreenSAM)*).

In cooperation with the Riga City Development Department and Riga City Architect's Office, consultations are held, for example, in the field of housing policy, on Riga public space and water space development opportunities, and other issues, research results are exchanged. Representatives of the Riga City Development Department and the Architect's Office participate with reports at UL International Scientific Conferences, while UL program lecturers participate in Riga City Development Department seminars and International Reinhold Schmeling's Conferences organized by the Riga City Architect Office, as experts participate in the development of Riga City territorial development planning documents (eg, Riga landscape thematic planning, Riga Development Program 2021-2027), participate in working groups and take part the public discussions of the elaborated planning documents.

In cooperation with Babīte municipality course works (e.g. on the development of the settlement structure of the county and the quality of the living environment) and master's theses are being developed on topics relevant to the municipality. For example in the spring of 2019, a master's thesis on the improvement of detailed planning in suburban growth areas was defended (I.Mežiniece, *Elaboration of detail plans in Riga suburban areas*) as well as responding to the call of the county, the lecturers (A.Zariņa, P.Šķiņķis, G.Lukstiņa) have carried out several researches on the development of the landscapes, settlement and green infrastructure development of the county.

During the reporting period, regular cooperation with the planning regions was strengthened - with the Riga, Vidzeme, Zemgale and Kurzeme Planning Region administrations. Planning regions are always open for study visits of students, students practice there in spatial development planning, on the other hand representatives of the regions participate in LU International Scientific Conferences (eg, I.Kalniņa, R.Cimdiņš, S.Zāgere, etc.) and invite lecturers of the field as experts and consultants in the elaboration of their development planning documents (for example, in the development of a *Sustainable Development Strategy for the Riga Planning Region*).

**Cooperation of the field with employers - institutions, companies and public organizations.** During the reporting period, the co-operation with employers from various institutions, companies and public organizations was continued and expanded. The teaching staff of the UL FGES of the study field actively participated in various cooperation networks together with existing and potential employers.

For example, during the reporting period there has been considerable active cooperation with the *Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia (MEPRD)*. The Ministry has invited the lecturers of the study program to be speakers at conferences of the Ministry in the field of spatial planning, as experts to participate in the work of commissions formed by the Ministry, to develop research on topics relevant to the Ministry. Representatives of the Ministry, in turn, have actively participated in the work of the Study Program and Field Council (I. Urtāne, J. Butņicka), have given guest lectures and gained knowledge by getting acquainted with the results of master's theses (thus, for example, in 2021, the interest of the Ministry was aroused by N. Nitavska's master's thesis in the identification, protection, planning and management of landscapes of Latvian national significance).

A good example of co-operation is the co-operation with the Secretariat of the international organization *Vision and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea (VASAB)*, which is an employer for two graduates of the program and every year in response to the call of the University of Latvia meeting provides students with latest information on spatial planning, i.e. maritime spatial planning, current events in the Baltic Sea region, while lecturers of the field are invited to participate in international conferences organized by *VASAB*.

From year to year, cooperation is improved with professional and innovative organizations and companies in their field of activity, such as the *Baltic Environmental Forum*, the *Baltic Coast, Urban Institute, Riga*, companies such as *Joint Stock Company Latvia's State Forests* and with leading planning offices such as *Ltd Metrum and Ltd Regional Projects*, which are responsive to information exchange and during student visits *Practice in Regions - Types of Planning Profession* and are ensuring the implementation of *Practice in Spatial Development Planning*. Professional planners working in these organizations and planning offices, incl. graduates of the field, as volunteers have led classes for the students.

Cooperation with the leading company in the field of spatial planning *Ltd Metrum* and in the field of forest planning *Joint Stock Company Latvia's State Forests* has been strengthened by internships of lecturers for their professional development, eg assoc. prof. P. Šķiņķis internship at *Ltd Metrum* in 2019 and assoc.prof. A.Zariņa's internship in *Latvia's State Forests* in 2020.

The cooperation and participation of academic staff in public, professional and municipal organizations of the industry (eg *Latvian Association of Spatial Planners (LTA)*, *Urban Institute, Riga (UI)*, *Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LPS)*) is important, which provides an opportunity to get acquainted and discuss for the latest in the profession and forecast potential labor markets.

As a mechanism for attracting employers to the study field and providing feedback, employers' surveys can be mentioned, as well as the involvement of employers' representatives in the management of the study field (eg from MEPRD, Riga City Council City Development Department, Riga Planning Region) or teaching (eg R.Cimdiņš, M.Kalvāne).

The initiatives of the study field to expand the circle of potential employers by developing course papers for local governments or places with which co-operation has not yet been established should also be noted. For example, in cooperation with Bauska County Council, in the spring of 2021, two course papers for the spatial development of Bauska County and Bauska Town were developed.

An important mechanism for attracting employers and promoting cooperation is the annual UL International Scientific Conferences - with an international membership (eg from Lithuania, Germany, Estonia), wide participation of planning professionals and employers, and students, during which discussions on integration of practice and science and development of spatial planning as a profession.

The co-operation of the field with public administration and other institutions, companies working in the field of planning, local governments and regions, and NGO's has broadened the horizons of the teaching staff, provided an opportunity to get acquainted with the latest developments in the field, as well as the information on students' readiness to enter the labor market was disseminated and requests from employers to recommend students for work have been received.

**Cooperation of the field with Latvian universities.** Cooperation with the students and lecturers of the Riga Technical University the Faculty of Architecture and University of Business, Arts and Technology (RISEBA) the Faculty of Architecture and Design is constantly being improved. Within the framework of the *Live Baltic Campus* project, joint colloquia have been implemented to study the left bank of the Daugava river, Mūkusala territory and to prepare development proposals. Cooperation between the above-mentioned higher education institutions took place within the project *Integrated Planning and Cooperation Model for Brownfield Revitalization (Baltic Urban Lab)*, joint guest lectures are being implemented, e.g. by the guest lecturer prof. S.Trejija (Riga Technical University) in 2017, and the lecturer V.Celmiņš (RISEBA) in 2016.

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

In the 2019 - 2021 academic years guest lecturer E.Spiriajevas and visiting professor F.Eckardt were involved in the full-time work within the project No.8.2.2.0 / 18 / A / 010 "Renewal of Academic Staff and Improvement of Competences at the University of Latvia". Even after the end of the project guest lecturer E.Spiriajevas continued his work at the University of Latvia in 2020/2021 academic year and his participation in the provision of studies is planned in the future. Further cooperation is foreseen with prof. F.Eckardt after his participation in the project, creating joint study modules with the Bauhaus - University of Weimar.

During the reporting period types of mobility have expanded, thus giving the students an opportunity to participate in the Erasmus + mobility program, which allows them not only to study, but also to do an internships in foreign institutions. The mobility of Master's students through a study practice trip to Germany was implemented with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (see Annex No 2.8 *Number of the foreign students in the program*).

For the several years students had an opportunity to participate in the Nordplus program project, which gave the Baltic and Nordic students an opportunity to study an urban studies course, which is jointly implemented by lecturers from several universities. During the reporting period, incoming mobility of students shows a constant intensity (data on student exchange are available in the LUIS system).

Within the study program, emphasis is placed on the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills, encouraging students to go to practice in foreign planning institutions and offices, as well as promoting going abroad to study.

There were no full-time students from abroad in the program. It is related to the current offer of the program and the course of the study process in Latvian, except for the guest lecturers and the practice implemented in the specialization during the reporting period (I). Since 2011, the study program has been implementing part-time (separate study courses, study semester) studies in

English as well. For example, in the 2015/2016 academic year, 18 students from the Technical University of Dortmund participated in the study course Practice in the specialization Settlement Planning (6 credits), in the 2016/2017 academic year 24 students from the Universities of Turku and the Estonian University of Life Sciences.

During the summer period of 2016 (June and August) 4 students of the program participated in two international summer schools - in the project *Urban Challenges ERASMUS +* (in cooperation with the University of Copenhagen) and in the project iWater - innovative storm water management MAR-E1002 Landscape Management (in cooperation with Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture). In the spring of 2017, 2 students of the program participated in the international summer school of the project *Urban Challenges ERASMUS+* (in cooperation with the University of Copenhagen) in Copenhagen and Riga.

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

The professional master's study program in the field *Architecture and Construction* implements Practice in the volume of 26 CP: I part - *Practice in Regions - Types of Planning Profession*, 2 CP, II part - *Practice at Local Authority - Planning and Management at Local Authority*; 6 CP; and III part - *Practice in Spatial Development Planning* 18 CP (see the *Practice Regulations* in Annex No 2.10A).

The content of the practice complies with the professional standard of Spatial Planner, corresponds to the degree to be obtained and by implementing the practice, the results of the study program are achieved (for a more detailed description of the practice and its link to the results to be achieved in the program, see Part III, Subchapter 2.4). The practice is organized by the practice organizer, it is managed by the UL practice supervisor.

In the first stage of studies in the first semester in order to form the students' idea of the diverse profession of spatial planner and current issues of the field an introductory practice *Practice in Regions - Types of Planning Profession* is implemented. Its aim is to acquaint students with the diverse work of the spatial planner and the necessary skills in different working environments.

The next parts of the practice - *Practice at Local Authority - Planning and Management at Local Authority*, *Practice in Spatial Development Planning* are implemented in the II and III semesters. They are organized and take place in those public and private institutions (state institutions, planning region administrations, local governments and planning offices, etc.) with which the UL has concluded a practice agreement or in which, in cooperation with the practice organizer (in case of practice in spatial development planning, taking into account also the topic of the student's master's thesis) is chosen by the student. Mutually coordinating the place of practice takes into account the institution's desire to transfer knowledge to students, the existence of professional planners - practice supervisors.

In case of choosing a student's practice place, a tripartite agreement is concluded between the UL, the practice place and the student (sample practice agreement in Annex No 2.10B). During the practice preparation stage, students are introduced to the practice conditions and tasks - the practice regulations, which include aim of the practice, tasks, process, practice assessment procedure, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the parties. Students are supported in

choosing high-quality practice venues - venues where professional planners work, in many cases those were program graduates work are recommended. Students are also encouraged to go abroad for practice with the support of the ERASMUS + mobility program.

Practice tasks are discussed and agreed with students and practice supervisors. One week before the practice, a draft order of the UL on students' practice is prepared. The choice of the practice site takes into account the experience of previous years in the practice and the feedback received from the students. Based on the feedback and experience gained during the practises, the practice program is improved (see the practice course descriptions in Annex No 3.6. *Study course descriptions*).

A representative of the institution with which the practice agreement is concluded also participates in determining the practice tasks. The evaluation of the practical skills acquired by the trainee and the work performed, as well as the evaluation of the practice report, is given by the practice supervisor at the practice site (it makes up 50% of the assesment). The evaluation of the practice supervisor at the practice site is taken into account when giving the joint assesment of the practice, which is given by the UL practice supervisor.

Taking into account students' recommendation on practice terms – practice in the chosen specialization short six-week term in the final stage of the third semester at the end of the 2020, a new course *Practice in Spatial Development Planning* in the volume of 18 CP was developed, combining the content of the course *Practice in the Chosen Specialization "Specialization Practice I"* and of the course *Practice in Spatial Development Planning, 12 CP*, as well as accordingly improving it. The course *Practice in Spatial Development Planning* in the volume of 18 CP is planned for implementation in the third semester starting from 2021/2022 academic year of.

**5.4. In the event that joint study programmes are implemented in the study direction, provide the justification of the creation of the joint study programmes and a description and assessment of the selection of the partnering higher education institutions by including information on the principles and the procedures for the creation and implementation of these joint study programmes. In the event that no joint study programmes are implemented in the study direction, provide a description and assessment of the plans of the higher education institution/ college for the creation of such study programmes within the study direction.**

Joint study programs are not implemented in the study field *Architecture and Construction* of the University of Latvia.

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

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

## relevant study programmes.

Accreditation of the previous study field and program was performed in 2013 within the framework of the European Social Fund project Evaluation of Higher Education Programs. According to the experts, the study program was allocated into the first group, noting that it was considered sustainable, however, the experts also made several comments on the improvement of the study program. For comments and the tasks performed or actions planned accordingly, please see Annex 2.12. Overview of the implementation of recommendations of the previous group of accreditation experts of the field and programme. The recommendations of the accreditation expert group of the study program corresponding to the previous study field have been implemented in the reporting period or are in the process of constant implementation.

Comments and recommendations were focused on 4 directions - research, international cooperation, study infrastructure and sustainability of the study program. During the reporting period the number of research projects and publications has steadily increased. International cooperation has expanded. At the same time, joint work with permanent partners continues. With the relocation of the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences to the newly built UL Academic Center, spatial planning studies are being implemented in a very suitable, modern research and study environment.

In the light of the recommendations international cooperation has been expanded and deepened (e.g. with the London South Bank University, Klaipeda University, University of Turku, Estonian University of Life Sciences, etc., and in recent years with the Stockholm University Resilience Center of the Stockholm University). In the 2020/2021 academic year, a visiting lecturer and a visiting professor have been attracted to full-time work.

During the reporting period the implementation of the recommendations of the accreditation expert group on increasing internationalization was continued, thus continuing the implementation of several study courses in English. Master students had the opportunity to acquire new skills, abilities and also competencies in English by participating in intensive courses together with students from other universities (e.g. in Turku, Finland), Klaipeda International Summer School "Go East" - in Gdansk, Kaliningrad, Klaipeda) and other events.

Following the previous accreditation, the study program has not been subject to a procedure for evaluating changes to the program, which would be evaluated by an external expert. Throughout the reporting period, the improvement of the content and procedures of the study program has taken place continuously and in accordance with the regulation. By making gradual changes, the structure of the study program was preserved. The changes to be made upon the proposals of the director of the study program were discussed and agreed in the Council of the Study Program, and, since 2020 - in the Council of the Study Field.

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

The recommendations of the accreditation expert group of the study program corresponding to the previous study field have been implemented in the reporting period or are in the process of constant implementation. In Annex 2.12. *Overview of the implementation of recommendations of the previous group of accreditation experts of the field and program* is accompanied by information on the implementation of the recommendations.

After the accreditation of the study field in the academic year 2013/2014 changes were made in the structure of the study program to improve the study process - new study courses were prepared and implemented in 2014/2015 academic year: *Strategic Planning and Methods* 2 credits; *Practice in Spatial Development Planning* 12 credits, which were improved in the 2015/2016 academic year.

No other structural changes in the program corresponding to the study field were made until the preparation of the report on changes in the content and field of this study program starting from April 2020.

Throughout the reporting period, methodological materials, the content of study courses, and the content linkage of study courses have been constantly improved. The number of study courses, which are implemented in both Latvian and English (GIS principles, Strategic management and project management,) has expanded. With the 2020/2021 academic year it is possible to teach the course *Principles of Spatial Planning* in both Latvian and English and to teach the course *Community Planning and Regeneration* in English.

In the 2020/2021 academic year all the descriptions of the study courses of the program corresponding to the field were reviewed and updated. New descriptions of study courses were updated and created, which are included in the new structure of the study program and are planned to be implemented starting from the 2021/2022 academic year.

3 new courses have been prepared:

- *Community Planning and Regeneration* (for teaching in English), 10 credits, (Part B);
- *Principles of Spatial Planning*, 8 credits, (Part A);
- *Spatial Analysis and Modelling Methods*, 4 credits (elective course),

in the study plan as elective course, in case of students' choice, for teaching in third semester. It is planned to gradually create a new Part B course in the amount of 10 credits on the basis of this course, expanding and improving it, as well as strengthening the GIS component.

Structural changes have been made in the study courses:

- *Spatial Development Planning*, 10 credits (Part B);
- *Applied Research Methodology in Planning*, 2 credits (Part A);
- *Practice in Spatial Development Planning*, 18 credits (Part A);
- *Master Thesis*, 20 credits (Part A)

See Annex No 3.2 *Full-time study plan of the study program "Spatial Planning"*, Annex No 3.6. *Study program Spatial Planning course descriptions*.

In the 2021/2022 academic year changes made are not directly related to the recommendations of experts, but correspond to the context of discussions and recommendations of the field Council, graduates and employers in connection with the need for internationalization of studies, as well as to clarify the student research process. In general, changes have been made to achieve deeper integration of the content of the program, to move towards internationalization and more precisely in line with the growth of the field, new international and national policies and labour market requirements.

# Annexes

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Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.		
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme		
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.		
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education		
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement		
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.		
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		

Electronically signed application form for assessment of a study direction

APPLICATION\_2021\_ENG (2) (3).docx

iesniegums (1).edoc

## Other annexes

Name of document	Document
Galveno LU lēmumu pieņemšanā iesaistīto institūciju, to sastāva un pilnvaru raksturojums	Pielikums 1.3. LU lēmumu pieņemšanā iesaistītās institūcijas.docx
Galveno LU kvalitātes vadībā iesaistīto pušu un to lomas raksturojums	Pielikums 1.4. LU kvalitātes vadībā iesaistītās pušes un to lomas .docx
Description of the main institutions involved in UL decision making, their composition and powers	1.3_Annex_UL main institutions involved in decision making.docx
Description of the main stakeholders involved in UL quality management and their role	1.4_Annex_Main stakeholders involved in UL quality management.docx
Standartu un vadlīniju kvalitātes nodrošināšanai Eiropas augstākās izglītības telpā (ESG) ieviešana LU	2.11_ESG LU tabula.docx
Telpiskās attīstības plānošanas studiju programmas pašizmaksas aprēķins	2.15_Programmas pašizmaksas apreķins.docx
Absolventu nodarbinātība un profesionālā izaugsme	2.14_Absolventu nodarbinātība un izaugsme.docx
Information on how the ESG are respected when assuring the quality of studies	2.11_ESG UL table.docx
Calculation of the cost of the study program "Spatial planning"	2.15_Calculation of the cost of the study program.docx
LU abonēto e-resursu kopu (datubāzu) izmantošanas statistikas dati	2.16_Bibliotēkas datu bāze_izmantošana.docx
Statistical data on the use of UL subscribed e-resource (databases)	2.16_Library data basis_use.docx
Studiju virzienā iekļautās studiju programmas salīdzinājums ar līdzīgām telpiskās plānošanas studiju programmām citās augstskolās ārvalstīs	2.13_Comparison with programs abroad.docx
Studiju virzienā iekļautās studiju programmas salīdzinājums ar līdzīgām telpiskās plānošanas studiju programmām citās augstskolās ārvalstīs	2.13_Salīdzinājums ar ārvalstu stud. progr..docx
Līguma paraugs neES studentiem	3_Studiju_līguma_forma_kons_30.06.2021.doc

# Spatial Planning (47581)

Study field	<i>Architecture and Construction</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Spatial Planning</i>
Education classification code	<i>47581</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Professional master study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Pēteris</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Šķiņķis</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>peteris.skinkis@lu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Dr.Geogr.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>The aim of the study program is to provide students with high-quality education demanded by the labor market by preparing competitive professional spatial planning specialists for work in state and local government institutions, planning offices, as well as international institutions.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<p><i>Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. To ensure the acquisition of students' general knowledge in planning theory and methodology.</i></li> <li><i>2. To give students the opportunity to learn the latest Latvian and international planning experience.</i></li> <li><i>3. To ensure students' knowledge and acquisition of practical skills in spatial planning, management of the planning process and implementation of the measures specified in planning documents, specializing in spatial development planning or community planning and regeneration.</i></li> <li><i>4. To deepen students' understanding of the relation between nature and human economic activity, sustainable development of the state and local governments.</i></li> <li><i>5. To enable students to acquire knowledge about the base of regulatory documents and development policies of Latvia and the European Union related to planning.</i></li> <li><i>6. To provide students with the knowledge to apply the latest information technologies in planning work and project development.</i></li> <li><i>7. To develop students' spatial planning, project development, management and implementation skills.</i></li> <li><i>8. To develop management, communicative planning - integration, cooperation and communication skills.</i></li> <li><i>9. To develop applied analytical and research skills</i></li> </ol>

Results of the study programme	<p><i>Upon completion of this study program, students are able to:</i></p> <p><i>Knowledge:</i></p> <p><i>1. Understand and demonstrate in-depth integrated knowledge of development planning systems, political contexts, spatial development policies and planning theories, tools and methods, socio-economic, built and natural environment spatial systems.</i></p> <p><i>2. To know the sources and types of data and information acquisition, organization of research work, integrated information and data analysis methods.</i></p> <p><i>3. Understand strategic management and territory governance, spatial development planning process, communication methods, effective communication and cooperation techniques, principles of community development and participation.</i></p> <p><i>Skills:</i></p> <p><i>4. Critically think, define, analyse and solve spatial development issues (problems and challenges) in a multidisciplinary environment.</i></p> <p><i>5. Integrate knowledge from different fields by developing spatial development visions, plans and projects in a cross-sectoral team.</i></p> <p><i>6. Apply modern spatial planning principles, methods, information technologies, technical and graphic / design tools working individually and in collaboration.</i></p> <p><i>Competences:</i></p> <p><i>7. Conduct and carry out case studies and research related to the spatial development and planning of places, territories and regions, critically evaluating and publishing their results.</i></p> <p><i>8. To organize and communicatively manage the spatial development planning process with the public participation - elaboration of development strategies, development programs and spatial plans of all planning levels, spatial development policies and other types of spatial planning documents.</i></p> <p><i>9. Coordinate and evaluate the implementation of the objectives, policies, regulations and actions set out in the spatial planning document.</i></p>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>Master's thesis - research or planning research project</i>

## Study programme forms

### **Full time studies - 2 years - latvian**

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80

Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Students in the study program are matriculated on a competitive basis, based on the results of the entrance examination - taking into account the evaluation of previous study marks and the results of entrance interviews, including previous work experience in the spatial development planning. The condition for admission to the program is a successful entrance examination in accordance with the established entrance examination criteria and consisting of: 1. assessment of the quantitative indicators of the academic bachelor's or second level professional (or equivalent) higher education (weighted average marks in the subjects of basic studies and marks of the final work); 2. entrance interviews to find out the applicant's motivation for studies, previous knowledge of planning and experience in the field of planning and is consisting of: a. statement of the justification of the applicant's motivation for studies; b. outlines current issues to be solved in the field of spatial development planning, their substantiation; c. studies at foreign universities and / or study practice abroad; d. courses for professional development in planning and / or project management; e. presentation of work experience, according to the profile of the study program (spatial planning, planning and management work in the private sector, local government or state institutions), incl. participation in the elaboration and implementation of specific planning documents or projects (experience is proved to the admission commission by submitting a personally certified CV).</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Profesional master's degree in Spatial Planning</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Spatial planner</i>

### **Places of implementation**

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

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

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

In May 2013, international accreditation experts evaluated the UL study field *Architecture and Construction* and the Professional master's study program *Spatial Planning* (hereinafter - the study program) included in it for the maximum accreditation term, ie for 6 (six) years, at the same time indicating that the study program is sustainable, competitive and meet the needs of the labor market. In accordance with the amendment to the Law on Higher Education (Article 48, 2 of the Transitional Provisions), the study field *Architecture and Construction* and study programme is accredited until 30 June 2022.

During the accreditation period, in accordance with international policies, the University of Latvia Strategy 2021-2027, the UL infrastructure development, external and internal regulatory enactments, both significant and less significant changes were made in the study program. The latter are related to the specification of the aim, tasks and admission requirements of the study program.

Significant changes: the content of the study program and the results to be achieved are based on the new professional standard of the Spatial planner agreed at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council for Vocational Education and Employment on February 6, 2019 (<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-106.pdf>), one of the forms of study program implementation has been closed - part-time full-time, as well as the actual place of study program implementation has been changed (changes in study program parameters from the previous accreditation period, see Table 11).

Table 11. Study program parameters

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Description and analysis of changes</b>			
Implementation mode/form, type, duration (if less than a year, in months) and language of implementation				
Part time regular studies	Professional master's degree in Spatial planning / Spatial planner	2 years, 6 month	Latvian	Eliminated, it was concluded that with the increase of study quality requirements in spatial planning, part-time studies cannot be fully implemented.

Place of implementation	<p>University of Latvia Academic Centre, Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences, Jelgavas street 1, Riga, Latvia, LV - 1004</p> <p>During the accreditation period of the study field, in order to provide students with a more qualitative working environment and more appropriate study opportunities, the actual place of implementation of the field and study program has been changed. Since 2015/2016 academic year the study program is implemented in the developing student campus of the University of Latvia - UL Academic Center.</p>
Admission requirements	<p>During the accreditation period of the field, the issues of entrance examination have been editorially clarified, as well as the criteria with indicators and corresponding evaluation points have been clarified, inc. evaluation of the outline of work experience of applicant according to the profile of the study program in points (it is reduced from 100 to 75 points by increasing the assessment in the first entrance interview questions) in order to balance the applicant's admission to the study program with and without previous experience in planning.</p> <p>Students in the study program are matriculated on a competitive basis, based on the results of the entrance examination - taking into account the evaluation of previous study marks (50%) and the results of entrance interviews (50%), including previous work experience in the spatial development planning field.</p> <p>Entrance examination in accordance with the established entrance examination criteria is consisting of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. assessment of the quantitative indicators of the academic bachelor's or second level professional (or equivalent) higher education (weighted average marks in the subjects of basic studies and marks of the final work);</li> <li>2. entrance interviews to find out the applicant's motivation for studies, previous knowledge of spatial planning and experience in the field of planning and consisting of;       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. statement of the justification of the applicant's motivation for studies,</li> <li>b. outlines current issues to be solved in the field of spatial planning, their substantiation,</li> <li>c. studies at foreign universities and / or study practice abroad,</li> <li>b. courses for professional development in planning and / or project management,</li> <li>e. presentation of work experience, according to the profile of program (spatial planning, planning and management work in the private sector, local government or state institutions), incl. participation in the elaboration and implementation of concrete planning documents or projects (experience is proved to the Admission commission by submitting a personally certified CV).</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

<p>Aim of the study program</p>	<p>During the reporting period, the aim of the study program has been clarified, it has been editorially corrected and the words “in the local market” have been deleted from it, orienting the aim more clearly to the wider labor market of graduates.</p> <p>The aim of the study program is to provide students with high-quality education demanded by the labor market by preparing competitive professional spatial planning specialists for work in state and local government institutions, planning offices, as well as international institutions.</p>
<p>Objectives of the study program</p>	<p>The tasks of the study program (No. 3; 7; 8 and 9) have been specified in accordance with the specified and substantiated results of the study program according to the professional standard of the Spatial Planner approved in 2019, tasks No. 1; 3 - clarified editorially.</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To ensure the acquisition of students' general knowledge in planning theory and methodology.</li> <li>2. To give students the opportunity to learn the latest Latvian and international planning experience.</li> <li>3. To ensure students' knowledge and acquisition of practical skills in spatial planning, management of the planning process and implementation of the measures specified in planning documents, specializing in spatial development planning or community planning and regeneration.</li> <li>4. To deepen students' understanding of the relation between nature and human economic activity, sustainable development of the state and local governments.</li> <li>5. To enable students to acquire knowledge about the base of regulatory documents and development policies of Latvia and the European Union related to planning.</li> <li>6. To provide students with the knowledge to apply the latest information technologies in planning work and project development.</li> <li>7. To develop students' spatial planning, project development, management and implementation skills.</li> <li>8. To develop management, communicative planning – integration, cooperation and communication skills.</li> <li>9. To develop applied analytical and research skills.</li> </ol>

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Learning outcomes to be achieved

The study outcomes to be achieved have been specified and substantiated in accordance with the professional standard of the Spatial Planner approved in 2019.

Upon completion of this study program, students are able to:

**Knowledge:**

Understand and demonstrate in-depth integrated knowledge of development planning systems, political contexts, spatial development policies and planning theories, tools and methods, socio-economic, built and natural environment spatial systems.

To know the sources and types of data and information acquisition, organization of research work, integrated information and data analysis methods.

Understand strategic management and territory governance, spatial development planning process, communication methods, effective communication and cooperation techniques, principles of community development and participation.

**Skills:**

4. Critically think, define, analyse and solve spatial development issues (problems and challenges) in a multidisciplinary environment.

5. Integrate knowledge from different fields by developing spatial development visions, plans and projects in a cross-sectoral team.

6. Apply modern spatial planning principles, methods, information technologies, technical and graphic / design tools working individually and in collaboration.

**Competences:**

7. Conduct and carry out case studies and research related to the spatial development and planning of places, territories and regions, critically evaluating and publishing their results.

8. To organize and communicatively manage the spatial development planning process with the public participation - elaboration of development strategies, development programs and spatial plans of all planning levels, spatial development policies and other types of spatial planning documents.

9. Coordinate and evaluate the implementation of the objectives, policies, regulations and actions set out in the spatial planning documents.

**1.2. Analysis and assessment of the statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down in the different study forms, types, and languages.**

During the reporting period, from 12 to 18 students were matriculated in the study program every year. An exception for matriculation is 2017 when 8 students were matriculated in the study program. The decrease in matriculated students was related to the decision of the Ministry of Education and Science to reduce the budget places for the program from 20 to 17 budget places. In order to preserve the existing budget places for the 2nd year students, it was possible to allocate only 5 budget places for matriculation in 2017 (see Annex No 3.1 *Statistical data on students in the study program "Spatial Planning"*, table *Number of matriculated, students, dropouts and obtainers of degree / qualification in the reference period*).

The impact of budget places on the number of students and graduates is also shown by the data of 2013-2016 period, when from 14 to 18 students enrolled in the program every year (on average 16.7 students per year). An average of 13 students graduated from the program each year. On the other hand, as the number of budget places decreased from 20 to 17, in the last three years, on average, from 12 to 16 students were matriculated in the program (average 14.3 students per year). Thus, the total number of students in the last 3 reporting years (2017, 2019-2020) has stabilized within the range of 27-33 students (together in the 1st and 2nd year).

Student dropout varies from 1 to 5 students per year. As a result of the heavy workload of students working and studying, many students take the opportunity of academic leave to successfully complete their studies in the following year (for example M. Zamarina graduated with distinction in 2020). There are also cases when students do not return after academic leave, but there are several cases when matriculated students graduate from the program after a break of several years (for example M. Ulāns, who was scheduled to graduate in 2010, but graduate only in 2017).

The number of degree and qualification graduates in the reporting period varies - from 16 graduates in 2014, to 17 graduates in 2015 to 8 students in the spring of 2016. In 2018, 14 graduates graduate the study program again. The exception is the small number of graduates in the spring of 2019 - 4 students, which is related to the above-mentioned reduction of budget places for matriculation in autumn 2017, as well as several students on maternity leave and one student receiving a Baltic-American Freedom Foundation scholarship and one year internship opportunity in the US. In the spring of 2020, the number of graduates returns to the usual level - 13 graduates. On average, 11.75 students graduated from the study program per year during the reporting period.

In the spring semester of 2021 (data as of January 1, 2021) a total of 27 students study at the study program, of which 12 in the first year and 15 in the second year.

The number of students in the program and semester is optimal (15) or slightly below the optimal (12) (on average in the reporting period 30.5 students per academic year in the 1st and 2nd year taking together).

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

The title of the study program, the degree and professional qualification, the aim, tasks, study results and admission requirements are interrelated and appropriate.

The title of the study program "Professional Master's Study Program in *Spatial Planning* follows from the professional qualification *Spatial Planner* and corresponds to the master's degree *Professional Master's Degree in Spatial Planning* obtained as a result of studies.

The 9 tasks of the study program are defined so that as a result of their implementation, the aim of the program "... to provide students with high-quality education demanded in the labor market by preparing competitive professional spatial planning specialists for work in state and municipal institutions, planning offices, as well as international institutions" is achieved. (for all tasks, see the section "study program parameters"). The first six are the tasks of the study program that reflect the study content, as a result of the implementation of which the students acquire the appropriate knowledge. These include students' knowledge of planning theory and methodology, knowledge of

planning systems, spatial development policies, tools and methods, organization of research, understanding of territorial governance, principles of community development and participation, etc.

The last three tasks of the study program correspond to the skills to be acquired as a result of studies, to ensure student's knowledge and acquisition of initial practical skills in spatial development planning, planning process management, to develop student's project development, management, cooperation and communication, analytical and research skills. These tasks are also based on the skills of critical thinking, define, analyze and solve spatial development issues, so that graduates of the study program in an interdisciplinary team, integrating knowledge of different fields, are able to develop spatial development visions, plans and projects in accordance with modern labor market requirements.

Tasks are defined so that studies ensure the acquisition of excellent competencies in accordance with the goal, so that graduates of spatial development studies can professionally manage and conduct situation research, organize and communicatively manage spatial development planning processes with public participation and evaluate the implementation of planning documents - according to professional master's degree and qualification.

Thus, the study results to be achieved as a result of mastering the study program are interrelated and in accordance with the tasks of the program and are directly focused at achieving the aim.

In turn, the requirements and criteria for admission to the study program are designed so that the students with higher previous study evaluation and the most motivated applicants ready to obtain knowledge and skills in the field of spatial planning are matriculated, who as a result of mastering the program, would be able to obtain excellent and excellent competencies, degree and professional qualification corresponding to the aim and tasks of the program (for admission requirements, see the section "study program parameters").

.By the 1st of November of each year, the UL approves and publishes the requirements and criteria for admission for the following year on the UL web portal (as informative booklets). The study program and admission procedure are introduced to future students at the faculty information days and at the annual nationwide exhibition "School". Admission to UL is provided by the admission commission, which operates in accordance with the regulations approved by the Rector<sup>[1]</sup>.

Admission requirements include general and additional conditions. In accordance with the procedures established by the UL, study courses<sup>[2]</sup>, acquired in other accredited and state-recognized higher education institutions, study results<sup>[3]</sup> achieved in previous education or professional experience are evaluated and recognized. When making a decision on the rights of holders of educational documents obtained abroad and to continue education in the study programs of the UL, the UL observes the principles of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications. In case of necessity and in order to find out the status of the educational institution in the host country and the level of the acquired program, the UL requests the opinion of the Academic Information Centre of Latvia.

Students in the study program are matriculated in accordance with the competition procedure, based on the results of the entrance examination. Admission requirements to the program are a successful entrance examination in accordance with the established entrance examination criteria, which consists of an academic bachelor's or second level professional (or equivalent) higher education quantitative indicator and a final thesis mark evaluation (50%) and the results of entrance interviews (50%).

In accordance with the [Enrolment rules at the University of Latvia](#) (approved in the Senate on 30.05.2016 Decision No 15 and issued in accordance with Section 65, Paragraph two of the Law on

Higher Education Institutions and Cabinet Regulation No 846 of 10 October 2006 "Regulations on Requirements, Criteria and Procedures for Admission to Study Programs") there are approved entrance examination questions and evaluation criteria of the study program. They focused on admitting students with high previous study evaluation, motivated, active and wishing to study spatial planning. Information is available on the UL website

<https://www.lu.lv/par-mums/dokumenti/pasnovertejuma-zinojumi/>.

The target audience of the study program is applicants with an academic bachelor's degree or second level professional (or equivalent) higher education:

1. graduates of the University of Latvia and other Latvian (Riga Technical University, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, previously known as Latvia University of Agriculture, etc.) and foreign higher education institutions, whose education is related to the field of planning like geography, environment and earth sciences, architecture and urban planning, landscape architecture, economics and management;
2. planners from local municipalities and planning regions, and employees of state institutions with act in the field of planning, based on their need for appropriate and new knowledge for being competent in the field of spatial planning;
3. other applicants, if they reasonably and convincingly justify their desire to study spatial planning and prove high-quality knowledge in the entrance examination.

**The first part of the entrance examination** - the joint assessment of the quantitative indicators of the academic bachelor's or second level professional (or equivalent) higher education and the final thesis mark is important for the matriculation of students with a higher previous study assessment in the study program.

**The second part of the entrance examination** - entrance interviews - are essential for the selection of the most interested applicants in the field of spatial planning, so that the study program as a result of its implementation, fulfilling the tasks of the program and achieving the study results, clearly achieve the program's aim to prepare competitive professional spatial planning specialists work in state and local government institutions, planning offices as well as international institutions.

The Admissions Commission at entrance interviews carefully evaluates the applicant's motivation for studies, knowledge of topical issues to be solved in the field of spatial planning, providing their justification. Furthermore to evaluate the applicant's activity to gain knowledge in the field of planning, previous interest and activity - internships in foreign universities, participation in international courses abroad, training in planning and project management in Latvia, are evaluated by the Commission.

In order to achieve higher quality results of the study program, it is desirable that students with diverse previous knowledge and work experience in planning study in the program. Thus, as a criterion for accession negotiations, work experience is determined in accordance with the profile of the study program, incl. participation in the development and implementation of specific planning documents or projects. The Commission evaluates the applicant's presentation of work experience in the field of planning according to the set indicators. Applicants shall confirm their work experience to the Commission by submitting a personally certified CV.

The competition in the study program is for the budget places. In case potential students do not qualify for the budget place, major number of applicants do not register for studies.

The Student Service acquaints new students with the study procedures and requirements of the UL by organizing special introductory classes. The director of the study program and study clerks also provide the necessary consultations on the study process of the FGES.

[1] Regulations of the Admission Commission of the University of Latvia (approved with UL 20.05.2016. order No 1/221)

[2] Credit transfer procedure at the University of Latvia (approved with 29.12.2008. UL Senate decision No 190)

[3] Regulation on the evaluation and recognition of prior learning at the University of Latvia (approved with UL 26.03.2012. Senate order No 201)

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

**2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation.**

The study program in the amount of 80 credits (120 ECTS) is implemented as a full-time program lasting for the two years (4 semesters).

The structure of the study program is formed in accordance with the requirement of the Law on Higher Education Institutions regarding the amounts of the compulsory, limited elective and optional part and the distribution of credit points between them (Article 55 (1) (2) (c)).

The structure of the study program consists of compulsory study courses (Part A), restricted elective courses (Part B) and optional or free choice courses (Part C). The volume of the study program is 80 credit points, of which 20 credit points, or 25% of the total study volume, consist of Part A study courses, 26 credit points of practice (32%) and 20 credit points of master's thesis (25%). Limited choice study courses (Part B) are provided in the amount of 10 credit points (13%), while in the part of optional study courses (Part C) students have to acquire 4 credit points (see Table 12).

*Table 12. The structure of the study program*

<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Parts of the study plan</b>	<b>Credits CP (ECTS)</b>	<b>As a percentage of the total study volume</b>
1.	Part A Compulsory study courses	24 CP (36 ECTS)	25
2.	Part B Restricted elective courses	10 CP (15 ECTS)	13

3.	Part C Optional study courses	4 CP (6ECTS)	5
3.	Practice (Part A)	26 CP (39 ECTS)	32
4.	Master's thesis (Part A)	20 CP (30) ECTS	25
In total		<b>80 CP (120 ECTS)</b>	<b>100</b>

Limited choice and optional study courses together make up 18% of the study volume. The structure of the professional study program necessarily includes a large proportion of practice (32%) and the development of a master's thesis (25%), the course and content of which are most closely related to the student's own choices.

The study program is mainly implemented in the Department of Geography and the Department of Environmental Science of the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences. During the reporting period studies were provided by four academic units - Department of Human Geography, Department of Natural Geography, Department of Geomorphology and Geomatics, Department of Applied Environmental Science and laboratories under their supervision: Cartography and Remote Sensing Laboratory, Geospatial Analysis Laboratory, Environmental Quality and Monitoring Laboratory. The study program is implemented with the involvement of teaching staff from other faculties of the UL, e.g. Faculty of Law, and Faculty of Architecture of Riga Technical University.

Students acquire practical work skills in practice places in state institutions, local governments, planning regions, agencies and private planning offices.

The program includes lectures, seminars, students' independent work, internships, as well as the development of course works and the development of a master's thesis in the chosen topic at the end of studies.

The content of study courses updated in accordance with the needs of the policies in the field of spatial planning, practices and the labour market, including the latest scientific findings, global and EU sustainable development policies. The study courses integrate findings in accordance with the latest global sustainable development and European Union climate and spatial development policies (eg UN Sustainable Development Goals, the new Leipzig Charter, EU Green Deal), Latvia's regional development policies.

By periodically updating the content of study courses, the development tendencies of the field are evaluated, the main general feature of which is the close connection of knowledge, research and practice. There is a deeper multidisciplinary integration in spatial planning practice. Based on research and applied experience, the range of thematic development node issues expands. Consequently, new development policies are being developed in the world, the EU and Latvia for sustainable development, urban development, landscape and ecosystem management, housing development, etc. The quality of the living environment, communities, smart technological development, resilient territorial management, the development of new types of urban and sparsely populated areas, etc. are becoming increasingly important in research, policy and practice today.

The study courses have been updated on the basis of an integrated analysis of their content, so that the study program complies with the State Education Standard (see, appendix, 3.3.) And the latest (2019) Spatial Development Planner Standard (see, appendix No. 3.4). ).

According to the specifics of the professional study program, the needs of the labor market are constantly assessed. The results of surveys of employers and graduates working in practice,

recommendations of professional and municipal organizations (Latvian Association of Spatial Planners (LASP), Urban Institute, Riga (UI), Latvian Association of Local Governments (LALG), etc.) are taken into account. They are mainly related to the current needs of the labor market for strategically thinking, able to manage the communicative planning process, skilled users of spatial information and analysis technology, etc. competency professionals.

The future needs of the labor market are defined in the study field council and in discussions with lecturers, whose opinions are based on research, development forecasts and strategic future vision. Consequently, the content of many study courses is designed to prepare professional planners for prospective labor market conditions.

During the preparation for the program accreditation, the program structure and courses were evaluated and reviewed, together with the lecturers examining the shortcomings of current topics or unnecessary contact of topics and course development opportunities, discussing program structure and course composition changes, firstly discussing preferred topics in the study programme Council (26.03.2020), secondly in the study field Council (09.10.2020, 05.11.2020). The changes have been made in order to achieve a deeper integration of the content of the program, to move towards internationalization and more precisely in line with the growth of the field, new international and national policies and labour market requirements.

In preparing the program for accreditation, the structure and courses of the program were evaluated and reviewed, together with the lecturers examining the shortcomings of current topics or unnecessary overlapping of topics and course development opportunities, discussing changes in program structure and course composition, their preferred topics first in the Study Program Council (26.03.2020) , then in the Study Field Council (09.10.2020., 05.11.2020.). The changes have been made in order to achieve a deeper integration of the content of the program, to move towards internationalization and more precisely in line with the growth of the field, new international and national policies and labor market requirements.

In the 2020/2021 academic year all courses of the program were reviewed and renewed in order to know which courses should be included in the new program structure and are planned to be implemented starting from 2021/2022, as well as 3 new courses were prepared:

- *Community Planning and Regeneration* (for teaching a course in English), 10 credits (15 ECTS), (Part B)
- *Principles of Spatial Planning*, 8 credits (12 ECTS), (Part A)
- *Spatial Analysis and Modelling Methods*, 4 credits (6 ECTS), (Part C). It is planned to gradually create a new Part B course in the volume of 10 credits on the basis of this course, expanding and improving it, as well as strengthening the GIS component.

Structural changes have been made in the study courses:

- *Spatial Development Planning*, 10 credits (15 ECTS), (Part B);
- *Applied Research Methodology in Planning*, 2 credits (3 ECTS), (Part A);
- *Practice in Spatial Development Planning*, 18 credits (27 ECTS), (Part A);
- *Master Thesis*, 20 credits (30 ECTS), (Part A).

See Annex 3.2 *Full-time study plan of the study program "Spatial Planning"*, Annex No 3.6. *Descriptions of the study courses*, also subsection 2.2 of the report Part III).

The initiatives of graduates and employers were also taken into account in the renewal of the study course *Community Planning and Regeneration* and it is also based on the new law on local governments.

One of the goals of the program structure renewal and development of new courses was also the

renewal of the study program and sustainability, so that the program will continue to change generations and new lecturers will be included in the course teaching, such as Dr. geog. I.Vinogradov, doctoral candidate M.Vološina and doctoral student E.Taurene.

Professional spatial planner's master's degree and professional qualification is awarded after the development of master thesis at the end of studies - research or planning research project, based on current issues, achievements and findings in the field of spatial planning (see also subsection 2.5. *Analysis and evaluation of students' final thesis* and Annex No 3.7 *Master's thesis defended 2009 - 2020 in spatial planning*).

**2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. In case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels.**

The study courses of the program are interconnected and complementary. The study program is designed so that students gradually acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for a diverse spatial planner, not only by exchanging theoretical courses and practices in the study process, but also by developing practical works to a significant extent within theoretical courses. The aims and topics of all study courses, the sequence of courses in the structure of the program and the acquisition process are aimed at achieving the aim of the study program “to provide students with high-quality education demanded by the labor market...”. The update of the study program in 2020-2021 has taken place on the basis of an integrated analysis of its structure and content of study courses, specification of the goal, tasks and results to be achieved, so that the study program complies with the State Education Standard (see appendix, 3.3) and the latest (2019) Spatial Planner standard (see, appendix No. 3.4.).

In the actualization of study courses (all previous study courses were updated and new ones were created), the successive place of each course in the structure of the program was assessed, the correspondence of the results to be achieved to the achievement of the study program results. The study results to be achieved as a result of the acquisition of study courses are interrelated and in accordance with the results of the program (see Appendix 3.5. Study course mapping). Thus, the content of all study courses is designed in accordance with the specifics of the professional study program so as to prepare professional planners with defined high standard competencies.

The interconnection of the study program courses in the way of achieving the program goal and results is realized as follows:

Firstly, in a sequential step of the study semesters, in the I semester from the diversity of the thematic spectrum of planning and understanding of the unifying bases, as well as from the acquisition of planning methods to the application of this knowledge and skills in the II, III and IV semesters.

Secondly, in a sequential step of the study courses, from the general basics to the deepening of knowledge and skills in spatial planning topics. For example, the orientation provided in the I semester study course Principles of Spatial Planning, in the field of social planning is developed in parallel with the acquisition of practical methods in the course Social and Psychological Aspects of

Planning.

Thirdly, with the gradual development of a Master thesis, starting from the II semester. The practical topics and applications of the optional courses of the II semester are often related to the topics of the master thesis, the continuation of the work in the III and IV semesters.

The specifics of professional master studies determine that the results to be achieved and the number of tests in study courses differ depending on the practical, group, etc. works in each of them. the proportion of work in each of them. The corresponding study course volumes in credits are not directly related to the results to be achieved and the number of tests.

In the I semester, theoretical basic courses of spatial planning are planned. Studies are started gradually, increasing the study load and the degree of interrelation of courses.

During the I semester, the course *Principles of Spatial Planning* is taught, providing students with basic knowledge in the field of spatial planning. The aim of the course is to create an understanding of the essence of spatial planning, to provide knowledge about the main planning directions, approaches, methods and spatial planning as a tool for moving towards sustainable development, and to develop skills in formulating planning problems and solutions. The course *Principles of Spatial Planning* is a basic course with a diverse range of knowledge in the field of planning, so that subsequently students can successfully master all other basic courses in the I semester and courses in the II semester - *Spatial Development Planning, Community Planning and Regeneration, Strategic Management and Project Management*.

The aim of the course *Principles of Geographical Information Systems (GIS)* is to provide basic knowledge about GIS, GIS components, basic principles of spatial and attribute data storage and spatial analysis capabilities, visualization and interpretation of the obtained results, use of GIS to solve spatial planning problems. The knowledge and skills provided by the course in their application permeate all other courses to be acquired in further studies by developing spatial databases, creating cartographic materials and performing spatial analysis. Good acquisition of the course material is very important in further studies. GIS tools are also used in the development of a master's thesis.

In its turn, the first course of the I semester *Social and Psychological Aspects of Planning* provides an insight into general communication, social and environmental psychology, developing basic knowledge in these areas of psychology in a practical framework – all in the context of spatial planning. Course topics: general psychology guidelines; various communication ally of the spatial planner - person, group, society; communication skills and barriers; conflict resolution; managerial practical psychology; public involvement in the spatial planning (the legislative framework and voluntary initiatives) complement the communicative orientation of planning given in the course *Principles of Spatial Planning*, and provide students with the better knowledge for the courses *Spatial Development Planning, Community Planning and Regeneration*.

In the 5th week of the I semester, students go for an introductory internship - *Practice in Regions - Types of Planning Profession* (Practice, part I) in order to get acquainted in practice with the various areas of work of the spatial planner, and to supplement and to strengthen the knowledge acquired in the first weeks of studies.

In the middle of the semester the study process includes the course - *Legal Fundamentals of Spatial Planning*.

Theoretical courses of the I semester have provided students with the basic knowledge and skills so that students would be ready to go for the practice at the beginning of the II semester - *Practice at Local Authority - Planning and Management at Local Authority* (Practice, part II). The aim of this

practice is to acquaint students with the practical environment of planning and progress of development issues in the local government, the daily work of the territorial development/ spatial planning structural unit and the work and role of the spatial planner.

In the II semester the knowledge and skills acquired in the I semester are supplemented and practically deepened, for example in the course *Spatial Development Planning*, by developing applied research and analytical planning work skills and promoting creative thinking, developing a spatial development proposal for a specific place or territory (e.g. Skriveri village, Bauska town, etc.). and in the course *Strategic Management and Project Management* where in interdisciplinary small working groups students are preparing project applications for specific funds and initiatives.

The mentioned I and II semester courses according to their goals and results form the basis for achieving the defined study program results. In the third semester, knowledge, skills, competencies are deepened along with the emphasis on students' research and practical work.

The III semester begins with the course *Applied Research Methodology in Planning*. The preparatory stage is already in the second half of the II semester, when students have to choose the topic of the master theses, substantiate it and develop a work program for the following months. Within the course, a part of the master thesis is developed, the content of which is directly related to the IV semester master thesis course. Within the course in practical works and lectures students acquire in-depth research methodology and tools.

In the III semester students deepen and gain new knowledge, skills, competencies in the *Practice in Spatial Development Planning* (Practice, part III), which takes place throughout the semester. The aim of the practice is to supplement the knowledge and skills acquired in previous studies and to gain deeper practical knowledge in spatial planning by participating in daily work processes and activities related to spatial planning, and to participate in the elaboration of the planning documents, their implementation, project application preparation, and public consultation activities related to the development of the planning documents. During the practice students supplement their skills by performing tasks specific to the practice. The choice of the place of practice is related to the topic of the master thesis. Thus, the practice is related to the course *Applied Research Methodology in Planning* and during the practice students carry out the necessary research and obtain data and other necessary information for the development of the master thesis.

In the IV semester, based on the knowledge, skills, competencies acquired in the II - III semesters, and strengthening them, a master 's thesis is developed.

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

In the study process lecturers use various methods of knowledge acquisition and consolidation, examination forms and assessment criteria corresponding to the study goal and planned study results, for example, introductory lectures, interactive classes, widely used practical tasks, seminars, small group work, discussions, development of course works and projects. Teachers use methods that encourage active student participation, critical thinking and reflection.

Studies are implemented in accordance with the specifics of the professional study program, in accordance with its aim and tasks. In all theoretical study courses, a significant part of activities consists of practical work. Planning profiling courses, for example, Principles of Spatial Development Planning, Territorial Development Planning, etc., practical works make up 50% and more of the course acquisition. The practical parts of the study courses are most often organized in the form of group work and seminars. According to the regulations of the Republic of Latvia, the structure of the professional study program includes Practice (26 CP), which makes up 32% of the total amount of studies. Part I of the Practice (Practice in the regions) is implemented mainly in the form of seminars, as well as small working groups. Parts II and III of the Practice (Practice in the municipality and Practice in Spatial Development Planning) are implemented in accordance with the Practice Regulations and according to individually agreed content tasks, their implementation methods for each student, according to the specifics of the internship place and the student's research work.

In order to promote the unity of theory and practice for some courses and lectures practitioners, professionals from various public and private institutions are invited and cooperation is implemented, incl. with practice private companies. For example, in the study courses *Principles of Spatial Planning*, *Spatial Development Planning*, *Strategic Management and Project Management*, and others, employers and professionals in the field of spatial planning, M. Kalvāne, R. Cimdiņš, N. Kotoviča and others are involved (see also Part III subsection 4.2). Practitioners in the field are invited to conduct both separate lectures (A.Roze, M.Geldofs, J.Buechel, etc.) and in seminars-classes, e.g. A.Skudra, I.Circene from the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development introduce students to the Spatial Development Planning Information System.

In the spring semester of 2019, two-day classes in the spatial planning were organized as an experience visit to Ltd. Metrum. Doctoral students of the faculty and of the UL are involved in the management of the study process (e.g. I.Vinogradovs in the course work in the *Environmental Conditions in Spatial Planning* course in the 2019/2020 academic year, E.Taurene leading small working group of students in the course work of the spatial planning in the 2020/2021 academic year).

The e-learning environment is used in the study process and to promote independent studies. An e-learning environment (Moodle) has been created for each study course, where students have access to lesson materials, task descriptions and additional study materials related to the course topics, as well as study tasks to be performed (practical and course work tasks, tests, seminar tasks, conferences, etc.). Evaluations of intermediate and final examinations of courses with the justification of the mark are recorded and available to students in the e-learning environment. The full-fledged e-learning environment is especially important during the Covid-19 pandemic (spring semester of the 2019/2020 academic year, autumn and spring semester of the 2020/2021 academic year) when classes take place online.

In order to achieve the intended study results of students (to acquire and strengthen knowledge, skills and develop competence) the study process is dominated by methods in which student cooperation is very important. The study process especially uses methods that promote the development of students' communication and team work skills, in many courses students work in small working groups (e.g. courses *Principles of Spatial Planning*, *Spatial Development Planning*, *Strategic Management and Project Management*, etc.), solving real spatial planning or environmental problems and putting forward proposals for the improvement of planning situations in specific territories and places, developing project applications in interdisciplinary working groups (students of environmental, geographic and spatial development planning programs). The physical environment of studies is also appropriate for such group work at the University of Latvia: classrooms are easily transformable for group work, there are small spaces and places for both

group and individual work, students can use digital technologies.

Seminars of study course foster presentation and discussion skills of the students. Taking into account the students' recommendations, in the last stage of the reporting period in several courses (*Principles of Spatial Planning, Spatial Development Planning* etc.) the skills of leading and moderating student seminars are promoted - students are invited to lead seminars and discussions.

The whole study process is student-centered, which manifests itself in: 1) constant communication, exchange of opinions and knowledge; 2) in the organization of internships, which is largely based on the suitability and interests of each student in the professional field, the choice of the direction of growth; 3) in the development of a master's thesis, where the choice of topics, the development process is closely related to the above.

The student-centered approach was followed by the updating the study program and study courses, paying special attention to the meaningful formulation of study results in order to promote dialogue between lecturers and students on study content, organizational forms and methods, correctly formulated study results promote students' understanding and co-responsibility for their learning, self-assessment and understanding of the received assessment.

Students receive support and feedback from the lecturers during the study process. Students of the program are informed about the evaluation criteria for marking in the introductory classes of all courses, the criteria have been published in advance and are available in the e-learning environment (Moodle). Assessment gives students the opportunity to show the extent to which they have achieved the expected learning outcomes.

The assessment system fully complies with the basic principles and procedures for the assessment of the academic study program, which is determined by the "Regulations on the State Academic Education Standard" and complies with the LU Senate Decision No. 211 of 29.06.2015 on "Procedure for Organizing Study Course Examinations at the University of Latvia". Acquisition of the study course is evaluated in a 10-point system, the course is considered successfully acquired if the evaluation on a 10-point scale is not lower than "4". Repeated taking of examinations, obligations and rights of the students and lecturers are regulated by the abovementioned decision.

The results of examinations and tests are evaluated in a 10-point system, in accordance with the general knowledge evaluation criteria defined in the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers. The description of each course is available in the (Moodle) system and also indicates the requirements for receiving credits. At the beginning of the semester students are introduced to the assessment procedure in each study course. Expected results, evaluation criteria and methods are defined in all course descriptions. Students' knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies are assessed depending on the specifics of the course. The final examinations of the study course are exams, for practice - practice report.

In order to ensure continuous quality control of studies, each study course includes intermediate examination papers - at least one study course with the amount of 2 credits, up to at least four examination papers for courses with the amount of 6 credits.

Types of intermediate examinations used: tests, independent work, practical work, course works, reports and essays, seminars and seminar work, field/site study. The total assessment of the intermediate examinations makes up not less than 50% of the total assessment, but the assessment obtained in the examination - not less than 10% of the total assessment. Such assessment procedure ensures the quality and continuity of knowledge control. The final grade is determined by summing the grades received during the semester in intermediate examinations and marks (points) of exam, report.

The master thesis is developed in accordance with the UL order *Requirements for the development and defense of final theses (bachelor's, master's theses, diploma theses and qualification theses)* (LU 26.02.2015 Order No. 1/69) and in accordance with the regulations of the FGES *On the Procedure for the Development and Defense of Final Thesis in Geography, Geology, Spatial Planning and Teacher Professional Study Programs*.

Following the principles of student-centered education studies, student mobility is promoted - going abroad for an internships, mainly using the support of the Erasmus + program, followed by recognition of study results. Students of the program engage in social activities initiated by lecturers and can gain significant experience. Students are regularly informed (orally, by group e-mail, groups in WhatsApp, Facebook) about spatial planning seminars, conferences, other activities (e.g. smart village competition , RailBaltica conference, MadCity event, etc.) and are invited to participate.

While implementing the internal quality assurance policy, the study program is implemented in a way that encourages students to actively participate in the improvement of the study process. Despite the fact that the faculty has the procedures for the students to submit suggestions and resolve complaints, after the reviewing student appeals, students of the program have not made any complaints, because within the study program there is regular communication (in the end of study week, at the end of each semester, if needed) with students - they are encouraged to express their thoughts, they are asked and are happy to express their recommendations for the study program and its processes (e.g. for the improvement of courses in the conversation with the program director and lecturers). In the study process and in the quality improvement, individual and joint conversations with the students and survey results are evaluated and taken into account (see also Part III subsection 2.6).

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

The professional master's study program in the field *Architecture and Construction* implements practice in the volume of the 26 CP: I part - *Practice in Regions - Types of Planning Profession*, 2 CP, II part - *Practice at Local Authority - Planning and Management at Local Authority*; 6 CP; and III part - *Practice in Spatial Development Planning* 18 CP (see the *Practice Regulations* in Annex No 2.10.A). In the reporting period until 2021/2022 acad. year *Practice in the chosen specialization "Specialization Practice"*, 6 CP and *Practice in Spatial Development Planning*, 12 CP were implemented.

The content of the practice complies with the professional standard of the Spatial Planner, corresponds to the degree to be obtained and by implementing the practice, the results of the study program are achieved.

In the first stage of studies in the first semester in order to form the students' idea of the diverse profession of spatial planner and current issues of the field an introductory practice ***Practice in Regions - Types of Planning Profession*** is implemented (see the *Practice Regulations* in Annex 2.10.A, course description Annex No 3.6) . The practice is organized by the practice organizer, are managed by the UL practice supervisor. Its aim is to acquaint students with the diverse work of the

spatial planner and the necessary skills in different working environments.

Tasks during the practice are to implement measures in planning workplaces related to spatial planning: state institutions (ministries, administrations, agencies), planning region administrations, local governments, planning offices and non-governmental organizations (eg *Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Riga and Vidzeme planning region administrations, Ķekava and Mārupe municipalities, Ltd Metrum, Ltd Regional projects, Free Riga*, etc.), to get acquainted with and participate in discussions about the institution's work in the field of planning the role and tasks, the knowledge and skills necessary for the planner's work in the respective workplace, to learn about topicalities in the field of planning, including getting acquainted with them in nature during site studies. During the practice students gain knowledge in accordance with the study results to be achieved in the study program on development planning systems, tools, sources of information, spatial planning process, communication methods, community development, etc.

At the end of the practice, the students' individual task is to nominate a potential master's thesis topic / field / direction. Students, working in small working groups, write a practice diary, prepare a practice report and present the practice results in the practice final examination - practice report.

**Practice at Local Authority - Planning and Management at Local Authority** is implemented at the beginning of the second semester in the municipality with the aim to acquaint students with the functions, structure, practical planning and progress of development issues in the municipality, daily work to be performed by the territorial development planning structural unit, planners work and role.

They are organized and take place in those local authorities with which the UL has concluded an practice agreement or in which, in cooperation with the practice organizer is chosen by the student. In case of choosing a student's practice place, a tripartite agreement is concluded between the UL, the practice place and the student.

During the practice preparation stage, students are introduced to the practice tasks and conditions and supported in the practice site selection process - the practice organizers recommends practice places where professional planners work, in many cases institutions, organizations where program graduates work. Practice tasks are discussed and agreed with the students and practice supervisors. One week before the practice, a draft order of the UL on students' practice is prepared. Students are also encouraged to go abroad for practice with the support of the ERASMUS + mobility program.

The tasks of the trainee are to get acquainted with the structure and functions of the municipality and its territorial development planning unit, and the work of the planning unit, evaluate it, identify the problems of the planner's work and role in promoting municipal development, participate in the elaboration of the spatial planning documents and projects and their implementation processes and in the daily work in the field of planning and events, to identify spatial planning documents adopted by the local government and under development and to evaluate one of them.

In practice, students gain an understanding of the structure and functions of the municipality and its territorial development planning unit, knowledge of spatial development planning and territorial management and how to perform daily work in the field of planning in the municipality. During the practice, students, in accordance with the study results to be achieved in the program, participate in spatial planning processes, learn to integrate knowledge of various fields and acquire daily skills in spatial planning - critically think, analyze and solve spatial development issues, apply information technology, technical and graphic working tools independently and in a team, communicate with municipal specialists and residents, evaluate the spatial development planning process, one the

municipal spatial development planning documents and its implementation.

Students prepare recommendations for the improvement of the spatial planning process, the improvement of daily work of municipality in the field of planning, the improvement of planning documents and their elaboration process.

The mentioned knowledge, skills and competencies correspond to the results to be achieved by the program and comply with the requirements of the Spatial Planner standard - to acquire practical knowledge for analysis, evaluation and selection of solutions, to understand the development planning system and spatial planning process, to communicate, to participate in the development process, work, communicate and express opinions, freely using professional terminology.

***Practice in Spatial Development Planning*** is intended to supplement students' knowledge and acquisition of practical skills in spatial development planning and appropriate competencies are implemented in international or state institutions, their structural units, planning region administrations, agencies, and municipalities or planning offices. Students choose the places of practice in state institutions, administrations of planning regions, local governments and planning offices, evaluating the topics of the master's thesis, in cooperation with the organizers of practice.

During the practice preparation stage, students are introduced to the practice tasks and conditions and supported in the practice site selection process - the practice organizers recommends practice places where professional planners work, in many cases institutions, organizations where program graduates work. Practice tasks are discussed and agreed with the students and practice supervisors. One week before the practice, a draft order of the UL on students' practice is prepared. Students are also encouraged to go abroad for practice with the support of the ERASMUS + mobility program.

The aim of the practice is to supplement the knowledge, skills and abilities acquired in previous studies and to acquire deeper practical knowledge, skills and competences in spatial planning. The tasks of the practice are to get acquainted with the structure and operation of the practice institution and territory development planning structural unit, to get involved in the daily work processes and activities of spatial development planning, to participate in elaboration of planning documents and / or their implementation, project application preparation and / or implementation process, and in public consultation events, etc., upon the instruction of the supervisor to perform other tasks specific to the practice site and to perform the necessary research and obtain information for the elaboration of the master's thesis.

The knowledge, skills and competencies acquired during the practice correspond to the results to be achieved by the program and the standard of the Spatial Planner. Students deepen their theoretical and practical knowledge of spatial planning processes, gain practical skills by performing daily work in the field of planning, and acquire the necessary knowledge and information for the elaboration of a master's thesis using internship resources.

During the practice students deepen skills to define, analyze and solve spatial development issues, participate in the spatial planning process, develop planning documents in a team, communicate with planning specialists and residents, work in a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary environment, be tolerant and balance different interests. As a result of the practice, students acquire competencies to conduct research and studies, evaluate the achievements of goals set in planning documents, implementation of regulations and actions.

The practice is implemented in accordance with the internship agreement on the provision of the internship place. The implementation of the practice of the program is mainly based on tripartite practice agreements between the UL, the employer and the student (see the practice agreement sample Annex No 2.10.B). The Practice Regulations include the practice goals, tasks, the practice

process, the practice achievement evaluation procedure, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the parties. The student achieves the goal of the practice based on the acquired knowledge, skills, competence and previous work experience.

When determining the tasks of the practice in the local government and spatial development planning, the content of the practice also includes a requirement for the trainee to get acquainted with the administrative structure of institution as well as the functions and operating principles of its planning unit.

A representative of the institution with which the practice agreement is concluded also participates in determining the practice tasks. The evaluation of the practical skills acquired by the trainee and the work performed, as well as the evaluation of the practice report, is given by the practice supervisor at the practice site. The evaluation of the practice supervisor at the practice site, is taken into account when giving the joint assessment of the practice, which is given by the LU practice supervisor. During the practice, the student writes a practice, prepares a practice report.

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

During the reporting period, the topics and quality of master's thesis defended since the previous accreditation of the study field testify to the successful achievement of the study results. During reporting period the graduates of the program have elaborated 80 master's thesis on various spatial development topics, starting from the theoretical planning issues to development and planning topics of specific regions, counties, cities, villages and neighborhoods, including urban regeneration, housing, mobility, landscape, green and blue infrastructure and public outdoor space issues (see the topics of all master's thesis elaborated since 2009, including the reporting period, in Annex No 3.7).

Proposals and solutions for the spatial development and planning, guidelines, methodological recommendations and methodologies are prepared in the works. Master's thesis have been elaborated for concrete territories, as well as sites, taking into account the development needs of areas and territories and recommendations of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development and local governments of Latvia.

A significant part of the master's thesis devoted on the **theoretical issues of spatial planning, public participation approaches and formation of participation in the planning process** (14 works). These include master's thesis on integrated planning process management, impact assessment of the implementation of spatial plans, importance and integration of thematic plans in the urban planning, possibilities of linking nature protection and spatial planning, assessment of degraded objects and territories, definition of the the protection zones of architectural monuments, as well as the provision of functional interconnection of marine and terrestrial territories in the spatial planning process and planning solutions for coastal nature areas.

The topics of six master's theses have been about the **participatory approach in municipal planning**, the formation of participation using open data and communication as a tool in planning, but three thesis of these six provided proposals for the involvement of children and youth in planning processes (for example: thesis *Participation of children and youth in Spatial planning: case*

study of Kekava village).

The next set of master's theses consists of works on the **topics of development, planning and regeneration** of regions, rural areas, cities and suburbs, villages and neighbourhoods that are especially topical in the Latvian situation. Students have paid attention to the development and management opportunities of Riga Metropolitan Area and the role of cities in promoting the cooperation. There are elaborated thesis with focus on urban spatial structure planning perspectives and assessed population capacity in the urban areas and the quality of urban areas (for the example: thesis *The approach for urban quality assessment: the case of „Āgenskalna priedes” neighbourhood in Riga*).

The thesis include studies on the limited residential areas both in the city and in the suburbs and **developed solutions for the transformation of former industrial areas** (for example: *From Garden city to City in the Garden for industrial and commercial territory planning: example of Sarkandaugava neighbourhood in Riga*), prepared proposals for municipal cross-border planning by integrating airport/airport city in the space of the surrounding municipalities (for the example: thesis *An integrated approach to airport and surrounding area planning - the case of Riga International Airport*).

Four master's thesis evaluate the **processes and tendencies of shrinkage** of urban and county areas and give proposals and strategic solutions for the management and development opportunities. In turn, six master's theses are dedicated to suburban growth - Riga suburbanization processes and impact assessment of settlements, proposals for adaptive urban development planning, development of compact settlement structure, giving recommendations for the development of the detailed plans, developing principles for the formation and planning of new settlements and villages.

In their master's thesis, several students (4) have evaluated the **development opportunities of small towns and counties** based on their social potential and social preconditions for the development (for example: thesis *Social preconditions for the development of small towns in Latvia: Iecava case*). Several thesis were considering also the social aspects and the importance of participation (6) and proposals for the place, community, neighbourhood and village planning have been prepared, recommendations for participatory site development have been elaborated, guidelines for village planning for smart development have been prepared (for the example: *Preconditions of place development in rural territories of Latvia; Village development opportunities in Latvia: the case of Garciems; Development perspectives of creative quarters: the case of Miera street*).

Seven works were dedicated to **urban regeneration and the renewal** of cultural and historical sites, ranging from revitalization proposals for the historic centres in a larger or smaller cities to strategic and spatial planning solutions for the part of the city, spatial planning for culturally significant sites and development solutions for former military villages (for the example: thesis *Spatial solutions for the development of Daugavpils historic centre; Revitalization of historic centers of small towns: the case of Bauska old town*).

The master's thesis have prepared recommendations for **public space planning and public space and quality of life evaluation criteria identification** (for the example: *Planning teen-friendly public space: the case of Ziepniekkalns neighbourhood*), and for the functional integration of the public space in the city.

The third set of master's thesis topics consists of works in the **field of landscape, green and blue infrastructure** planning. Within the framework of the thesis, landscape planning practices in Latvia have been studied, the significance of landscape approach in the spatial planning has been

emphasized, solutions for improving sound landscape and roof landscape management in the urban environment have been given (5 thesis) (for example: thesis *The soundscapes - urban acoustic quality improvement opportunities*).

Several master's theses (3) address topics related to the **coordination of nature protection and social interests**, management of nature and socially sensitive territories (for the example: thesis *The balance between nature protection and social issues: the case of nature park Piejūra in Carnikava county area*).

**Green infrastructure planning topics** are solved in five master's theses, starting with the works that apply to the whole territory of the country (for the example: thesis *Guidelines for future development of dendrological parks*) and metropolitan region - proposals for planning and management of Riga Metropolitan Area urban forests (for the example: *Planning and governance of urban forests. Example of Riga metropolitan area*), to works that provide proposals for the city of Riga - proposals for the functional zoning of forest parks and specific solutions for green urban planning in the example of the city neighbourhood, as well as for planning and managing family gardens in the city.

During the reporting period the master's thesis also include important **"blue" topics** necessary for the local governments - sea and land functional connections and waterfront development and planning solutions (3) (for the example: thesis *Daugava riverfront space planning solutions Riga - Kekava area*), as well as in several master's theses (6) significant attention have been paid to the water spatial planning - public water planning, planning of water bodies and small water bodies in the urban environment, as well as solutions for flood risk reduction and sustainable rainwater management (for the example: thesis *Sustainable storm water management in the city: case of Valmiera*).

In the next set of topics - 6 master's theses are in the **field of transport and mobility**. Five of the six master's theses refer to the city of Riga. Works have been elaborated on the possibilities of creating a sustainable transport system in Riga and the accessibility of Riga neighbourhoods by the public transport and the impact on the adjacent territories of the potential construction of the Riga Northern Transport Corridor section has been assessed. Two master's theses provide proposals for walking as a mode of transport and improving the opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists to move around the city (for the example: *Possibilities for pedestrian mobility in Riga city centre area; Street design methods for improved mobility in Bierini neighbourhood*). One work in the field of transport is dedicated to the assessment of the accessibility of the public transport in rural areas.

In recent years, the students of the program pay more and more attention to the theme that is becoming more topical in Latvia from year to year - **housing**, in their master's thesis students are developing proposals for the housing policy and housing availability, as well as preparing housing development options - scenarios, for example for large-scale residential areas (for example: *Processes of change in large scale housing estates: the case of Ilguciems in Riga*).

**Geographic information systems (GIS)** are increasingly used as a tool in master's theses, for example in thesis *Land use change simulation in Ķekava municipality to predict possible future land use in Ķekava region*, while in other work to analyze the accessibility of public transport in rural areas (thesis *Assessment of Public Transport Accessibility in Aizpute, Kuldīga and Skrunda Municipalities*).

Also in their final thesis the students of the program have focused on other topical spatial planning issues such as integrated energy planning (2), shared property challenges and land consolidation for the territorial development (2), planning of the rural school network and integration of the university cities in the urban environment. During the reporting period, a thematically important

master's thesis on spatial planning education and the planning labour market in Latvia has been developed.

The topics and quality of the master's thesis defended during the reporting period testify to the successful achievement of study results. The Master's Thesis Defense Commission basically evaluates the works with marks on the scale from "good" (mark 7) to "with distinction" (mark 10) with some exceptions, when the Master's thesis are evaluated with a mark of 6 or lower, e.g. in 2017 academic year.

Each academic year several master's thesis (exception in 2019 - one master's thesis with the grade "excellent") are evaluated with "with distinction" and "excellent", nominating them for the recognition of the Rector and / or Dean. Thus, in 2014 four students of the program master's thesis were evaluated "with distinction" - J.Duboks, I.Jankava, I.Rukšāne, S.Zāgere - supervisors prof. V.Segliņš, prof. O.Nikodemus, assoc. prof. P.Šķiņķis. In 2015 "with distinction" - N. Kotoviča's master's thesis *The approach for spatial development planning impact assessment: Riga City cases* is outstanding, supervisor - assist. prof. J. Paiders. Five master's theses received the evaluation of the Commission for the Defense of Master's Theses as "excellent".

In 2016, the Commission for the Defense of Master's Thesis evaluates two master's thesis with the assesment ""with distinction" - L. Stikane's master's thesis *Introduction of Child friendly planning principles in Latvian towns: cases of Brocēni and Skrunda* and E. Taurene's work *Participatory approaches to municipal development planning: example of Cēsis Municipality*, supervisor assoc. prof. P.Šķiņķis. The Commission for the Defense of Master's Thesis assesed three thesis with the evaluation "excellent". The works of D.Barbars, I.Kalniņa, A.Skedele were nominated for recognition of the Dean (supervisors Dr.arch. J. Lejnieks, assoc. prof. P.Šķiņķis, assist. prof. K. Āboliņa).

In 2017 the Rector's recognition to three students of the program - K. Cirse for an "outstanding" master's thesis *Spatial solutions for the development of Daugavpils historic center*, supervisor - prof. O. Nikodemus; L. Līce for master's thesis *Divided property and land consolidation solutions in Rigas large-scale residential areas: Kengaraga case*, supervisor - prof. O. Nikodemus and Z. Zamuška for master's thesis *Housing affordability in the context of urban regeneration of historic centers*, supervisor - prof. S. Treija. One thesis was evaluated with "excellent".

In 2018 the master's thesis of K. Alpa *Small water bodies in urban planning: the case of Dzirciems in Rīga* was assesed with the evaluation "excellent", supervisor - prof. O. Nikodemus as well as L. Dimitrijeva work *Preconditions of place development in rural territories of Latvia*, supervisor assoc. prof. P. Šķiņķis. The Commission for the Defense of Master's Theses evaluates four theses with the evaluation "excellent", while in 2019 rating - "excellent" receives one graduate.

In 2020 M. Zamarina received the Rector's recognition for the outstanding work *Village planning for smart development*, supervisor - assoc. prof. P.Šķiņķis and E. Jakovele on work *Processes of change in large scale housing estates: the case of Ilguciems in Riga*, supervisor - prof. S. Treija. One master's thesis receives the grade "excellent".

The results of research and projects presented in the works confirm the in-depth knowledge of degree applicants in the field of planning, skills to independently acquire, summarize and interpret the results obtained at work, which allows to carry out the research activities and develop a practical research project at high professional level.

Graduates of the study program who have obtained a professional master's degree have the right to continue their academic education in Latvian and foreign universities in order to obtain a doctoral degree. Students are recommended to continue their doctoral studies within the University of Latvia, priority is given to doctoral programs in Geography or Environmental Science.

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

**Student surveys.** An essential element of the quality of the study process is the independent hearing of students' opinions. Students' opinion about the study program and about the specific lecturers is obtained by conducting regular conversations with the students, questionnaires and student surveys in the electronic *Information System of the University of Latvia* (hereinafter - LUIS), as well as by analysing the obtained results and discussing students' thoughts with the lecturers, as well as discussing the collected questionnaire information with the students.

Meetings, individual and joint group discussions, take place both in the study process and in between, and in cooperation during the development of master's theses. Meetings are held also when needed, for example in the academic year 2020/2021 during the autumn semester when state of emergency was announced due to Covid-19 in order to prevent the possible impact of the situation on the quality of studies, the director of the study program met with students online every weekend to discuss the distance learning process and how to improve it.

The results of the surveys conducted within LUIS on the courses and the program as a whole facilitate the program administration to monitor the quality and the process of the studies, obtaining more and specific feedback on the quality of the study process. After each course, students of each academic year at LUIS have to fill in an evaluation questionnaire for each course, giving an assessment of the course content and its presentation according to the established criteria, for example giving feedback about the lecturers by answering whether “the methods used by the lecturer facilitated the acquisition of study courses”(see annex 3.8.1. Results of the study program student surveys).

The evaluation of the course and its lecturer provided by students at LUIS is available to each lecturer for his / her course. In turn, the results of individual course surveys and course evaluation are available to the management, the director of the study program, and they are used for comparative evaluation of courses both in academic years and performance evaluation among lecturers, and for improving courses and their teaching, lecturer, if necessary, taking into account students' assessments and recommendations.

In general, students' evaluations of courses and their lecturers are considered to be applied -like. They vary slightly from year to year, but when considering the course evaluation by the program management, the leaders stand out over several years - the students' highest rated courses and their lecturers, such as the course *Social and Psychological Aspects of Planning*, lecturer M. Ābeltiņa, course *Environmental Conditions in Spatial Planning*, lecturer prof. O.Nikodemus.

After each academic year, a student survey is also conducted on the program with a significant number of questions. The results of the survey are compared with the results of previous years, they are evaluated by the study field council, and students are also introduced to the results of the survey. The management of the program also takes into account the students' free comments for the following actions, such as what they liked best about the study program, but especially about “what improvements would be needed”. If, for example, students like “welcoming and responsive lecturers”, “linking theory with practical work...”, then, for example, they are not satisfied that “almost all study papers had to be prepared in groups of working people (mostly studying for a master's degree) complicates time planning...” (from the survey in spring 2020).

In addition to the mandatory surveys in the e-environment, the study program field has a good practice at the end of each autumn and spring semester to organise a round table discussion with the study program director and with students and to discuss the assessment of semesters and lecturers, in this process often receiving a "more lively", more direct assessment than in LUIS. The expressed students' evaluations and proposals are summarized, the program administration analyses them and further evaluates them in the development of the study program, improvement of the course content and attraction of lecturers.

Thus, for example, the following students' opinion (excerpt from the 2015-2016 academic year report) on the specialization practice "Settlement Planning" that "the practice in Kamen was a great and valuable benefit to understand planning and a very good training for the team work" and that "the most useful part of the semester was the internship at Kamen, where intensive, continuous work was an important factor in achieving good results" provided a basis for continuing this approach to the course, seeking new financial support for the course in the following years.

Despite regular communication with students to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic distant learning, both in 2019/2020 academic year in the spring semester and 2020/2021 academic year in the autumn semester, at the end of the semester, in addition to the surveys in the LUIS system, the first year students of the study program were interviewed (orally and in written).

About academic year of 2020 spring semester (studies during the Covid-19 pandemic) - students note that "although this transition to a remote and more digital environment in the second semester was certainly challenging and not without difficulties, they are glad that it took place very quickly and organised", they are satisfied that, in connection with the remote lectures in the second semester, the MS Teams environment is used, "where everything takes place quickly and we can also connect in group work in this environment", but they also note that "the volume of tasks in the remote environment is very large", also note that "a group work was definitely more difficult to do without a face-to-face meetings", and they also point out that "distance communication is problematic for group work" .

The students' opinion was especially important for the management of the program during the Covid-19 emergency situation in the academic year 2020/2021 in autumn semester, because the studies, except for the first month of the autumn semester (September 2021), were conducted online. In general, students rate the semester as valuable, indicating that it has been "very fulfilling and interesting", with a very large scope of new information "to be processed and put into your head". They express the opinion that they "would like to hear more lectures on environmental aspects", also "more about methodological tools and analysis of foreign experience", they point out that "Principles of Spatial Planning lectures were valuable".

Students understand that in the emergency situation of Covid -19 "remote version is a challenge for everyone", however, it is also acknowledged that in a situation where the course (*Strategic Planning and Methods*) takes place remotely, they would have been willing to participate in the course structure because "it is more adapted to the face-to-face format than to the online one". Taking into account the students' recommendation, following course work 2020/2021 in the spring semester was adjusted (teaching approach and the task).

In the students' evaluation of the lecturers students value many lecturers - "I liked O.Nikodemus, I.Kudreņickis; I.Kudreņickis - one of the best lecturers", students are satisfied with "analysis of foreign (planning) documents" (guest lecturers M.Geldof, F. Eckardt), students like ideas provided by R.Cimdiņš. One of the students specifically indicates the evaluation of his / her lecturers - "I highly appreciate these lecturers - M. Ābeltiņa, R.Cimdiņš, I.Grīne, J.Sperga, O.Nikodemus, I.Kudreņickis, G.Lukstiņa, and guest lecturers - Ā. Adlers, M. Geldof, F. Eckardt", while another student highlights and especially welcomes M. Ābeltiņa's course *Social and Psychological Aspects of*

*Planning*, expressing the opinion that the course “was great”. This gives grounds to invite the mentioned lecturers and guest lecturers to give lectures and teach in the next academic years.

**Graduate surveys.** Graduate surveys are conducted periodically. Surveys of graduates were conducted in 2011 when preparing the program for previous accreditation, then the survey was conducted in 2014, in the middle of the next reporting period - in 2016 in the inter-accreditation phase, the last survey was conducted at the end of 2020 while preparing the program for the accreditation. Surveys of graduates of the program show that the program generally meets the requirements of the labour market.

In the autumn of 2016, the survey of graduates was conducted by the student of the program L.Sēja, in the spring of 2017 another student of the program - K.Muravjova - in-depth analysed the survey data while developing his master's thesis (summary of the results of both subsequent surveys is included in the annual report for the 2016/2017 academic year). In the autumn of 2020, the graduate A. Pastora repeated the survey with similar questions, indicating that the graduates' opinion on the quality of the study program obtained as a result of the survey will be used in the accreditation process and the results were summarized by another student A. Sprūde (see Summary of the survey results of the study program 2013-2020 graduates Annex No 3.8.2).

In both cases, the survey was conducted in one period in autumn - from 14th of November to 4th of December of 2016 and also in 2020 from 14th of November to 4th of December. In both cases, the questionnaires were available on the website [www.webanketa.com](http://www.webanketa.com). In 2020, they were also sent out in written. In 2016, the questionnaires were filled in by 47 (forty seven) graduates of the program, which is 46.5% of the total number of graduates, but the questionnaires completed in 2020 were filled in by 29 (twenty nine) graduates, which is 36.25% of the total number of graduates in the reporting period.

In both cases positive answers were received to the question whether the graduates would gladly recommend the program to other students. In comparison, in 2016, in more than 89% of the answers were rated “strongly agree”, “rather agree”, giving a slightly more critical assessment in the 2020 survey - 76% of respondents would recommend the program to other students.

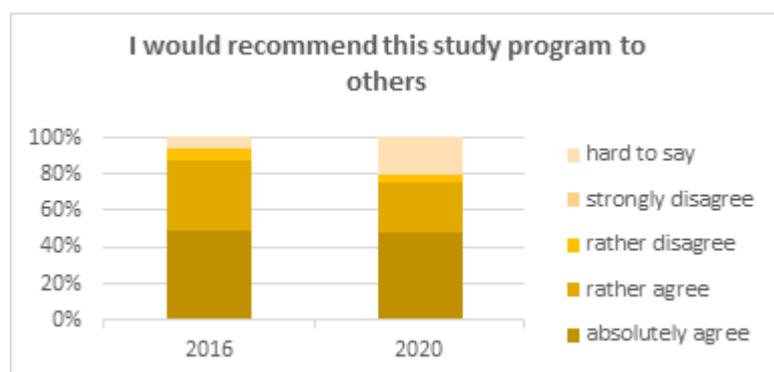


Figure 8. Results of the 2016 and 2020 graduates' survey on the issue of recommending the program to other students

Subsequently the valuable recommendations of graduates expressed in the 2016 survey on possible improvements in the study program were taken into account in the development of the program, so that graduates could more successfully enter the labour market. For example, the graduates suggested that with the introduction of the new *Spatial Development Planning Information System TAPIS* (hereinafter - TAPIS) additional lectures on the existing state information systems and their interconnection should be introduced in the study program. Specialists of the

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development responsible for TAPIS are now invited every year to inform students about the operation of the TAPIS and its connection with other information systems. Recommendations of graduates “more practical work that will enable students to feel like a planner” have been taken into account in the development of the program - development of course works with real situations, places, territories has been strengthened in the improvement of the program, also development of the international co-operation with leading universities in the Baltic Sea Region and /or Europe was improved.

In the question about the most valuable benefits gained within the study program, in both surveys graduates indicated the opportunity to gain theoretical knowledge and understanding of the local and other countries' spatial planning approaches and examples, involvement of the specialists from various fields, inclusion of guest lecturers with extensive work experience. The graduates pointed out that they after studies they have an idea of spatial planning documents, regulations, how the state and local government institutions function, and of spatial planning trends in Latvia and in the world. The knowledge of planning documents, their hierarchy, practical skills for work in a municipalities as well as experience of giving public speeches are also obtained and valued.

When asked whether and what improvements are needed in the study program *Spatial Planning* in order for graduates to better integrate into the labour market, graduates mentioned the need for even closer connection between the theory and real work and its specifics, skills (e.g. development of detailed plans), in addition to pay more attention to planning in Latvia. The recommendation of the graduates has been evaluated and in the last three academic years the program gives students more knowledge about detailed planning, in the course *Spatial Planning* several practical tasks about land use planning are given.

In the surveys of both years, the vast majority of respondents indicated that studies of spatial planning have had a positive impact on a career opportunities and employment in the field of spatial planning. Graduates of the program appreciate the knowledge acquired in the study process that has prepared them for the labour market - in 2016, 66% of respondents rated “fully agree and rather agree”, incl. 28% of respondents give a rating “strongly agree”, in 2020 the overall positive indicator has slightly decreased (rather agree, strongly agree) - 62%, while the rating “strongly agree” has increased - 34%.

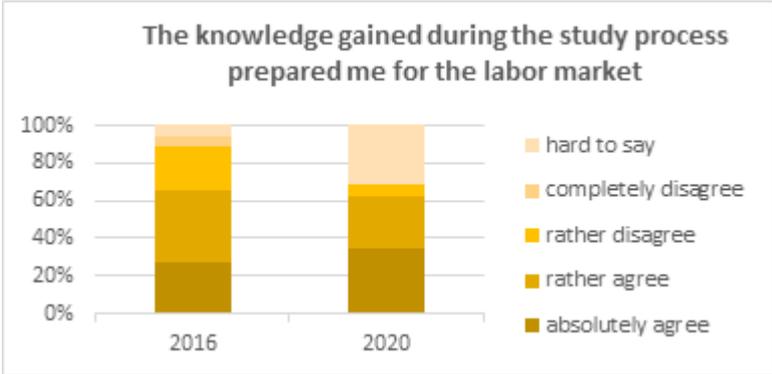


Figure 9. Results of the graduate surveys of 2016 and 2020 on the question whether the knowledge acquired in the study process was prepared for the labor market

The majority of the respondents believe that nowadays the Latvian market needs planners who have strategic and analytical thinking, knowledge of legislation, the ability to manage planning processes and make decisions, as well as knowledge of mastering specific software, specialists who are knowledgeable about environmental issues and specialists who understand the meaning of data, are able to analyze them and draw conclusions and interdisciplinary specialists. A desire to

learn new skills is important because every job is different, even with critical thinking. Answering the question about the development of planning in Latvia and what planning specialists will be needed in the future, the respondents indicated that planning in Latvia is more based on the fulfilment of the established regulatory enactments and regulations and not so focused on cooperation with the population and openness. Greater public involvement in decision-making is needed in the future. Great emphasis must be placed on cross-sectoral cooperation.

**Labour market and evaluation of the employers.** In general, the evaluation of the employers about the qualification of the programme's graduates is high, it is acknowledged that the graduates have good theoretical and practical preparation, the graduates' ability to acquire new knowledge and skills and the ability to work independently is appreciated. Many graduates have become employers themselves and are justifiably demanding of the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies.

In 2014 a study was conducted (by student E.Pudzis): *Labour market assessment of planners: requirements of employers regarding the knowledge and experience of the spatial planning specialists*. At total of 60 (sixty) questionnaires / interviews were conducted in the study (the results of the study are available in the report of the study field *Architecture and Construction* for the 2014/2015 academic year). Almost all respondents indicated that municipal spatial planning specialists need strategic and analytical thinking, while also communication skills and knowledge of the legal system are important, which indicates that the planner must be able to make correct and data based decisions, planner must be able to justify decisions them within the regulatory framework, as well as explain and convince the public that the decisions are justified. The results of the study justified the development of the program.



Figure, 10. Answers of municipal spatial planning specialists to the question “What skills are important for a development planning specialist?” (2014)

In the autumn of 2016 next survey was conducted - the student of the program, L. Sēja, in parallel with the survey of graduates, also conducted a survey of employers of the program. In the spring of 2017, student K.Muravjova in-depth analyzed the survey data while developing her master's thesis (the summary of the survey results, based on the survey conducted by L.Sēja and K.Muravjova's analysis of its data, is included in the direction report for 2016/2017 academic year).

Compared to the survey conducted in the autumn of 2016 in which seven employers participated, in autumn of 2020 questionnaires were received from employers of 20 (twenty) graduates of the program (see the results of the survey in Annex 3.8.3). Summarizing the answers provided about

the graduates of the program it is acknowledged that employers express themselves positively, mainly mentioning that the graduates of the study program have a good knowledge of spatial planning and related processes.

In the 2016 85.7% of employers were “completely satisfied and rather satisfied” with the theoretical knowledge of graduates, compared to the 2020 survey, the positive assessment has increased - 75% of employers are completely satisfied with the theoretical knowledge of graduates and what together with the assessment “rather satisfied” makes 100% of employers (see Figure 2.4).

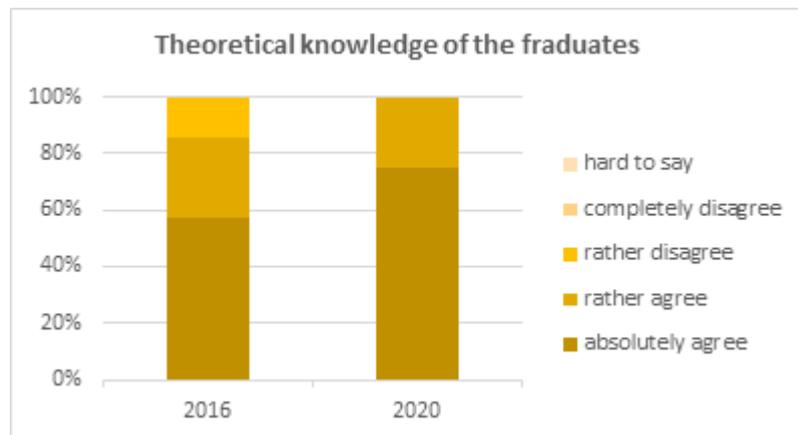


Figure 10. Results of the 2016 and 2020 employers’ survey on the issue of graduates' theoretical knowledge

In the 2016 71.5% of employers “are completely satisfied and rather satisfied” with the practical skills of graduates, compared to the 2020 survey, the strongly positive assessment has significantly increased - 71% of employers fully satisfy the practical skills of graduates and together with the evaluation “rather satisfied ”- 95% of employers (see Figure 2.5).

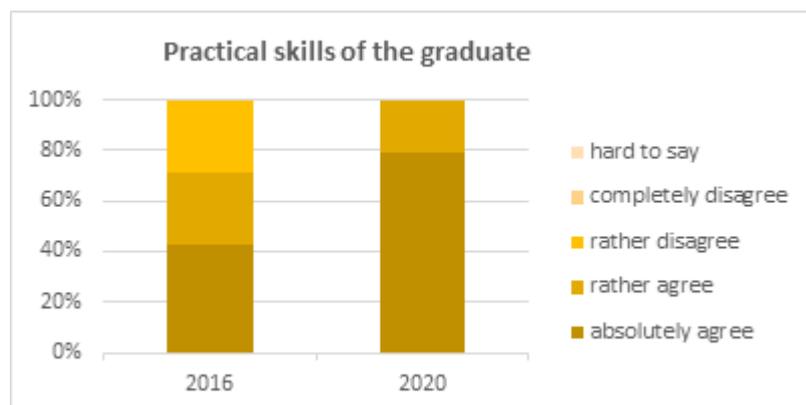


Figure 11. Results of the 2016 and 2020 employers' survey on the practical skills acquired by graduates

In the 2020 survey while answering questions about proposals for improving the field study program and improving the knowledge, abilities and skills of graduates, employers recommend that future students should strengthen their skills and abilities in spatial analysis with a greater emphasis on GIS and also on analytical capabilities, such as technologies and solutions that could be used in planning, learning interactive public engagement tools, as well as other data processing software, developing GIS competencies in strategic planning, and paying more attention to risk

analysis and the analysis of spatial development scenarios. The proposals were evaluated, a new course *Spatial Analysis and Modeling Methods* was prepared.

One of the employers pointed out that “currently, those working in the field of planning lack the skills to coordinate the interests of different groups in order to manage the development processes of the territory and ensure the sustainable development of places. Lack of necessary knowledge in project development and management. Planning specialists should be better oriented in the new methods for the planning documents” and made a proposal to supplement the program with further education components, providing flexible opportunities for cooperation between the UL and the labour market (see Annex No 3.8.3).

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

During the reporting period the incoming and outgoing mobility of students in the field generally shows a constant intensity, however, the most intensive mobility period for the program was from 2014 to 2019, thanks to several international projects and student mobility within them. In the last reporting years (2019 - 2021) there is a slight decrease in mobility. This fact can be explained by the students' unwillingness to lose their job by going on a longer internship, as well as by the implementation of another type of project (Nordplus Horizontal 2019 project *Sustainable Cities in the Baltic Nordic Region*) with other involved students.

Study courses acquired during mobility are recognized by the UL in accordance with the procedures established by the UL *Recognition of study courses at the University of Latvia* (approved by UL Senate Decision No 190 of 29.12.2008) and includes them in the student's passed academic obligations. In order to recognize study courses, the student must fill in the application and submit it to the clerk of his / her program, enclosing a copy of the transcript of the study courses approved by the higher education institution with an assessment. Recognition of study courses is performed by the study program director. He makes a decision on the academic recognition of study courses based on the valid study program plan.

Within the framework of the study program in order to promote outgoing and incoming mobility, the support of various funds and projects is used, creating international inter-university cooperation with an emphasis on the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills.

There were no full-time students from abroad in the program. This is related to the current offer of the program and the course of the study process, mainly in Latvian. During the reporting period, the study program implements gradual (guest lecturers, separate study courses or their parts) preparation for the study program also in English, using various funds and project support. For example, thanks to the support of various projects and funds for several years, the UL course *Practice in the Specialization* with the specialization *Settlement planning* (6 credits) has been implemented in English and in international cooperation. The experience of its implementation has supported the preparation of a new course *Community Planning and Regeneration* in the volume of 10 credits, planned to start in 2021/2022 academic year.

In the 2014/2015 academic year with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation *practical planning skills* in the practice in specialization *Settlement Planning* was organised in Talsi town (Latvia) for the students of the program and six Klaipeda University students and it was led by an

international team of lecturers from the University of Latvia, Klaipeda University and Dortmund Technical University (see Annex No 2.8 *Number of foreign students in the program*).

In the 2015/2016 academic year in this practice course in the specialization *Settlement Planning*, which was implemented with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, together with 10 students and lecturers of the program, 18 students and lecturers from the Technical University of Dortmund took part in the intensive part of the course in Kamen, Germany.

In the following academic years 2016/2017; 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 with the support of the *Nordplus Higher Education project Localized Learning Approach to Urban Studies & Planning in the Baltic Sea Region*, students of the program had the opportunity to work in small working groups with Baltic students from the University of Turku and Tartu University of Life Sciences (36 students in total each year, from each country - Latvia, Estonia, Finland - 12 students) within the specialization practice *Urban Studies and Planning* by gaining practical experience in spatial planning and obtaining a credit assessment (6 ETCS).

Practice course in specialization *Urban Studies and Planning* 2016-2019 jointly implemented by an international team of lecturers (6 lecturers, two from each country) from the University of Latvia, the University of Turku and the University of Tartu Life Sciences, with the participation of a representative of the NGO Urban Institute, Riga (Latvia). The implementation of the practice special course took place in three cities of three Baltic States - Rezekne (Latvia), Narva (Estonia) and Turku (Finland) for international interdisciplinary student teams preparing concrete proposals for the place development, finally presenting the results of group work in the municipalities (see Annex No 2.9 *Number of students studying in foreign universities and going to foreign internships or other mobility programs*).

In the next 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years with the *Nordplus Horizontal 2019 project Sustainable Cities in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, three students of the program participated in an international course (5 ECTS) on social and ecological urbanism for students (masters) from the Baltic Sea region.

During the reporting period other types of outgoing mobility have also expanded, promoting and enabling students to participate in the Erasmus + mobility program through practises in foreign institutions (eg *Barcelona Urban Ecology Agency*, *Geographical Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy*, etc.) as well as summer schools and professionally oriented international study projects with the possibility to obtain credit points.

The students of the program have actively used the opportunities to participate in summer schools as well. Thus, in the summer period of 2016 - June and August 4 students of the program participated in two international summer schools - in the project *Urban Challenges ERASMUS+* (in cooperation with - University of Copenhagen) and in the project *iWater - innovative storm water management MAR-E1002 Landscape Management* (in cooperation with - Aalto University - School of Arts, Design and Architecture). In turn, in the spring of 2017, 2 students of the program participated in the international summer school of the project *Urban Challenges ERASMUS +* (in cooperation with the University of Copenhagen) in Copenhagen and Riga. In 2018/2019 3 students participated in the *Go East summer school*, which took place in Lithuania and Germany.

Student Elīna Sergējeva, who received a scholarship from the *Baltic-American Freedom Foundation*, went on an annual internship to the US enterprise *PLACE - Projects Linking Arts Community and Environment* from November 2018 to October 2019.

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

**3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.**

Provision of the study program resources and its compliance with the implementation of the program is given in the field Part II., Chapter 3, Subchapters 3.1 to 3.3. In addition to the information provided in the Chapter 3, the following subsection provides more detailed information about the spatial data collection in the Map Browser of the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences of UL.

The collection of spatial data in the Map Browser of the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences of UL is being expanded year by year. It includes topographic maps, thematic maps, 6th cycle orthophoto map collections with the coverage of the territory of Latvia and a Latvian terrain model, which covers all the basic data in its structure. An incomplete topographic map Scale 1:10 000 of the *Latvian Geospatial Information Agency* (hereinafter in the text - LGIA) is available in the map browser. For approximately 60% of the territory of the Republic of Latvia LiDAR data model is available, in which it is possible to measure the height of the earth's surface (relief) and create profiles (research-oriented).

The Map Browser of the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences of the UL only one in Latvia has agricultural land (cadastre) - soil maps and land valuation maps. The vector data of the mentioned agricultural lands prepared within the framework of the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences project can be found in e-Latvia resources and available to everyone. In 2020/2021 academic year Map Browser has been supplemented with new layers, maps of the city of Riga in 1883 Scale 1: 2100, map of Western Russia Scale 1: 100 000 - 1, 1915-1920, including Vidzeme region, maps from the time before the First World War and the USSR maps of time collective farms and Soviet farms. The Map Browser is available to users registered in the network of the UL.

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

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

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

In the 2020/2021 academic year 21 lecturer participated in the implementation of the study program - 12 lecturers from the UL Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences, 1 lecturer from the UL Faculty of Law, 1 from Riga Technical University; 1 lecturer from Klaipeda University and a visiting professor from the Bauhaus - University Weimar: in total 3 professors, 1 visiting professor, 5 associate professors, 4 assistant professors and 5 lecturers - planning professionals.

It is envisaged that in 2021/2022 academic year 23 lecturers - 12 lecturers from UL FGES, 1 lecturer from UL Faculty of Law, 1 lecturer from UL Faculty of Social Sciences, 1 lecturer from Riga Technical University, 1 lecturer from Klaipeda University (3 professors, 5 associate professors, 4 assistant professors, lecturer, researcher, assistant professor, 68.8% are elected at the UL) and 7 lecturers - professionals in the field of planning participate in the implementation of the study field (lecturers involved in the implementation of the program see Annex No 2.3 *Teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field*).

Annex No 2.3 *Teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field* also includes 2 lecturers in addition to the courses - *Environmental Protection* and *Civil Protection*, which must be acquired in addition to the master's program if the student has not mastered the requirements in a lower level study program (Regulations of Cabinet Ministers No 512, Article 25).

The structure of the academic staff is favourable and reflects integration with other UL, Riga Technical University and international study programs. The academic staff of Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences covers the largest amount of study program (73%).

For the sustainability of the program, the composition of the teaching staff is purposefully and gradually renewed. It is implemented in such a way that changes in the teaching staff have a long-term positive impact on the implementation of the study program, as well as assessing the compliance of the program with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments (see Annex No 3.2 *Full-time study plan of the study program "Spatial Planning"*).

Since 2013/2014 academic year the program has gradually changed lecturers, including present and former PhD students of the UL Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences, lecturers M.Krievāns, R.Cimdiņš, doctoral degree applicants, program graduates, M.Vološina (since the spring semester of 2020/2021), and other graduates of the study program - N. Kotoviča since 2018/2019 academic year and J.Sperga since 2020/2021 academic year autumn semester.

Reputable lecturers such as architect E.Bērziņš, Dr.ing. assistant. prof. I.Niedole, Dr. geogr. prof. V.Segliņš, as well as Dr. oec. I.Vilka, lect. L.Kūle, have been gradually replaced by young lecturers, for example, instead of the experienced lecturer E.Bērziņš course *Spatial Development Planning* is taught by the Master of Architecture M.Kalvāne, instead of prof. V.Segliņš, taking over the duties of the Vice-Rector of the UL, course *Environmental Conditions in Spatial Planning* is successfully overtaken by assoc. prof. M.Krievāns, the program graduate J.Sperga have replaced an experienced prof. assistant from Riga Technical University I.Niedole in the course *Technical Infrastructure Planning*.

For the development of the program it is planned that from 2021/2022 academic year Dr. geogr., researcher I.Vinogradovs will participate in the implementation of the annual program (I.Vinogradovs taught in the program in 2019/2020 academic year) as well as the graduate of the program, doctoral student E.Taurene (CV see Annex No 2.4. *CV of the teaching staff involved in the*

*implementation of the study field).*

In the 2020/2021 academic year in the spring semester in the framework of the project *Academic Staff Renewal and Competence Improvement at the University of Latvia* as an acting assistant lecturer, M. Vološina, also a graduate of the program started working (contract for a year) and further involvement in the implementation of the program permanently is envisioned.

There is a qualitative growth of new lecturers, for example in the 2013/2014 academic year there were three associate professors, but in the 2020/2021 academic year already five associate professors teach in the program in. M. Vološina and M. Ābeltiņa are preparing for the defence of doctoral theses, doctoral studies at the UL FGES in the 2020/2021 academic year started E. Taurene, a graduate of the program. Another graduate of the program L. Akmentiņa, (with doctoral degree Dr. rer. nat. received in Germany and now researcher of Riga Technical University) is leading the elaboration of master's theses of the students in 2020/2021 academic year and more closer cooperation with her is envisaged in the coming period.

There are also changes in the composition of *The Commission for the Defense of Master's Theses* of the program. From 2020/2021 academic year, G.Ruskuls, Head of the Strategic Management Administration of the Riga City Development Department, is replacing Habilitated Doctor of Science A.Melluma.

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

*The teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program - academic staff, visiting professor, and the qualification of professionals in the field of spatial planning comply with the conditions for the implementation of the study program, regulatory enactments and professional standard (see also Part II, subchapter 3.6 Description and assessment of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field).*

There are 14 lecturers with a doctoral degree among the teaching staff of the study program. Ten lecturers have a doctoral degree in geography, one lecturer has a doctoral degree in geology, one in architecture, one in engineering and one in law. It is expected that in the next one to two years the number of lecturers with a doctoral degree of the program will increase by two.

All lecturers of the study field understand, speak and write in several foreign languages. 19 lecturers have English language skills at C1 level, two lecturers have Russian language skills at C2 level, twelve lecturers at C1 level, one lecturer has Norwegian language skills at C1 level. Lecturers communicate in at least two foreign languages, some lecturers speak 3-6 foreign languages (German, Spanish, French, Italian, etc.), eg lecturer E.Spiriajevas knows 6 foreign languages, assoc. prof. A.Zariņa and assoc.prof. I.Steinberga - 4 foreign languages.

Lecturers with extensive thematic, high-quality knowledge participate in the implementation of studies, for example: in the field of environmental protection, climate and planning prof. O.Nikodemus teaches the courses *Environmental Conditions in Spatial Planning, Spatial*

*development planning*; in the field of energy planning assoc. prof. I. Kudrenickis teaches the course *Technical Infrastructure Planning*, assoc. prof. P.Šķiņķis is teaching spatial planning and strategic planning, assistant. prof. S.Meiere is teaching legal aspects of planning in the course *Legal Fundamentals of Spatial Planning*.

The quality of studies is also ensured by the active participation of the academic staff in scientific research, academic and applied research projects, including the involvement of students in the implementation of projects (see Part II, subchapter 3.6 *Description and assessment of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field* and Annex No 2.6 *Teaching staff publications, participation in the project implementation and international conferences*) and professional activities. For example, the students of the program together with the lecturers were actively involved in several *Nordplus Higher Education projects Localized Learning Approach to Urban Studies and Planning in the Baltic Sea Region* in cooperation with the University of Turku and Tartu Life Science University.

Professional activity of the academic staff, incl. in the international environment, ensures the transfer of the latest global and sectoral policies, knowledge, experience, and accordingly the transfer of that knowledge to students. For example, assoc. prof. P.Šķiņķis, lecturer G.Lukstiņa participated as experts in the training program for Latvian local governments (supported by the *Norwegian Financial Mechanism*) - project *Increasing the territorial development planning capacity of Latvia's planning regions and local governments and elaboration of development planning documents* (No.4.3.-24 / NFI / INP-002 ) as well as in the *Local Community Training Program* (2013-2016). P.Šķiņķis together with H.Gūtmane, M.Geldofs, A.Pužulis, E. Spiriņjevs, prepared the monograph *Handbook on Urban Restoration and Rebirth. From degradation to recovery, 2020*.

Since 2018/2019 academic year the content of the study program is significantly improved by the participation of guest lecturer E.Spiriņjevas and visiting professor F. Eckardt thanks to the support of the UL project *Academic Renewal and Competence Improvement at the University of Latvia*.

From March 2019 (with some breaks) until the 2020/2021 academic year within the framework of the above-mentioned project a guest lecturer, director of the Center for Social Geography and Regional Studies of Klaipeda University, doctor of geography, E.Spiriņjevas participated in the implementation of studies. Taking into account his competencies, incl. GIS planning, also in the 2020/2021 academic year in the spring semester he continued to work at the the FGES of UL. From February 1st to July 1st, 2021, a visiting professor from the Bauhaus - University of Weimar, director of the master's study program in European Urban Studies, director of the Bauhaus Research School, doctor of political sciences, professor F. Eckardt, and acting assistant lecturer M. Vološina, a graduate of the program and a candidate for a doctor's degree, started working (0.3 workload, from June 2021 to February 2022 - 0.5 workload).

Professionals working in the field of spatial planning have participated in the implementation of studies since the establishment of the program *Spatial Planning* - in teaching study courses, teaching individual parts of the course or lectures, supervising and consulting final theses. Those working in the field participate in the master's thesis defense commission. For data on the involvement of specific professionals in the field of studies, see Table 13 in Part III *Involvement of the professionals of the sector in the program*.

Specialists in spatial planning and related fields in the 2020/2021 academic year similarly to the previous academic years teach several courses, for example, graduate of the program N. Kotoviča (now project manager at the *Riga Energy Agency*) teaches several courses *Strategic management and project management*; R.Cimdiņš (now acting Head of the *Riga Planning Region Administration*, spatial planner), participates in the course *Principles of Spatial Planning*, providing students with current information and experience in the field of planning. M. Ābeltiņa transfer professional

knowledge to students in the course *Social and Psychological Aspects of Planning*, which is highly valued by students. M. Kalvāne, the head of the Spatial Planning Branch at one of the leading spatial planning companies in Latvia, Ltd Metrum, includes professional knowledge into the tasks and the group work of the course *Spatial Development Planning*.

Table 13. *Involvement of the professionals of the sector in the program*

<b>Professionals of the sector involved in the implementation of the program, including:</b>	<b>2017/2018</b>	<b>2018/2019<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>2019/2020</b>	<b>2020/2021</b>
<b>Lectures</b>	Edgars Bērziņš	Edgars Bērziņš	Edgars Bērziņš Māra Kalvāne	Māra Kalvāne Jānis Sperga Baiba Gulbe
<b>Lecturing study course</b>	Māra Kalvāne Edgars Bērziņš Marija Ābeltiņa Nika Kotoviča	Māra Kalvāne Edgars Bērziņš Marija Ābeltiņa Nika Kotoviča Rūdolfš Cimdiņš	Māra Kalvāne Edgars Bērziņš Marija Ābeltiņa Nika Kotoviča Rūdolfš Cimdiņš	Māra Kalvāne Marija Ābeltiņa Nika Kotoviča Rūdolfš Cimdiņš
<b>Final thesis work supervision</b>	Jānis Lejnieks Rūdolfš Cimdiņš	Anda Ruskule	Rūdolfš Cimdiņš	Rūdolfš Cimdiņš
<b>Take part in the Commission for the Defense of Master's Thesis</b>	Jānis Lejnieks Aija Melluma Ilze Circene	Jānis Lejnieks Aija Melluma Ilze Circene	Jānis Lejnieks Aija Melluma Ilze Circene	Jānis Lejnieks Runtars Ruskuls Ilze Circene

The qualification of the teaching staff and academic staff, as well as the diversity of professional competencies and knowledge in the field help to achieve the study results, it is based on the evaluation of students, graduates and employers (see survey results in Part III subsection 2.6) and graduates' successful integration into the labor market (see Annex No 2.14 *Employment and professional growth of the study field graduates*).

**4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).**

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

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

The research activity of the academic staff together with the participation in the implementation of the international and *Latvian Council of Science* funded projects, directly and promotively influences the study process. Research activity contributes to the study content both in the individual study courses and in the development of the field of planning. Proposals for improving the content of study courses have also been made with the knowledge and experience gained in the research works of the lecturers.

During the reporting period (2014-2020), the academic staff has provided at least 67 direction-related reports at conferences, symposia and congresses. Representatives of the academic staff have actively published research results during the reporting period (2014-2020) (91). Thematic research directions cover various sub-branches of the geography and environmental science (see Annex No 2.6.).

The results of the research work are characterized by publications that are directly related to the topic relevant to the direction:

- Lagzdina, E., **Kudrenickis, I.**, Ernšteins, R., Lontone, A. 2018. Municipal coastal governance towards rural community resilience development: scenarios and tools. *WIT Transactions on Ecology and the Environment*, Vol. 226, Sustainable Development and Planning 2017, pp 297-309 ). (For a full list of publications, see in Annex 2.6.).

- **Zariņa A., Vinogradovs I., Šķiņķis P.** 2018. Towards (Dis)Continuity of Agricultural Wetlands: Latvia's Polder Landscapes After Soviet Productivism. *Landscape Research*, 43(3), 455-469. (Scopus).

- Grube, G., **Paiders, J.** (2020) Latvia's Progress Towards a Retirement Society: Ageing Trends in Latvian Municipalities/Latvijas virzība uz pensionāru sabiedrību: novecošanās tendences Latvijas novados. *Folia Geographica XVIII New Geographies of Wellbeing: Nature, Resources, Populations and Mobilities* pp.36-45. DOI: 10.22364/fg.18.12.

- Zarins, E, **Paiders, J.** (2020) Factors Affecting and Determining Local Depopulation / Factors influencing and determining local population growth and decline. *Folia Geographica XVIII New Geographies of Wellbeing: Nature, Resources, Populations and Mobilities* pp.13-19. DOI:

10.22364/fg.18.12.

- **Paiders, J.** (2019). Projected changes in the number of inhabitants of Latvia in the event of the stabilization of emigration. *Folia Geographica XVII – Appreciating Geography: Local and Global Scale*, pp. 77-84. <https://doi.org/10.22364/fg.17.10>

- Ušča, M., **Vinogradovs, I.**, Reķe, A., Immurs, D. V., & **Zariņa, A.** (2019). Assessment of Ecosystem Services for Planning of Green Infrastructure at the Regional Level. In *Proceedings of the 12th International Scientific and Practical Conference. Volume I* (Vol. 315, p. 319).

- **Zariņa, A., Vološina, M.** 2018. Renewable energy and landscape quality. *Country Chapters. Latvia*, Roth, M. et al. (eds). Jovis, pp. 58-59.

- **Spiriajevas, E.**, Spiriajevienė, I. (2018). The Geographic and Social Dimensions for Implementation of Bike-Sharing System: A Case of Klaipėda City. *Regional Formation and Development Studies (3)*. Klaipėda University, p. 118-131 (ISSN 2029-9370).

Original articles (15), including:

- **Lukstina, G.** Landscape of the Resort City of Jurmala: From Fishermen Villages to Planned Urbanization. In Vol 4 (2018): *Acta Architecturae Naturalis* (ISSN 2228, 1320 (print), ISSN 2613, 7399 (online)), Tartu 2018. pp. 33-50.

- Printsman, A., Linkola, H., **Zariņa, A., Vološina, M.**, Häyrynen, M., Palang, H. (2019) Landscape 100: How Finland, Estonia and Latvia Used Landscape in Celebrating their Centenary Anniversaries. *European Countryside* 11(2):187-210

- **Šķiņķis P., Cimdiņš R.** (2015). Capacity assessment in territories. New approaches in measuring social development: people, territories, municipalities. Riga: University of Latvia, pp.307-325.

- **Šķiņķis P.,** Vilka I., **Cimdiņš R.,** Ušča M. (2015). Capacity assessment in territories. New approaches in measuring social development: people, territories, municipalities. Riga: University of Latvia. pp.281-306.

Monographs (16), including:

- Gūtmane, H., Geldofs, M., **Šķiņķis, P.,** Pužulis, A., **Spiriajevs, E.** (2020) Monograph "Handbook on Urban Renewal and Revival. From degradation to recovery", Riga, 135 pp. <http://www.alps.archi/portfolio/rokasgramata-par-pilsetvides-atjaunosanu-un-atdzimsanu-no-degradacijas-uz-regeneraciju/>

- Climate and sustainable development. Edited by M. Kļaviņš and J. Zaļoksnis. Riga: University of Latvia Academic Publishing House, 2016, 384 pp (**A. Briede**, chapter 4: Latvia's climate and its changing tendencies).

- **Meiere, S.** Principle of public participation in the implementation of transport infrastructure projects. Book: Central and Eastern European legal traditions and issues of legal identity. Proceedings of the 76th International Scientific Conference of the University of Latvia. Riga: University of Latvia Academic Publishing House, 2018, 93.-100.pp., ISBN 978-9934-18-351-5.

- Latvia. Land, nature, nation, country. 2018. (scient. ed. **Nikodemus O.,** Kļaviņš M., Krišjāne Z., Zelčs V.) Riga: University of Latvia Academic Publishing House, 752 pp.

- **Nikodemus, O.,** Brūmelis, G., Ruskule A., Auniņa, L., Ikaunieca, S., Mendziņa, I., Račinska, L., 2015. Nature protection (ed. Nikodemus O., Brūmelis G.) 2nd edition, Riga: University of Latvia

**Participation in the international conferences** (67). The academic staff has actively participated in and presented at the international conferences in Latvia and many foreign countries (France, Ukraine, Austria, Vietnam, Lithuania, etc.), including presentations at global and regional conferences:

- IALE World congress "Ecosystem services as an integral support tool for green infrastructure and landscape planning: a case of agro-industrial landscapes in Latvia" (**Zariņa, A., Vinogradovs, I., Ruskule, A.**);

- International conference on "New insights in Regional Geography": A creation of Social Economic Well-being in Europe's Green Belt Spaces", "Challenges for New Regional Policy in Latvia: Alternatives of Administrative Territorial reform" (**Šķiņķis P.**, Miglavs, A.) (For a full list of conference reports, see Annex No 2.6.)

The teaching staff of the program has ensured the management of international or local projects important for the program or participated in their implementation (participation in international (55) and local (12) projects), including:

- National expert of the EU URBACT II program project "USEAct" (Urban Sustainable Environmental Actions), "Sustainable Urban Environment Renewal", Latvian sub-project "Riga Metropolitan Area Urban Development Action Plan". **G.Lukstiņa** national expert, 2014. - 04.2015.

- Norwegian Financial Mechanism. Latvian local government training program Project "Increasing the territorial development planning capacity of Latvian planning regions and local governments and development of development planning documents" (No.4.3.-24 / NFI / INP-002), Local community training program, expert. (Nr.4.3.-24/NFI/INP-002), 2013-2016. **P.Šķiņķis, G.Lukstiņa** - experts.

- LIFE program project "Restoration of grasslands and promotion of their various uses" GrassLIFE, LIFE16NAT / LV / 000262 managing partner Latvian Fund for Nature (project coordinator UL), **Nikodemus, O.** - expert.

- Nordplus Higher Education 2016-2018. Project Localized Learning Approach to Urban Studies and Planning in the Baltic Sea Region (NPHE-2017/10186). (P.Šķiņķis, G.Lukstiņa);

- Nordplus Horizontal 2019. - 2021. *Sustainable Cities in the Nordic-Baltic Region*), NPHZ-2019/10030, (**P.Šķiņķis, G.Lukstiņa**) (for a complete list of projects, see Annex No 2.6.).

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

Recognizable mutual cooperation and practice has developed between the teaching staff. There are collegial relations between the lecturers of the University of Latvia, lecturers of the University of

Latvia and professionals - lecturers in the field, which promote the quality of studies and the process, exchange of knowledge, improvement of the taught courses and their interconnection. For example, the development of a course work in a small working group in the course *Spatial Development Planning* is led by a lecturer at the University of Latvia, who teaches theoretical courses in planning and 1-2 professionals in the field of spatial planning from the private sector. In the joint study process there is a mutual exchange of theoretical knowledge and transfer of practical skills.

The cooperation of the teaching staff is also facilitated by the management of the program, who regularly meets and / or communicates electronically with the lecturers, discusses and coordinates the study process. The issues of the study process are discussed in individual negotiations and are periodically reviewed by the study field Council.

Recognizable mutual cooperation and practice has been established between the teaching staff, there is a collegial relationship in order to promote the course of the study process, improvement of the taught courses and their mutual connection. Issues of the study process are periodically reviewed by the study field Council.

During the reporting period, the internationalization of the study program has increased. For example, in the 2020/2021 academic year an international team of lecturers, consisting of 13 lecturers from Latvian universities (UL, Riga Technical University), lecturer E.Spiriajevas from Klaipeda University, Lithuania, and visiting professor F. Eckardt from Germany Bauhaus - Weimar University and six planning professionals from the public and the private sector.

The ratio of the number of students and teaching staff within the study program at the time of submission of the self-assessment report in the spring semester of 2021 is 27:21. The relation can be explained by the diversity of knowledge required in the field of spatial planning, as well as the change of generations in the program, the participation of a visiting professor and the acting assistant involvement in the implementation of the program from the spring semester of the 2020/2021 academic year.

It is also worth noting the cooperation between the programs of the faculty - study course *Strategic management and project management* is joint for the students of master programs of *Environmental Sciences* and *Geography* of the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences of UL, and students work in interdisciplinary working groups. In the 2020/2021 academic year in the spring semester, 32 additional students from the master programs of environmental sciences and geography study in the course in addition to the students of the program.

# Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	3.1_Statistics, dynamics of students.docx	3.1_Studējošo statistika dinamika.docx
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	3.3_Compliance with the state education standard RCM ENG p.docx	3.3_Atbalstība valsts standartam MKN p LAB..docx
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)	3.4_Compliance with the professional standard.docx	3.4_Atbalstība profesijas standartam jp GUNTAL.docx
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	3.5_Study course mapping.docx	3.5_Studiju kursu kartējums 15.08..docx
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	3.2_Study plan.docx	3.2_Studiju plāns.docx
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	3.6_COURSE DESCRIPTIONS Eng.docx	3.6. KURSU APRAKSTI.docx
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	3.9.2_3.9.3_Diploma and diploma supplement.docx	3.9.2_3.9.3_Diploms par grādu un kvalifikāciju un tā pielikums.docx
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	3.9.6_Rector certification for study continuation in other program.docx	3.9.6_Rektora apliecinājums par pāreju uz citu progr..docx
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	3.9.7_Rector certification about compensation.docx	3.9.7_Rektora apliecinājums par kompensāciju.docx
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.	3.9.5_Cerification by head of direction about English language skills.docx	3.9.5_Apliecinājums par angļu valodu.pdf
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education		
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	2_Studiju_liguma_forma_kons_30.06.2021.doc	1_Studiju_liguma_forma_kons_30.06.2021.doc
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.		