

APPLICATION

Study field "Religion and Theology" for assessment

| | |
|---|--|
| Study field | <i>Religion and Theology</i> |
| Title of the higher education institution | <i>Nodibinājums "Lutera Akadēmija"</i> |
| Registration code | <i>3343802695</i> |
| Legal address | <i>ALKSNĀJA IELA 3, CENTRA RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1050</i> |
| Phone number | <i>67222461</i> |
| E-mail | <i>info@lut.edu.lv</i> |

Self-evaluation report

Study field "Religion and Theology"

Academy of Luther

| | |
|--|-----|
| Self-evaluation report | 2 |
| Study field | 4 |
| 1. Information on the Higher Education Institution/College | 4 |
| 2.1. Management of the Study Field | 15 |
| 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System | 33 |
| 2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field | 51 |
| 2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation | 68 |
| 2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation | 85 |
| 2.6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures | 90 |
| Annexes | 92 |
| Other annexes | 94 |
| Theology (43221) | 95 |
| Study programme | 98 |
| 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme | 98 |
| 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof | 110 |
| 3.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme | 117 |
| 3.4. Teaching Staff | 118 |
| Annexes | 125 |

1. Information on the Higher Education Institution/College

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

The Luther Academy (the LA) is a higher education institution established on 1 February 1997 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL) with a purpose to prepare clergy and lay persons for ministry in the field of spiritual care and education in the ELCL congregations and state, municipal, and non-governmental institutions.

The LA has taken over traditions of the Seminar of Theology established after World War II (1969-1991). Therefore, studies in the LA are founded on the Christian faith and Lutheran tradition to encourage and prepare people to fulfil their God-given calling.

The LA has been accredited for an indefinite period since 2012.

The mission of the LA

The mission of the LA is to make available theological education, which is academic, based on the Holy Scriptures, and practically applicable, while cooperating with the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, as well as other churches and cooperation partners across the world.

The vision of the LA

The LA is an internationally recognised theological higher education institution of the Lutheran tradition preparing people to respond to the calling to implement the Christ's mission in the world.

The LA is the centre of a higher education ecosystem based on Lutheranism in Latvia, and it serves for the purposes of a long-term high-quality development of a unified Christian education ecosystem in Latvia.

The values of the LA:

1. Mission and Responsibility
2. Tradition and Openness
3. Relationship and belonging
4. Individuality and togetherness

The LA aims, doctrinal and financial foundations, principles for operation and management are defined by the LA Articles of Association (https://ej.uz/LA_Statutes) and the LA Constitution (https://ej.uz/la_constitution).

The LA has a significant role not only in development of the higher education system in Latvia, but also the spiritual development of the nation. The LA provides studies and research corresponding to the level required for the 21st century based on unity between higher education, science, and religious thought. The LA takes active part in solving spiritual matters of national and social scale, is a centre of life based on Lutheran traditions in Latvia promoting both the Lutheran heritage and values, as well as solving current challenges by application of research methods and obtaining results of scientific research. At the same time, it cultivates national language, culture, and development of the nation and society in the international context.

The LA has signed 7 bilateral cooperation contracts with higher education institutions in 4 countries: in Latvia, Germany, the USA, and Sweden.

Alongside intellectual studies, the Luther Academy establishes the Christian fellowship between students, lecturers and staff based on unity of purpose of life and selected ministry. While studying in depth the liturgical life of the Church, the practice of recollections and hourly prayers, students search for the most appropriate way to their spiritual growth and personal development.

In January 2023, the LA employs 13 staff, incl. 6 LA academic staff members and 8 LA general staff members.

The LA financial indicators in 2021 are reflected in turnover of EUR 169,969.

Financial sources:

- Subsidies of the Founder;
- Tuition fees;
- Donations of partners.

The LA study process is organised in Rīga, Alksnāja iela 3.

Study fields implemented by the LA and the number of included study programmes

Currently, the Luther Academy implements one study field “Religion and Theology” with an implemented state-accredited study programme “Theology”. Its purpose is to provide the students with an enhanced development of knowledge, skills, and competences in theology to form academic foundations in the main areas of theology and work in a church and society with an appropriate level of competence.

Framework of the study field “Religion and Theology” includes also implementation of the LA programme “Theology and Ministry” (formerly “Education Programme for Church Staff”) of the LA Open Academy which has been recognised by the LELB (not accredited). It provides basic knowledge and skills recognised by the Church for the ministry of evangelists, lecturers, deaconry staff, Sunday school teachers, as well as for fulfilment of other callings to minister to the church and society. The programme prepares the students for further studies in theology or church music. Programme “Theology and Ministry” is available in English as well since the academic year 2021/2022.

The Luther Academy has also an accredited study field “Arts” with a study programme “Church Music” which has been closed since 1 September 2022 by the Senate meeting Decision No. 4 of 26.04.2022, p. 6/

Dynamics of the LA student number during the evaluation period

According to its specifics, the LA positions itself as a higher education institution with a small number of students forming the Christian education community in cooperation with the LELB based on the Lutheran traditions and values. There are 28 LA students at the beginning of 2023.

Dynamics of the LA student number during the evaluation period (2017-2022) is reflected in Figure 1.

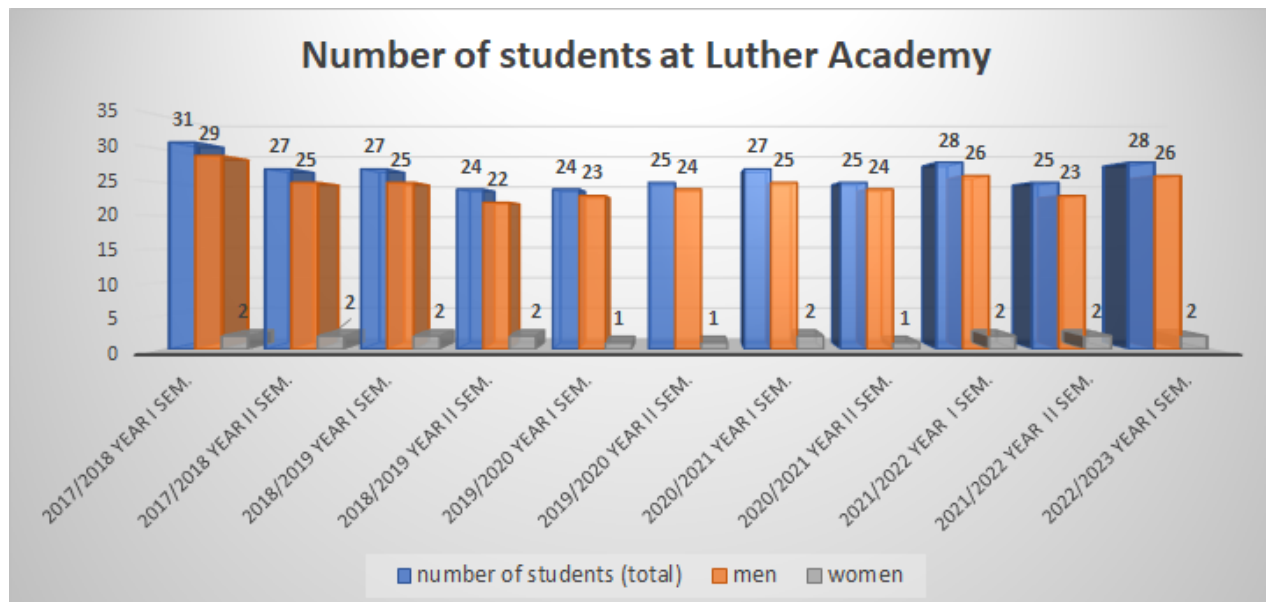


Figure 1. Number of the LA students, 2017-2022.

The figure clearly shows that the number of students has not changed significantly during the last years; however, regression of the number of students can be observed in other higher education institutions in Latvia implementing similar programmes.

(<https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/statistika-par-augstako-izglitiba> - only in Latvian). It shows that the LA operates in a specific segment of education and is included in an ecosystem appropriate to its profile.

Analysis of demographical data of the students at the disposal of the LA shows that studies at the Academy are chosen by people with previous experience in life and work (see Figure 2).

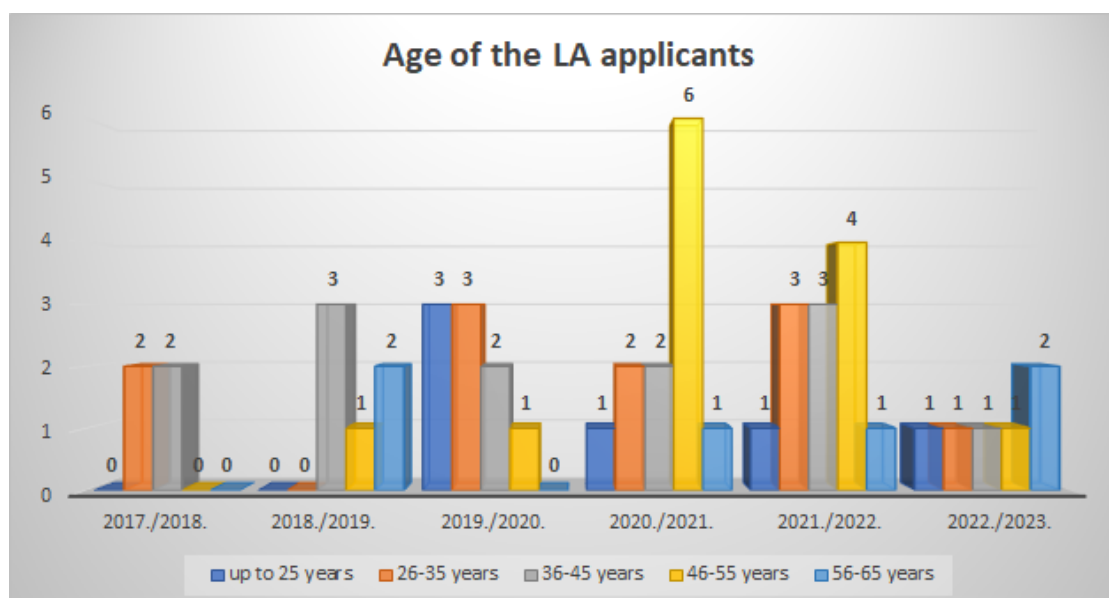


Figure 2. Age of the LA applicants, 2017-2022.

The figure shows that most of the applicants are persons aged between 26 and 55; many already have a former vocational or higher education in various fields, incl. theology. The studies at the LA should be seen as an expression of the mission and their own Christian persuasion.

The LA development strategy

On 13 August 2021, Decision No. 8, p. 6 was adopted at the Senate meeting approving the LA medium term development strategy for the period of 2021 - 2025 ([Development of strategy of LA 2021-2025](#)). When cooperating with the involved parties and analysing the LA strategy for 2016-2020, the LA mission, vision, and values were updated, and **3 strategic priorities were defined:**

1. Offer of the higher education;
2. Scientific research;
3. Lifelong learning.

The aim of Priority No. 1 – **the LA offer of the higher education** – is to prepare suitable, competitive professionals in the fields of theology and religion in accordance with the trends of higher education and relevant needs of the society. The prepared professionals may use the acquired knowledge and practical skills to promote the spiritual health of the society.

The aim of Priority No. 2 – **scientific research** – is to provide and develop a high-quality scientific and applied research in accordance with the requirements of laws and regulations in the Republic of Latvia, as well as the trends in the fields of theology and religion by involving the teaching staff, students, local and international partners.

The aim of Priority No. 3 – **lifelong learning** – is to develop the offer of lifelong learning based on needs of the Church and society, as well as create the culture of lifelong learning in the field of theology and religion.

The LA development strategy defines six areas of activities ensuring achievement of the aims defined for these priorities: 1) quality assurance; 2) staff development; 3) partnership/cooperation; 4) internationalisation; 5) resources; 6) image.

The LA strategy 2021-2025 provides further development of the LA as the centre of higher education ecosystem in Latvia based on Lutheranism (see "Other annexes" **Annex No 1 "LA as the centre of higher education ecosystem in Latvia based on Lutheranism"**), development of unique studies and lifelong learning programmes ([Open Academy](#)) to serve the long-term fruitful development of a unified Christian education ecosystem in Latvia.

The LA continued the objectives defined in the previous strategic period to achieve a higher level of research excellence, as well as to promote student-centred studies and to develop advanced environment for studies facilitation wellbeing of all involved parties, promotion of talent development and sustainable growth.

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

The LA is a higher education institution established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL). The legal activities and management structures of the LA are governed by the LA Articles of Association (https://ej.uz/LA_Statutes) and the LA Constitution (https://ej.uz/la_constitution).

Decision-making bodies of the LA:

The Founder – the LA decision-making body in strategic, financial, and budget matters is the

Founder. In accordance with the LA Constitution and other laws and regulations, the LA Founder takes the final decision on the following matters:

- approval of the candidates for the position of the Rector;
- approval of the results of the Rector elections;
- decision on dismissal of the Rector;
- approval of the LA budget and annual report of the Rector;
- assessment of the LA performance and effectiveness;
- taking decisions on creation, reorganisation, and liquidation of the LA structural units, branches, institutions, commercial companies.

Constitution Assembly – the Constitution Assembly is the higher LA academic and scientific activity representation, management and decision-making body elected for the period of 3 years. The Constitution Assembly consists of 11 persons, of which 6 representatives are elected from the academic staff; 2 representatives are elected by the LA Founder; 2 representatives are elected from the full-time students, 1 representative is elected from the general staff.

The Constitution Assembly shall:

- adopt and amend the LA Constitution;
- elect and remove the Rector as per procedures specified in the Constitution;
- hear the Rector's report;
- elect and revoke the Senators;
- elect the Revision Commission and Academic Arbitration Court;
- elect the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson, and the Secretary of the Constitution Assembly.
- approve and amend Regulations of the Constitution Assembly, the Senate, the Revision Commission, and the Academic Arbitration Court;
- take a decision on creation, reorganisation, and liquidation of the LA structural units, branches, institutions, commercial companies, as well as the basic rules for operation thereof;
- determine the documents governing the internal procedures and structure of the LA;
- decide the matter on changing the name and the legal status of the LA;
- may adopt for review also other matters on the LA activities.

The **Senate** is a collegial management and decision-making institution approving documents by which the academic and scientific activity areas of the LA are governed. Operation and competence of the Senate is governed by the Regulations of the Senate approved by the Constitution Assembly (https://ej.uz/la_Senat).

The Senate is elected by the Constitution Assembly for the period of 3 years. The Senate consists of 9 members of which 6 are representatives of the academic staff, 2 representatives of the students, and 1 representative of the LA Founder. The Senate meetings take place on the second Tuesday of each month. Any LA student and staff member of the higher education institution may participate in these meetings.

Rector

The Rector implements the general management of the administrative, academic, and scientific activities of the LA, and represents the LA in all matters of academic and scientific activities without a special authorisation within the bounds of his or her competence.

With the agreement of the LA Founder, the Rector is elected by the Constitution Assembly by secret ballot for no more than two successive periods of 5 (five) years.

If the LELB Archbishop is elected as the Rector, the limitation of the office period is not applicable to him.

In 2013, the Archbishop Jānis Vanags was approved as the LA Rector.

The Rector:

- approves rules and procedures on the administrative activity matters in the LA; takes responsibility for implementing of the LA strategy;
- takes a decision on formation of the internal LA structural units;
- ensures lawful, economic, and targeted use of the LA financial resources and property; takes personal responsibility for the LA financial activities; prepares the LA budget;
- defines and validates with the Senate the number of Professors, Assistant Professors, Lecturers, and other academic staff; signs contracts with the representatives of the academic staff;
- promotes the development of the LA staff and ensures academic freedom of the academic staff and students;
- takes a decision on replacement of academic staff due to temporary absence if it does not exceed two years;
- matriculates and excludes persons from the list of students;
- performs other obligations of the Rector.

The **Audit Commission** inspects compliance of all aspects of the LA financial and economic activity with the effective laws and regulations, the LA Constitution, and decisions of the LA Founder. The Audit Commission consists of three persons elected by the Constitution Assembly for the period of 3 years.

The Academic Arbitration Court shall examine:

- applications of students and academic staff on restrictions and infringements of the academic freedoms and rights under the LA Constitution;
- disputes between the LA officials and management bodies of the structural units in subordination relationships;
- applications on contesting an administrative act or actual action, taking relevant decisions in the matter, as well as shall fulfil other tasks specified in the LA Constitution.

The Academic Arbitration Court consists of 5 (five) people elected for the period of 5 (five) years by the Constitution Assembly. The Arbitration Court consists of 4 (four) representatives of the academic staff and 1 (one) representative of students.

The LA is governed in accordance with a democratic management style and principle of good fellowship. Representatives of the Founder, representatives of the academic staff, representatives of the general staff, as well as representatives of the Student Council are involved in the decision-making process and planning and implementation of the operative and strategic management of the higher education institution. Matters of the operative management are settled in administration meetings. The operative management of the higher education institution is organised by the Vice Rector for Studies. Meetings are open; information on meetings and adopted decisions is electronically sent to the staff of the higher education institution.

The LA management structure is shown in the annex to the report (see **Annex 1 "LA management structure"**).

Study programmes are updated and improved taking into account needs of the Church and the society. Experienced and professional teaching staff from Latvia and international LA partners are involved in ensuring the quality of studies.

Studies at the Luther Academy include progressive study forms, integration of academic work, research, and practical ministry, as well as fellowship and joint prayers.

A list of the main internal regulatory documents and regulations of the LA is included in an annex to the report (see Annex 2).

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

The LA quality policy is a continuous development towards excellence based in the Christian values to ensure balanced and sustainable result that would meet the needs of all stakeholders. The quality policy is an aggregate of principles and goals related to quality, and actions to achieve these aims and is implemented by the LA in accordance with the international standards recognised in the higher education and management of organisations. **The aim of the quality policy** is to promote performance of the LA mission and strategic aims by determining guidelines and principles which can be used to ensure performance quality which would be constantly high. The quality policy ensures coordinated planning and implementation of the LA activities. The quality policy is a part of the quality management system applicable to all operational areas of the LA and providing the implementation thereof in all management levels of the LA. The LA defines quality as a measure of excellence describing the ability to satisfy and exceed the expected and future needs of the parties involved in its operation, and to ensure compliance of the processes with the governing requirements of the industry and standards. The LA ensures an set of activities and methods whereby the quality is planned, implemented, systematically evaluated, and continuously improved, promoting achievement of aims and satisfaction of needs of the parties involved in the operation.

The LA quality management has been implemented since 2021. The LA quality management system is implemented in accordance with the TQM (Total Quality Management) principles (<https://www.techtarget.com/searchcio/definition/Total-Quality-Management>), which is a philosophy of organisation management emphasising participation of all employees in ensuring and achieving quality, as well as the fact that employees must continuously improve in their area of responsibility. Moreover, quality is viewed both in relation to the product (in the case of the LA – studies in theology) and the processes. This management method is applicable to all levels of hierarchy. The total quality management includes the matters of ethics and an attitude towards society, environment, people. In the case of the LA, it is manifested in promotion and dissemination of the Christian values and norms in the society.

The most significant basic requirements of the TQM are as follows:

- Focus on customer (both internal and external);
- Involvement of employees;
- Process approach;
- Systemic approach to management;
- Decisions based on facts;
- The role of management;
- Continuous improvements.

To implement the TQM, the LA uses EFQM (European Foundation of Quality Management) quality management methodology. The EFQM model is based of self-evaluation. It provides the following benefits:

- A structured, fact-based approach to identify operational strengths of the institution, to analyse aspects for improvement, as well as measure the results of process;
- Helps to educate employees on basic concepts and improvement of management, as well as on their role in it;
- Integrates various initiatives in everyday activities;
- Promotes comparison with other organisations with similar or different experience by using criteria widely used and recognised across Europe, as well as creates a possibility to take over examples of the best practice.

(<https://tap.mk.gov.lv/valsts-parvaldes-politika/kvalitates-vadiba/Kvalitates-vadibas-modeli/EFQM-iz-cilibas-modelis/> - only in Latvian).

The **basis of the LA Quality Management System** consists of:

- Global trends;
- Sectoral policy;
- International directives;
- Economic development trends;
- Higher education development trends;
- Local trends;
- National development strategies;
- Sectoral policy documents;
- Economic development;
- Educational sector development trends.

The key elements of the LA quality policy action:

- Excellence in studies;
- Research development and improvement;
- Contributions to society.

The LA quality management is described by **cycle and continuity** for which an internationally recognised methodology approach of Plan – Do – Check – Act (PDCA) is used.

Figure 3 shows the diagram of the LA quality management system.



Figure 3. The LA Quality Management System.

To ensure the quality of the higher education, the **study quality assurance system** is used at the LA. It includes procedures for planning, provision, measurement, and assessment of the quality of the higher education in accordance with the requirements of the legislation of Latvia, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), as well as internal necessity.

The **internal study quality assurance system** implemented by the LA is shown in Figure 4.

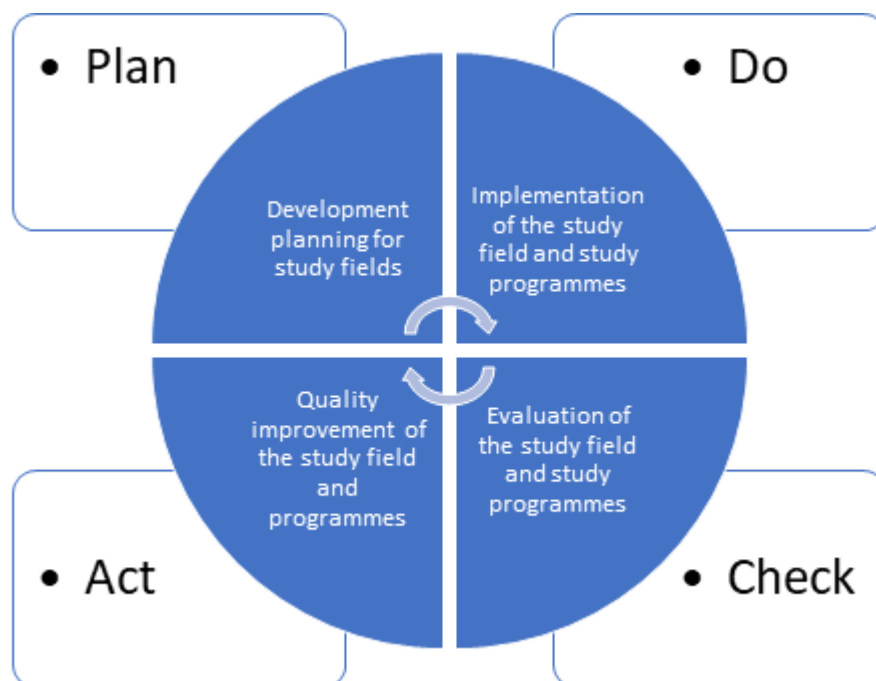


Figure 4. The internal study assessment system at the LA.

The LA ensures the planning of the study field development and improvement of the included study programmes for the period of 5 years.

The implementation procedures of the study programmes is stated in the internal LA regulatory documents, including development of new study programmes, conditions for admission, matriculation and registration for studies, development, implementation and review of study

courses, organisation of examinations and final examinations, the principles of academic integrity and compliance therewith, exclusion, issuance of diploma and certificates, reconciliation of the previously acquired education or professional experience, procedures for performing surveys, submission of proposals and complaints by the students, challenging the administrative decisions, etc.

Each year, follow-up of the performance of the study field development plan takes place, as well as discussion of SWOT, if necessary, making changes to the implementation plans of the study programme, the plan of the study field, or by making changes to the LA Strategic Plan.

Systematic performance of the **external study quality assurance** takes place as well, involving such experts as the ELCL representatives, graduates, and other strategic partners (including from abroad).

Cooperation between the LA personnel and leadership skills of the management are at the basis of successful performance of the LA Quality Management System.

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

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education. | <p>The LA Quality Management System for studies has been implemented to ensure the quality of higher education. See information in Part I, Chapter 1.3 of this report.</p> <p>Development, supervision, and improvement of the quality management system at the LA is ensured by the management and staff delegated by it. The Deputy Rector is responsible for development, implementation, supervision, and improvement of the study quality assurance system in cooperation with the head of the study field who is the director of the study programme at the LA, as well as the Vice Rector for Studies. A great importance in quality monitoring is granted to students and other involved parties of the LA by organising regular surveys, as well as involving them in quality evaluation and decision-making to improve the quality.</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. | Development and internal approval of the study programmes is determined in the LA Regulations on Opening and Management of Study Fields and Study Programmes (https://ej.uz/regulat_study_field_programm). Periodic inspection of performance quality of study programmes is implemented in accordance with the LA Quality Policy and Policy Action wherein a significant role has been assigned to lecture observation, methodological meetings of teaching staff of the study field, management meetings, and analysis of results of the student questionnaires. Quality results are regularly reflected in annual reports of the programme directors and the rector. |
| 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. | To ensure the quality of the study process, the LA has established a study quality evaluation system (https://ej.uz/Quality_manag_system). Study outcomes and evaluation are described in description of study courses preparation and updating of which is determined in the LA Procedures for Development and Updating of Study Courses (https://ej.uz/develop_updat_courses). Proceedings and evaluation of interim examinations and final examinations, as well as evaluation and recognition of study outcomes achieved in previous education or professional experience is governed by the LA Regulations on Procedures for Recognition of Study Outcomes Achieved in Previous Education or Professional Experience (https://ej.uz/LA_Recognit_study_outcomes). |
| 4. | Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed. | The LA has approved the Regulations of the Academic Staff, governing recruitment, selection, and development of the staff (https://ej.uz/LA_regulat_on_acad_staff). The LA plans the area of academic staff for medium term, as well as study plans for a study year. Qualification requirements for staff have been defined in the LA Regulations of the Academic Staff according to the external laws and regulations. The quality of work is regularly assessed by means of regular employee and academic staff evaluation analysing also the satisfaction of students with the content and forms of the study process, as well as performance of the research activities |

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| 5. | <p>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> | <p>The LA information on achievements of students is collected in the LA Database. Once per semester, the collected data is processed and analysed within the framework of implementation of study courses and improvement of the study programme. Satisfaction of students and graduates with the study programme is monitored by organising regular communication between the head of the programme, the LA management, students and graduates, receiving feedback for improvement of processes.</p> <p>Surveys for evaluation of the study process are performed regularly (after implementation of each study course).</p> <p>For more information on ensuring quality of the involved parties see - the LA Quality Management System (https://ej.uz/Quality_manag_system).</p> <p>Effectiveness of the work of academic staff, available study aids, improvement, supplementation, and costs thereof are monitored in a centralised manner in cooperation with the Founder.</p> |
| 6. | <p>The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.</p> | <p>Improvement of the study field and programmes is planned in accordance with the LA development strategy.</p> <p>Evaluation of the operational effectiveness and planned control is implemented in the annual self-evaluation of the study field.</p> <p>These processes are monitored both at the horizontal and vertical management level.</p> <p>The LA ensures the external evaluation as well by involving in the quality management system the ELCL experts and other involved parties of the LA.</p> |

2.1. Management of the Study Field

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

Global challenges that will inevitably reach the population of Latvia during the period until 2030, e.g., economic globalisation; changes to the demographic situation and its consequences; endangering nature as the life environment; increased risk of poverty, etc., provides reasons to upgrade the spiritual support and human values. Such values are provided by the LA study field

“Religion and Theology” and its programme, proving that acquired knowledge and competences are relevant in the context of current social development.

The aim of the study field “Religion and Theology” is to provide students with an opportunity to obtain existentially consistent spiritual reference points and values in the dynamic environment of today’s society.

Therefore, the LA study field “Religion and Theology” provides the academic foundations in the key theological areas:

- **Biblical theology** – to be able to explain the Biblical texts within the framework of the Lutheran hermeneutics to indicate the spiritual origins of biblically rooted human values;
- **History** – to identify the constant role of the LELB in development of the cultural and national self-awareness of Latvians while learning of the Church history and role of Lutheranism in it;
- **Systematic theology** – to formulate the apostolic Christian faith based in the Holy Scriptures, acknowledged in ecumenical creeds, and explained in Lutheran creeds to provide spiritual reference points in current environment and society;
- **Practical theology** – to acquire ecclesiastical competences to operate in the Church ministry and be involved in the current social processes with an appropriate understanding and confidence.

The aims of the LA study field are linked to the vision defined in the *Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy 2030* (<https://www.vestnesis.lv/ta/id/191187> - only in Latvian) that in 2030 the society in Latvia will be such as to consume responsibly, be creative, open, ready to cooperate, especially favourable towards children and older people.

The position of the aims of the study field and strategic and operative management of implementation of these aims is in line with the key strategic principles of the national sustainability development:

- creative activity;
- tolerance;
- cooperation;
- participation;
- excellence

Quality, availability, and content of education pose significant challenges to future social development in Latvia. Education means not only acquisition of specific competences and qualifications, but also a development process of human talents, development of emotional, spiritual, and social intelligence, as well as personality. Development of creativity and cooperation skills, as well as independent, intelligent, and critically thinking personality provides balance to the education of technological competences. This significant function of creating balance is successfully implemented within the framework of the LA study field “Religion and Theology” while respecting the social needs:

- to ensure capacity, knowledge and talent development of the key value of Latvia, its people;
- to implement the main strategic development principles in Latvia: creative activity, tolerance, cooperation, and partnership;
- to ensure availability of education and high-quality lifelong education;
- to develop creativity and ability to cooperate;
- to educate young people and adults so that they are able to be a part of the global labour market, implement their ministry calling in the Latvian society and the Latvian communities across the world.

To make the public participation process as constructive and effective as possible, abilities and skills of the Latvian population to participate in public and spiritual development processes should be strengthened. In the conditions of globalisation, the civic and spiritual education should be aimed at participation and equality to improve the public abilities of participation, but also to facilitate the social integration of the community. The LA sees its niche in these processes by offering a high-quality education based in the Lutheran traditions to serve the social recovery and preservation of values (including Christian values).

The LA has become a centre of a certain social network managed by teaching staff, students, as well as a broader local and international community caring for preservation and updating of the spiritual values.

Students of the study programme learn the necessary theoretical knowledge and practical skills for independent research taking place within the framework of research in study courses, course papers, and final papers. Together with the academic staff, students can participate in projects, international and local conferences as attendees and active participants, in the lectures of Assistant Professors and Professors of partnering foreign higher education institutions, as well as events for promotion of scientific and spiritual thought.

Current trends in theology and development of spiritual world perceptions are also identified within the framework of the study programme, emphasising the values of Evangelical Lutheran faith and considering the global nature of religious phenomena.

Upon successful completion of studies, the LA graduates are prepared for work in the area of spiritual care and education in the LELB congregations, State, municipal, and non-governmental institutions, academic institutions, and companies.

Defining of competences necessary for the professional activity has currently become an integral part of the education process.

Survey of Latvian employers conducted by the LDDK expert Anita Līce shows that the highest value is placed on such individual traits as:

- attitude towards work;
- ability to work independently;
- motivation to work;
- ability to take responsibility;
- problem-solving skills;
- ability to adapt to new situations, including continuous learning;
- communication and teamwork skills.

(<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/lv/blog/darba-tirgu-pieprasitakas-kompetences-uznemumu-vaditaju-vertejuma> - only in Latvian).

Competences of a future employee which are most sought after are also:

- flexibility or adaptability;
 - lifelong learning;
 - self-presentation skills.
- (<https://www.darbaguru.lv/lv/academy/254-3-pieprasitakas-kompetences-nakotnes-darbiniekam> - only in Latvian)

The global world requires also the following:

- cross-cultural skills; leadership; global understanding;
- initiative; self-motivation; perseverance, responsibility;

- disciplinary knowledge, STEM type of thinking;
- creativity, communication, critical thinking, problem solving, inquisitiveness (https://ej.uz/ibe_unesco_org).

Current employment of graduates and its future trends is one of the main performance indicators of the good governance set for the LA study field “Religion and Theology”.

Management structure of the study field and the relevant study programme is aimed at development of the study field. Taking and implementation of the necessary decisions takes place in operative and effective manner. Support provided by the administrative and technical staff ensures the needs of the relevant study programmes of the study field.

The LA has implemented procedures for admission of students, recognition of the study period, professional experience, previously acquired formal and non-formal education, as well as for evaluation of the achievements and study outcomes of the students. The LA has established principles and mechanisms of the academic integrity, applies anti-plagiarism tools, thus promoting development of the internal LA academic culture, informing thereof all involved parties.

The study field “Religion and Theology” is implemented by the LA with an aim to provide an opportunity to receive a scientific degree of a Bachelor level in a study programme in theology by offering high-quality studies based on interdisciplinary research and collaboration with the Latvian and international partners, especially the LELB, and thus promoting the public competence in the area of religion, economic and social sustainability by developing a student-centred environment of education and studies.

The aim of the study field is in line with the aims included in the [LA development strategy 2021-2025](#):

- To prepare suitable, competitive professionals in the fields of theology and religion in accordance with the trends of higher education and relevant needs of the society. The prepared professionals may use the acquired knowledge and practical skills to promote the spiritual health of the society.
- To provide and develop a high-quality scientific and applied research in accordance with the requirements of laws and regulations in the Republic of Latvia, as well as the trends in the fields of theology and religion by involving the teaching staff, students, local and international partners.
- To develop the offer of lifelong learning based on needs of the Church and society, as well as create the culture of lifelong learning in the field of theology and religion.

Objectives of the study field follow from the objectives defined in the LA development strategy 2021-2025:

- To offer a relevant, high-quality, and research-based higher education;
- To prepare suitable, competitive professionals in the fields of theology and religion to meet the most relevant needs of society;
- To introduce new forms and approaches of study;
- To implement various types of cooperation to improve the quality of studies;
- To implement the recruitment policy;
- To develop and strengthen the scientific research capacity and quality in the LA strategic specialisation;
- To enhance the cooperation in scientific and research fields at a national and international level;
- To improve the scientific and research work infrastructure at the LA and availability of finances;

- To develop the offer of lifelong learning appropriate for the LA target audiences;
- To develop cooperation with people interested in volunteer work to research their education needs and to develop the offer;
- To use the lifelong learning options as a link for establishing long-term relationships with the LA graduates;
- To strengthen the recognition of the “Open Academy” offers.

The study field implements the programme “Theology” the aim and objectives of which arise from and are related to the aim and objectives of the study field (see Paragraph 3.1.2 of the report). The title of the Bachelor study programme corresponds to the study field and implements the priorities stated therein. The content of the study programme has been developed in close partnership with the founder and the strategic partners in Latvia and abroad providing for development of theoretical and practical skills and abilities required for the work of ministry. The studies are based in research, and advanced methods are used for implementation thereof; in parallel to the studies, the teaching staff and students conduct a wide-spread work of providing spiritual education for the public, as determined by the aim and objectives of the study field and the whole LA. The obtainable degree and study materials are also in line with the study field.

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

SWOT analysis of the study field is an integral part of the good governance at the LA. The task of the SWOT analysis is annual identification of strengths and weaknesses, analysis of threats, and provision of recommendations for an aimed use of opportunities.

Analysis of the internal and external factors has been performed by setting the following key indicators based in the LA strategy and form the basis for studies, research, and organisational activities:

- quality assurance;
- personnel development;
- partnership/cooperation;
- internationalisation;
- resources;
- image/institution;
- competitiveness

SWOT analysis (2022) is shown in section "Other annexes" - *Annex No 2 “SWOT analysis of the study field “Religion and Theology”, 2022”*.

Analysis of the internal factors

Quality assurance is the most important performance sustainability factor of the study field. The LA offers a student-centred relevant education based on Lutheran traditions. Quality is improved by

constant cooperation with the ELCL and maintenance of the spiritual fellowship resulting in studies based in research, and preparation of graduates who are appropriate for the requirements of the labour market. Improvement of scientific and pedagogical capacity of the academic staff should be the focus of future quality improvement to increase the number of teaching staff with a PhD. Capacity of the scientific research should also be improved by participation in local and international research projects, promoting cooperation of students and researchers in assessment of quantitative and qualitative scientific indicators. In the aspect of society, more attention should be given also to involvement of external experts for evaluation of internal processes and their quality.

When analysing the **staff** of the study field, professionalism and recognition of academic staff in theology and related areas should be mentioned. Emphasis should also be placed on opportunity to use the ELCL human resources and potential of the academic staff of international cooperation partners in providing the content of study programmes. The strength is also the motivation of the teaching staff in relation to professional growth proven by participation in doctoral studies and professional improvement courses. A great added value is created also by former education and work experience of students (many students already have acquired a previous higher education – see Figure 5; and their studies have been determined by their awareness of mission).

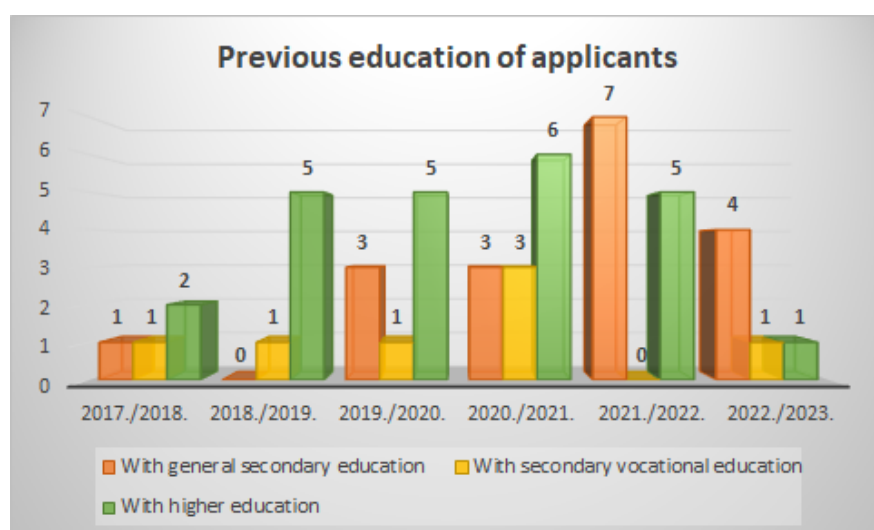


Figure 5. Previous education of applicants

As a weakness should be mentioned the low number of students often affected by inability of students to combine their studies with work or family circumstances. The matter of reducing the ratio of visiting teaching staff and increasing the number of researchers should be considered in the future ensuring sustainability of research-based studies.

Various types of local and international **partnership** is successfully used in implementation of the programme of the LA study field. It is expressed in mutual exchange of teaching staff, offer of professional improvement options, and provision of jobs for students and graduates. As a challenge to improvement of partnership should be mentioned a necessity to be involved in joint research projects, including both the academic staff and students.

One of the opportunities to develop the study field is improvement of internationalisation processes. **Internationalisation** is one of the action directions in the LA strategic priorities. A positive is fact that many teaching staff have acquired education abroad improving the study content and variety of forms, as well as increasing options for successful inclusion in an international network. Furthermore, it stimulates the scientific research, exchange of academic experience, innovations in the study process. Within the framework of the study field, the LA has a long-term cooperation with strategic partners in the USA and in Europe. Activities of the *Open*

Academy also contribute to improvement of the international experience. A weakness is the fact that currently the LA does not offer Bachelor studies in English and is not involved in Erasmus+ programme that significantly narrows down the transfer of international experience in the study field programme.

One of the most significant aspects in organising full-fledged studies is sufficient **provision of resources**. The LA has a guaranteed subsidy of the Founder to implement the basic functions, financial and other support from other partners is also significant in implementation of qualitative studies in the study field. The LA library should be mentioned as a positive example of such cooperation as its collection is formed by a long-term support of partners. The LA should pay more attention to attraction of the EU financing, especially in research projects. The matter of the tuition fees is also controversial. On one hand, the low tuition fee is an attractive factor for recruitment of students; on the other hand, it is the weak link in development of the study field and procurement of resources it needs.

Historically, the LA has formed an **image** of an education institution which is publicly recognised and characterised by a positive reputation and common views with the ELCL. The image is improved also by the historical environment in the Old Riga, and publicly respected persons taking administrative and academic positions. The LA attempts at improving its visual image should be positively seen since it promotes recruitment of students for the study field; however, this work should be done more actively and systematically so as to involve also foreign students and cooperation partners.

Competitiveness in the education area is one of the most significant factors for sustainable development of the study field and higher education institution. The LA study field provides for several significant aspects, e.g., balance between theory and practice in the offer of study courses, a possibility for students to combine work with studies, by offering options of distance studies or studies in the Open Academy. The low tuition fee is also motivating. However, certain aspects should be improved: the study field has only one Bachelor level programme, thus failing to ensure successive studies at a Master level; the existing programme does not have specialisations that would enhance the range of acquired competences of students.

Analysis of the external factors

The ultimate aim of the Education Development Guidelines for 2021-2027 (https://ej.uz/izgl_pamatnostadn_21-27 - only in Latvian) is to ensure **high-quality** education opportunities for all residents of Latvia to promote the development of their potential and life-long implementation and to form their ability to change and responsibly manage the constant changes in society and economics. Regular and systemic monitoring of the higher education quality is necessary for this purpose with an aim to support the operational quality of the higher education sector (compliance with objectively set requirements and compliance with the needs of the stakeholders) and its continuous improvement. The society has new needs in terms of skills related to the green transition and digitalisation of the EU society; therefore, the higher education should ensure continuous **development of skills** and **maintenance of competitiveness** in the global arena. Regardless of the fact that STEM and innovation transfer fields have been recognised as especially important, the public interest in conservative and historically proved values increases. The values are based both on traditions and dialogue with the society, while looking to the future with a progressive outlook and focusing on development. Due to its traditions and study content, the LA may call itself a “learning organisation” which offers various options for studies forming the study environment and availability to varied target audience. The LA has accepted the challenges of the multicultural society and the offered opportunities by positioning itself as an organisation with a high level of professional competence of the management and academic staff, a strategic

operational vision, accountability and autonomy; at the same time, the institution is actively partnering with various cooperation partners in Latvia and abroad by ensuring effective management of resources and transfer of knowledge and the best practice to improve the quality. Without doubt, quality improvement processes in the programme of the LA study field may be endangered both by the internal and external factors, e.g., increasing intensity of studies and work of the applicants and students, the possible insufficiency of finances and human resources, problems in implementing interdisciplinarity; however, globally it does not affect the performance of the strategic LA objectives and advancement towards assurance of quality in studies, research, and management.

One of the national priorities is strengthening of the quality of academic **staff** and provision of a sustainable academic career. Guidelines of the higher education provide for implementation of a new model of doctoral studies to ensure a stable and high-quality growth of human resources for research and innovations; both students and academic staff have many options for international mobility and networking improvements.

The most serious threat for the programme of the study field is decrease in the number of students affected by the critical demographic situation. The population in Latvia is expected to systematically decrease. In accordance with the conditionally real variant, it will decrease from 2,458 thousand in 1998 to 2,156 thousand in 2025, or by 12%. By 2040, the most rapid decrease will affect the population of working-age (19-64 years old): from the current 1.14 million down to 0.93 million. The number of children and youth will fall from 0.38 million to 0.33 million, but the ratio in the total count of population will slightly increase from 19.7% to 20.6%. (<https://emergingsolutions.eu/latvijas-demografiska-prognoze-2020-12-15/> - only in Latvian; <https://www.vestnesis.lv/ta/id/14411> - only in Latvian). This all can certainly have a negative effect on the number of students in the LA programme.

Threats can also be seen in the condition that in Latvia people can acquire Dr.theol degree only in one higher education institution, at the University of Latvia (https://ej.uz/niid_search_lu); moreover, during the last 5 years this degree has been granted only to one graduate endangering the processes of ensuring qualification and regeneration of the academic staff. The low remuneration of the academic staff across the country in general may have a negative impact on quantitative and qualitative provision of staff in the study field. The LA should continue implementing the model of good governance to ensure the capacity of the staff.

To promote effective and coordinated use of resources and implement the transfer of knowledge, the LA should be actively involved in the local and international **partnership**, especially reaching out to the local communities, local governments, and non-governmental organisations. Creation of partnership networks, consortiums, alliances is a basis for successful functioning of the LA as a learning organisation. Special focus should be granted to the education quality management by involving various stakeholders and strengthening accountability of LA founder. The role of digital solutions also increases in implementation of partnership and its strategic drive. The most significant threat in successful implementation of the partnership is a different view on strategic priorities and areas of responsibility.

One of the conditions for sustainable development in higher education is provision of **internationalisation**. For these purposes, one of the tasks in Latvian foreign policy is provision of our national economy and promotion of education export to drive Latvia towards the best indicators of the European Union (EU) and OECD, as well as facilitating the economic growth and improving recognition of Latvia across the world. The referred to aims are in line with foreign student recruitment policy implemented by several Latvian higher education institutions, including the LA: to admit students from the EU, the European Economic Area (EEA) and OECD member states,

though not rejecting applicants from other countries as well.

The export of higher education is one of the safest ways to promote the recovery of our national economy after the global pandemic and overcome our current geopolitical situation which is the greatest threat to successful development in any sector.

The question of effective and useful higher education is relevant in the global space. Achieving effective and useful higher education depends on relevant work content of higher education institutions created by the public bodies. This model includes the policy for ensuring appropriate **resources** and effective quality assurance. Reform and upgrading of the higher education system in Europe is based on assigning international financing to scientific research, especially to interinstitutional research, as well as other cooperation to increase the capacity of higher education institutions, while also planning consolidation of resources. In support of research and cooperation, the European Commission assists the EU member states with implementation of effective management and financing models in higher education, supports mutual learning from the best practice among the EU member states in the area of governance and financing by using the partner consultation instrument. During the period from 2014 to 2020, 17 EU member states have invested the European structural and investment funds (ESI funds) in the area of higher education. A total of 5.2 billion euros from the European Social Fund (ESF) were directed towards training of persons, reforms in programmes, and alignment of education with the requirements of the labour market. Additional 1.5 billion euros from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) were used to renew the old infrastructure and create new infrastructure for education. Since the LA does not receive financing from the State, the greatest threat for successful further development is posed by potential changes in the financial support from the strategic partners, as well as unwillingness to be involved in consortiums. For today's society, education is not only a commodity, but also an integral part of the social culture, a precondition to its development and prosperity. A fundamental element of preservation and development of a nation, ethnicity, community is its culture which in essence is composed of spiritual formations, emotional images created in the human conscience by which the following generations receive knowledge, including, descriptions, representations, evaluation. The greatest part of society acutely demands spiritual, incl. Christian values often endangered by superficial often indiscriminate negative interpretation of the church **image**, thereby reducing the positive role of humanities and especially theology in the spiritual development of society.

Current development trends in higher education across the world show that:

- the number of students is decreasing across the whole Europe, but generally it increases in the world;
- the distance (combined) study process allows for recruitment of both foreign students and teaching staff;
- only the study programmes with a great significance in research, participation and digital competences may aim for an excellent result, become **competitive** and attractive to the students regardless of their place of residence;
- during strengthening of the open science, resources, common use, and consortiums it is not possible to create closed scientific universities characteristic only to specifics of a single small region (https://ej.uz/izm_gov_konkuretspeja_augst_izgl_petn - only in Latvian).

The LA must become a partner in creation of a global ecosystem of the Lutheran theological education by overcoming obstacles created by flourishing liberal values and populism, as well as decreased interest in humanities, as well as other factors contributing to decreased competitiveness.

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

When managing the study field, the LA implements collegial responsibility. The following LA decision-making bodies are involved in management: the Senate, the Council of Science, the Methodological Commission, the Study Department which supervise, plan, and organise the process of studies and research, and evaluates the quality of studies and research, as well as makes decisions on measures for provision and improvement thereof (https://ej.uz/la_study_regul).

The main duties of the **Council of Science** are determination of the priority directions of the scientific work, planning and coordination of the scientific work carried out by academic staff and students; promoting improved scientific qualifications of lecturers; conducting international scientific cooperation; assessment and compilation of research results (https://ej.uz/la_science_council) .

The **Methodological Commission** has a significant role in the management of the study field and the programme.

Methodological Commission is a consultative institution providing suggestions for assurance of study quality and promoting skills development of the academic staff (https://ej.uz/LA_Methodolog_commission).

The Methodological Commission consists of: the Head of the Study Field; the Vice Rector for Studies; at least two lecturers of the profiling study courses of the relevant study programme of the field, and a study methodologist as a secretary of the Commission without the voting right.

Main work tasks of the Commission:

- Review and approval of topics for study papers.
- Review and approval of topics for Bachelor papers.
- Review and approval of topics for study course descriptions.
- Provision of recommendations to the management of the LA on necessity to develop new study courses.
- Organising observation of classes and analysis of results.
- Organisation of methodological seminars.
- Evaluation of methodological materials.
- Evaluation of the open class results of the candidates for teaching staff positions and taking a decision on recommendation of candidates to the Senate of the LA for election to the academic positions.
- Discussion of the novelties in the use of information technologies in the study process and adoption of decisions in implementation thereof.
- Review of the licensing/accreditation report and recommendation for approval by the Senate of the LA.

The operational aim of the **Study Department** is to ensure a high-quality study process in accordance with laws and regulations. Objectives of the Study Department:

- to plan, coordinate, and control the study process at the LA;

- to supervise implementation of study programmes in accordance with the established study plans;
- to keep records of the work time of the teaching staff of the LA;
- to control performance of required workload of the academic staff;
- to update the personal files of students in accordance with the regulatory documents;
- to order, receive, record, and store diplomas and related documentation (https://ej.uz/LA_Study_departm).

The Head of the Study Field is responsible for the study field and the study programme implemented within it (https://ej.uz/head_of_study_field). The competence of the **Head of the Study Field** is to ensure the management and development of the study field. The Head of the field is approved by the Senate. Considering that the LA is a small higher education institution, and the study field includes only one programme, the Head of the Study Field takes on also the functions of the Programme Director.

The main responsibilities of the Head of the Study Field:

- To organise development of programmes of the study direction in accordance with the requirements of the relevant field or sub-field of science, in accordance with laws and regulations governing the higher education of the Republic of Latvia, and regulatory documents of the LA;
- To organise development and updating of the description of study courses and approval thereof at the meeting of the Methodological Commission;
- To develop the annual self-evaluation report of the study field for approval by the LA Senate.
- If necessary, to amend the current study programme and submit amendments for review by the LA Senate.
- To prepare the accreditation report of the study direction in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia, Cabinet Regulations, and other laws and regulations related to accreditation of study field, and to represent the study direction during the evaluation process;
- To organise development of a new study programme in accordance with the procedures stipulated by the Ministry of Education and Science to receive a licence within the framework of the study field;
- To ensure high-quality implementation and improvements of the study programme;
- To submit the study plan of the programme for the current study year to the Head of the Study Department;
- To coordinate the work of teaching staff working for the study field;
- To inform the students on requirements, content, and implementation process of the relevant study programme;
- To recommend the personnel composition of the National Examination Commission to the Vice Rector for Studies;
- To promote cooperation with graduates and employers; to conduct annual surveys and analyse the obtained results;
- To promote cooperation with higher education institutions in Latvia and abroad for purposes of improving the study field.

Obligations of the Director of Study Programme:

- development and implementation of a study programme; development and supervision of the annual study plans;
- organisation of an independent expert examination to make the detected necessary changes;
- preparation of documents to have the study programme or its changes approved by the LA

Senate;

- coordination of the licensing processes of the study programme in the LA;
- managing development of the study course guidelines and course descriptions;
- supervision of performance of the study programme and its material and technical provisions;
- organisation and supervision of the final examination process;
- provision of information to all involved parties regarding the content of the study programme, its implementation, and other relevant study matters;
- determination of compliance of the volume, content, and evaluation of study courses completed in the LA or other higher education institutions with the current study programme in accordance with the LA rules on procedure of commencing studies at later study phases (https://ej.uz/Recognit_study_outc);
- suggestion and organisation of the international activities of students;
- attraction of the necessary teaching staff;
- development of the study programme based on the latest scientific insights, laws and regulations governing education, assessment of information received from surveys of students, teaching staff, employers, cooperation partners, incl., the founder;
- supervision of record keeping of the study programme;
- advertising and promotion activities for the study programme.

Cooperation with the **LA Student Council** holds a significant role in management of studies. **The aim of the Council** is to protect and represent the interests of all students in academic, material, cultural and Christian faith matters before the LA and other institutions.

Obligations of the Student Council:

- to organise and coordinate the extracurricular activities of the students;
- to identify the students' needs, interests and wishes for improvement of the study and research process, and to provide suggestions for implementation of improvements;
- to inform the students on operation and activities of the Council;
- to promote the Christian lifestyle
- of the students and their participation in the life of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church;
- to represent the interests of the students in negotiations with the management and academic staff of the LA;
- to promote the quality of the study process;
- to discuss and accept recommendations in matters related to the academic, material, and spiritual life of the LA students (including services, devotions of the LA students), their social life and fellowship;
- to cooperate with the councils of other higher education institutions, municipal and state institutions, public organisations, and churches;
- to represent the students of the LA in Latvia and abroad;
- to develop suggestions for improvement of the internal regulatory documents of the LA;
- to provide opinions in matters relevant to the rights, obligations, and interests of the students (https://ej.uz/stud_council).

Regulations for election of the Council can be found here https://ej.uz/stud_council_elect

Convent of Graduates is acting as an important advisory organisation for the LA (https://ej.uz/LA_graduate_convent).

Tasks of the Convent of Graduates:

- to promote cooperation between the LA and the LELB, State, municipal, scientific, business,

art, and other institutions;

- to participate in development and improvement of the LA development strategy;
- to promote attraction of material and financial resources to the LA;
- to promote and support the LA by facilitating inclusion of the graduates in the LA events and lifelong learning programmes;
- to promote recognition of the LA;
- to conduct active promotion of the LA by recruiting the potential students;
- to cooperate with the responsible LA persons in organisation of events, writing and implementation of projects;
- to organise seminars, courses for experience exchange of graduates; to involve graduates in organisation of conferences;
- to assist in improving the LA contact network and promote inclusion of the LA in education ecosystems at a local and international level;
- to provide support in evaluation and development of the study programmes;
- to facilitate cooperation between the LA and organisations for young people of various social groups;
- to facilitate civic participation of youth in formation and maintenance of the spiritual environment.

Management of the study field and the programme is ensured in line with the “[Regulations on Opening and Management of Study Fields and Study Programmes](#)” (approved by decision of the LA Senate No 8, 29.08.2017), which has been established in accordance with Section 3(1) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and defines higher education institutions as institutions of higher education and science implementing academic and professional study programmes, as well as in accordance with Section 55.3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Cabinet Regulation “Regulations on Opening and Management of Study Fields”.

Management quality of the study field is regularly monitored. Student surveys are organised once per study year (https://ej.uz/la_study_barometer), evaluating the quality of the study environment and study process.

For the results of the student survey organised in 2022 see Figure 6 and 7.

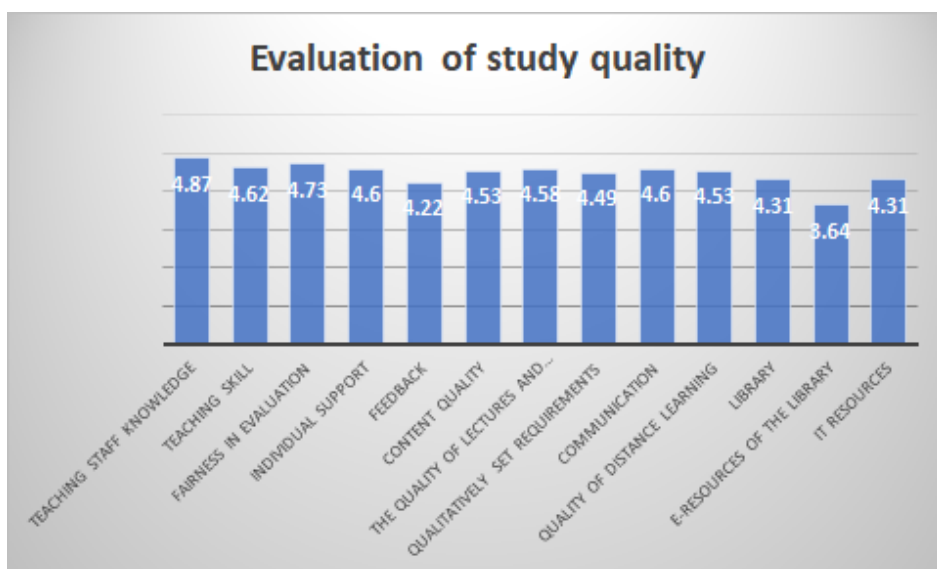


Figure 6. Evaluation of

study quality in the opinion of students, 2022.

Analysing the data included in the figure, it can be concluded that students are mostly satisfied with organisation and management of the study process, and have given the highest scoring (the maximum evaluation on the scale of evaluation is 5) for the professional competence and

knowledge of the academic staff, the academic integrity in evaluation of study outcomes, individual support, as well as organisation of distance processes. Focus should be placed on provision of the library e-resources.

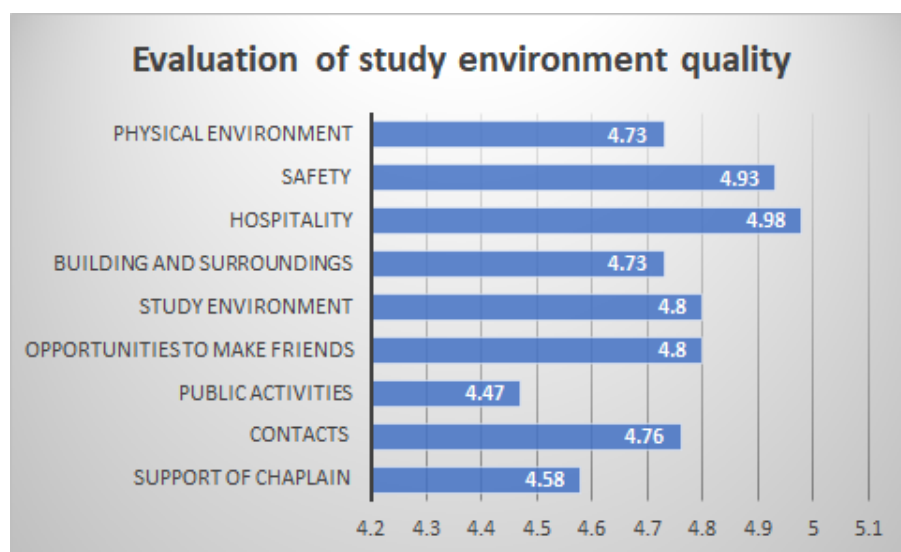


Figure 7. Evaluation of study environment quality in the opinion of students, 2022.

The highest scoring in provision of high-quality study environment has been given to the hospitality of the LA staff, safety of environment, physical condition and atmosphere of premises, which are the factors determining the offer of student-centred education, promoting of student wellbeing, and facilitating motivation to study and an increase in performance indicators.

Effectiveness of management is facilitated also by a uniform procedure in organisation of studies in the study field and study programme, availability of information on the current processes and news, as well as standardised uniform document samples. All key activities at the LA are planned before the new study year when preparing the study calendar, schedules for development of final papers and the plan of annual activities.

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

Student admission procedures and requirements are based on “Admission Rules at the Luther Academy” (https://ej.uz/la_terms_enrolment_23_24) approved by the decision of LA Senate meeting No 1, 25.01.2022, and issued in line with Section 46 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (<https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=37967>) and Cabinet Regulation No. 846 of 10.10.2006 “Regulations on Requirements, Criteria and Procedures for Matriculation in Study Programmes” (<https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/146637>). Registration for studies takes place individually in person in the LA premises at Alksnāja iela 3, Riga. The LA specifics determine that the package of documents necessary for admission should be supplemented by an essay on “Why I would like to study at the Luther Academy?”; a recommendation from the church pastor is viewed as an advantage.

Admission to the study programme takes place according to competition based on results of centralised exams in the Latvian, Mathematics and foreign language, or grades reflected in the certificate for persons who have completed their secondary education before 2004, who have been released from the centralised exams, or have acquired the secondary education abroad.

An entry examination has also been provided for the academic Bachelor study programme “Theology” at the LA:

- a test in the Old and New Testament Scriptures;
- a test in Luther’s Small Catechism to check knowledge;
- an examination of English language;
- oral examination.

Opportunities for recognition of previously acquired formal and non-formal education within the framework of the study field are governed under Cabinet Regulation No. 505 (adopted on 14.08.2018, Regulations on Recognition of Study Outcomes Acquired Outside the Formal Education or Competences Acquired in the Professional Experience and previous Education) stating that “when resuming suspended studies, recognition of study outcomes achieved in previous education, outside the formal education and/or in professional experience may be done. When submitting an application, documents certifying the achieved study outcomes should be included – certificates, employer statements, recommendations, project results, job descriptions, etc. (https://ej.uz/arpus_form_izgl).

A decision on recognition of study outcomes achieved in previous education and professional experience shall be taken by commission formed by the LA, the personnel of which are approved by the Rector of the LA. Its rights, obligations, conditions for establishment, as well as specific conditions for procedures of recognition of study outcomes achieved in previous education or professional experience are included in “Regulations on Procedures for Recognition of Study Outcomes Achieved in Previous Education or Professional Experience” (https://ej.uz/Recognit_study_outc).

The Regulations provide that a possibility to recognise study courses is reviewed on the basis of the student’s application, and the LA may recognise and reconcile courses acquired:

1. within the framework of an accredited study programme;
2. in a separate study course of a study programme which the person has participated in as an attendee;
3. in a part of the study programme.

Study outcomes achieved in previous education or professional experience and recognised may not be accepted as the final examination, national examination, or final examination - qualification exam of the relevant study programme.

Most often the recognition of study courses in the study programme takes place in the following cases:

- persons who have been matriculated in the Bachelor study programme may ask for recognition of study courses acquired during the previous studies if the volume and content corresponds to the courses included in the study programme. For instance, if the student has acquired a course of civil defence when studying in a Bachelor study programme of another higher education institution, he or she does not have to attend the course for the second time. After the recognition of the study outcomes, individual additional study courses and relevant examinations are specified, if necessary.
- when resuming studies after the leave (recognition of the courses has taken place according

to the changes in the plan of the study programme).

The commission formed by the LA Senate meeting on 1 November 2017 and consisting of the Vice Rector for Studies, Programme Director, and a representative of the academic staff was responsible for recognition of outcomes achieved in former education. The Commission was tasked with verification of the submitted documents, evaluation of the study outcomes and reconciliation with the outcomes in the programmes of the study field. During the reporting period, the LA had 7 cases (from *LU Faculty of Theology*, Latvia - 3; from *University of Oxford*, Great Britain -1; from *Seminar fur biblische Theologie*, Switzerland -1; no *International Theological Seminary*, USA -1; from the Latvian Bible Centre (in cooperation with *Høyskolen for Ledelse og Teologi*, Norway) -1) when outcomes achieved in previous education have been recognised for study programmes.

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

Information on conditions for commencement of each study course, its aims, tasks, requirements for receiving credit points, content of the study course, organisation of the study process in contact classes, organisation of independent work of students, and tasks for the planned study outcomes (knowledge, skills, competence), and methods of examination and evaluation criteria is included in descriptions of study courses. Registration and recording of evaluation results of the students takes place in the relevant Examination protocol of the study course, in the electronic database created for the needs of the LA students and teaching staff (<https://admin.lut.edu.lv/userchooser>).

Study programme and each study course has formulated study outcomes (https://ej.uz/progr_result), which includes knowledge, skills, and competences accumulated during the course. Principles of graduality and succession are complied with while developing study courses. Mapping of the planned study outcomes for the study programme and study courses has been done for the study programme.

Mapping results can be found in section 3.2.1. - *Annex No 24 "Mapping Results of the Bachelor Study Programme "Theology" "*.

At the beginning of the studies, students are informed on organisation and implementation of studies in the study programme; at the beginning of each study course, the lecturer provides information on organisation, content, learning requirements of the course, planned study outcomes, examinations and evaluation criteria, as well as explains the nature of the study course in achievement of the general study outcomes of the programme. The students may become acquainted with the performance assessment criteria and conditions, as well as binding procedures also in descriptions of study courses and e-study environment.

Organisation of examinations and evaluation of student achievements takes place in accordance with the Luther Academy's "Regulations on Examinations" (decision of the Senate No 8, 29.08.2017) (https://ej.uz/LA_regulat_on_examin).

Type and procedures of organising the examination shall be determined by the content of each study programme.

Basic criteria for assessment of knowledge of the students at the LA are as follows:

- **the principle of summing up the positive achievements:** knowledge is assessed by summing up the positive achievements during acquisition of the study course;
- **the principle of open and clear requirements:** aggregate of basic requirements necessary to assess the acquired knowledge shall be determined in line with the set aims and objectives of the study programme;
- **the principle of variety of examination types** is used in assessment: various types of examination are used to assess the students' knowledge;
- **the principle of assessment compliance:** during examinations, students have to prove their analytical knowledge and creative abilities, knowledge, skills, and competences required by the content of the study course.

Planning of examinations is ensured by the Studies Department in preparing for each semester and submitting for the approval of the Vice-Rector for Studies a schedule of lectures and studies with indicated examination times.

Each study course has two types of examinations: interim examinations (the total evaluation of interim examinations is at least 50% of the total evaluation), and the final examination of the study course (evaluation of at least 10% of the total evaluation). Examinations may be implemented in writing or orally, or in a combined form (in writing and orally). A form and methods of examination are chosen to evaluate the students' achievements corresponding to study methods used in contact classes of the study process and in organisation of the students' independent work.

Types of interim examinations:

- a test,
- independent work,
- practical work,
- a report, a presentation, an essay, and other types of work according to specification of the study course.

The number and type of interim examinations is defined in the description of the study course. For a student to receive an evaluation on acquisition of the course, the evaluation received in the exam and the final examination should be successful. The lowest positive evaluation is 4 (almost average).

In accordance with the specification of the study course, the teaching staff may determine also requirements for attendance of classes which would be taken into account when evaluating the study course. The mandatory attendance is 51%.

A final examination of the study course in a form of an exam is held at the end of each study course.

A research paper should be developed for most study courses at the LA to show a successful acquisition of methods and a relevant skill to apply these methods. The task of the research paper is to promote a gradual formation of research skills and research-based study process in the LA. The research papers develop also the culture of scientific communication and discussions, as well as motivate students to record their achievement by the way of scientific articles.

Various achievement evaluation methods are used in study courses – summative, formative, and cumulative. Interim examinations are organised by the way of tests, tasks, and discussions: students need to prepare presentations, present them to other students, support their opinion, participate in the scientific or practical discussion which provides a significant contribution for improvement of competences necessary for the future.

Study outcomes are evaluated on the scale of 10 points. The course is deemed successfully

completed, and the student receives credit points for the acquisition of the specific course if evaluation is successful, i.e., evaluation on the scale of 10 points is not below "4" (almost average).

Explanation of evaluations is used in formulation of criteria (see in section "Other annexes" - *Annex No 3 "Explanation of evaluations"* or https://ej.uz/LA_regulat_on_examin).

In a study process it is important to ensure that evaluation methods and procedures correspond to the purpose of the study programme and the study needs. For this purpose, study outcomes achieved by students, annual comparable results of student and graduate surveys, and recommendations of the cooperation partners are analysed regularly. The LA teaching staff regularly and systematically analyse their experience, cooperate with colleagues both in the LA and partnering higher education institutions, analyse the achievements of students, and improve the course descriptions, content, e-learning environment by developing evaluation criteria appropriate for the planned study outcomes and thus ensuring reasoning for evaluation.

Final examinations of the programme of the study field may be in a form of oral or written exams (tests; answers to examination questions), as a research paper (e.g., scientifically critical and contextual analysis of texts, essays) development and/or presentation, as a presentation of a practical scientific research. The students can choose the topic for a Bachelor paper themselves (and thus also their research methods), or the scientific supervisor may assist in the choice (The Luther Academy's Regulations on Examinations; decision of the Senate No 8, 29.08.2017, https://ej.uz/LA_regulat_on_examin).

To aid the students, pre-defence is organised during the development of the paper and is governed by the Luther Academy's Regulations on Pre-defence of a Bachelor Paper (https://ej.uz/LA_Pre-defence_bachelor_paper decision of the Senate meeting No 7, 01.08.2019). Pre-defence is a mandatory precondition for the student to be allowed to defend their Bachelor paper. Pre-defence is allowed for those students whose unsettled academic obligations do not exceed the lack of evaluation in no more than two study courses.

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

Principles and provisions of the academic integrity and responsible actions in the LA are reflected in the Academic Ethics Code (decision of the Senate No 7, 24.08.2018., https://ej.uz/LA_code_acad_ethics) and Rules on Academic Integrity (decision of the Senate No 3, 10.04.2018., https://ej.uz/LA_rules_acad_integrity). These documents are binding to all staff and students of the LA and are publicly available on the LA website (http://lutraakademija.lv/en/?ct=zin_petn).

To control plagiarism, the LA uses the unified digital plagiarism control system. In the beginning of 2023, the LA signed an agreement on joining the Unified Digital Plagiarism Control System. Currently, based on the cooperation agreement, the system is used by seven higher education institutions of Latvia – Daugavpils University, Liepāja University, University of Life Sciences and Technologies of Latvia, Rīga Stradiņš University, Rēzekne Academy of Technologies, EKA University of Applied Sciences, as well as RISEBA University of Applied Sciences.

The system assists in verification of the final papers written by students. The system automatically

compares the final papers uploaded on theses systems of higher education institutions, including materials available on the Internet. If the match of fragments in papers reaches a certain percentage, a report on results of this verification is sent to the directors of the study programmes, and they can view in parallel the identical text fragments in papers written by various authors. The programme directors pass this information on for initial evaluation by the supervisor and reviewer of the relevant paper, and if there is suspicion on violation of the academic integrity, the results are transferred for examination and taking of the final decision by the final examination commission.

The LA study programme views plagiarism as a very serious infraction. If the student's paper is recognised as plagiarism, it shall not be assessed. If plagiarism is discovered in the national examinations (in Bachelor thesis), the student shall be excluded (*Luther Academy's Regulations on Examinations*, https://ej.uz/LA_regulat_on_examin).

A student who has been excluded for plagiarism is entitled to submit a new Bachelor thesis for defence by their own means after a certain period specified in laws and regulations (at least after a year) by developing it from the start on a different topic and submitting it according to the set procedures, while undergoing the verification in the plagiarism control system once again.

In the case of suspicion on plagiarism, the LA creates and accordingly approves a plagiarism assessment commission consisting of 3 representatives of the academic staff. If doubt exists in the case, the director of the study programme is obliged to convene the commission by the due date and conduct an enhanced analysis of texts with detected signs of plagiarism. If necessary, the commission may question the author of the paper to prevent misunderstandings and accidental (formatting, etc.) errors.

2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

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

The LA has created and maintains a quality assurance system which helps to achieve the aims and results of the study field and the relevant study programmes. The system ensures a continuous improvement, development and operational effectiveness of the study field and the relevant programmes.

The LA has defined and regularly monitors development and review processes of the study programmes relevant to the study field, as well as upholds feedback mechanisms (from students, employees, graduates) which are targeted, logical, effective, and available to all involved parties.

The LA regularly summarises and analyses statistical data and other types of information on the study field and the relevant programmes by using the data to improve the study field

The LA systematically implements quality assurance procedures, including a continuous monitoring and analysis of implementing the study process; the results are used to implement the necessary improvement measures. Management processes for the quality assurance of the programmes in the study field and the applied procedures allow implementation of the programmes in a previously defined form and quality while swiftly responding to the possible changes in situation. Decisions

related to the quality are taken in a collegial manner, inviting external experts, if necessary. A significant methodological tool for quality assurance is the LA Quality Assurance System.

The LA uses the following activities to monitor and improve the quality of studies and research:

- analysis of quantitative and qualitative indicators of student learning, scientific and creative activities;
- monitoring of the quality management system;
- quality audit of procedures and documentation;
- identification (questionnaire survey) and analysis of student satisfaction;
- identification (questionnaire survey) and analysis of graduate satisfaction;
- summarising and analysis of opinions expressed by employers and cooperation partners;
- identification and monitoring of the quality of academic staff (annual work interviews; results of student questionnaires; analysis of quantitative and qualitative indicators of scientific and creative activity);
- quality assessment of the work performed by staff (results of student questionnaires; annual work interviews);
- regular self-evaluation of the study field;
- regular self-evaluation of study programmes;

Regular (at least twice per academic year) evaluation of quantitative and qualitative indicators of student learning, scientific and creative activity, including:

- analysis of performance,
- analysis of drop-out risks,
- achievements in the research activity, and other aspects.

If necessary, students are invited to individual interviews to provide them the possible support. Provision of support includes also the opportunity to meet a chaplain as a consultant and leader of the academic life of students and the spiritual aspect of their general growth.

Feedback from students on the content and forms of studies, the used methods, and study outcomes is significant in monitoring of the quality of studies. Assessment of the activities of the academic and general staff is also important in the process of studies and research.

Surveys conducted by the LA show that generally students in their feedback have evaluated the study quality as good (See Figure No 8). If questionnaires or individual discussions with students reveal problems, the management of the LA organises an interview with the student and the head of the study field or the Vice Rector for Studies. Since the number of students at the LA is small, it is possible to ensure an individual student-centred approach to each of them, and students state that it is an added value to the studies and one of the quality indicators.

The objective of monitoring of the quality management system is to improve the quality of the study process and content quality at the LA by providing to all involved parties a timely, accurate information to help them with a more effective evaluation of education quality in the programmes of the study field and to take decisions based on evidence. Quality system monitoring at the LA is managed by the Deputy Rector, the Director of the study field and study programmes in cooperation with representatives of the Student Council, employers, and other cooperation partners.

For the purposes of improving study organisation and quality of the LA management, internal regulatory documents are renewed, adjusted, and improved on a regular basis by auditing the procedures and documentation quality as necessary. This process is supervised by the LA Vice Rector for Studies.

Regularly, but at least once per academic year, the LA analyses also the content of study programmes, taking into account the opinion of students, employers of graduates, incl. LELB; once per year before the beginning of the studies, the study course descriptions are reviewed, renewed, and supplemented, methodology and resources of intramural and distance studies are improved. For example, the time for review of Islam was increased in the course *“World Religions”* in response to recommendations by students; a course *“Catechesis”* was included in the programme after the survey of graduates.

Positively should be viewed the fact that a situation in 2020 determining the transition to distance studies did not have a significant impact on the quality of studies at the LA because the LA had well prepared for a successful implementation and use of distance studies:

- e-learning platform *Canvas* was used effectively;
- virtual conference tool *Zoom* was used for lectures;
- electronic questionnaires for students were regularly used;
- students could use *Zoom* video and audio recordings to support their knowledge and review the content.

The LA has always respected the opinion of students and graduates on the content and methodological provision of the study process, as well as research options and quality.

A survey of graduates performed at the end of the previous strategic period (2020) by surveying 36 graduates (https://ej.uz/absolv_aptaujas_rez_2020 - only in Latvian) shows that:

- 82% of respondents were satisfied with the academic and practical preparation in the three key academic areas of theology (Bible Studies; Church History; Systematic Theology);
- also 73% as an indicator of graduate evaluation for the education received at the LA in general is a considerable indicator of the readiness of graduates for the labour market where the LELB is the main employer;
- 79% of the respondents have also very highly evaluated the fellowship of students at the LA and community events, when expressing their satisfaction with the quality of study environment.

Results of the graduate survey performed in 2022 are reflected in Figure No 8.

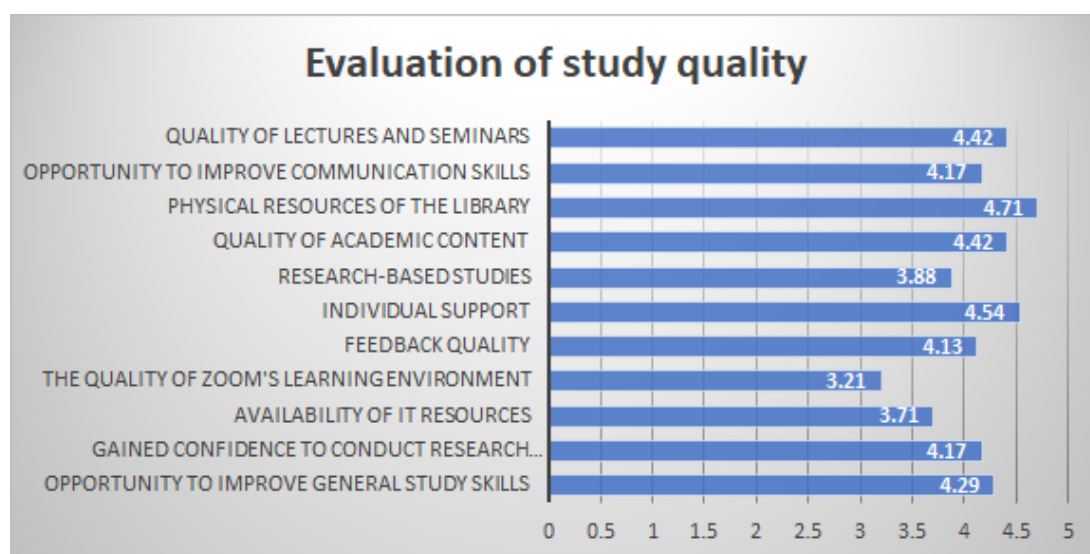


Figure No 8. Evaluation of study quality in the opinion of graduates, 2022.

To improve the quality of the study process, teaching at the courses, organisation of visiting lectures, and review of the final papers, employers are involved – representatives of the LELB

institutions and other organisations. Involvement of employers has allowed to include in the course content the case analysis more based in practice, has promoted the development of discussion culture while analysing the experiences of employers; has promoted the use of international experience in the process of studies and research. Employers also provide a regular feedback assisting in achievement of the planned study outcomes.

The quality of work performed by the academic and general staff also has a significant role in the internal quality assurance. The most significant quality monitoring and control mechanisms include:

- Regular analysis of the pedagogical, research, and professional competences at the LA. The LA students are viewed as the main quality evaluators of the work performed by the academic staff. The LA management regularly conducts surveys of students and analyse the results which are then used to evaluate the work of the teaching staff.

The survey of students in 2022 contains the following comments: “Everything or almost everything is very good”, “There is no need for significant improvements”.

Recommendations:

- “More events (lectures, seminars, discussions, camps) could be organised on weekends so that students living further away could come”
- “More feedback on course papers”.

The LA performs regular observation of classes (Luther Academy’s Lecture Observation Minutes, decision of Senate No 13, 19.12.2017. https://ej.uz/LA_observation_part1; https://ej.uz/LA_observation_part2), as the main quality assessment criteria setting the following:

- **Work organisation** (use of time; ensuring beneficial emotional environment for cooperation between the lecturer and a student);
- **Content** (achievable and clear aims; systemic outline of the lecture content; persuasive and argumented speech; competent answers to questions asked by students; the use of relevant information resources; successful connection between theory and practice);
- **Methods and aids** (various learning aids and materials; various learning methods and approaches to achieve the set aims).
- **Communication** (contact with the audience; emphasis on key points; quality of explanation; urging students to be involved in discussions);
- **Student activities** (active involvement; showing interest; participation in discussions; creative, analytical, research activity);
- **Evaluation** (informing students of the evaluation procedures and criteria in the relevant study course; use of accurately developed criteria; feedback (support; praise; positive criticism, etc.))

If the LA management identifies shortcomings and deficiencies in the work of the academic staff, the Head of the study field is delegated with the task to organise an individual interview with the lecturer to search and offer solutions to the problems for improvement of quality in study or research paper. Issues of the study process quality, incl. results of class observation, are regularly reviewed also at the meetings of the Methodological Commission (the Luther Academy’s Regulations on the Methodological Commission, Senate decision No. 13, 17.12.2017). There have been cases when the lecturer of a study course was replaced in response to results of the student surveys on study courses and verbal complaints.

To improve the quality of studies and promote enhanced academic and spiritual cooperation networking, the LA graduates are also involved in the study process, e.g., when organising a Motivation camp in Saldus, etc.

A significant indicator of academic staff quality is their scientific and creative activity which is also regularly monitored and analysed motivating the teaching staff to conduct research within the framework of projects, and in that way to upgrade their options for international cooperation, increase their scientific capacity, and publish their work in internationally recognised databases.

Quality monitoring of the general staff activities is just as important. At the LA, it is coordinated by the Vice Rector for Studies, by means of explaining, training, and facilitating the professional growth of staff.

In the survey of students and graduates performed in 2022, the psychological microclimate at the LA was highly appreciated, e.g., hospitality, pleasant environment, consultations, explanatory work, timely circulation of information, organisation and usefulness of events (Saite uz aptaujas rezultātiem) which is surely a high evaluation of quality of the work performed by the general staff.

To evaluate the study quality and its provision, annual self-evaluation of the study field and the relevant study programme is conducted each year. It takes place by means of collegial work, respecting the opinion provided by students, employers, management and academic staff, as well as by using the summary of data based on facts.

In activities performed by the LA, focus is placed on compliance with all standards included in Part 1 of the ESG (Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf) and integration thereof in the internal quality assurance system. Special attention is given to the necessary changes in the use of study methods by implementing novelties, e.g., role-plays, simulation, as well as e-solutions. The students are provided with opportunities to be involved in research and creative activities, e.g., conferences, excursions, camps, etc.

Compliance of the LA with ESG standards in the internal quality assurance is reflected in Table No 1.

Table No 1.

Compliance with ESG standards in the LA quality assurance

| Standards and guidelines | The LA Quality Management System |
|--|--|
| ESG 1.1. Higher education institutions should have a quality assurance policy. | The LA has determined the responsibility of all involved parties in quality assurance. Each involved party knows its obligations in quality assurance. Academic staff, students, administrative staff participate in quality assessment and assurance, but also employers, graduates, cooperation partners, and professionals in the sector (in data analysis of administrative, academic, and quality management processes and consultations in planning improvement based on data; in paper defence commissions; in review of papers; participating in development and updating of the content of study programmes and study courses). |

| | |
|---|---|
| ESG 1.2. Development and approval of programmes. | Development and implementation of study programmes in the field is based on requirements of laws and regulations. Content of study courses is created so that study outcomes of each course would provide for achievement of the general study outcomes of the study programme. Content of the programmes is regularly reviewed and renewed. |
| ESG 1.3. Student-centred learning, teaching, and evaluation. | <p>Implementation of the study content ensures and facilitates the use of various study approaches to various student groups while respecting their previous level of readiness and individual learning style.</p> <p>Various assignments are offered for performance of the requirements of the study courses, including promotion of innovative solution options.</p> <p>Students are informed on criteria and methods for evaluation of knowledge.</p> <p>Evaluation of the final examinations takes place in the presence of the commission which includes employers as well.</p> |
| ESG. 1.4. Admission; the process of studies; recognition of diploma. | Admission takes place in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Latvia and internal procedures of the LA in compliance with the specifics of the study programme and by organising an entry examination. |
| ESG. 1.5. Higher education institutions should ensure the competence of their teachers. Procedures for recruitment of teachers should be fair and open. | The LA uses teaching staff selection criteria in accordance with the requirements of internal regulatory documents; qualification improvement of the academic staff is ensured, as well as opportunities for them to engage in scientific activity, incl. preparation of publications and participation in conference. |

| | |
|---|--|
| ESG. 1.6. Higher education institutions should provide appropriate and easily available teaching aids and provide support to students. | Is organised in a centralised manner for the LA by organising group or individual support measures. |
| ESG. 1.7. For effective management of programmes, the higher education institution should collect, analyse and use the information. | The LA organises surveys of students and employers to gain information on satisfaction, as well as to receive feedback. The obtained and summarised information is used to conduct self-evaluation of the study field and programmes. |
| ESG. 1.8. Higher education institutions should regularly publish clear, accurate, objective and current information. | Each year, the LA prepares self-evaluation reports on the study field. The LA website provides information on the study process, a description of each study programme, admission requirements; and other relevant information. |
| ESG. 1.9. Higher education institutions periodically evaluate programmes to ensure that they achieve aims and that they meet the needs of students and society. | Each year, evaluation of study programmes of the study field is conducted with participation of the academic staff and students. At the beginning of each study year, descriptions of the study courses are regularly updated, taking into consideration the novelties of the sector and recommendations of students, teaching staff, employers, and cooperation partners. |
| ESG. 1.10. Higher education institutions should implement a cyclical external quality assurance and evaluation in accordance with ESG. | The cyclical external evaluation takes place once every six years in accordance with the requirements of laws and regulations. |

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

The quality of the study field and programmes at the LA is monitored and managed by using the so-called principle of Deming cycle “Plan - Do - Check - Act” (See Figure 9).

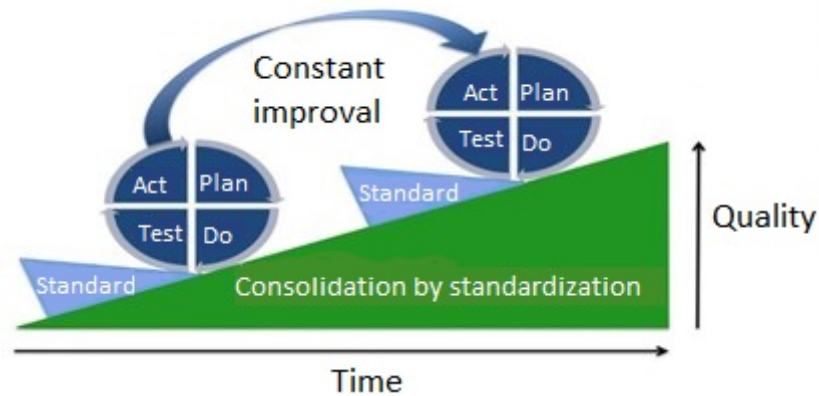


Figure 9. Deming cycle. (<http://agilescrum.lv/05-deminga-aplis/> - only in latvian)

According to the Deming cycle, development and improvement of the study field programmes at the LA is planned for the period of five years with regular monitoring of requirements, needs, and recommendations of all involved parties, in compliance with the LA Development Strategy 2021-2025 (https://ej.uz/la_developm_strategy), and respecting the national and international guidelines and development trends in the sector.

Achievements of each stage become a standard and starting point for planning the next process to move towards development, improvement, and excellence. To provide a clearer view on the LA quality assurance system, it is shown in a graphic model (See Figure 10). It shows the four key process blocks: 1. Planning of processes and results. 2. Implementation of processes. 3. Evaluation of processes and results. 4. Making improvements.



Figure 10. The LA Quality Assurance System

Within the framework of quality assurance system of the study field and included study programmes, the development of the study field and links between the included study programmes, as well as implementation results of each existing study programme are planned, controlled, evaluated, and reviewed, ensuring involvement of representatives of the responsible and involved parties of all levels of the study field management in quality assurance of studies.

During the planning process of self-evaluation and development of new study programmes, the responsibility at the LA is distributed between the Director of study programme, Head of the study field, the Study Department, as well as the Senate.

Cooperation of all involved parties (LAT management, teaching staff, students, graduates, LELB,

and other employers, cooperation partners) in quality assurance can be best seen in planning of a new study programme, for example. As an example can be mentioned planning for creation of a new professional Bachelor study programme the necessity of which is determined by topicality of practice, employer requirements, as well as reasonable recommendations of the graduates.

During the development of the programme, joint seminars of the working group took place where representatives of all involved organisations came together to agree on the idea, concept, aim, objectives, and achievable outcomes of the programme; partnering higher education institutions expressed an opinion on the content of the programme, planning of the courses of the study programme, etc. Electronic correspondence and mutual consultations took place between the meetings of the working group. A professional standard, concept of the programme was developed, and improved according to recommendations of experts. The development process of the programme was collegial; all partners were involved in all stages based on equality principles. In the process of developing the programme, the general international experience was analysed, all Latvian and EU documents binding to creation of the programme were analysed. Currently, introduction of the programme has been suspended because the professional standard has not been approved; however, when analysing resources and opportunities, as well as the demand on the labour market, the LA still supports the necessity of this programme.

Internal regulatory documents providing for procedures and activities that should be complied with when developing and reviewing the programme are included in the “Regulations on Opening and Management of the Study Field and the Study Programmes”

(https://ej.uz/regulat_study_field_programm) and the Quality Management System

(https://ej.uz/Quality_manag_system).

Each year, the LA prepares self-evaluation reports of the study field and programmes to reflect implementation of the programmes, novelties, changes to the programmes, and the improvement process; evaluation of the stakeholders – both the results of student surveys and evaluation of employers. During the self-evaluation process of the study programmes, the LA Study Department ensures also an independent expert examination to ensure planned development of recommendations. Accreditation self-evaluation reports are prepared by using the results of annual self-evaluations. Recommendations by the expert groups of evaluation for accreditation and licensing and the study quality commission are evaluated by the Methodological Commission and meetings of the LA management when preparing the implementation plan for expert recommendations.

During the reporting period, and while preparing the LA self-evaluation reports, detailed analysis of harmonisation of aims, objectives, and results of programmes and the study field, as well as compliance of the LA with the common strategic aims is conducted. It resulted in a decision to close the Bachelor study programme “Church Music” due to insufficient number of students and use of resources.

During the reporting period, the main internal quality experts were the students of the programme; their opinion was analysed in detail when preparing self-evaluations, planning measures and activities to eliminate the identified deficiencies (See Table 2).

Table No 2.

Planned performance of recommendations of students included in self-evaluation reports for the Bachelor study programme “Theology” (2020, 2021)

| No | Recommendation | Activity | Achievable result | Deadline | Responsible person | Performance of recommendation |
|----|----------------|----------|-------------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
|----|----------------|----------|-------------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------------------|

| | Results of student surveys; specified deficiencies and recommendations | | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| 1. | For certain study courses: belated receipt of feedback; lack of references to academic sources; the lecturer mostly referred to their own experience | The specified problems related to certain lecturers in individual study courses were analysed by the Methodological Commission, as well as were generally discussed in the LA management meetings. The Programme Director and Vice Rector for Studies spoke with individual teaching staff. Teaching staff attend various courses to improve their work. | Lecturers have been acquainted with the evaluation given by students. Solutions were found to improve the situation. | Improvements should be started in a timely manner; no later than by the next period of teaching the relevant course. Individual courses were changed because they were not appropriate. | Programme Director, Vice Rector for Studies | Certain deficiencies specified in surveys and comments were already partially eliminated during teaching the course after conversations with students and the teacher. |
| 2. | On the study programme: No criticisms, but there are recommendations, mostly on reducing the study intensity, timeliness of feedback; recommendations to combine courses. | The problem was examined by the Methodological Commission and in the management meetings. In 2021, several changes based on data analysis were made to the programme to create larger interdisciplinary blocks of courses, thus reducing the number of exams in semesters. | Upgrading of the programme, taking into account the latest research trends and global trends in demand for content of theological education. | Consequent changes should be made for each academic year while developing and upgrading the programme. | Programme Director, Study Department, academic staff | Each year, targeted rearrangements and updates to the programme take place. |

In general, analysis and assessment of the system and the procedures for the development and review of the study programmes has been conducted on regular basis throughout the reporting

period by using various mechanisms of monitoring and control, thus ensuring targeted improvement of quality.

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

In its activities, the LA complies with the principles of democracy and equity, meaning that at all stages of the study process, beginning from admission to the final work participation of applicants and students is ensured in evaluation of the LA study process.

To ensure the quality of the study process, the LA has developed and implemented "Rules of Proposals and Claims by Students of the Luther Academy" (Decision of the Senate No 3, 02.04.2019, https://ej.uz/propos_claims_by_students). The procedures define:

- the form how students can individually or in groups submit suggestions or complaints in writing,
- procedures for registration and evaluation of complaints.

The rights of the LA applicants to submit complaints on violations of the admission procedure state under annual "Terms of Enrolment to the Luther Academy" (decision of the Senate meeting No 1, 25.01.2022, https://ej.uz/la_terms_enrolment_23_24) that the decision of the admission commission on the tender results may be appealed by submitting an application to the LA Rector within three days since announcement of results. The decision taken by the LA Rector may be appealed in the court in accordance with procedures stipulated by the Administrative Procedure Law.

To improve the quality of studies, students are entitled to submit suggestions and complaints on the study process, incl. evaluation of examinations and final papers. A student may also submit an appellation for the penalty imposed in accordance with the LA procedures (*the Luther Academy's Internal Rules of Procedure for Students*, decision of the Senate No 3, 02.04.2019, https://ej.uz/la_internal_rules_students).

Procedures for appellation of examinations and national examinations are stipulated by the "Luther Academy's Regulations on Examinations" (decision of Senate No 8; 29.08.2019, https://ej.uz/LA_regulat_on_examin), providing that a student may appeal the decision on evaluation of an entry examination or examination within 2 business days after the evaluation has been published by submitting a written application to the Vice Rector for Studies.

Suggestions and complaints on the study process (schedule of classes; organisation of studies; quality of studies or improvement thereof; failure by the LA academic staff or employees to fulfil their duties, etc.) may be submitted to the Programme Director, Vice Rector for Studies, or the Deputy Rector. Replies to suggestions and complaints are usually provided within 5 business days. If additional information is necessary, the student is informed on extension of the period with a provided reasoning for it. At the end of the academic year, the Programme Director submits a report to the LA management for the received complaints and decisions made to eliminate the complaints. The cyclical monitoring is a significant part of the quality system allowing for

improvement of the internal control mechanisms for the purposes of improving the quality.

The LA also has the Academic Arbitration Court the regulations of which provide an opportunity to address this collegial institution regarding any matter related to studies, incl. control over compliance with evaluation principles, procedures for granting discounts on tuition fee (*Regulations on the tuition fees and general procedure for awarding tuition fee discounts to those studying at the Luther Academy*, decision of the Senate No 8, 05.10.2018, https://ej.uz/regulat_tuition_fees) and other matters. During the reporting period, the students have not used the aid of the Academic Arbitration Court to settle disputes.

Suggestions and complaints on all processes are registered by the Study Department where they are submitted, and remarks are made on results of examined complaints and adopted decisions.

The situation shows that the cooperation model used by the LA is based on respectful, empathetic, and democratic cooperation, ability to see the values, needs, and wishes of all involved parties; it ensures openness towards suggestions submitted by students, a regular monitoring of student wellbeing during the study process, a democratic discussion culture which prevents the academic conflicts and complaints at the root. The activities and process organisation at the LA takes place democratically; decisions are made as a result of discussions and negotiations; both students and teaching staff are clearly aware of the rules for activity and rights and obligations under the internal regulatory documents.

During the period from 2017 until 2022, one written complaint was submitted on LA or its teaching staff. The student expressed insights from her subjective experience and a reasonable remark on the teacher's work. The complaint was submitted to the Student Council, and its representative informed the LA Senate. Afterwards, the LA chaplain heard out the student personally and provided answers to her. Talks were held with the teacher as well. There have been verbal complaints; in one case the teacher of the course was replaced, and in another – participation was organised in further education courses on didactics of the teach level at a higher education institution.

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

The LA regularly analyses the dynamics of the number of students. It is done twice per year: in autumn and in spring. For this purpose, information is collected on:

- the number of applicants and admitted students, with a focus on education acquisition institution, the year when the person has graduated from it, examination results received in the secondary education institution/higher education institution, as well as demographical data.
- number of students, incl. study leaves, performance, drop-out rate, study status of being excluded in the case of failure to settle academic obligations, excluded in the case of failure to settle academic and financial obligations, excluded in the case of receiving the education document (graduate). See Figure 11.

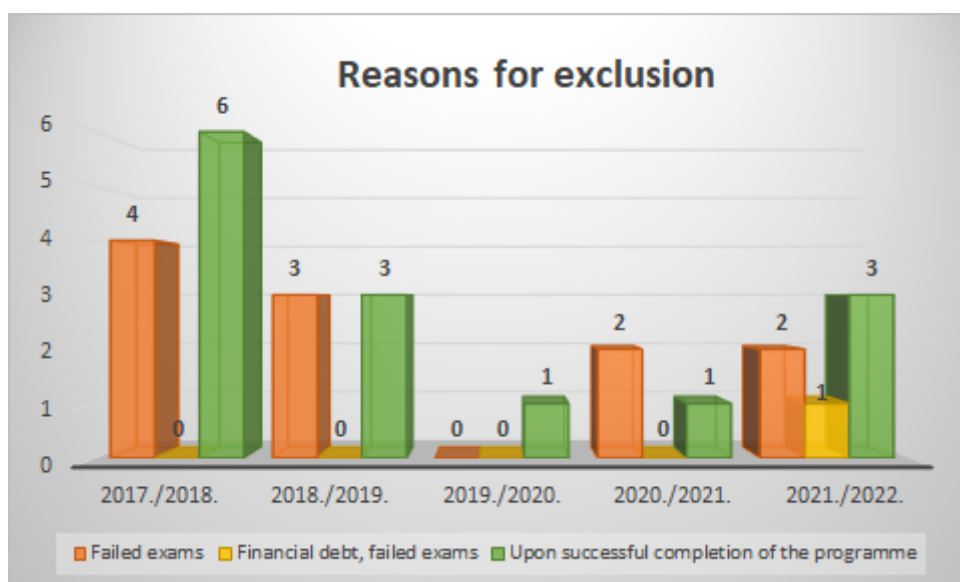


Figure 11. Reasons for exclusion

Monitoring of study performance and results of students is also important. For this reason, the LA summarises and analyses data on interim evaluations and final evaluations of the study courses, final results of the final examinations once per semester. The data on performance of the study programme in general, the academic debts of students (per semester, in credit points) are also summarised.

To promote the implementation and development of good governance principles at the LA, information which is necessary to plan and effectively use the study resources is also summarised; for this purpose, information on performance of the tuition fee payment schedule under the student contract, the study loans, and the number of students receiving the loans is summarised.

Satisfaction of students, graduates, and employers with the study quality and its results is one of the most significant indicators of the quality of the process. To perform the necessary measures of improvement, the LA organises the following surveys:

- survey for applicants with a purpose to receive information for improvement of quality of measures of student recruitment. The survey is usually conducted verbally as a free conversation with an applicant before commencement of studies. The survey helps to identify the motivation for studies, sources of receiving information on studies at the LA, as well as social and demographical characteristics. Data are compiled and analysed by the Study Department. The survey results are provided to the LA management, the Founder, the academic staff.
- Student survey. Its aim is to find out the opinion students hold on the content and forms of study courses, the quality of work performed by the teaching staff, and the quality of study environment. This survey is organised once per semester in electronic form. The results are used both for evaluation of the quality of the study process and evaluation of the professional capacity of the academic staff, diversification of the study content and forms, as well as when preparing the annual report on the study field and the LA development plans.

The survey (usually verbal) of students who have expressed a desire to terminate studies or have already terminated their studies is organised to predict the possible risks. The main aim of the survey is to identify the main reasons for termination of studies and to facilitate reduction of the student drop-out rate. Data are compiled and analysed by the Study Department, submitting the results to the LA Senate.

- The graduate survey, the aim of which is to obtain the opinion of graduates on the quality of

the completed programme, on the acquired knowledge, skills, and competences, their sustainability and competitiveness, on contributions of the graduated study programme to their employment, as well as plans to continue studies in the context of lifelong learning.

- Employer survey which usually takes place verbally, when employers participate in the work of the LA decision-making bodies, are involved in the study process, when organising meetings of the LELB Central Board presidium with the LA senators, when inviting the LA management to participate in the official meetings of the LELB Central Board presidium, and discussing LA performance and measures for quality improvement. The purpose of the surveys is to find out the opinion of employers on compliance of the knowledge, skills, and competences acquired by students and graduates with the requirements of the labour market. Direct expression of opinion of employers on the LA students and graduates is a decision of the LELB Examination Commission of Spiritual Ministers allowing the persons to minister officially in the Church.

Results of the student, graduate, and employer surveys are reflected in the ***Annex No 8 “Results of the Student, Graduate, and Employer Surveys”***.

To ensure compliance with the principles of academic integrity, the LA ensures automatic inspection of all final papers submitted by students for defence by using the unified digital plagiarism control system. The LA students are well informed about the plagiarism tools and control mechanisms, on the moral and ethical component of plagiarism and its consequences (plagiarism is controlled in examination papers of each course: quotations, discussions with opinions, separation of the opinion of other authors from theirs, direct references, etc.). Supervisors of the final papers, reviewers, and commission pay special attention to controlling plagiarism even when the control tool has not identified it (mostly problems in quotation and discussion).

Summarisation and analysis of statistical data takes place when preparing the annual report of the study field, when evaluating and improving the performance of the study field. The report includes and analyses the following statistical data:

- number of students in the programmes (total number; number of matriculated persons; number of graduates; drop-out rate);
- composition of the academic staff: position; number with a doctoral degree;
- ratio of the number of students to the number of teaching staff;
- number of employers working in the sector which are involved in implementation of the programme;
- summary and analysis of results from the student surveys.

Obtaining, summarisation, and regular analysis of statistical data allows the LA to maintain its quality monitoring system the purpose of which is to obtain, summarise, analyse, and use information to evaluate performance and progress in relation to set aims, expected results, as well as to be able to make decisions based on evidence, and to promote improvement of the quality of studies.

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

Today, a website is an integral part of activity of any institution. The LA website <http://luterakademija.lv/en/> is created for various target audiences: future and current students, employees, cooperation partners, as well as public in general. The website ensures availability of the public information of the LA, providing an opportunity for its visitors to read information on the LA activities.

Sections of the LA website:

- **News and events** (Home).

Here the current and planned LA events are available, the schedule of lectures, also the main cooperation partners of the LA are mentioned (with a hyperlink to the organisation) – LELB, RARZI, Latvian Christian Academy (now European Christian Academy), LU Faculty of Theology, LCMS (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, USA), Saint Gregor Education Centre.

- **About us**
 - History;
 - Values and vision;
 - Governance and administration;

The section provides information on LA institutions implementing representation and management functions in academic, scientific, organisational, and economic matters: the Constitution Assembly; the Senate; the Audit Commission; the Academic Arbitration Court; composition of these institutions. It also describes duties and tasks of the Rector and the Student Council, as well as provides information on the LA management and its contact information.

- Teaching Staff:

The section provides information on the academic staff and visiting teaching staff of the LA, their contact information and taught courses.

- News and events;
- Regulatory documents;

The section references the most significant external regulatory documents which are binding to provision of the LA activities:

- [Law on Higher Education Institutions](#)
- [Education Law](#)
- [Law on Scientific Activity](#)

General documents on the LA:

- [Articles of Association of the foundation “Luther Academy”](#) /registered in the Enterprise Register of the Republic of Latvia on 18 December 2007/
- [Constitution of the Higher Education Institution “Foundation “Luther Academy””](#) / approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 31 January 2012/
- [Regulations of the Constitution Assembly](#)
- [Regulations of the Senate](#)

Rules governing admission of students:

- [RULES OF ADMISSION for Basic Study Programmes](#)
- [APPLICATION for the Study Programme “Theology and Ministry”](#) - only in Latvian

Documents governing the studies:

- [Regulations on Studies](#)

- [Regulations on Examinations](#)
- [Regulations on Opening and Management of Study Field and Study Programmes](#)

Documents governing the scientific and research work:

- [Regulations on Competition of the Scientific Articles of Students](#)
- [Regulations on the Research Papers](#)
- [Regulations of the Scientific Council](#)

Rules on receipt of loans

- Cabinet Regulation No. 231 Procedures for the Allocation, Repayment and Cancellation of a Study Loan from the Resources of the State Budget - only in Latvian
- [Regulations of the Loan Granting Commission](#)
- [Request for a Study Loan](#) - only in Latvian

- [Contact us](#)

The section provides the LA details, contacts and the contact form which can be used for exchange of information with the LA.

- [How to find us](#)

Information on the LA location and possible ways to get there.

- [Cooperation partners:](#)

Provides the most significant information on the strategic cooperation partners of the LA.

- [Vacancies](#)

Interested parties may find information on the current vacancies at the LA for the relevant period.

- **Studies**
- [Study programmes;](#)

The section provides information on the Luther Academy (LA) as a higher education institution established by the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church and accredited by the Latvian State showing that by a theological education based on Christian faith and Evangelical Lutheran traditions, the LA encourages people and prepares them to carry out God's calling.

Describes the most significant advantages of studies at the LA:

- we are a small higher education institution; therefore, we can ensure an individual approach to students, as well as opportunity to study in their desirable form and duration of studies;
- studies at the LA can be combined with work because lectures and practical classes take place during evenings of working days; we provide options of distance learning (ZOOM; video and audio recordings of individual study courses);
- the best students may receive a discount of tuition fee, starting from the 2nd semester;
- each semester, teaching staff include visiting lecturers from partnering churches in the USA, Sweden;
- students and teachers are united by faith and common calling of Christ to follow Him. The LA learning process provides a possibility to experience a friendly atmosphere and feeling of community.
- Alongside intellectual studies, the LA establishes the Christian fellowship between students, lecturers and staff based on unity of purpose of life and selected ministry. While studying in

depth the liturgical life of the Church, the practice of recollections and hourly prayers, students search for the most appropriate way to their spiritual growth and personal development.

The study options offered at the LA are also reflected by describing the offered programmes.

- [Study programme “Theology”](#)
[ADMISSION RULES for Bachelor Study Programmes acad.y. 2023/2024.](#)
- [Admission to the study programme “Theology and Ministry”](#)
APPLICATION and admission to the programme “Theology and Ministry” acad.y. 2023/2024.
- [Recognition of study outcomes](#)
- [Distance studies:](#)

The section describes the process of distance studies determining that the LA provides also distance studies the volume of which is up to 50 percent of the contact hours of the relevant study programme as defined by the Study Plan of the study programme approved by the LA. The distance studies at the LA are a part of the full-time education process where the learners study by using information and communication technologies among others, while not physically present in the same room or location of studies together with the lecturer. When organising and participating in the distance studies, [Procedures of Organising the Distance Study Process at the Luther Academy must be complied with.](#)

- **Scientific research**
- Scientific activity and research fields

Defines the strategic aim of the scientific research at the LA; the applied research fields of the LA study field “Theology and Religion”:

- general history and the history of Church in Latvia,
- systematic theology,
- Biblical and exegetical theology,
- practical theology.

It is stated that the strategic research field of the LA in 2025 is: Lutheran atropology in today’s context.

Regulations and rules:

- [Regulations on the Research Papers](#)
- [Regulations on Competition of the Scientific Articles of Students](#)
- [LA Rules on Pre-defence of Bachelor Papers](#)
- [Regulations of the Scientific Council](#)

The interested parties may find here information on international and local conferences organised by the LA.

- Library

The section reflects the open hours of the LA Library; communication channels with the librarian; a short history of library.

It is possible to oversee the resources of the Library [HERE>](#)

Activities of the LA Library are governed by the [Regulations of the Library of the Luther Academy.](#)

Services are provided in accordance with the [Rules on the Library Use at the Luther Academy.](#)

- **Academy life**

- Spiritual life

Academy life does not consist of studies alone, but of living the faith of Jesus Christ in a community. The LA cultivates its prayer and service life by weekly services of Holy Communion, and Vespers on weekday evenings. Spiritual leadership and care under the ministry of chaplain and pastor Tālis Freimanis is also significant both for ministry and fellowship of students.

Spiritual leadership takes a very significant role in the life of the Academy. Each student can receive encouragement, advice, and spiritual support when meeting with the chaplain pastor Tālis Freimanis, when being united in prayer, and together searching for practical solutions to challenges of life.

- Motivation camp:

The section describes the special LA tradition to organise annual motivation camps that take place outside the LA and consisting of:

- individual conversations with clergy;
- icebreaker games;
- fellowship (feeling of a supporting shoulder);
- games together with clergy;
- common morning and evening prayers and the church service;
- lectures appropriate to the topic of the camp.
- Photo gallery;
- Student Council

This section shows the significant role of the Student Council in organisation of the study life by sharing information on the functions, mission, vision, tasks, structure, and composition of the Student Council.

Editions of the student newspaper “SOLA SCRIPTURA” can also be found here - only in Latvian;

[1_2016_nov](#); [2_2016_dec](#); [3_2017_janv](#); [4_2017_mart](#); [5_2017_apr](#); [6_2017_rud](#)

- **My studies**
- For students;

The section provides [calendar plan for acad.y. 2022/2023](#), [LECTURE PLAN for the 1st semester of acad. year 2022/2023](#), [EXAM SESSION SCHEDULE for the 1st semester of acad. year 2022/2023](#), lists of lectures - only in Latvian.

The Study Department of the LA is responsible for preparation of information for the website, its correctness and updating. The website content administrator is responsible for maintenance of the website, placement and regular updating of the prepared information.

The person responsible for compliance of information available on the website with the information provided in the official registries (VIS and E-platform) is the Vice Rector for Studies.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

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

For the purposes of determining the provision of the financing necessary to implement the study programmes of the LA study field “Religion and Theology”, a sustainable system has been established, the necessary infrastructure resources have been identified and determined, as well as the material and technical provision which has been purposefully used during the reporting period. Availability of resources is ensured for all parties involved in the study process. A unified system and procedures have been set for material, technical, methodological, informative, and other provisions. The LA has also determined, implemented, and observed procedures for recruitment of qualified academic staff. Purposeful analysis is conducted of the professional capacity of the academic staff; professional and didactic improvement needs of the teaching staff have been determined by organising appropriate improvement measures. At the conclusion of the professional improvement measures the results and effectiveness are evaluated. The LA has identified the support students need, and a functioning support system has been established based on spiritual values, empathy, cooperation, and collegial equality.

The LA system to determine and distribute financial provisions for the study field and its programmes is based on the Law on Higher Education Institutions (www.law_higher_educ_instit), providing that higher education institutions are funded by the founders. The founder of the higher education institution provides the financial resources necessary for continuous operation of the higher education institution, as well as for performance of tasks requested by the founder, controlling the use of the resources.

In accordance with the Articles of Association of the Foundation “Luther Academy” (https://ej.uz/LA_Statutes), approved on 18 December 2007, the financial provisions for the operation of the Foundation are:

- monetary resources invested by the Founder, as well as the movable and immovable property which the Founder has transferred for the use of the Foundation;
- income from the tuition fees;
- income from the economic activity;
- donations and gifts from legal entities and natural persons;
- revenue from the use of immovable property owned or used by the Foundation;
- State funding received according to the procedures stipulated by laws and regulations;
- other sources of financing which are permitted by laws.

The founder of the Foundation and donors transfer the monetary resources to the Foundation by paying them into the Foundation’s bank account.

If movable items which do not need to be registered are transferred to the Foundation, an acceptance certificate is drawn up. Transfer of registered movable items and immovable items is performed by making an entry in the relevant registry or Land Register. Movable and immovable

items may be transferred to the Foundation's ownership or use.

Funds of the Foundation are used only to achieve the aims of the Foundation. The Management Board of the Foundation takes decisions on the use of resources of the Foundation.

When conducting its operations, the LA takes into consideration the Cabinet Regulation No. 445 of 05.07.2016 "Regulations Regarding Remuneration of Teachers" (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/283667>), as well as other external laws and regulations.

Most of the LA financial resources are used to organise the study process. The main costs related to implementation of study processes include remuneration of the academic staff governed by the Regulations on Workload of Academic Staff at the Luther Academy (Decision of the Senate meeting No12, 21.11.2017, https://ej.uz/LA_workload_academic_staff), stating that the components of the workload of academic staff include:

1. study work:

- work with auditorium: heading lectures, seminars, practical classes;
- other study work;
 - preparation and control of assignments for students' individual work;
 - individual consultations for students;
 - supervision and review of course papers and final papers;
 - supervision of the students' internship;
 - supervising course papers;
 - work in final examination commissions;
 - work in entry examination commissions.

2. methodological work:

- development of new study courses;
- development of practical works;
- development of lecture notes, textbooks, and aids and preparation for publishing, as well as review of the said works;
- participation in the work of Methodological Commission;
- preparation of the study programme for licensing, accreditation, repeated accreditation.

3. scientific work:

- the planned scientific research and innovative work in accordance with the research fields defined by the Academy;
- participation in scientific seminars and conferences;
- preparation, heading, and performance of scientific research projects in Latvia;
- preparation, heading, and performance of scientific research projects on an international level, incl. for structural funds of the European Union, etc.;
- compiling the research results; preparation of conference theses, publications, and monographs;
- conducting scientific expert examinations and reviewing the papers;

4. organisational work;

- participation in collegial and administrative institutions of the Academy, heading these institutions;
- participation in working groups, leading these groups;
- organisation and leading of scientific seminars and conferences;
- preparation of and leading methodological seminars;

- participation in preparing the annual/accreditation self-evaluation report for the Academy.

5. professional improvement.

- academic leave for scientific research or conducting scientific work outside the workplace;
- completion of a professional improvement programme appropriate for the academic qualification and work experience;
- professional improvement of teachers in higher education may include international mobility appropriate for the aim of the professional improvement, participation in conferences and seminars that is proven by submitted documents.

The Regulations on Workload of Academic Staff (https://ej.uz/LA_workload_academic_staff, decision of the Senate No 12, 21.11.2017.) define also the volume of work of the academic staff:

- Academic staff working full-time at the LA shall have a 40-hour working week, which is a total of 1,680 hours per year.
- Study and methodological work for academic staff working full-time at the LA, except Professors and Associate Professors, shall be 1,008 hours per academic year, forming 60% from the total volume of work. This ratio of the study work is determined also for academic staff working a part-time workload.

Other costs related to the organisation of the study process at the LA:

- costs for visiting teaching staff;
- costs for general staff, including costs for remuneration of study implementation support (general) staff, for organisation and provision of the LA activities;
- direct costs related to study programmes, e.g., external services, premises, lease of additional equipment, lease of transport, etc.;
- costs for property and services include material, technical, and methodological provisions of the study programme, incl. technical equipment, hand-outs, professional improvement (experience exchange trips, training), etc.;
- indirect costs include the total costs for provisions of the LA activities and investments in development.

Infrastructure costs – costs for premises, including utility payments, repairs, and maintenance – are covered by the Founder.

The most significant financial support to the LA is provided by the Founder and LELB partnering church in the USA, LCMS (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod); a part of the financial resources is formed by the student tuition fees governed by the Regulations on General Procedures for Study Fees and Granting Discounts for Study Fees at the Luther Academy (Decision of the Senate No 8., 25.10.2018, https://ej.uz/regulat_tuition_fees).

The amount of the tuition fee for each academic year is determined for the Senate. The tuition fees at the LA has not changed since 2018: for full-time studies the fee is EUR 800 per year, which in comparison with other higher education institutions (e.g., at the LU Faculty of Theology – EUR 2,200 per year (<https://www.lu.lv/studijas/fakultates/teologijas-fakultate/bakalaura-limena-studijas/teologija-un-religiju-zinatne>), at the European Christian Academy – EUR 1,350 per year (<https://kra.lv/studiju-programmas/pamatstudijas/#teologija>)) is student-friendly.

Study fee is used for development of the study programmes (development of new courses; improvement of existing courses; improvement of the methodological provisions; material incentives for academic staff and students, etc.). Revenue from the life-long learning can also be used for this purpose (https://ej.uz/Open_academy) or other services, as well as accrued financial

resources.

Sources for research financing intended for development of study programmes is also diverted towards academic staff, e.g., for their scientific activities; participation in international projects; publishing of scientific articles; organisation of scientific events at the LA, etc. When participating in such measures, the academic staff build their professional and research competence, including involvement of students, ensuring positive influence on quality of studies and research process.

For research, the LA budget allocated 4.8 per cent of total expenditure in 2022, including research projects, the publication of LA scientific articles, the organisation of conferences, participation of academic staff in international conferences, and the replenishment of library resources.

For data on the financing available for the study programme see Section 3.3.3 of this report.

The Management Board of the LA is responsible for rational use of financial resources since it implements financial governance.

The actual recording of profitability takes place in a centralised manner; the management follows up with the results of the study process, dynamics of the number of students, and the influencing factors. If necessary, permitted corrections are made in organisation of the study process to provide the viability and long-term development of the LA and its study field.

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

The programmes of the accredited study field are organised in Riga, Alksnāja iela 3. By its shape, cultural and historical status, and location in the Old Riga, the building indirectly assists in implementation of the Christian education and maintaining its values.

The building is owned by the ELCL (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latvia); it is in a good technical condition, includes 3 lecture rooms adapted for the study process. The total area of premises intended for provision of the study process is 415 square metres.

According to the number of students and the specification of the LA, the lecture rooms can be used by 12 to 24 people. All lecture rooms are equipped with the magnetic (white) board, stationary or portable projectors. Each lecture room has a computer; desks and chairs can be rearranged as needed to meet the requirements of studies. All premises are equipped with a free access Internet connection, access to e-learning environment, e-mail. If necessary, video conferences may also be organised in the lecture rooms.

To preserve the history and heritage of the LA, lecture rooms are named after famous LELB pastors, Professors of the LU Faculty of Theology and LELB Seminar of Theology, e.g., Memorial Room of E. Rumba; Lecture Room of R. Feldmanis; lecture room of R. Akmentiņš, P. Žibeiks; the rooms are decorated with the interior items and informational material reflecting the most significant events in the life and ministry of these LA and LELB people.

The LA premises have been adapted for the comfort of students and teaching staff: the foyer of the 2nd floor is made into a rest area where they can have a free tea or coffee, refreshments provided

by the students themselves or the LA management; there are sockets for charging of mobile phones. The teaching staff mostly hold consultations with their students in their workplaces (individual offices with the technical equipment; office of the Programme Director; Study Department, etc., with the total area of 95 square metres).

The premises of the LA include also a library with a reading room where it is possible to work on current and final papers and do research in comfortable and high-quality conditions. Besides the rooms intended for studies, the LA has an enclosed yard; a special colourful and added value is created by the direct exit towards the Reformers Church. Its large hall is used to hold LA services, conferences, celebrations, and various other events. In cooperation (contract with the LELB since 1996) with Riga Recording Studio and under leadership of the legendary music life personality Aldis Ermanbriks, plans have been made to create an advance recording studio in the premises of the church so that the sacral building may be used also for the purposes of cultural and musical events of the Latvian and international level (recordings, concerts).

Students, employees and teaching staff of the LA have access also to a kitchen where they can cook or heat up the food they have brought with them. Once a week, the LA staff offer a free meal to the students by preparing a simple Latvian food. The common meal and evening prayers serve to improve the spiritual environment of studies and maintain the mutual communication and human relationships.

Material and technical provisions and availability thereof to students and teaching staff at the LA can be evaluated as fully appropriate for the needs of study programmes.

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

The library of the Luther Academy was founded in 1998. Activities of the LA Library are governed by the Regulations of the Library at the Luther Academy (https://ej.uz/LA_regulat_library , decision of the Senate meeting No. 9 , 19.09.2017) determining that the Library is the structural unit of the LA without a status of a legal entity. The Library provides services and performance of other obligations defined in laws and regulations governing the activities of libraries.

The LA Library provides not only the literature necessary for studies, but also unique publications of theological literature. For example, in 1999, the LA Library received from Germany several thousands of books of Prof. Edmund Schlink, including Weimar edition of Luther's writings. The collection compiled by the Professor Roberts Feldmanis is also highly valuable; it forms a section on the history of Church in Latvia (900 titles), general history of Latvia and history of foreign missions. Among other donations, a special gratitude should be expressed to the exiled pastor dr. Modris

K. Gulbis (1927-2002) and Elaine Sanders Snyder, the granddaughter of the pastor Jānis Sanders. She has provided the latest Bible commentaries and theological books in English. Therefore, the LA Library has become one of the best theological libraries in the Baltic States.

The aim of the Library activities is to provide the LA students, academic and general staff with access to information resources and services.

Tasks of the Library:

- to form a Library stock according to the LA study programmes;
- to create a system, catalogue and bibliography of printed works and other documents;
- to provide operative and high-quality library, bibliographic, and informative services;
- to advise the users in the matters of the use of the Library and obtaining information;
- to use the available information sources from other libraries in Latvia and abroad,
- as well as electronic libraries;
- development and development of library automation.

The work of the Library is managed by the Library manager who is directly subordinated to the Vice-Rector for Studies. Creation of the Library collection is supervised and controlled by the library collection commission. Activities of the Library are financed by the financial means of the Luther Academy.

On 12 October 2017, LA Library was included in the Registry of Libraries of the Ministry of Culture (Number in the Registry of Libraries: BLB2073); Library registration certificate No. 2631.

Services are provided in accordance with the Rules on the Library Use at the Luther Academy (https://ej.uz/library_use, Senate meeting No. 9 decision, 19.09.2019). The Library user is any legal entity or natural person who uses the services of the Library and has been registered as the Library User. When registering, the user gains the right to use the information sources and services available at the Library.

Basic services provided by the Library are free of charge to all Library users, and paid services are provided in accordance with the price list of paid services of the LA.

Basic services of the LA Library are as follows:

- the use of information resources in the premises of the Library.
- supply of information resources.

When the necessary publication is not located in the collection of the LA Library, the LA academic staff, researchers and doctoral students, and students are provided information which libraries have the book available, if there is a home subscription, and what are the options for the digital request.

- providing information and consultations in the Library, by e-mail;

One of the areas of the work performed by the LA Library is consulting the users, providing information, as well as training and support in research. The LA librarian provides to the LA students, academic, scientific, and general staff information on bibliography, topics, factography, addresses, clarification, as well as consultations. The users are consulted electronically: bibliotekalutaka@gmail.com; by phone: +37129466511; WhatsApp

- the use of the open access databases of the library: OAPEN Library, Project Gutenberg.;
- the use of computers and Internet;

The reading room of the LA Library provides an option to use the collection of the information literature and periodical publications, stationary computers and laptops, WI-FI.

- development of news and topics, e.g., an exhibition dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, etc.
- user training in use of catalogues, filing cabinets and other information search systems and electronic resources.

The user training is organised to develop the skills of users to work independently, to find, evaluate, and use the informational resources and e-environment tools. The Library is working actively with various target audiences: students; academic, scientific, and general staff, to promote not only information literacy, but also provide enhanced knowledge and skills in work with electronic resources.

When students begin their studies at the LA, they undergo training also at the National Library of Latvia so that the users would gain skills in working with open access collection, self-service equipment – self-service scanners, copy machines, and so improve the independent learning and IT competences.

Paid services of the Library:

- Copying (black and white A4, A3 format);
- Printing (black and white A4, A3 format).

Library users may use the following publications only in the reading room:

- reference literature;
- dictionaries;
- encyclopaedias;
- books that are the only copy in the fund;
- periodical publications;
- Bachelor papers.

The Library shall issue materials for the home subscription to the LA students, academic staff, general staff, pastors of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church and staff of the LELB Central Administration;

The open hours of the Library is adapted and corresponds to the learning process and convenience of users. The Library is open on Mondays, Tuesdays from 15.00 to 21.00; on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays from 17.30 to 21.00; on Saturdays upon request. The Library users have access to 5 workstations, incl. 4 work with a computer. The users have available an open access collection. The Library is located in 2 rooms; students can use all lecture rooms of the Luther Academy for their studies and research of the library materials.

The Library collection is formed and supplemented in accordance with the LA study and scientific work fields, as well as requirements of the study programmes.

Purchase of new informative resources takes place in line with the financing granted for this purpose which is approved by the Founder each year.

When purchasing the informative resources, the order of the academic staff, suggestions of the Student Council, or proposals of the cooperation partners are also respected.

The new additions are placed in the exhibition of the selection of the collection, and the lists of latest books registered by the Library are formed and published on the LA website (https://lutraakademija.lv/en/?ct=bibliot_la).

In December 2022, the users of the LA Library had access to 27,408 units of printed information resources in Latvian, English, German, and Russian (see Table 3) for implementation of the study

field "Religion and Theology".

Table 3.

Literature available in the collection of the LA Library for implementation of the study field "Religion and Theology"

| Information resources available in the collection of the LA Library (as at 15.12.2022) | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|---|---------|--------|---------|-----------------|
| Printed publications (title/copies) | | | Distribution of publications by language (copies) | | | | |
| Books | Serial publications; periodical publications | Other types of publications | Latvian | English | German | Russian | Other languages |
| 25802 | 15 titles | 14 | 4100 | 7100 | 6472 | 2257 | 5873 |

Printed resources for provision of the study process in the study field "Religion and Theology" forms the largest part of the collection – 80%. Most resources – 27.52% are in English; 15.89% in Latvian; 25.08% in German; 8.75% in Russian; and 22.76% in other languages (Hebrew, Greek, Latin, etc.). Most information resources represented in the collection are in the area of Christianity and Lutheran faith.

The LA ensures digitalisation at the request in accordance with the Law on Copyright.

The LA Library increases the ratio of e-resources and develops the options for remote access to e-resources, informs the students and teaching staff, and recommends them to use the service of remote access to databases offered by the National Library of Latvia (NLL). By completing the application form, remote access to the following databases is ensured: *EBSCO databases*, *VLeBooks* e-books platform, *ScienceDirect/Scopus*, *Cambridge Journals Online*, *Encyclopædia Britannica Academic Edition*, *Gale Reference Complete*, *JSTOR/ArtStor*.

In 2022, the LA offers a total of the following e-resource platforms:

- Logos Bible Software;
- The National Encyclopaedia: the electronic version of the universal encyclopaedia; the principle of entries;
- Directory of Open Access Books;
- Open Research Library;
- Directory of Open Access Journals.

To better serve the students and staff, the LA Library collection has its own electronic catalogue in Nexus system. The electronic catalogue is available on the LA website (https://ej.uz/la_bibliot_katalogs - only in Latvian). The necessary book can be found when searching by sector, author's name, or book title. Creation of the new version of the electronic catalogue has influenced also the library processes and work with the collection: its processing and promotion.

As of 2020, the LA purchases 25 subscriptions each year and offers the LA teaching staff and students the option to use *Logos Bible Software* which is a large-scale electronic library (in English) for studies in theology. It provides resources necessary for studies in theology and enhanced research in all areas of theology:

- books and publications in the Biblical, systematic, and practical theology;
- Bible commentaries verse by verse both for enhanced studies and preparation of sermons;

- a wealth of informational material (encyclopaedias and dictionaries) for various topics related to theology and Church history;
- Maps, illustrations, images (very useful for preparation of presentations and other visual materials);
- study materials for learning the Biblical languages;
- both the classics of theology and the latest publications;
- auxiliary tools for preparation, systematisation, ordering of sermons;
- recommendations for everyday Bible readings and meditation, etc.

Students have access to the following electronic resources: *Remote Research Library Feature Set*, *Lexham Remote Research Library Collection*, *Galaxie's Theological Journal*, *Classic Scholarship Collection*, as well as identified broad selection of open access e-resources appropriate for the study field "Religion and Theology".

The LA Library offers the teaching staff to create bibliographies of their publications and biobibliographies.

The collection of the LA Library corresponds to implementation of studies and development of the scientific research; each year, it is supplemented with the latest information resources according to the information needs of the academic staff and students and the strategic plans of the LA.

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

ICT technologies are an integral part of the study process.

Since the study field of the LA and its programmes are mostly oriented towards development of the so-called soft skills, e.g., self-motivation, communication, leadership, responsibility, problem-solving, etc., the use of ICT gives an opportunity to develop the hard skills as well since those are necessary for the study process, e.g., the use of e-studies environment, preparation and showing of presentations, search of information, selection of trustworthy information sources, statistical analysis, management of databases, social media, project management, and finances, etc.

To facilitate independent studies and ensure distance or hybrid learning, if necessary (*Procedures of Organising the Distance Study Process at the Luther Academy*, decision No 9 of the Senate, 30.08.2021.) https://ej.uz/LA_organis_distance_study the LA uses the following platforms:

- e-study environment,
- MS Teams;
- Zoom.

The lecturer may organise the online consultations via MS Teams, Zoom, Skype, Whatsapp applications, electronic mail, or other technological options, and the lecturer will agree on this with a student in advance.

E-studies environment CANVAS which has been made to suit the LA needs (<https://canvas.instructure.com/courses/5273232>), provides an opportunity to view a part of the course descriptions of the study programme, study forms, lecture content and topics, presentations, seminar materials, independent works, performance schedules and paper evaluation

criteria. The students can also create their profile. The LA study environment is suitable both for placement of study content and monitoring and self-control of the student performance, as well for administrative supervision.

E-studies environment provides an option to place various files (PDF, Word, Excel, etc.), as well as add links, images, videos, books, etc. All information, study literature, and materials (methodological materials, lecture reports, test assignments, tests, etc.) related to protection of items subject to copyright and ancillary rights are placed in e-studies and used in accordance with provisions governing the copyright area in the Republic of Latvia, as well as provisions of international agreements related to the intellectual property binding to the Republic of Latvia.

In addition to uploading information, e-studies environment is also used to evaluate the students' knowledge, as well as for communication between the teaching staff and students. Study courses in the e-studies environment can be improved by the teaching staff at any moment by using the editing function.

Zoom environment is used to provide distance and hybrid lectures, as well as study seminars. The teaching staff can easily access the platform from which to broadcast the lecture and use the tools offered by Zoom: sharing the screen or files, hand raising and reaction functions, the chat where files can also be sent, as well as the function of splitting into teams. Lecture recording function is very useful in the study process. It provides the option for students who do not participate in the lecture to familiarise themselves with the content of the lecture at a later point; it provides an option of repeated listening to the lecture while preparing for the study examination, and the teaching staff can keep improving their lecture content and methods of teaching.

Zoom platform provides an option to create a mutual individual or group communication by using a call and correspondence function. Within the framework of the course, it is possible to add documents in a separate section of a course group if documents are important for fulfilment of requirements of the study course. Individual participants, e.g., visiting lecturers or specialists in the field can be added to lectures and seminars when teaching staff invite them to participate in their courses.

Zoom is used not only for lectures, but also for internal needs of the LA when organising various meetings, as well as the sessions of the Methodological Commission and Council of Science. If defence of the final papers of students cannot be organised in person, it is also organised in remote format by using Zoom environment.

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

Rights and obligations of the academic staff; the process and procedures for election into academic positions, release from the position, and appeal procedures are defined by the LA "Regulations on Academic Staff" (https://ej.uz/LA_regulat_on_acad_staff, decision of the Senate No 12, 21.11.2017.)

In accordance with these Regulations, the LA has the following academic positions:

- Professor;
- Associate Professor;

- Assistant Professor;
- Lecturer;
- Assistant;
- Researcher.

Decisions on necessity to create a certain position are taken by the LA Senate in coordination with the Founder. Both citizens of the Republic of Latvia and foreign countries may be elected in academic positions.

Competitions for the elected academic positions are openly announced. Information on the competition, incl. job assignments of the position, are published on the LA website (<http://lutraakademija.lv/en/?ct=vak>), as well as in the official gazette "Latvijas Vēstnesis". Any person corresponding to the requirements under the Law on Higher Education Institutions may apply for the competition. Applicants to the academic positions of the profiling study subjects need two references, incl. one reference from the Bishop Collegium of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Applicants to the academic positions should read an open lecture which is evaluated by two experts who submit observation minutes. The election process is organised by the Study Department (in the case of Assistants, Lecturers, and Assistant Professors), and the Board of Professors of the relevant field in the case of Associate Professors and Professors.

Elections for the academic positions shall take not later than within 3 months after announcement of the competition. After being acquainted with the submitted documents, minutes of open class/lecture observation and negotiations with all applicants to the relevant position, the Senate shall vote by secret ballot, take a decision on election or non-election into the relevant academic position. In the case of equal number of votes, the Rector's vote shall be decisive.

In accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions, teaching staff are elected in office for the period of 6 years. When the election period has expired, the faculty decide on necessity to announce a new competition for the position. There are no restrictions to the period of taking the position. The LU Rector enters into an employment agreement for the whole election period with the person elected into the academic position.

The LA has several categories of teaching staff:

- teaching staff working in elected academic positions;
- teaching staff working as acting staff in the elected academic positions (acting staff and visiting teaching staff).

If the LA has a vacant or temporarily vacant academic position, the Senate may decide not to announce the competition, and up to a period of two years recruit a visiting Professor, a visiting Associate Professor, a visiting Assistant Professor, a visiting Lecturer, or a visiting Assistant who then hold the same rights, obligations, and remuneration as Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, Lecturers, and Assistants, but they cannot participate in the work of the elected management institutions.

The Rector may sign individual contracts with the retired academic staff, also contracts on conducting scientific research, providing for a specific payment for a certain volume of work according to the qualification of the staff member.

When Professors and Associate Professors reach the age of retirement, the Senate of the LA may granted them an honorary title of Professor Emeritus for their contributions to the higher education.

As necessary, the LA has held elections in academic positions and competitions for administrative

positions during the accreditation period.

To improve the quality of the academic and research work at the LA, it is necessary to focus on several aspects:

1. renewal of human resources;
2. recruitment of foreign teaching staff;
3. recruitment of the scientific staff.

Recruitment of staff is a measure to provide information and create interest in possible establishment of employment relations with the organisation. A purposeful formation and maintenance of the internal and external image of the organisation is necessary to recruit the desirable staff. To create the image of the organisation, a significant role is assigned to references on employer which are available in informal communication and social networks (e.g., <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Lutera%20akad%C4%93mija>; <https://www.ebaznica.lv/tag/lutera-akademija/> etc.)

Within the context of activities for the renewal of the LA human resources, the following is planned:

- development of recruitment and selection of human resources by developing an attractive image and offer of the employer providing for an opportunity to attract a greater number of applicants for the vacant positions;
- improvement of the staff recruitment process, as well as competition for the best candidate;
- implementation of a timely and effective selection of staff to ensure the necessary volume and capacity of professional staff;
- improvement of the work commencement and adaptation process for the new staff and staff who have taken on a new position;
- a more active work on retention and motivation of human resources.

To recruit foreign teaching staff, cooperation with the existing partners, including the use of the LELB cooperation network, should be continued. The international capacity may be improved by activating the broad circle of partners of the LA Open Academy.

The weakness of the LA is in its lack of scientific staff. To improve this area, it is necessary to:

- improve support for the professional growth of the young researchers;
- motivate the LA students to continue studies in the next levels of studies by attracting doctoral students of other higher education institutions, etc.

In the current period (December 2022), the LA has announced a competition for 2 positions of academic staff: Assistant Professor in the sub-field of Church history, and a Lecturer in the sub-field of systematic theology (<http://luteraakademija.lv/en/?ct=vak>); discussions are also held on increasing the number of staff with a PhD in the programme of the study field.

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

Personnel management system based on performance should be put in place to achieve this purpose and to provide for a competitive and motivating remuneration for staff.

- Work results of qualification or artistic creativity.

In the area of qualification assurance of the academic staff, the LA is guided by the following documents:

- Cabinet Regulation No. 569 of 11.09.2018 “Regulations Regarding Education and Professional Qualification Required for Teachers, and Procedures for Development of Professional Competence of Teachers” (https://ej.uz/not_pedag_izglit), wherein it is provided that teachers in higher education institutions until the end of their election period in the academic position should complete professional development programmes on innovations in higher education system, didactics in higher education institutions, or educational work management in the volume of 160 academic hours, including at least 60 contact hours. Professional development may include international mobility appropriate for the aim, participation in conferences and seminars that is proven by submitted documents.
- Cabinet Regulation No. 129 of 25.02.2021 “Procedures for Evaluating the Scientific and Teaching Qualifications or Results of Artistic Creation Work of an Applicant for the Position of Professor or Associate Professor and of a Professor or Associate Professor Holding the Position”(https://ej.uz/profesoru_kvalifikac), governing criteria related to the number and quality of publications, quotability, number of patents, as well as other organisational works related to research, scientific, study, or artistic creation, as well as deadlines and procedures of how the Board of Professors of the industry evaluates the scientific and teaching qualification or artistic creation work of an applicant for the position of Professor or Associate Professors or a Professor or Associate Professor holding the position.
- Qualification requirements and tasks of the LA academic staff are included in the Regulations on Academic Staff (https://ej.uz/LA_regulat_on_acad_staff, decision of the Senate No 12, 21.11.2017.).
- Performance of the LA academic staff is evaluated according to the Regulations on Workload of Academic Staff (https://ej.uz/LA_workload_academic_staff, decision of the Senate No 12, 21.11.2017).

The LA develops an offer of professional development after analysing the teaching staff’s needs in professional development in the context of development trends in higher education, innovations and digitalisation. Surveys of academic staff and individual interviews are organised for this purpose. Survey of participants and evaluation of results is conducted after implementation of each programme. Participation in further education programmes is voluntary, considering the recommendations of management as well.

During the reporting period, the LA has provided the following **professional development courses for academic staff**:

- Professional education course for higher education teaching staff. Student-centred learning and teaching in higher education. RSU, Pedagogical Development Centre, 60 hours (September – December, 2022);
- International seminar: “Quality assessment systems and legal framework of higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area” (March 2022).
- LA seminar “Organisation and management of an advanced study process” (March 2021).
- LA seminar “Basics in creation of a course in CANVAS” (March 2021).

- LA seminar: "The use of Logos Bible Software" (April 2021).
- AIKA webinar on evaluation of study fields (May 2021).
- AIC seminar "Accreditation of higher education institutions in Latvia – opportunities and preconditions" (November 2019)
- Discussion series organised by IZM: Management of higher education: courage to change. Investments of the European Union structural funds for strong higher education institutions in Latvia (September – December, 2019).
- LA seminar "Media in the study process" (May 2019)
- AIC seminar "Guidelines, methodology, and e-platform of quality evaluation" (April 2019)
- AIC seminar "Learning results in higher education institutions" (March 2019)
- AIC seminar "Qualification increasing for academic staff: challenges and experience (November 2018);
- LA seminar "Trends in higher education in the context of the European Union". (October 2018);
- AIC seminar "The role of the strategic partnership in increasing the quality of higher education" (September 2018)
- Seminar organised by the Academic Information Centre (AIC) "Directions of changes in the European Higher Education Area" (May 2018)
- LA seminar: "Topicalities in the scientific research" (September 2017) and "Management of information resources" (October 2017).

Thematical variety of courses has been determined by several factors, e.g., global development trends of the higher education institutions, the necessity to have a successful implementation of the strategic tasks of the LA, the necessity for the individual professional development and motivation of the employees and the academic staff.

Participation of the management in seminars and courses has promoted understanding on integration of the best practice principles in the LA management system, quality assurance standards in the higher education and the processes of implementation of changes, promotion of the strategic partnership in creation of the ecosystem of the higher education. The academic staff have gained new competences in implementing the IT in the study process, the skills in development of research-based studies, development of the motivation of students in initiation and implementation of scientific research.

The high motivation of the teaching staff in relation to their participation in qualification improvement courses has promoted signing of new cooperation contracts and the increase of the LA research capacity, enhanced possibilities to offer lifelong learning, and increase in number of foreign students (attendees).

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

The number of teaching staff with an appropriate education, academic qualification, professional and international experience are involved in provision the the LA study content in accordance with laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia.

The proportional distribution of teaching staff involved in the programme during the reporting

period (2017-2022) is shown in Figures 12 and 13.

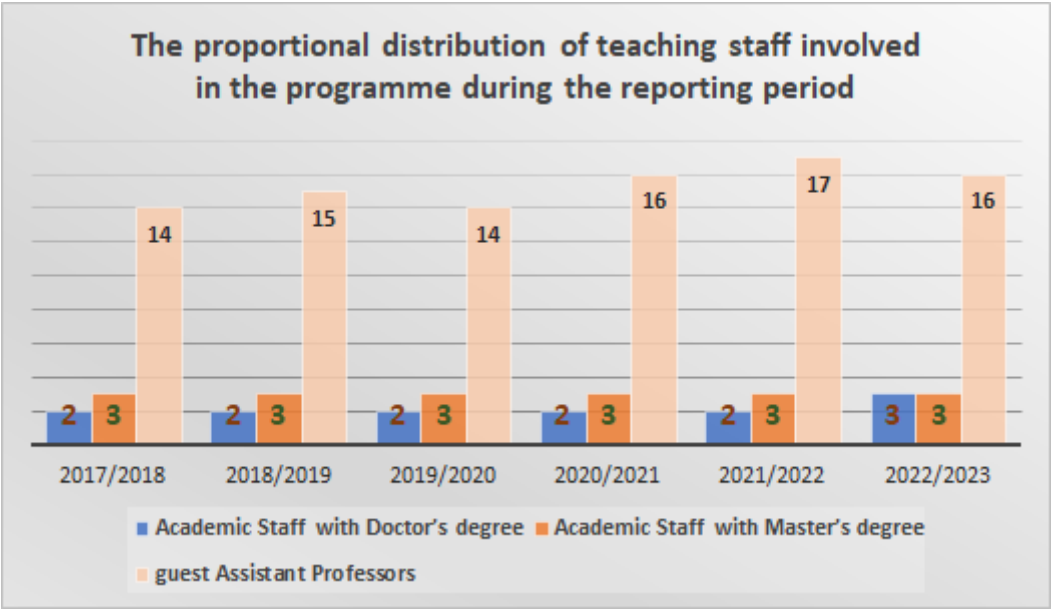


Figure 12. The proportional distribution of teaching staff involved in the programme, 2017-2022.

Specification of the LA and the programmes offered by it determine the necessity to recruit diverse teaching staff. The most part is formed by teaching staff who are not the academic staff of the LA but are a high-level professionals in their field, representatives of the LELB, as well as partnering foreign higher education institutions who contribute professionally in development of courses, methodological provisions, and transfer of the international study and research experience to the LA students. A positive trend in relation to challenges of the latest years and a purposeful work is the increase in the number of the LA academic staff with a PhD during the last year, as well as increase in the professional and scientific competence: 2 representatives of the academic staff plan to defend their doctoral thesis in 2023 and receive their PhD. That way, the capacity of the LA academic staff would be improved both in quantity and quality.

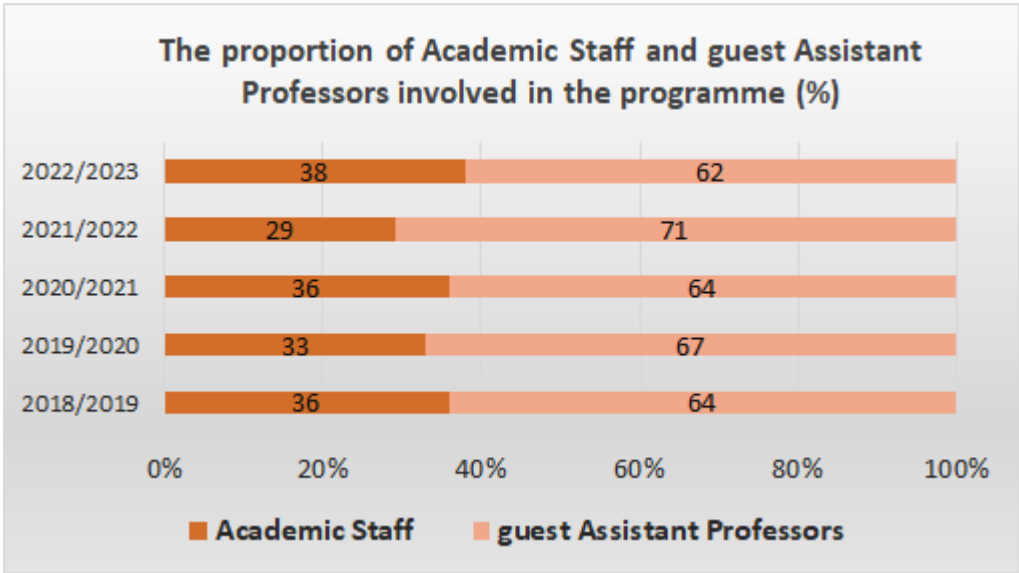


Figure 13. The

proportional distribution of teaching staff involved in the programme

Figure 13 shows the percentile distribution of academic staff and visiting teaching staff involved in the programme, reflecting the average ratio: 35% of academic staff and 65% of visiting teaching staff to ensure the content of studies. The percentile distribution is typical for the small higher education institutions in Latvia, especially in programmes representing humanities and with diverse study courses included in the plan requiring diverse high-lever teaching staff to teach the courses.

(https://ej.uz/LA_workload_academic_staff, decision of the Senate No.12, 21.11.2017.)

2 Assistant Professors from the academic staff work full time, while 4 have taken on a part time workload.

Most of the LA academic staff are working not only as the teaching staff, but are also actively involved in promoting the Christian values in society and preservation of the Lutheran traditions while working with pastors, chaplains, Church musicians, Sunday school teachers. Ministry in the churches across Latvia creates the added value to the study process: the experience of the teaching staff is successfully integrated in the study process ensuring a purposeful link between the theory and practice at a local and international level.

At LA, teaching is provided by highly qualified academic staff (See **the annex No 10 "CV of Teaching Staff"**), all teaching staff of the programme have a full command of the official language, their skills at foreign language (English and/or German) are at a high level, several teaching staff are fluent in 3 and more foreign languages which are necessary to ensure a high-quality study process, research, and international cooperation.

All 6 representatives of the academic staff have acquired their education abroad:

1. Čakare – partial Master's studies at the Free University of Amsterdam (the Netherlands),
2. Kolms – Doctoral studies at the University of Greifswald (Germany),
3. Kalme – Master's and Doctoral studies at Saint Louis Concordia Seminary, USA,
4. Sildegis – Doctoral studies at the University of Helsinki (Finland),
5. Rubenis – received the diploma of the third highest degree contemplation teacher at Lassalle Kontemplationsschule Via Integralis (Switzerland),
6. Graudiņš – Master's studies at the branch of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wain (USA) in Gothenburg (Sweden), that way creating an opportunity to introduce a broad international dimension in the studies and research. For the purposes of international experience and improving further education, the teaching staff speak at international conferences, are opinion experts in academic and faith matters related to the specification of programmes.

Participation of the academic staff in international organisations and networking is successfully implemented to enhance the international experience of the LA. The LA teaching staff are focused on cooperation with students, open to creative discussions and student-centered approach as shown by the high evaluation in student surveys (In section 2.2.4. see *Annex No 8 "Results of the Student, Graduate, and Employer Surveys"*).

During the reporting period, the LA has formed a stable academic team with an appropriate number of PhD holders and professionals in the field to successfully ensure the study programmes.

Among the visiting teaching staff of the LA are people who are renowned in the academic environment of humanities, as well as practical theology and public activities, e.g., Prof. Harijs Tumans, Dr. Andris Priede, Dr. Elizabete Taivāne, Dr.cand. Indulis Paičs, Mg. Vija Beinerte.

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

In accordance with Standard 1.3 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) adopted in 2015, “higher education institutions should ensure that programmes are implemented so as to ensure students to take active part in formation of the study process”. Guidelines of this standard state that student-centred learning and teaching have a significant stimulating role in students’ motivation, self-reflection, and involvement in the learning process.

(https://aic.lv/portal/content/files/Informativs_zinojums_SCL_istenosana_Latvija.pdf)

The LA implements a student-centred teaching and learning, respecting the diversity of students’ needs, creating appropriate learning opportunities, e.g., since the most of the LA students combine their studies with work, classes are organised on business day evenings. Cooperation between the LA staff (academic and general) and students promotes independence of students, bilateral respect in relations between students and teaching staff, while also providing leadership and support.

Students of the LA have access to the following types of support:

- **Academic support** aimed at providing the students with information and consultations on matters of the study process during the whole study period. Academic support includes support to applicants and first-year students in relation to the study process: content of the study programme, study courses and selection thereof, documents governing the study process, information on consultations by the teaching staff, on acquisition of self-guided competences and learning skills during the study process (notes; reading of scientific literature; selection of information; active listening; time planning; use of ICT resources, etc.).
- **Psychological support** is provided to students in order to solve personal and learnign problems arising during the studies (interpersonal problems; conflicts; emotional difficulties; pre-examination stress, etc.). The LA provides individual consultations in person and by phone.
- **Career support** is significant at any age, and its aim is to ensure the opportunity to identify and determine their interests, abilities, skills, experiences at any stage of life throughout the whole life to be able to make decisions in choosing education, profession, and determine their individual choices in the context of lifelong learning. Support to career development is provided by the staff of the LA Study Department in cooperation with partnering institutions (LELB, etc.). The career support is expressed in individual consultation of the students, providing opportunities to practice in the LELB, social and other institutions, offering motivation camps, recollections, professional learning of German in Germany, liturgical ministry practice in Latvia and Germany, professional skills events, etc.

The Student Council (SC) also takes active part in supporting students with an aim to defend and represent interests of the LA students in academic, material, cultural, and Christian faith matters in the LA and other institutions. The vision of the Student Council is to create an environment where a student can successfully apply themselves both in the study process and the social life. The vision of the LA SC provides that there will be a day when all processes implemented by the LA and the achieved outcomes will correspond to the interests of each LA student (https://ej.uz/LA_regulat_student_council).

SC support for the students:

- facilitating participation of students in events; organisation and coordination of activities (Motivation camp; cam; “Calling”, Christmas events);
- identification of the students’ needs, interests and wishes for improvement of the study and

- research process, and provision of suggestions for implementation of improvements;
- facilitation of the Christian lifestyle and participation in the life of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church;
- representation of the interests of the students in negotiations with the management and academic staff of the LA;
- discussion and acceptance of recommendations in matters related to the academic, material, and spiritual life of the LA students (including services, devotions of the LA students), their social life and fellowship;
- provision of opinions in matters relevant to the rights, obligations, and interests of the students;
- consulting the students in matters of their rights, obligations, and interests.

As a positive aspect should be acknowledge the fact that the students are involved in all events related to the study process at the LA; in matters of study content students receive individual and group consultations both in person and by remote communication. The LA staff regularly compile information on performance of students to detect the possible risks in a timely manner. In the case of risks, talks are held with teaching staff, the chaplain, Programme Director, or Vice Rector for Studies to improve performance, prevent the drop-out, and motivate students to continue their studies.

For the purposes of informative support, the LA has created a special e-mail for communication with each group of students and to facilitate timely transfer of information; the exchange of information takes place also in special WhatsApp groups serving not only for exchange of information, but also as an empathic tool for solving problems.

The survey of students conducted in 2022 shows that they are very satisfied with the received support rating it with 4.8 (the highest possible score is 5.0). They have especially appreciated support in choosing their study specialisation (study courses, Bachelor paper topics, etc.) – 4.04; the quality of the received feedback (helping them understand what they should improve) – 4.22; the possibility to improve their communication skills – 4.51.

2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

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

Scientific research fields of the study field is in line with the LA development goals and are appropriate to the study field and sector. The scientific research and its results are integrated into the study process. International cooperation in scientific research is provided within the framework of the study field and is being purposefully developed. The LA has developed mechanisms to facilitate involvement of teaching staff and students in the scientific research; the mechanisms function and are gradually improved, considering the experience. Results obtained from the scientific research activity are offered to improve the study process, content, and forms.

Scientific work at the LA is coordinated by the Council of Science (hereinafter the Council) the

activities of which are governed by the LA Regulations of the Council of Science (https://ej.uz/LA_council_of_scienc, decision of Senate meeting No 4, 08.05.2018.). The main duties of the Council shall be determination of the priority directions of the scientific work, planning and coordination of the scientific work carried out by academic staff and students; promoting improved scientific qualifications of lecturers; conducting international scientific cooperation; assessment and compilation of research results. The functions of the Council shall be to oversee the development and implementation of the scientific strategy, scientific development processes, the use of funding intended for scientific development at the LA.

The **strategic aim** of the LA scientific research is to ensure and develop high-quality scientific and applied research in accordance with requirements of laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia and based on the relevant ELCL (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latvia) documents - *ELCL Constitution* (<http://www.lalb.lv/lv/?ct=satversme> - only in Latvian), *ELCL mission* (http://www.lalb.lv/lv/?ct=par_lalb - only in Latvian), *ELCL Rules on Pastoral Ministry* (http://www.lalb.lv/lv/?ct=noteikumi_instrukcijas - only in Latvian) and other documents expressing the needs of ministry in the ELCL, as well as based on current trends in theology and religion which apply to the involvement of the Church in society. The LA implements this research aim by involving the teaching staff, students, local and international cooperation partners.

In accordance with the regulatory documents binding to the teaching and ministry of the ELCL, it has stipulated that for the LA doctrinally binding shall be teaching in accordance with the Old and New Testament scriptures of the Bible and its interpretation in the collection of Lutheran creeds *Liber Concordiae*. The ELCL management has also stated that the ELCL has historically been an important formative element of the Latvian nation and its cultural environment, and that the challenge for the Church today is to continue being a force that forms the society.

In accordance with Article 4.1.5. of the ELCL Rules on Pastoral Ministry (http://www.lalb.lv/lv/?ct=noteikumi_instrukcijas - only in Latvian), the LELB management has stipulated that a pastor should have acquired theological and practical education which is necessary to fulfil the pastoral position and has been recognised by the ELCL.

Accordingly, the LA has defined its operational aims:

- to prepare clergy and laypeople for ministry in the area of spiritual care and education in ELCL congregations and in State, municipal, and non-governmental institutions;
- to provide academic and practical education for the students specifically in the area of theology specialising in the tradition of Lutheran theology in its historical and systematic exposition;
- to develop the science of theology in Latvia;
- to promote spiritual recovery of society; to preserve and create the necessary spiritual and intellectual potential for Latvia, and to promote its development.

Considering the causal links of development in theology and religion science and theological guidelines of the ELCL, the LA has specified the following **research fields** for the study field "Theology and Religion":

- general history and the history of Church in Latvia,
- systematic theology,
- Biblical and exegetical theology,
- practical theology.

These research fields have been derived from the relevant areas of theology and describe the role of each area in theology and religion research:

- the general **Church history** with the special role of Lutheran faith in it assists in seeing the role of the Church as preserver of spiritual values globally in the Western and general global civilization and locally as continuous role of the LELB in development of the Christian faith, culture and national self-awareness of the Latvian nation;
- **systematic theology** formulates in a structured way a unified view on prophetic and apostolic insights of the Holy Scriptures which are acknowledged in the ecumenical creeds, explained in the Lutheran creeds, and established in rationally fixed dogmas, and provide spiritual reference points for today's environment and society;
- **Biblical and exegetical theology** explains the Biblical texts pointing towards the Biblical spiritual origins of the general human values;
- **practical theology** provides specific ecclesiastical competences to operate in the Church ministry and be involved in the current social processes with an appropriate understanding and confidence.

The scientific and applied research fields of the LA are also based on [LA strategy](https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/media/3679/download), which is formed in line with the "Framework for Scientific, Technological Development and Innovation for 2021-2027" (<https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/media/3679/download> - only in Latvian), respecting the aims of the document:

- a) to promote development of intelligent, technologically developed and innovative society in Latvia, with a special focus on promoting research excellence and increase in social value,
- b) to develop the culture of open science by ensuring availability and use of research data and results in society,
- c) the necessary preconditions should be created in the context of the global trends and national development priorities – human capital, knowledge, skills, and competences while using the advanced technologies to ensure acquisition of high-quality education and skills,
- d) to increase the influence of the higher education and research system in Latvia, creating the added value in a way which is enriching in social, technological, economical, and cultural areas by promoting development of healthy, open, technologically developed, socially inclusive, and nationally responsible society.

The **research aim** of the LA in line with the LA development strategy is obtaining the results of scientific research, support and further improvement of the scientific activity in the study process, and solving relevant tasks by using research methods.

For the period until 2025, the LA has specified its **strategic research field** as the Lutheran theological anthropology in the context of current events.

The LA research complies with and maintains correspondence to the previous readiness level of researchers (choice of topic; research methods, communication, etc.). The LA increasingly focuses on research internationalisation, striving for research excellence, involvement of society and educating society with an aim to promote development of an intelligent society of Latvia based on Christian values, which is technologically developed and spiritually enriched.

Link between the research areas of the study field and the aims of the study field is reflected in more detail in Chapter 2.4.2.

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

The LA places a special focus on linking the results of the scientific research with the study process. The research results become an integral part of this process, and provide a new incentive for development of new research ideas. Most part of research at the LA is conducted in relation to the content included in the study programme. Selection of topics for research papers of students takes place as follows:

- on the initiative of students themselves based on their academic interests and pastoral ministry experience, with the approval of the teaching staff of the relevant area;
- by choosing one of the offered topics compiled in the list of recommended Bachelor paper and report topics for the LA. The list is supplemented and corrected at the beginning of each academic year in accordance with the Annual Plan of the Scientific Research (in the section "Other annexes" - *Annex No 4 "Academic Research Plan for Academic Year 2022/2023"*).

The examples of the best practice in use of the research results in the study process:

- Bachelor paper by Rolands Pētersons on the topic "Old Testament Sacrifices as a Reference to Jesus Christ" (2017) was used in the course "Exegesis of Pentateuch";
- the report by Viesturs Rikveilis "Luther's Article "To the Christian Noblemen of the German Nation"" (2020/21 ac. y. Sem. 1) was used in the course "Luther's Writings" in 2022/23 in the 1st semester lecture on the relevant topic;
- Luther's 95 theses translated by K. Bankovskis were used in the course "Luther's Writings". It was also used as the hand-out in the exhibition dedicated to the 500th Anniversary of Reformation in the National Library of Latvia, published in the newspaper Svētdienas Rīts in October 2017 (together with his article "Luther's 95 Theses Today"), as well as in the book titled "Dr. Mārtiņa Lutera darbu izlase", Vol. 1, Riga: Luterisma mantojuma fonds, 2019. pp. 49-57.

In 2020, in partnership with the Foundation of Professor Roberts Feldmanis (PRFF), the work of famous theologian of the 17th century Johann Gerhard, "Sacred Meditations" as translated from Latin by the LA student Kaspars Bankovskis was published and presented. The book can be used as additional literature in practical subjects of theology and in formation of clergy. The work is distributed to students, pastors, congregations, and other interested parties. In cooperation with Lutheran Heritage Foundation, translation from English by the LA student Kaspars Bankovskis of the work by J. Pless "Prayer with Luther's Small Catechism", Riga: Luterisma mantojuma fonds, 2019. The work can be used in the LA study course "Fundamentals of Pastoral Spiritual Care".

LA teaching staff implement a research-based study approach by regularly using the results of their research and the most significant fragments of publications in hand-out materials intended for students and in the exposition of the study content.

Since the LA sees itself as the carrier of traditions of the ELCL Theological Seminar, in 2011, names of the LA lecture rooms were changed by the order of the LA Rector J. Vanags, assigning the names of the most distinguished teaching staff of the Latvian Lutheran Church, and after the initiative of the LA Student Council and decision of the LA Senate, it was decided in 2015 to make them into the memorial lecture rooms. On 28 May 2015, memorial lecture room dedicated to History Professor Dr. Roberts Feldmanis of the Latvian Church was opened; on 1 June 2019, the lecture room dedicated to martyr, Professor Dr. Edgars Rumba; in 2020, the lecture room dedicated to the Dean of the first renewed LU Faculty of Theology, Rector of the Theological Seminar, Dr. Roberts Akmentiņš; in 2023, it is planned to complete arrangements of the memorial lecture room dedicated to the Old Testament Professor Dr. Pauls Žibeiks. In the process of developing the lecture

rooms, teaching staff together with students researched the academic achievements of the distinguished theologians, prepared memorial panels, opening conferences, and publications to promote their academic activities.

Results of the link between the research and studies are reflected in the scientific conferences, seminars of foreign and local visiting lecturers, and in other activities described in more detail in Chapters 2.4.4 and 2.4.5.

In 2020, the LA teaching staff have reported in the memorial conference dedicated to the 110th birthday of Doctor of Theology, Professor, pastor of Bauska Evangelical Lutheran Church of Holy Spirit, Pauls Žibeiks: LA lecturer Dr. cand. Laila Čakare – on the topic “Pauls Žibeiks, Professor of the Old Testament”; LA Assistant Professor Dr. theol. Guntis Kalme – on the topic “Pastoral Ministry and Academic Work of Pauls Žibeiks” (<https://kultura.bauska.lv/paulim-zibeikam-110/> - only in Latvian). Contributions of Pauls Žibeiks were popularised in the publication by G. Kalme: “Pauls Žibeiks – A Scientist and Pastor” (Svētdienas Rīts, May 2020). These and other studies are used as resources in Bachelor papers.

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

Sustainable and meaningful development of the scientific research in the study field is ensured by cooperation and internationalisation. During the reporting period, a significant role was held by development and strengthening of cooperation with the *Lutheran School of Theology, Gothenburg (LSTG); Församlingsfakulteten i Göteborg*; <https://ffg.se/kontakta-oss/in-english/>), to promote exchange of teaching staff and students, participation in conferences, joint seminars and researches.

The LELB and the LA regularly recommend the LA graduates to continue studies in the Master Studies of the Lutheran School of Theology, Gothenburg, to obtain a STM (*Master of Sacred Theology*) degree, so that they would be prepared for activity of a LA teacher or LELB theologian. For example, after graduating the School at Gothenburg in the reporting period, former LA students are working or have worked as teaching staff at the LA:

- Mg. theol. Roberts Otomers (study courses “Exegesis of the Gospel of Matthew” and “Leadership in Christian Church”);
- Mg. theol. Gints Graudiņš (study courses “Introduction to Theology and Dogmatics”, “Exegesis of Paul’s Letter to Romans”);
- Mg. theol. Romans Kurpnieks-Logins (study course “Pastoral Theology”). Since 2017, Kurpnieks-Logins is the head of the LELB Theology field.

Teaching staff of the Lutheran School of Theology, Gothenburg, were involved in the research project organised by the LA on meaning and topicality of the 500th anniversary of Reformation; the results of the research were presented on 26-27 May 2017, at the conference “Lutheran Reformation: Heritage of the Past; Current Challenges” (<https://lutraakademija.lv/en/?ct=aktualitates&fu=read&id=48>).

During the reporting period, visiting lectures by foreign scientists have been an integral part of the study process promoting formation and exchange of scientific thought not only among the academic staff, but also students (see Table 4).

Table 4.

Foreign visiting lecturers during the period of 2017-2022

| Date | Guest lecturer | Higher education institution (country) | Lectures |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| March 6-10, 2017 | Dr. Naomichi Masaki | Associate Professor in systematic theology, Concordia Theology Seminary of Fort Wayne (USA). | The Living Heritage of Luther: His Faith in Christ and Ministry of Gospel |
| March 5-9, 2018 | Dr. Charles Gieschen | Academic Dean and Professor in exegetic theology, Concordia Theology Seminary of Fort Wayne (USA). | Exegesis of the Gospel of Matthew |
| April 9-13, 2018 | Dr. Wayne J. Knolhoff | Stewardship Ministry Director, LCMS (USA) | Theological Basis of Stewardship |
| November 9, 2018 | Dr. Folke T. Oloffson | Assistant Professor of Uppsala University | Biblical Hermeneutics |
| November 13, 2018 | Dr. Robert Castro | Pastor, ELCA (USA) | Sermons in Postmodern Age |
| March 4-8, 2019 | Dr. theol. Roland Ziegler | Assistant Professor in systematic theology and denominational Lutheran studies, Concordia Theology Seminary of Fort Wayne (USA). | Lutheran Creeds II |
| October 4, 2019 | Rev. Terry Hoese | Pastor emer. LCMS (USA) | Pray and Learn Catechism |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| November 25, 2019 - January 24, 2020 | Dr. Timo Laato | Lecturer at Lutheran School of Theology, Gothenburg (Sweden) | Exegesis of Romans |
| September 6 - October 18, 2021 | | | Paul's Writings |
| February 10-28, 2020 | Dr. Thomas Appelquist | Doctor of theology, senior lecturer at Karlstad University | Introduction to Dogmatics |
| February 12 - May 27, 2020 | Dr. Charles Cortright | Professor of theology, Wisconsin Lutheran College Theological Educator; regional chaplain, Eurasia Region, LCMS (ASV) | Exegesis of Paul's 1st letter to Corinthians |
| September 8 - November 11, 2020 | | | Introduction to Dogmatics |
| October 21, 2022 - February 4, 2022 | | | Introduction to NT |
| October 21 - November 25, 2021 | Dr. Daniel Johansson https://ffg.se/larare/daniel-johansson/ | Lutheran School of Theology, Gothenburg (Sweden) | Exegesis of the Letter to Hebrews |
| January 24 - February 8, 2022 | Dr. Christian Tiews https://www.lcms.org/tiews | LCMS (USA) missionary in Germany | Introduction to Pastoral Theology |

Cooperation with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, USA, consisting of 10 universities and 2 theological seminaries with which the LA actively cooperates has been created for enhancement of the international research thought, research internationalisation, and attraction of financing to science, e.g.,

- in **Ft. Wayne Concordia Seminary**, Illinois, PhD was received by Dr. Miss. Sandra Gintere, Dr. Miss. Didzis Stilve), with the branch in Gothenburg (Sweden) – see above.
- **St. Louis Concordia Seminary** (LA teaching staff had an opportunity to receive a Master degree and PhD. As a result, during the reporting period, the LA teaching staff were Mg. U. Jumejs, Dr. G.Kalme).

A contribution to promotion of the international cooperation is given also by the academic staff involved in the study field when participating in international conferences with their reports, e.g.,

- Čakare, L. (2020). 95.Psalma interpretācija Vēstulē ebrejiem” / “Interpretation of Psalm 95 in the Epistle to the Hebrews//International conference “Estonian-Latvian doctoral conference in theology and religious studies” (organised by: Tartu University; Tallinn University, LU)
- Kalme, G. (2020). M.Lutera Ticības apliecība kā ietvars teoloģiskās antropoloģijas pētniecībai / Luther's Creed as a Framework to the Research of Theological Anthropology// Section of theology and religion research of the 78th international scientific conference, Riga.
- Kalme, G. (2020). On the Theology of Martyrdom// International Conference of the Confessional Lutheran Churches, To be the Church of Christ, Saldus.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPb5uU1hOow> from 48`11``).

- Kalme, G. (2019). The Ethos of Values of the Western Civilization in Context of a Nation-State-Latvian perspective//Berlin International Conference of Values, Berlin.
- Kalme, G. (2018). Is Western Civilization Destined to Perish? (An analysis of current processes in Europe seen from a theological and historical cultural perspective)//International Conference: "The Future of the European Union: A Europe of Sovereign States." Vilnius.
- Čakare, L. (2017). Luterisms pirms Lutera: luteriskās interpretācijas pamatprincipi Vēstulē ebrejiem / Lutheranism before Luther: Basic Principles of Lutheran Interpretation in the Epistle to Hebrews// "Luteriskā reformācija: pagātnes mantojums, šodienas izaicinājumi" /International scientific conference dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation "Lutheran Reformation: heritage of the past, challenges for today". <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZLeGuwyWOW>
- Kalme, G. (2017). The artifact of art as an adiaphoron in the ecclesial space: theological principles of its usage, Indifferent things? Material and Ceremonial Church Practices in the 16th and 17th Centuries in the Baltic Sea Region, Tallinn.
- Kalme, G. (2017). Luther's Concept "Christ for Us" As a Fundamental Principle of Lutheran Theology, International scientific conference dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation "Lutheran Reformation: heritage of the past, challenges for today", Riga. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeKnKJ33hmw>
- Kalme, G. (2017). Idea of Continued Reformation As Today's Challenge: Axiological Aspect. International conference dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, University of Latvia, Faculty of Theology, Riga.
- Sildegis, U. (2017). "Luther's Theology of Cross in Circumstances of Communistic Ghetto - Example of Pastor Nikolajs Plāte", International scientific conference dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation "Lutheran Reformation: heritage of the past, challenges for today", Riga. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=le_JyiV6OYU
- Rubenis, J. (2022). "Human Awareness and Value", conference "Values and Rationality: Boundaries in Society and Court Rulings", event held in Riga Palace for the centenary of the administrative justice.

The visit of the LA teaching staff and management with the Theological Seminary of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELB) organised in December 12-13, 2022, during which various types and opportunities of cooperation were discussed, had a significant and important role in improving international cooperations and internationalisation processes. The participants have agreed that on 13 May 2023 an international ecumenic conference "Ecology of the Spirit" will be held. It will be led by the LA, RARZI (Latvia), ELC Theological Seminary (Estonia), and as guests will be invited theological researchers from Sweden, Lithuania, Ukraine, Poland, and other countries.

Representatives of the LA academic staff are also active in the international organisations, e.g., Dr. G.Kalme since 2018 is a member of EuroISME (The International Society for Military Ethics in Europe), *Dr.cand.* V.Kolms since 1990 is participating in the organisation "Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Hymnologie", Dr. Juris Rubenis since 2008 is the Member of the Board of Lassalle Kontemplationsschule Via Integralis (Switzerland), Uģis Sildegis since 2011 is the member of INBCH (International Network of Baltic Church Historians), Deputy Rector Mg. Rinalds Grants - the LELB representative in WLF (The World Lutheran Federation), ILC (International Lutheran Council).

When planning activity in internationalisation of the scientific research, the LA set the additional new fields of activity:

- Involvement of students and academic staff in Erasmus+.
- Strengthening cooperation with the Theological Institute of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and Westfield House Theological Seminary of the Lutheran Church of England by

creating common research projects and promoting common scientific publications in internationally quoted publications.

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

Active involvement of the LA academic staff is one of the strategic priorities in the LA.

For this purpose, the LA has developed the support mechanisms to motivate the teaching staff, e.g., scientific research and its results are defined as one of the most significant criteria in the annual evaluation of the academic staff and determination of their remuneration; the participation of the academic staff in conferences is paid for, publishing of their publications is supported, etc.

For attraction of financing for improvement of research and study quality LA appropriate projects are being sought for this purpose where the financial resources could be directed towards research. Teaching staff can also use their academic leave for research.

A significant link between the scientific research and study process takes place when the LA cooperates with organisations that match the interests of the LELB, e.g., Foundation of Professor Roberts Feldmanis and Lutheran Heritage Fund, Latvian Bible Society.

On 1 June 2019, the LA together with the Foundation of Professor Roberts Feldmanis and Lutheran Heritage Fund organised the *Day of Church History in Latvia* when they opened the memorial exhibition of E. Rumba "Pastor Dr. theol. Edgars Rumba (1904-1943), Witness of God in Life and in Death". Reports were presented by researchers from the LA and RSU, e.g., Linards Muciņš lawyer, attorney at law, historian, LU, BAT and RSU academic staff member, state and public official, politician, member of the LSSR KGB scientific research commission reported on *Church in the Occupied Latvia: KGB Opponent, Victim, or Covering Organisation*; Jouko Talonen, Professor of the University of Helsinki also presented a report and participated in discussions. (<http://luterakademija.lv/en/?ct=aktualitates&fu=read&id=21>).

Dr. G. Kalme, the LA Assistant Professor, PFF Chairman of the Board led the project with participation of Ilona Miežīte, the specialist of Rainis Literature and Art History Museum, and the LA graduate Dzintra Mikolone. They conducted the work of compilation and research collected from many various sources the spiritual heritage of E. Rumba, and as a result PRFF published a book "Edgars Rumba, Kristus – mūsu miers. Sprediķu un rakstu krājums" (Edgars Rumba, Christ – Our Peace. Collection of Sermons and Articles). R: PRFF, 2019, with a foreword of G. Kalme: *Aktuālais mācītāja Edgara Rumbas sprediķos un rakstos. (Topicalities in Sermons and Articles of Pastor Edgars Rumba)*. pp. 9-12

Study course "Homiletics and Public Speech" uses additional literature, i.e., works published by PRFF: E.Rumba, *Kristus mūsu miers. Sprediķu un rakstu krājums*" (Edgars Rumba, Christ – Our Peace. Collection of Sermons and Articles). (R: PRFF, 2019) and R. Feldmanis, *Ar Kristu* (With Christ), R, PRFF, 2016.

The central and most significant project of the reporting period was "Reformation – 500" (2017) which took place in two parts: an international ecumenical conference, and preparation and

publishing of the fundamental work of Andreas Knopkens, the reformer in Livonia and Riga, *Vēstules romiešiem skaidrojums/ 24 tēzes* (Interpretation to the Epistle to Romans/ 24 Theses), R: PRFF, 2017. Several activities took place during this project, including an international and ecumenical conference in cooperation with the Latvian Academy of Sciences, LU, Riga City Council, PRFF, and other organisations. LA was represented by:

- the Rector Archbishop Jānis Vanags D.D. with a reading “Primarity of Christ as the Principle of Lutheran Reformation”,
- Dr.Guntis Kalme “Luther’s Concept “Christ for Us” As the Fundamental Principle of Lutheran Theology”,
- Dr.cand.Laila Čakare “Lutheranism Before Luther: Lutheran Interpretation Principles in the Epistle to Hebrews”,
- Dr.Uģis Sildegis “Lutheran Theology of the Cross in Conditions of Communist Getto – Example of the Pastor N. Plāte”,

Mg.Uģis Brūklene “Mission in Migration Circumstances Caused by Globalisation”.

The Roman Catholic Church of Latvia was represented by its Archbishop Dr. Z.Stankēvičs with a report “Insight into Document “From Conflict to Communion” Jointly Developed by Catholics and Lutherans” (<http://www.luteraakademija.lv/?ct=aktualitates&fu=read&id=48>)

Scientific research interests of the academic staff:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Dr. G. Kalme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematic theology - Theological and philosophical anthropology, especially Lutheran theological anthropology - Lutheran ethics - Military ethics - Church history in Latvia, especially early history, and 20th century history |
| Dr. J. Rubenis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practical theology - Spiritual practices |
| Dr. U. Sildegis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Luther’s theology of the cross - Luther’s teaching on two kingdoms |
| Mg. L. Čakare | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exegesis of the OT Psalms - Unity of the OT and NT - Problems in the Epistle to Hebrews |
| Mg. V. Kolms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - History of Lutheran liturgy in Latvia, especially in the 15th and 16th century |
| Mg. G. Graudiņš | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lutheran systematic theology |

Results of the scientific and applied research conducted by the academic staff are regularly presented in conferences organised by the LA:

- In 2020: International conference in practical theology “To be the Church of Christ!” (<http://www.luteraakademija.lv/?ct=aktualitates&fu=read&id=28>);

- In 2020: Memorial conference and exhibition dedicated to the 110th birthday of Paulis Žibeiks, Doctor of Theology, Professor, pastor of Bauska Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit (<https://kultura.bauska.lv/paulim-zibeikam-110/>);
- In 2018: Conference of Church history in Latvia "Church of Latvia in a Century" (<http://www.luteraakademija.lv/?ct=aktualitates&fu=read&id=16>);
- In 2017: international conference dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation "Lutheran Reformation: Heritage of the Past, Challenges of Today".

(http://luteraakademija.lv/en/?ct=zin_konf)

A significant contribution to research development is provided by the scientific publications of the LA academic staff. For example, in 2017, 9 articles were published; in 2018 – 4 articles of the academic staff; in 2019 – 1; in 2020 – 2; in 2021 – 1; in 2022 – 7 publications of the academic staff. A total of 24 publication.

In 2017, Dr. Uģis Sildegis published a monograph in English: Sildegis, Uģis. *Theology in the Getto: The Life, Work, and Theology of Nikolajs Plāte (1915– 1983), Pastor and Theologian of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Latvian SSR*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 2017. 252 p.

In 2017, monograph by Dr. Guntis Kalme was reissued - "Latviešu karotprasme (War Skills of the Latvians) (1943-1945)// R: Domas spēks, 213 p.

Several books by the LA researcher Dr. Juris Rubenis were also published during the reporting period, e.g.,

- Rubenis J, *Starp divām bezgalībām. Vairāk nekā simts iedarbīgas prakses apziņas paplašināšanai. (Between Two Infinities. More Than Hundred Effective Practices for Enhancing Consciousness)*. R.: Zvaigzne ABC, 2021, 415 p. A very active research activity (field research and theoretical analysis) has taken place during creation of this publication. It can be considered both as a monograph compiling research by J. Rubenis and a unique teaching aid. Such a research does NOT have an analogue in Latvia.
- Rubenis J., Stappel, B. *Das Meditationsbild des Niklaus von Flüe. Darstellung eines christlichen Initiationsweges*. Zürich (Switzerland): Via integralis, 2017.- 32 p.;
- Рубенис, Юрис. Она и он. : Zvaigzne ABC, 2018. – 320 p
- Frīmens L., Rubenis J. *Krīzes iespējas. Meditācija kā dzīves līdzsvarošanas māksla. : Zvaigzne ABC, 2010 - 192 p./ The second issue with a new foreward in January 2021.*

Quantitative summary of the scientific research activities of the LA academic staff is enclosed in **Annex No. 12 "Summary of Quantitative Data on Scientific Research Activities of the Academic Staff in Relation to the Study Field for the Period of 2017-2022"**.

The list of publications by the teaching staff involved in implementation of the study field is included **Annex No. 13 "List of Publications of the LA Teaching Staff for the Period of 2017-2022"**.

To promote improvement of quantitative and qualitative indicator of the scientific capacity of the LA academic staff, the LA scientific journal *Credimus* is being published since 2022. Members of the editorial board include Jouko Talonen (Prof. *emeritus* of the University of Helsinki), Dr. theol. Thomas Appelquist, University of Karlstad (in Swedish - *Karlstads universitet*), Dr.theol. Daniels Johansons (Daniel Johansson, School of Theology in Gothenburg, Sweden (*Församlingsfakulteten* - in swedish)), as well as Dr.theol. Guntis Kalme (LA), Dr.cand. Laila Čakare (LA).

The journal *Credimus* is the first typographically published scientific publication of the LA, and it begins a new academic publicity stage of the LA by becoming an annual publication which creates the intellectual face of the LELB. The collection includes articles on the LELB history, as well as

contributions of scientific activity of the teaching staff in the Biblical, exegetical, systematic, and practical theology.

The first edition includes published articles or translated original texts by the following persons:

- Jānis Vanags – the Archbishop of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the LA Rector;
- Laila Čakare, Dr.cand., LA Lecturer
- Rune Imberg, Dr. theol., member of the teaching staff at the Lutheran School of Theology (Gothenburg, Sweden)
- Guntis Kalme, *theol.*, LA Assistant Professor.
- Vilis Kolms, *cand.*, LA Assistant Professor.
- Aīda Krūze, *paed.*, LU Professor Emeritus.
- Uģis Sildegis, *theol.*, LA Assistant Professor.
- Michal Valčo, PhD, Professor at Comenius University in Bratislava.
- Viesturs Rikveilis, LA graduate.
- Kaspars Bankovskis, LA 4th year student.

LA teaching staff and researchers actively participate in organisational commissions of conferences. For example, on February 6-8, 2020, the LA organised an international conference in the practical theology "To be the Church of Christ!" at the St. Gregor Education Centre in Saldus, among the participants were scientists from Latvia (Archbishop Jānis Vanags *D.D.*, Dr.theol Guntis Kalme, LA), and from other countries: Dr. Folke T. Olofsson from Sweden, Dr. theol Tomas Appelqvist from Sweden, Dr.theol. Rune Imberg) from Sweden, Dr.theol, prof. Christoph Barnbrock, Germany; Dr.theol. Darius Petkunas Lithuania, Jon Ehlers from the Great Britain, Dr.theol. Timothy Quill from the USA, Sebastian Grünbaum from Finland (<http://www.luteraakademija.lv/?ct=aktualitates&fu=read&id=28>).

On 20 August 2022, LA Assistant Professors Uģis Sildegis organised an international conference "Christoph Fürecker Singing Festival" (participants from Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden), reading a report on the topic "Spiritual Songs of Christoph Fürecker" (https://ej.uz/firekers_dziedas_svetki - only in Latvian).

Participation of the LA academic staff in development and promotion of theology has a significant role in public discussions when preparing popular scientific and homiletic publications on topics relevant for the society:

- **Interpretation of Biblical texts and their topicality (exegetic research)**, e.g., Participation of L. Čakare in a popular science educational weekly broadcast "A Road to Emmaus", Radio Marija Latvija, during the period from 2018 until 2022.
- **Fight for freedom, and fighters for freedom; patriotism**, e.g., Kalme, G. *Sargāt brīvību (To Protect Freedom)*// <http://www.aprinkis.lv/index.php/viedokli/37840-guntis-kalme-sargat-brivibu> <https://www.laikraksts.com/laikraksti/Latvietis727.pdf> (2022); Kalme, G. *Es ticu. (I Believe)*. Address by Guntis Kalme at the opening of translation of "The Last Word" by Gunārs Astra at the European Parliament <http://www.aprinkis.lv/index.php/viedokli/33782-es-ticu-gunta-kalme>
- **Political situation; war in Ukraine**, g., Kalme, G. *Mājas darbs, uzvaru gaidot (Homework, While Waiting for Victory)*// <http://www.aprinkis.lv/index.php/viedokli/32830-guntis-kalme-majas-darbs-uzvaru-gaidot> (2022); Kalme, G. *Krievijas sakāve vairs nav aiz kalniem (Defeat of Russia Is No Longer Far Off)*// <https://www.la.lv/krievijas-sakave-vairs-nav-aiz-kalniem> (2022);

- **Morality and values**, e.g., Kalme, G. *Civilizācijas mirst no pašnāvības, nevis no slepkavības* (*Civilizations Die of Suicide Not Murder*)// <http://www.aprinkis.lv/index.php/sabiedriba/dzive-un-ticiba/11680-guntis-kalme-civilizācijas-mirst-no-pasnavibas> (2019); Kalme, G. Mūsu vērtību sardzē (Protecting Our Values) // <https://www.nacionalaapvieniba.lv/aktualitate/musu-vertibu-sardze/> (2019),
- **Understanding of values**, e.g., Rubenis J. *Cilvēka apziņa un vērtības*. (*Human Conscience and Values*) Bulletin of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Latvia. No. 25/October 2022 – pp. 125-128. https://ej.uz/rubenis_vertibas ; Rubenis J. Viss ir pavisam savādāk. (Everything Is Entirely Different)// Imants Ziedonis. Es skaitīju un nonācu pie Viena. (I Counted and Arrived at One). – R.: Viegli, Imanta Ziedoņa fonds, 2016. – pp. 115-121, Rubenis J. Franciska ceļš. (The Way of Franciscus).// Ričards Rors. Mīlestības ceļš. Asīzes Franciska alternatīvais garīgums. (The Way of Love. Alternative Spirituality of Franciscus of Assisi). – R.: Zvaigzne ABC, 2016. – pp. 9-11., Rubenis J. Tuksneša tēvi un 21. gadsimts. (Desert Fathers and the 21st Century). R.: Zvaigzne ABC, 2017// Indulis Paičs. Devīni dvēseles uzdevumi. (Nine Tasks of the Soul). – pp. 7-9.

A significant contribution to the applied research was given by participation of the LA in the project “Sustainable Development of the Cultural and Historical Centre of Rubene” (2015-2020). Rubene congregation, Kocēni municipality, the Luther Academy, and Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences partnered to create the first series of educational conversation and meeting events. Considering that Rubene congregation was the one where priest Henry, the author of the Chronicle of Henry, (*Henricus de Lettis*, 1187 — after 1259) was active, it was named the “Day of Henry”. The main task of the event was promoting understanding and interest in the role of Rubene congregation in formation of the Latvian (Livonian at the time) church and national history.

Within the framework of this project:

1. In 2015, candidate for a degree Reinis Bikše defended his thesis “Ecclesiological and Missiological Aspects in the Development of Ministry of Rubene Congregation”;
2. In cooperation with [Kocēni Municipality Council and Rubene Evangelical Lutheran Church, LA](#) organised a conference on the “Day of Henry” for 5 years: https://ej.uz/indrika_diena_2015 (LA Assistant Professor Dr. G. Kalme participated with his report); https://ej.uz/indrika_diena_2016 (speakers were LA visiting Assistant Professors Dr. H. Tumans and Dr. A. Priede); https://ej.uz/indrika_diena_2017 (speaker J. Vanags D.D.).

Raising public awareness and expressing an expert opinion also have a significant role, e.g., report by G. Kalme “January and February. January Barricades and Historical Parallels of Russian-Ukrainian War from a Christian Perspective” at the conference for National Guard (NG) chaplains on 28.01.2023.; “*News of Russian-Ukrainian War from a Christian Perspective*” at the conference of NG chaplains on 26.11.2022.; report “*Russian-Ukrainian War from a Christian Perspective*” at the conference of NG chaplains on 17.09.2022.; report “*Religious Components of Putinism*” at the conference of NG chaplains on 21.05.2022. etc.

The society highly appreciates speeches of the LELB Archbishop and LA Rector J. Vanags D.D. on significant occasions, e.g., during official holidays.

(<https://timenote.info/lv/events/Latvijas-Republikai-101>;

<https://tuvuma.lv/arhibiskapa-jana-vanaga-spredikis-18-novembri-ar-ticibu-apzinu-un-divam-puslod-em-video/> ; <https://timenote.info/lv/events/Arhibiskapa-Jana-Vanaga-vestijums-Latvijas-cilvekiem>).

The speeches contain results of the scientific studies and address people on matters of faith, morality, and ethics

(<https://timenote.info/lv/events/Janis-Vanags-Nevar-but-miera-ar-putinistiem-jo-putinisms-ir-ista-nav>

es-civilizacija etc.).

On 24 November 2022, the LA Rector Archbishop was elected the honorary member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences for his achievements in development of theology as science (<https://www.lza.lv/nodalas/humanitaro-un-socialo-zinatnu-nodala/1352-pasniegti-diplomi-jaunajiem-hsxn-locekliem>).

In 2018, J. Vanags received also a Certificate of Honour from the Minister of Defence A. Bergmanis.

Whereas, Dr. Juris Rubenis has been an expert of the Council of Science of Latvia in the field of theology since 1997.

LA teaching staff contribute to research when editing books, e.g., during the reporting period, Dr. G. Kalme was a theological editor for the following publications:

- Gerhards, *Dienišķā svētdzīve* (Sacred Meditations) (R: PRFF, 2020).
- Rumba, *Kristus mūsu miers. Sprediķu un rakstu krājums* (Christ – Our Peace. Collection of Sermons and Articles). (R: PRFF, 2019).
- Feldmanis, K.Bankovskis, *Jaunās Derības personas (Persons of the New Testament)*, R: PRFF, 2018.
- Feldmanis, *Par sevi un sev (About Myself and for Me)*, R: PRFF, 2017.
- Knopkens, *Romiešu vēstules skaidrojums/ 24 tēzes*, (Interpretation of the Epistle to Romans/ 24 Theses), R, PRFF, 2017.

LA teaching staff also act as creators of the scientific terminology in Latvian, e.g., Dr. *cand.* Laila Čakare - head of the Sub-Commission for Terminology in Theology, LZA, Dr.*cand.* V. Kolms and Dr. G. Kalme have been members of the Commission of Theological Terms at the Latvian Academy of Sciences (LZA) since 2006.

Dr. Since 1996, Juris Rubenis is a member of the Doctorate Council of the LU in theology.

Public activities and promoting the theological thought in the society are also significant areas of activities by the teaching staff, e.g., Dr. G. Kalme has been a Council member of Riga Latvian Society since 2011, a Deputy Chair to the National Identity Commission, and in 2022 he was awarded a second degree medal *“For service to the National Guard”*, and on 18 November 2019 G. Kalme was appointed a commander of the Order of Three Stars and was awarded the III grade Order of Three Stars *For special achievements on behalf of Latvia - for long-standing, significant, and selfless spiritual service and public activities on behalf of Latvia and its nation.*

Dr. J. Rubenis became the first laureate of the Statehood Award in 2021.

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

Research-based studies are an integral part of the LA activities. Research activities of the LA students are governed by the LA Rules for Development, Defence, and Assessment of Study Research Papers (https://ej.uz/LA_rules_study_research, decision of Senate No 1, 30.01.2018.). The

students should write the following research papers:

- Scientific report;
- Study paper;
- Bachelor paper.

Students can choose to write a personally significant study research paper which:

- follows from a relevant problem identified in practice;
- is relevant to the needs of the Lutheran Church;
- is relevant to the strategic development plan of the LA.

The LA initiative to motivate students for participation in research should be appreciated. The LA has developed internal regulatory documents defining the procedures for financing the research activity of students (Rules on Financing the Scientific and Research Activities of the Students of the Luther Academy), https://ej.uz/LA_financ_research, decision of Senate No 7, 24.08.2018.):

- The annual planned volume of financing for quality support measures in scientific and research activities of the students is calculated in the budget of the LA by determining up to EUR 200.00 annually per one student.
- Financing for quality support measures in scientific and research activities of the students may be used:
- to cover the student's business trip costs, including participation fee in scientific conferences and seminars if the student participates with a report/poster in a scientific conference or seminar in Latvia or abroad;
- to cover the costs for publishing a scientific article.

During the reporting period, financial recognition was shown to the following LA students: K.Bankovskis, V.Rikveilis, J.Amols.

Each year, the LA announces also the competition of scientific papers of students and provides to the winners one-off premiums of EUR 200,00 (1st place), EUR 100,00 (2nd place), and EUR 50,00 (3rd place) (https://ej.uz/LA_financ_research).

Student Andrejs Irbe has also received a scholarship "ELCA International Leaders Program scholarship" (2017-2020), allowing him to take active part in research, e.g., in creating references for E. Rumba's collection of sermons and articles "Kristus - mūsu miers" (Christ - Our Peace), research of biography of E. Rumba, and development of the memorial exhibition.

On initiative of A. Irbe the LA students' newspaper "Sola Scriptura" was also formed. It was issued from 2016 until 2017, a total of 6 issues. The newspaper included publications on theology and Church history, discussions, and articles of reflection the authors of which were LA students and teaching staff, as well as other persons related to the sector of theology. The newspaper also reflected information on student activities, e.g., opportunities to participate in the LA motivation camp and other significant events for LA students and LELB family (https://ej.uz/LA_regulat_student_council).

Owing to the support of the Foundation of Professor Roberts Feldmanis (PRFF), the LA students can be more active in the scientific field achieving academically significant results that help them implement research-based studies at the LA:

- In 2017, the most significant contribution in the view of LELB was issued and presented. It is a dedication to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation by the LA student K. Bankovskis; he translated from Latin the work of the renowned reformer of Livonia and Riga, Andreas Knopken - "Interpretation of the Epistle to Romans"/24 Theses". K. Bankovskis created the

scientific references necessary for this work. The book is used as the teaching aid in the following courses: "History of Church in Latvia" and "Exegesis of the Epistle to Romans". Due to its artistic design (artist Agate Muze), the work was awarded also the *Golden Apple* prize for the 1st place in the genre of popular science literature.

- In 2018, the book "Persons of the New Testament" was published and presented. It was based on notes of Dr. Roberts Feldmanis, including his work "Interpretation of the Book of Revelation". For the book of R. Feldmanis to serve as a complete insight into persons of the New Testament, the LA student K. Bankovskis has written several articles for this book and has supplemented it with a foreword and the index of persons of the New Testament, as well as the necessary references. And the student Ingmārs Ļakas has written an article for this book, "A Foreword to Series of Sermons "Interpretation of the Book of Revelation"" and has provided the necessary references. The book is used as additional material for study courses on the New Testament.
- In 2019, when celebrating the 115th birthday of the Professor Dr. Edgars Rumba, a collection of his sermons and articles, "*Kristus mūsu miers*" (*Christ – Our Peace*) was published and presented. LA student A. Irbe has compiled the scientific references of this work. The work of E. Rumba can be used as additional literature in homiletics.
- In 2020, the work of famous theologian of the 17th century Johann Gerhard, "Sacred Meditations" as translated from Latin by the LA student K. Bankovskis was published and presented. The book can be used as additional literature in study courses of practical theology and in formation of clergy. The work is distributed to students, pastors, congregations, and other interested parties.

LA students are showing initiative in organisation of conferences; for example, in 2017, student Jānis Amols organised 100th anniversary conference of Dr. U. Ģērmanis, the exiled Latvian historian. The conference was titled "*Remember U. Ģērmanis!*", and the reports read there are compiled in the collection of reports (J. Amols, A. Auce, eds., *Piemini U. Ģērmani! U. Ģērmaņa 100. Dzimšanas dienas piemiņas rakstu krājums* (R: Fraternitas Livonica Filistru biedrība, 2017). The collection includes also a report by J. Amols "*Streams and Sources of the Spiritual Strength of Uldis Ģermanis*".

The students are also involved in various social activities, e.g., in 2022, J. Amols cooperated with the journalist Anitra Tooma to create and place on the Internet the "Babīte Audio Guide". It is an audio story on the vicinity of the Babīte railway station, its history, and most famous sites of interest. ([https://www.marupe.lv/lv/turisms/gidi-un-marsruti/audio-gids-babites-ciema-vesture un https://izi.travel/ru/7072-babites-ciema-vesture/lv](https://www.marupe.lv/lv/turisms/gidi-un-marsruti/audio-gids-babites-ciema-vesture-un-https://izi.travel/ru/7072-babites-ciema-vesture/lv)); in 2019, J. Amols created a portable history exhibition in Piņķi Church, "Insight into the Past of Piņķi Church and Parish". Special attention was dedicated to Latvian riflemen, a sermon of Colonel Jukums Vācietis at Piņķi Church. For this achievement, on 06.01.2023, J. Amols received the *Certificate of Appreciation* from the 1st Company of the Student Battalion of the National Guard. J. Amols is also involved in creation of the memorial lecture room of Prof. Paulis Žibeiks.

LA student Mihails Voronovs who works as the senior desk officer for Resocialisation Department of the Central Apparatus of the Prison Administration, published his research, "Bible through the Bars. A Book for Prison Minister", in 2022; (<https://flibusta.su/book/76805-bibliya-skvoz-reshetku-kniga-dlya-tyuremnogo-sluzhitelya/read/>, in 2020, he published the book "Secret of the Spring of Living Water. Finances and Church" (https://www.amnis.lv/lv/gramatas/krievu_valoda/dziva-udens-avota-noslepums-ru).

Another report by student J. Amols, "Professor Paulis Žibeiks (02.03.1910-15.09.2006)" was published in the Church Yearbook of the LELB for 2020. (<https://www.ihtis.lv/lv/kalendari/baznicas-gadagramata-2020> - only in Latvian)

Research of the LA students is fruitful also due to cooperation with “Lutheran Heritage Foundation” (LMF); e.g., LA student K. Bankovskis worked together with LMF to translate other significant theological writings, such as “Loci Communes” by Philip Melanchton, and “On Being a Theologian of the Cross: Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation” by G. Forde, etc. These works are used both as the primary and recommended literature for the study course “Dogmatics”, and in other courses of the practical theology.

A high added value the LA would wish to develop is the so-called LA “Small Research Academies” which are non-formal formations with the main task of promoting the scientific interest of students on certain topics and studies on these topics in cooperation with the scientific supervisors, e.g.,

1. History of Church in Latvia (superv. Dr. U.Sildegs);
2. Theological Anthropology (superv. Dr.G.Kalme);
3. Biblical Exegesis (superv. Mg.LČakare);
4. Spiritual Life and Its Values (superv. Mg.R.Grants).

“Small Research Academies” unite representatives of the LA academic staff, researchers, and students who are interested in any of the above-mentioned research topics and are motivated to be involved in research and publication of results (reports at conferences; scientific articles in a LA collection of articles; international and local publications, etc.), as well as the practical implementation (pastoral counselling; recollections; etc.). Such activities aid in implementation of research-based student-centred studies, promote development of research competences, and long-term increase in the scientific capacity of the LA.

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

In accordance with “Framework for Science, Technological Development, and Innovations 2021-2027” (ZTAI), innovation is implementation of new scientific, technical, social, cultural or ideas, developments, and technologies of other fields in a product, service, or process (https://ej.uz/zinatnes_attist_pamatnostadnes_2021-2027 - only in Latvian).

The aim of ZTAI policy is to promote development of a smart, technologically developed, and innovative society in Latvia. To reach this aim, it is necessary to develop excellence in research and international cooperation, improve infrastructure for excellence of research and innovation, promote international mobility, attraction of excellence and cooperation, increase innovation capacity, the social and economic value of knowledge and research.

As an innovative study process is understood a process which is organised to do outpacing studies and prepare students for the necessity of tomorrow's self-education, to provide the necessary skills to see and solve problems and offer alternatives for problem solution.

Innovation has always existed as a driving force of education. To develop programmes of the study field, LA uses marketing and organisational innovations aimed at:

- development of content and form of studies;
- ensuring research-based study process;
- improving the quality of studies and research process;

- development of internationalisation.

Theoretically, product innovations can also be mentioned because future ideas for the study field include development of a professional Bachelor programme the foundation of which will be formed by content based on analytics, upgraded international cooperation in the area of research and methodology.

Marketing innovations serve to improve the LA image, attract new students, increase publicity and competitiveness of the programme. As the example of the best practice should be mentioned annual LA Motivation camp at Saldus St. Gregor's School.

(<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=560415619220258&set=pcb.560422355886251>).

A significant driving force of the LA activities is organisational innovation. During the reporting period, an LA e-system was formed to increase the effectiveness of the governance process; accountability principles have been introduced in management processes; inclusive governance has been improved to increase the role of students in it.

Many innovations have been created due to circumstances of the reporting period affected by COVID-19. Especially it can be said of the organisation of the study process, implementation of new study methods and ICT solutions. As the most significant innovations should be mentioned the use of Zoom platform for distance studies (also with an option of simultaneous interpreting); differentiated offer of study material; introduction of hybrid studies; organisation of distance examinations; distance consultations, etc.

In accordance with ZTAI, the LA has set the following priorities:

- development of study programmes and provision of competitiveness;
- improvement of research quality;
- renewal of academic staff and researchers;
- recruitment of students;
- attraction of financing;
- improvement of internal and external communication.

The LA activity is based on principles of transparency, involvement, and equal participation by involving in the LA governance the teaching staff, employees, and students with a purpose to achieve diversity of opinions and find the best solutions through discussions.

2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

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

Internationalisation of the study process and research is on the significant operational fields of the LA, and its results depend on cooperation with higher education institutions in Latvia and abroad (higher education institutions; employer institutions; non-governmental institutions, etc.). Internationalisation processes promote achievement of aims of the field and the relevant study programme, as well as the study outcomes, increased pedagogical and research capacity of the academic staff. LA cooperation partners are selected in accordance with the specification of the study field and criteria set by the LA.

Cooperation with various Latvian institutions (higher education institutions, employers, NGOs, etc.) promotes improvement of the study content in accordance with current requirements, assists in development of theory-based necessary professional competences students need, provides significant contribution in ICT provision of the programmes in the study field. The LA criteria for selection of the potential cooperation partners include:

- The operational field of the cooperation partner (according to the specification of the LA and the study programmes);
- Operational quality;
- Reputation and values;
- Range of cooperation (possible jobs for graduates; joint projects; research, etc.)

During the reporting period, the LA has established and implemented cooperation with the following institutions in Latvia:

- **European Christian Academy (EKra)** - annual experience exchange meetings for managers of both higher education institutions; visiting lectures of EKra teaching staff at the LA; LA graduates continue studies in Master studies programme at EKra. To enhance the cooperation in the scientific research activities as well, a Cooperation Memorandum was signed in September 2022 providing for development and implementation of formal and non-formal education and scientific cooperation opportunities in the fields of research and higher education. A special focus in cooperation is placed on activities related to fields of theology, social work, and iconography.
- **Riga Higher Institute of Religious Sciences affiliated to Lateran Pontifical University (RARZI)** - exchange of teaching staff; participation in conferences organised by the other higher education institution; jointly implemented further education project for teaching staff "Student-Centred Learning and Teaching in Higher Education"; in May 2022, a cooperation contract was signed with RARZI.
- **University of Latvia and Faculty of Theology** - mutual long-term exchange of teaching staff; participation in conferences with reports; a contract has been signed with the LU on continuation of studies in the case if implementation of the LA study programme "Theology" is terminated.
- **Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church (LELB) and its congregations** - cooperation within the framework of the study process (involvement of potential students; regular monitoring of professional growth and competence of students; support; study and motivation camps; training excursions), as well as organisation of seminars, discussion evenings, and lectures outside the LA study process. For example, LA teaching staff (L. Čakare; V. Kolms, E. Mažis) regularly participate as teachers in courses for LELB ministers (lecturers) and interested persons organised by Saldus St. Gregor Education Centre. Graduates of these courses often become LA students (currently Indra Zeiza and Rolands Kalniņš are studying in programme "Theology and Ministry" of the *Open Academy*). When invited by congregations, the LA academic staff read lectures to the members of congregations; that way, the LA recognition is promoted, communities based on Lutheran traditions are enhanced, and ecosystem of Christian faith is developed.

- **Lutheran Heritage Foundation** - cooperation in translation and publication of theological books. It has been especially significant during the last years, and as a result students and teachers of the LA have received an opportunity to familiarise themselves with important writings of Dr. Luther (*Selection of Writings* in 2 volumes), as well as fundamental biographies of the German theologian Brecht and Luther in 3 volumes; these works are used in the following courses: *Church History III - Reformation* and *Luther's Writings*. LA student K. Bankovskis in cooperation with LMF has translated several important writings in Lutheran theology. Currently within the framework of this cooperation translation of textbooks in dogmatics are prepared: S. Mueller, *Called to believe, teach and confess. An introduction to Doctrinal Theology* to replace the previous obsolete textbook.
- **Foundation of Professor Roberts Feldmanis** - a long-term cooperation in the area of research of Church history in Latvia, especially on Dr. Prof. R. Feldmanis and other LELB and LA academically significant persons (e.g., Dr. E.Rumba, Dr. R.Akmentiņš, Dr. P. Žibeiks) and identification, compilation, and publication of their spiritual heritage. Due to the fact that students have access not only to a significant homiletic material (three published collections of sermons by R. Feldmanis; work takes place on the fourth; published collection of sermons and academic articles by E. Rumba, *Christ - Our Peace*), as well as an insight into the academic contributions of these persons in general.
- **Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia** - when developing the professional standard for "Theologian", "Specialist in Pastoral Work", and "Pastoral Consultant".
- **Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia** - LA Rector often conducts devotions for the Ministry of Defence. Several LA teaching staff serve as chaplains for the National Armed Forces (NAF) and the National Guard (NG), read lectures, and participate in NAF and NG conferences with reports in addition to their work as teaching staff. LA teaching staff U. Brūklene and G. Kalme have completed an officer specialist course in the specialty of "Chaplain" and have served as a chaplain of the National Defence Academy (NDA) (U. Brūklene) and NDA military ethics teaching staff (G. Kalme). U. Brūklene has received several awards for good service; G. Kalme has received a medal *For Service in NG* for his long-term significant contribution to the training of the NG chaplains. G. Kalme has implemented into the training of NAF and NG and developed the concept of the *military ethos* which has not been known this far in Latvia.
- **Local governments** (e.g., with Kocēni Municipality Council in the project of applied research when jointly organising events in Rubene church; when organising 5 conferences in which research results were published; with Saldus Municipality Council, when organising the LA Motivation camps at St. Gregor's school, etc.).
- **Institutions of mental health and social care** (e.g., Strenči Psychoneurological Hospital; old people's homes, and other care institutions) - long-term cooperation when responding to the demand of institutions for ministers (chaplains) and care employees, recruiting for work the LA graduates, implementing a fruitful cooperation between the educational institution and employer.
- **Media.** The LA academic staff and management, as well as students actively participate in promoting the LA and its programmes when commenting on questions and problems related to theology in media (on television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and news portals; students and teaching staff also publish articles and provide interviews in various types of media, e.g., in the magazine "Svētdienas Rīts", "LELB Yearbook", internet portals *delfi.lv*, *la.lv*, *tvnet.lv*, etc.).
- **Foreign embassies**, e.g., Embassy of Switzerland in Kathmandu, Nepal; Embassy of Latvia in Cairo, Egypt; Embassy of Germany in Islamabad, Pakistan; Consulate General of Germany in Karachi, Pakistan; Embassy of France in Dares Salaam, Tanzania; Embassy of Egypt in

Lilongwe, Malawi; when providing support to successful operation of the LA visiting lecturers and attendees of the Open Academy.

Cooperation is organised with a purpose to educate society in the context of traditions of theology and Lutheranism; to promote the LA study field programmes; as well as develop relationships with the potential employers (for the work of chaplains; for work in religious organisations; in state administration, etc.).

For the list of cooperation partners with whom cooperation contracts have been signed, see **Annex No 14 “The List of Cooperation Contracts”**.

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

Development of cooperation with foreign institutions is one of the strategic activity fields at the LA. When searching for and selecting the potential cooperation partners, the LA adheres to the following criteria:

1. Operational area corresponding to the specification of the LA study programmes;
2. Image and reputation;
3. Operational quality;
4. Opportunities for exchange of students and academic staff;
5. Potential jobs for graduates.

The LA cooperates with the following foreign higher education institutions:

- **Fort Wayne Concordia Seminary (USA)** - exchange of teachers; bilateral participation in conferences; experience exchange visits and consultations; a contract on continuation of studies in the case if implementation of the LA study programme “Theology” is stopped; cooperation agreement.
- **Sent Louis Concordia Seminary (USA)** - exchange of teachers; bilateral cooperation in conferences; experience exchange in summer camps for recruitment of students; cooperation agreement.
- **Oberursel Lutheran University of Theology** - participation of the teaching staff in a conference organised by the LA; experience exchange on content and implementation of programmes; a seminar within the framework of further education of the LELB pastors; cooperation agreement.
- **Lutheran School of Theology in Gothenburg** - participation in the development of the LA professional education programme; provision of Master studies opportunities for the LA graduates; teaching staff support for implementation of the LA programme “Theology”.
- **Pastoral Management Institute** - preparation of several LA teaching staff to be pastoral management training coaches; provision of resources for development of content for the course “Fundamentals of Christian Management”.

- **Tallinn Institute of Theology** - several visits of experience exchange; joint research projects in the future.
- **University of Helsinki** - participation of Dr. Juoko Talonen in a LA conference. Awarding a doctoral degree to two teaching staff members of the LA - Dr. Uģis Sildegs and Dr. Voldemārs Lauciņš.
- **Lutheran Church Missouri Synod USA (LCMS)** - financial support; support to missionary network by involving foreign students to the programme “Theology and Ministry” of the Open Academy.
- **International Lutheran Council (ILC)** - participation of the Council in seminars organised for heads of higher education institutions of participating churches on content and quality of theological programmes; mediation in establishment of a global network.

The international cooperation with the foreign institutions implemented within the framework of the study field provides for achievement of the following aims and objectives of the study field:

1. It ensures the content in Biblical theology, church history and systematic and practical theology based on the latest international research;
2. It promotes strengthening of the spiritual values in the society by raising the matter of creativity, participation, and cooperation;
3. It facilitates development of such competences in the students that helps them to be included in the global labour market, implement the calling of their ministry in the society of Latvia and the Latvian communities across the world.

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

Since the LA has not yet participated in Erasmus+ exchange programme, and the Bachelor programme was implemented only in Latvian during the reporting period, recruitment of foreign academic staff has mostly taken place with the support of LELB and involvement of the strategic partners (USA, Sweden). There are no foreign students in the Bachelor programme.

A significant number of foreign students participates in the programme “Theology and Ministry” implemented by the *Open Academy*. There are 35 students from 13 countries – the programme takes place for the second study year; a positive dynamic can be observed in the number of students; a positive aspect is enhancement of the area of domicile countries, including countries in Europe, Africa, and Asia (see Figure 14).

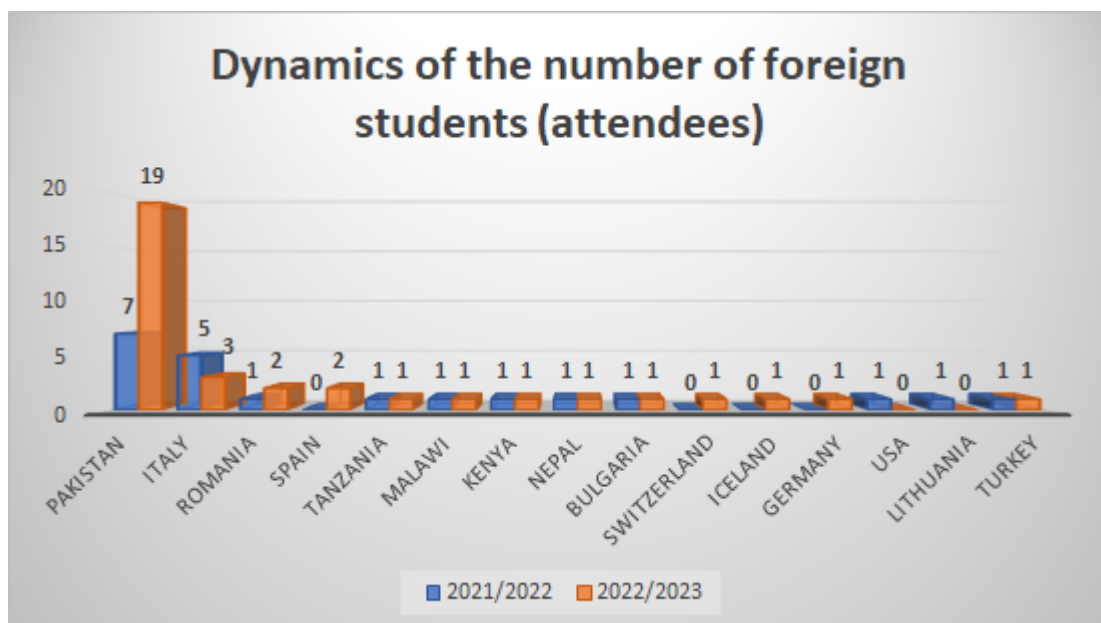


Figure 14.

Dynamics of the number of foreign students, 2021-2023.

Recruitment of attendees for this programme takes place in close cooperation with an employer, mostly due to the international cooperation of LELB and flawless reputation of the LA. The cooperation provides not only involvement of motivated participants (the main motivators are a high-quality education and competitive tuition fee), but also many opportunities for international networking. Duration of training is 4 years; studies are organised remotely by using study materials available in Canvas environment, Zoom lectures, and individual consultations. Once per year, attendees of the programme are offered also intensive 2-week long studies on site, e.g., a summer camp in Mazirbe, Saldus. Especially significant for students was a camp in Wittenberg (in cooperation with German partners) in a place where Luther preached. That way, LA could not only offer appropriate content to attendees, but also create an additional emotional background, create a study environment promoting the wellbeing of participants and belonging to the Lutheran Church. It is particularly applicable to attendees in whose domicile countries Christianity is not a primary faith (Pakistan, Nepal, etc.).

As one of the future development fields the LA has determined internationalisation of the study process. For this purpose, a Bachelor study programme in English will be offered, and capacity of the Open Academy will be developed.

LA plans involvement in Erasmus+ mobility to promote the international experience of students and academic staff. Student mobility has taken place only within the framework of the Open Academy; in 2021, 4 students from the Lutheran School of Theology, Gothenburg (LSTG) joined the study courses of the intensive study weeks.

Recruitment of foreign students and teaching staff to the programme of the study field is a significant development field for the LA, and a special focus will be dedicated to it.

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

2.6.1. Assessment of the fulfilment of the plan regarding the implementation of the recommendations provided by the experts during the previous accreditation of the study field, as well as the assessment of the impact of the given recommendations on the study

quality or the improvement of the study process within the study field and the relevant study programmes.

Recommendations provided during the previous assessment procedures have been fully implemented. LA contributions to analysis of recommendations and implementation of recommendations to the specification of the study field and the relevant study programme can be observed.

Assessment of the fulfilment of the plan regarding the implementation of the recommendations provided by the experts during the previous accreditation of the study field, as well as the assessment of the impact of the given recommendations on the study quality or the improvement of the study process within the study field and the relevant study programmes is provided in ***Annex No 18 "Report on the implementation of the recommendations"***.

Implementation of the recommendations provided by experts has helped with implementation of principles of good governance both in the LA in general and individually in the study field; thus, the study environment is made more advanced by improving cooperation of teaching staff and students in research. Internationalisation of the study process is promoted by increasing the international experience of the teaching staff and developing cooperation with the strategic partners. The LA publicity has been improved by participation in various events of raising public awareness, in discussions on theology and related matters. The changes have also been applied to the content of studies adapting it to social development trends of today, while preserving and promoting the traditional Christian values.

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

(Not applicable)

Annexes

| I - Information on the Higher Education Institution/ College | | |
|--|--|--|
| Information on the implementation of the study field in the branches of the higher education institution/ college (if applicable) | | |
| List of the governing regulatory enactments and regulations of the higher education institution/ college | Annex No2_LA list of regulatory documents.pdf | Pielikums Nr.2_Normativo dokumentu saraksts.pdf |
| The management structure of the higher education institution/ college | Annex No1_LA management structure.pdf | Pielikums Nr.1_LA parvaldības struktūra.pdf |
| II - Description of the Study Field - 2.1. Management of the Study Field | | |
| Plan for the development of the study field (if applicable) | Annex No3_Development plan for Study Field.pdf | Pielikums Nr.3_Studiju virziena attīstības plans.pdf |
| The management structure of the study field | Annex No 4_The management structure of the study field.pdf | Pielikums Nr.4_Studiju virziena parvaldība_shema.pdf |
| A document certifying that the higher education institution or college will provide students with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution/ college (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college) if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. | Annex No5_Agreements_continuation of studies.7z | Pielikums Nr.5_Ligumi_studentu parejai uz citu augstskolu.7z |
| A document certifying that the higher education institution or college guarantees compensation for losses to students if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme license is revoked due to actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme. | Annex No6_Acknowledgment_guarantees compensation.pdf | Pielikums Nr.6_Aplicinajums par zaudējumu kompensāciju.pdf |
| Standard sample of study agreement | Annex No7_Study Agreement.pdf | Pielikums Nr.7_Studiju ligums_paraugs.pdf |
| II - Description of the Study Field - 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System | | |
| Analysis of the results of surveys of students, graduates and employers | Annex No8_Results of surveys of stud_graduat_empl.7z | Pielikums Nr.8_Studejoso_absolventu darba deveju aptauju rezultāti.7z |
| II - Description of the Study Field - 2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field | | |
| Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field | Annex No9_Basic information_the teaching staff.xlsx | Pielikums Nr.9_Macibspeki_pamatinformācija.xlsx |
| Biographies of the teaching staff members (Curriculum Vitae in Europass format) | Teaching staff biographies_CV.7z | Macibspeku biografijas_CV.7z |
| A statement signed by the rector, director, head of the study programme or field that the knowledge of the state language of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes within the study field complies with the regulations on the state language knowledge and state language proficiency test for professional and official duties. | Pielikums Nr.11_Acknowledgment_knowledge_state language.pdf | Pielikums Nr.11_Aplicinajums par valsts vai atbilstību.pdf |
| A statement of the higher education institution/ college on the respective foreign language skills of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme at least at B2 level according to the European Language Proficiency Assessment levels (level distribution is available on the website www.europass.lv, if the study programme or part thereof is implemented) | | |
| II - Description of the Study Field - 2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation | | |
| Summary of quantitative data on scientific and/ or applied research and / or artistic creation activities corresponding to the study field in the reporting period. | Annex No12_Summary of quantitative data on scientific research activities.pdf | Pielikums Nr.12_Kvantitatīvie dati_zinatn_petniecība_2017-2022.pdf |
| List of the publications, patents, and artistic creations of the teaching staff over the reporting period. | Annex No13_List of the publications of the teaching staff.pdf | Pielikums Nr.13_Macibspeku publikāciju saraksts.pdf |
| II - Description of the Study Field - 2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation | | |
| List of cooperation agreements, including the agreements for providing internship | Annex No14_List of cooperation agreements.pdf | Pielikums Nr.14_Sadarbības partneru saraksts.pdf |
| Statistical data on the teaching staff and the students from abroad | Annex No15_Statistical data on the teaching staff and the students from abroad.pdf | Pielikums Nr.15_Statistikas dati_par arvalstu stud_un_macibsp.pdf |
| Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of students (by specifying the study programmes) | Annex No16_Statistical data_mobility of students.pdf | Pielikums Nr.16_Statistikas_dati_par_studejoso_izejoso_ienakoso_mobilitati.pdf |
| Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff | Annex No17_Statistical data_teaching staff_mobility.pdf | Pielikums Nr.17_Statistikas_dati_par_macibsp_mobilitati.pdf |
| II - Description of the Study Field - 2.6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures | | |
| Report on the implementation of the recommendations received both in the previous accreditation and in the licensing and/ or change assessment procedures and/ or the procedures for the inclusion of the study programme on the accreditation form of the study field. | Annex No18_Overview of the implementation of the recommendations.pdf | Pielikums Nr.18_Rekomendāciju izpildes pārskats.pdf |
| An application for the evaluation of the study field signed with a secure electronic signature | Application_AIC_22.04.2023.edoc | Iesniegums_AIC_22.04.2023.edoc |
| III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme | | |
| Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme | | |
| For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable) | | |
| Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable) | | |
| Statistics on the students in the reporting period | | |
| III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof | | |
| Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard | | |
| Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable) | | |
| Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable) | | |
| Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme | | |
| The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme) | | |
| Descriptions of the study courses/ modules | | |

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

Other annexes

| Name of document | Document |
|---|--|
| Studiju virziena "Reliģija un teoloģija" SVID analīze, 2022 | Pielikums Nr.2_SVID.pdf |
| SWOT analysis of the study field "Religion and Theology", 2022 | Annex_No.2_SWOT.pdf |
| LA-luterismā balstītas augstākās izglītības ekosistēmas centrs Latvijā | Pielikums Nr.1_Ekosistema_LA.pdf |
| LA as the centre of higher education ecosystem in Latvia based on Lutheranism | Annex No.1_Ecosystem_LA.pdf |
| Vērtējumu skaidrojums | Pielikums Nr.3_Vertejumu skaidrojums.pdf |
| Explanation of evaluations | Annex No 3_Explanation of evaluations.pdf |
| LA zinātniskās pētniecības plāns 2022./2023.akad.studiju gadam | Pielikums Nr.4_Zinatniskas_petniecibas plans 2022_2023.pdf |
| Academic Research Plan for Academic Year 2022/2023 | Annex No 4_Research development plan_2022_2023.pdf |

Theology (43221)

| | |
|---|---|
| Study field | <i>Religion and Theology</i> |
| ProcedureStudyProgram.Name | <i>Theology</i> |
| Education classification code | <i>43221</i> |
| Type of the study programme | <i>Academic bachelor study programme</i> |
| Name of the study programme director | <i>Laila</i> |
| Surname of the study programme director | <i>Čakare</i> |
| E-mail of the study programme director | <i>Laila.Cakare@lut.edu.lv</i> |
| Title of the study programme director | <i>Mg.theol, Dr.cand.</i> |
| Phone of the study programme director | <i>26804235</i> |
| Goal of the study programme | <i>To provide the students with an enhanced development of knowledge, skills, and competences in theology to form academic foundations in the main areas of theology aimed at continuation of studies and lifelong learning, and work in a church and society with an appropriate level of competence.</i> |
| Tasks of the study programme | <p><i>1. To provide acquisition of good and competitive humanities education based on Lutheran traditions while receiving a Bachelor degree in theology.</i></p> <p><i>2. To create and develop the study environment that develops the learning skills of students, facilitates formation of systematic knowledge and critical understanding in theology, develops competence of theological research for further studies in the context of lifelong learning and for advanced scientific research work.</i></p> <p><i>3. To provide an opportunity to use the acquired theoretical knowledge and methodological skills in development of Bachelor paper while creating an ability to conduct a scientifically critical analysis of the academic literature, as well as explain the results of the scientific work consequently, clearly, and understandably and defend it with appropriate reasoning.</i></p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| Results of the study programme | <p>Knowledge:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of the key theological areas, links and interactions between those. 2. Understanding of the roots and place of the Lutheran tradition in the historical context. 3. Understanding the interdisciplinary nature of the theological research. <p>Skills:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to explain Christian teachings and questions of life in an understandable, engaging, systematic way suitable to interests and needs of people considering the current issues and experience of society. 2. Ability to choose and use modern scientific research methods in theology in a systematic and reasoned way; to select and critically analyse information sources; to conduct independent research work and present the results. <p>Competences:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to operate in the Church ministry with an appropriate understanding and confidence, and to become involved in the current social processes in a creative way. 2. Ability to become involved in development of theological science and interdisciplinary research by using sectoral and general knowledge and skills. 3. Ability to find an answer to current social crises and challenges based on Holy Scriptures and Lutheran tradition. |
| Final examination upon the completion of the study programme | Bachelor thesis |

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 4 years - latvian

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Study type and form | Full time studies |
| Duration in full years | 4 |
| Duration in month | 0 |
| Language | latvian |
| Amount (CP) | 160 |
| Admission requirements (in English) | Admission to the study programme based on results of centralised exams in the Latvian language, mathematics, and foreign language, or based on marks in the certificate of education for persons who acquired the secondary education until 2004, who are released from centralised exams, or have acquired the secondary education abroad. The academic Bachelor study programmes "Theology" of the LA includes an interview with the applicants (a colloquium), including 2 tests with questions: - on the Old and New Testament Scriptures; - on Luther's "Small Catechism"; and a test of basic theological terminology in English. The interview does not officially affect the competition results, and lets the LA evaluate the general level of preliminary knowledge in the profile field, as well as helps the applicant understand their correspondence to the selected field of studies. Based on information obtained during the interview, the LA can develop an individual support programme for the aspiring student, if necessary. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english) | <i>Bachelor of Humanities in Theology</i> |
| Qualification to be obtained - (in english) | - |

Places of implementation

| Place name | City | Address |
|-------------------|-------------|---|
| Academy of Luther | RĪGA | ALKSNĀJA IELA 3, CENTRA RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1050 |

3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

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

One study programme "Theology" is implemented within the framework of the study field "Religion and Theology". The uniqueness of the LA which singles it out among other theological higher education institutions is a Lutheran education rooted in Church which provides an opportunity to implement the study process in close relation with the main employer, the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church. The LA is the only theological higher education institution in Latvia the study programme of which qualifies graduates for ordination as clergy and for ministry in the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church.

A special focus of the study programme is on developing competences of clergy as people maintaining mental and spiritual health while preparing them for caritative ministry in society to meet its spiritual and practical needs, facilitating development of their intellectual and analytical thinking, promoting their personal spiritual and moral growth, and developing their skills of representing the Christian values in a progressively secular society. The students are also prepared for work as stewards caring for the cultural environment and sacral heritage of the nation.

- Academic Bachelor study programmes "Theology".
- Code of the study programme according to the education classification in Latvia: 43221
- Obtainable degree: Humanities Bachelor degree in theology; Bachelor diploma.
- Implementation duration and volume (in CP) of the study programme: 4 years; 160 CP/240 ECTS.
- Implementation type and form of the study programme: full-time intramural studies.
- Implementation language of the study programme: Latvian.

Several changes have been made since the previous accreditation to improve the quality of the study programme based on current events in the sector and based on recommendations of employers, students, and graduates:

- In accordance with the LA development strategy and aims of the study field, the aim of the study programme has been improved, tasks and achievable outcomes have been updates.
- Content of the study programme has been improved.

All changes to the content of studies have been approved by the LA Senate.

Changes to the Bachelor study programme "Theology" are reflected in Table No 5.

Table No 5

Changes to the Bachelor study programme "Theology", 2018-2022

| Date of changes | Changes made to the programme | Changes in CP | Basis for necessity of changes |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|

| | | | |
|-------------|--|---|---|
| 2018 | The course "Civil Protection" introduced to the study programme (1 CP) | 1 | The course has been included with an aim to improve the competence of the students in the matters of civil protection in accordance with the Cabinet Regulation No. 716 "Minimum Requirements for the Content of the Mandatory Course in Civil Protection and the Content of Training of Employees in Civil Protection", adopted on 15.12.2017. |
| August 2022 | "Civil, Environmental, and Occupational Protection" (2 CP) | 1 | The volume of the course has been increased to 2 CP, including also the matters of environmental and occupational protection. |
| August 2022 | World Religions (3 CP) | 3 | The course was moved from part C (electives) to part A to promote the understanding of all students on the major religions as it is important in current circumstances of globalisation. |
| August 2022 | Church History (12 CP) | 1 | The course was consolidated from 4 parts which formed a total of 11 CP; to even out the volume of parts, an additional 1 CP was added to the course |
| August 2022 | Liturgy (6 CP) | 1 | The course was consolidated from 3 parts which formed a total of 5 CP; to even out the volume of parts, an additional 1 CP was added to the course |
| August 2022 | Traditional Denominations and the New Religious Movements (4 CP) | 4 | The course was moved from part C (electives) to part A and supplemented with a section on NRM to promote the understanding of students on major denominations in Latvia and the religious background in general. Completion of this course is necessary to be competent in today's trends of ecumenism. |

| | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| August 2022 | New Testament Greek (9 CP) | 3 | The course is consolidated from 4 individual parts and the total volume is reduced from 12 to 9 CP to even out the ratio of languages in the programme. |
| August 2022 | OT Prophets (6 CP) | 1 | The course is consolidated from 2 parts (Major Prophets and Minor Prophets), adding 1 CP for an overview of the specifics of the prophetic genre |
| August 2022 | Exegenis of Synoptic Gospels (4 CP) | 1 | The couse is based on the course <i>Gospel of Matthew</i> (3 CP) by expanding it to include information on both other synoptic gospels. |
| August 2022 | Pastoral Counselling (3 CP) | 1 | The volume of the course was increased by 1 CP, considering the meaning of this course in preparation of the future pastors. |
| August 2022 | Introduction to Theology and Dogmatics (3 CP) | - | The course was consolidated from 2 relatively small courses (<i>Introduction to Theological Studies</i> and <i>Introduction to Dogmatics</i>) to discuss together topics which are logically bound together. |
| August 2022 | Philosophy and Ethics for Theologians (4 CP) | - | The course was consolidated from 2 relatively small courses (<i>Philosophy for Theologians</i> and <i>Ethics</i>) because they logically supplement each other. |
| August 2022 | Management of Christian Church (3 CP) | - | The course was consolidated from 3 small courses (<i>Church Administration</i> , <i>Introduction to Christian Stewardship</i> , and <i>Stewardship</i>) to prevent fragmentation of courses because they logically supplement each other. |

| | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| August 2022 | Exegesis of NT Epistles (10 CP) | - | The course was consolidated from 4 small courses (<i>Paul's Writings, Exegesis of the Epistle to Romans, Exegesis of the 1st Epistle to Corinthians, Exegesis of the Epistle to Hebrews</i>), to prevent needless fragmentation of courses. |
| August 2022 | Church History of Visual Art and Music (4 CP) | - | The course was consolidated from 2 small courses (<i>Art in Christianity</i> and <i>History of Church Music</i>) because they are closely related. |
| August 2021 | Theological English (8 CP) | 4 | The course is consolidated from 4 individual parts and the total volume is reduced from 12 to 8 CP to even out the ratio of languages in the programme. |
| August 2021 | Church and Office (2 CP) | 2 | The course was moved from part C (electives) to part B, and its volume was increased by 1 CP considering the significance of the course in preparing the future pastors. |
| August 2021 | Fundamentals of Biblical Hebrew (2 CP) | 2 | The course was moved from part C (electives) to part B considering its significance for the courses on exegesis of the Old Testament. |
| August 2021 | Luther's Writings (2 CP) | 2 | The course was moved from part C (electives) to part B considering its significance for strengthening the Lutheran identity. |
| August 2021 | Catechetics (CP) | 2 | The course was created considering its necessity for preparation of church pastors and catechists. |

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| August 2021 | Homiletics and Public Speech (4 CP) | 4 | When consolidating the courses <i>Homiletics I</i> and <i>Homiletics II</i> , the course <i>Art of Speech</i> was also integrated in the new course because it necessarily supplements learning of homiletics. |
| August 2021 | Christian Pedagogy (4 CP) | 2 | The volume of the course was increased by 2 CP, taking into account the wishes of students to study the topic of this course in more depth. |
| August 2021 | Biblical Overview (6 CP) | - | The course was consolidated from 2 separate parts (<i>Introduction to the Old Testament</i> and <i>Introduction to the New Testament</i>) allowing for better view of the Bible as a unified message. |
| August 2021 | Dogmatics (9 CP) | - | The course was consolidated from 3 separate parts (<i>Dogmatics I, II, III</i>) assisting in viewing the unity of the course and preventing unnecessary fragmentation. |
| August 2021 | Lutheran Creeds (4 CP) | - | The course was consolidated from 2 separate parts (<i>Lutheran Creeds I, II</i>) assisting in viewing the unity of the course and preventing unnecessary fragmentation. |
| August 2021 | Exegesis of the Pentateuch (6 CP) | - | The course was consolidated from 2 separate parts <i>Exegesis of Genesis and Exodus</i> and <i>Exegesis of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy</i>), emphasising the close links between these courses. |

3.1.2. Analysis and assessment of the study programme compliance with the study field. Analysis of the interrelation between the code of the study programme, the degree,

professional qualification/professional qualification requirements or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements. Description of the duration and scope of the implementation of the study programme (including different options of the study programme implementation) and evaluation of its usefulness.

The title of the academic Bachelor study programme "Theology" (43221), the obtainable degree, i.e., humanities Bachelor's degree in theology, the duration and volume (CP) of the programme implementation – 4 years; 160 CP/240 ECTS have been selected with an aim to implement the goals and objectives of the study field and programme by defining the admission requirements and opportunities to continue studies. The content, forms and methods of implementation, and the assessment criteria correspond with the statutory provisions of acquisition of education in the Republic of Latvia and for acquisition of an appropriate diploma for the higher education.

The name of the Bachelor study programme complies with the area of theology and the study field. The acquired degree and learning outcomes are also compliant. The admission rules define uniform criteria for admission, thus providing that all students can equally adapt to the study programme. All teaching staff have scientific degrees significant for the field - PhD or Master's degree in theology, art, history, or pedagogy. The volume of the study programme allows for completion of courses which are related to all sub-fields of the field: Biblical Theology, Systematic Theology, Church History, and Practical Theology.

Aim of the study programme

Its aim of the Bachelor study programmes "Theology" of the Luther Academy is to provide the students with an enhanced development of knowledge, skills, and competences in theology to form academic foundations in the main areas of theology aimed at continuation of studies and lifelong learning, and work in a church and society with an appropriate level of competence.

Objectives of the study programme

1. To provide acquisition of good and competitive humanities education based on Lutheran traditions while receiving a Bachelor degree in theology.
2. To create and develop the study environment that develops the learning skills of students, facilitates formation of systematic knowledge and critical understanding in theology, develops competence of theological research for further studies in the context of lifelong learning and for advanced scientific research work.
3. To provide an opportunity to use the acquired theoretical knowledge and methodological skills in development of Bachelor paper while creating an ability to conduct a scientifically critical analysis of the academic literature, as well as explain the results of the scientific work consequently, clearly, and understandably and defend it with appropriate reasoning.

Achievable outcome of the study programme

Knowledge:

- Knows the main areas of theology, their connection and interaction.
- Understands the roots and place of the Lutheran tradition in historical context.
- Understands the interdisciplinary nature of theological research.

Skills:

- Can explain Christian teaching and life issues in a comprehensible, engaging, systematic manner and in accordance with people's interests and needs, taking into account current events and the experience of society.
- Can systematically and reasonably choose and use modern scientific research methods in theology, select and critically analyse sources of information, independently conduct research work and present its results.

Competences:

- Able to act in the ministry of the Church with appropriate understanding and confidence and to creatively engage in the current processes of society;
- Able to engage in the development of theological science and interdisciplinary research, using the acquired knowledge in the field and general knowledge and skills
- Able to find an answer based on the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran tradition in the crises and challenges of contemporary society

Tasks of the programme have been set to create a study environment that would promote opportunities of performing independent research. The objective of the study programme also corresponds to the aim to prepare specialists in theology promoting creation and development of research competences. Outcomes of the programme correspond to the set aim and objective. Mutual links between the study outcomes is evaluated by mapping the study outcomes (See Section 3.2.1. *Annex No 24 "Mapping of the Study Courses of the Bachelor Study Programme "Theology"*).

Graduates of the programme "Theology" show theoretical and conceptual understanding of theology as a field of social development, they have good knowledge of current research methods, are able to plan, organise and manage their research and professional work independently. The aim of the study programme – preparation of specialists in theology – can be measured by the number of graduates. The aim is achieved by regular internal quality monitoring the part of which consists of results presented in survey of students, graduates, and employers.

Conditions for admission

Conditions for admission to the Bachelor study programme "Theology" are updated at the beginning of each academic year and are published on the LA website (https://ej.uz/Terms_of_enrolment_23_24). Unified applicant selection criteria are stated therein.

Opportunities to continue studies

After completion of Bachelor studies, graduates have opportunities to continue studies in Master or higher level academic and professional studies in Latvia or abroad while continuing to gain new knowledge, developing their professional or research competences.

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

Already since the 16th century, the Lutheran Church has been an integral part of the state of Latvia and a part of cultural development. Clergy of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church with their activity have actively supported attempts of Latvia to regain independence and were active participants in promoting educational, moral, and traditional values of society. Therefore, it is important that almost 300 Lutheran congregations in Latvia would have educated, competent pastors.

The LA prepares such staff; that way providing support both for the interests of church and the whole society. It is proved by the Law on Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church proclaimed by the Parliament and the State President

(<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/184625-latvijas-evangeliski-luteriskas-baznicas-likums> - only in Latvian). Therein appreciation was expressed on the “long-term existence and prevalence of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in the territory of Latvia, recognising its contribution and enriched experience in social physical and spiritual health, education, culture, social aid, and other areas, including active participation in formation process of the statehood”. This law points towards contribution of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in development of the national religion, morality, patriotism, and culture of the Republic of Latvia. The LA has a significant role in implementation of this national law.

Considering that a significant part of population in Latvia are Lutherans, preparation of new pastors, theologians, and educated church staff is relevant and important in the area of spiritual care and education of members of public.

Theological studies are based on ideas, texts, opinions, and actions. The LA study process is based on balanced and future-focused acquisition of appropriate skills including general or transversal skills (incl. self-guided learning, civic participation, digital skills, etc.), as well as specific knowledge and skills which are relevant and useful for the labour market. (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/324332-par-izglitibas-attistibas-pamatnostadnem-2021-2027-gadam> - only in Latvian).

Bachelor studies at the LA are aimed at lifelong learning and ensure openness of education system for adults. Lifelong learning has a decisive role in strengthening national human capital and individual skills and abilities.

Graduates of the Bachelor study programme “Theology” are able to work in areas related to:

- ministry in congregations of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Churches;
- ministry in congregations of other Lutheran churches in Latvia and outside;
- ministry in churches and congregations of other denominations;
- social caritative work (in social and health care institutions, prisons, military defence (NAF) organisations and services);
- administrative work in the state administration, religious organisations, and other institutions the work of which require consultative support in spiritual matters of ethics, morality, and human being;
- analytics of research and current events or processes (higher education institutions, research institutions, media);
- work in the religious education and non-governmental organisations (social work, area of human rights);
- stewardship, caring for the national cultural environment and its sacral heritage.

During the reporting period, graduates of the Bachelor programme serve as clergy of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church (Andis Kīvičs, Oskars Smoļaks, Mārtiņš Kalējs, Kārlis Irbe, Tālis Freimanis), as clergy in other churches (Gints Pallo, Varis Bogdanovs), they work in the state and

municipal institutions (Jānis Erno, Varis Bogdanovs, Andris Reiters) and in the public sector (Ivars Cišs, Jānis Kopštāls, Rolands Radziņš, Viesturs Rikveilis), in the area of culture (Ivars Sprīngis), as entrepreneurs (Kaspars Bērziņš, Jānis Diekonts, Eduards Kress), and after completion of studies at a higher level work as the LA academic staff (G. Graudiņš) and teaching staff (Rinalds Grants, Indulis Paičs, Uģis Brūklene, Tālis Freimanis, Romans Kurpnieks-Logins, Roberts Otomers).

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

Annex No 20 “Statistical data on students of the study programme “Theology” during the reporting period from 2012 to 2022” includes the summary of these statistical data.

Here is a more detailed analysis for the period 2017-2022

Dynamics of the number of students in the Bachelor study programme “Theology” is shown in Figure 15.

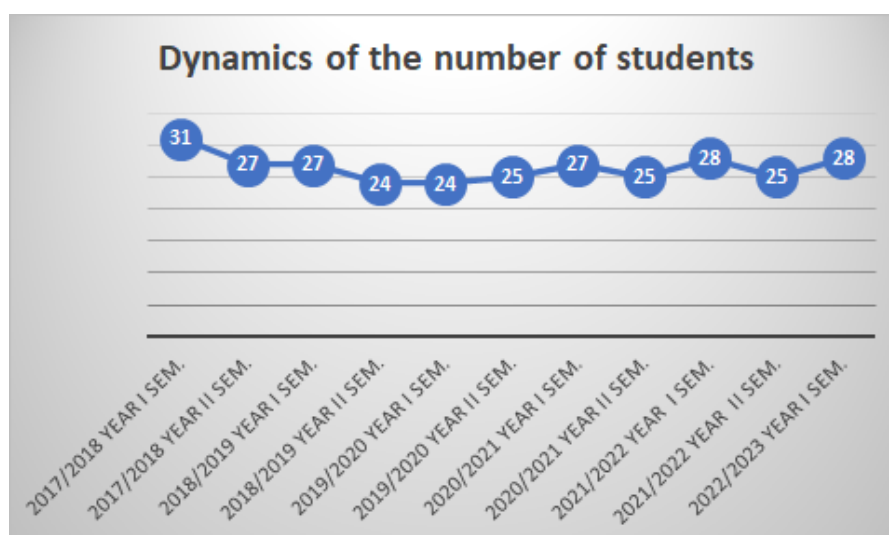


Figure 15. Dynamics of the number of students, 2017-2023.

The figure clearly shows the fluctuating dynamics of the number of students where the changes in the number are not significant. The small growth of the number of students in the 1st semester of study year 2022/23 should be appreciated. During the period of 6 years, the number of students in the programme has not significantly decreased; quantitative stability can be observed and can be explained by the content quality creating a positive image of the study programme in society and serving to meet the educational needs of a certain target group.

Figure 16 shows the changes in number of students admitted to 1st study year during the reporting period.

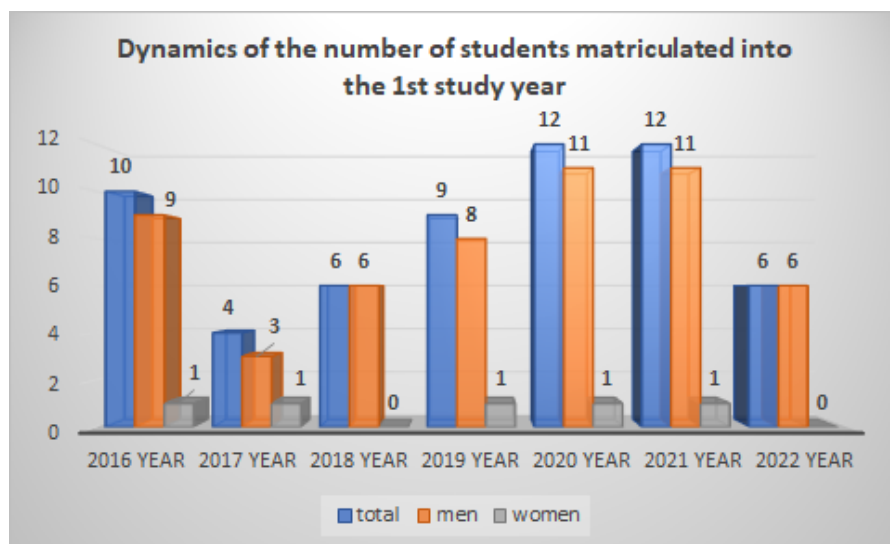


Figure 16. Dynamics of the number of students matriculated into the 1st study year, 2016-2022.

The figure shows an increase in the number of 1st year students during the period from 2017 to 2021; a rapid drop can be seen in 2022 and can be explained by the general global crisis: post-covid situation, war in Ukraine, economic volatility, etc. Regardless of the fact that the tuition fee is relatively small and competitive, the applicants currently do not choose humanities, incl. theology, as the priority in life.

Drop-out rate of the students during the reporting year is shown in Figure 17.

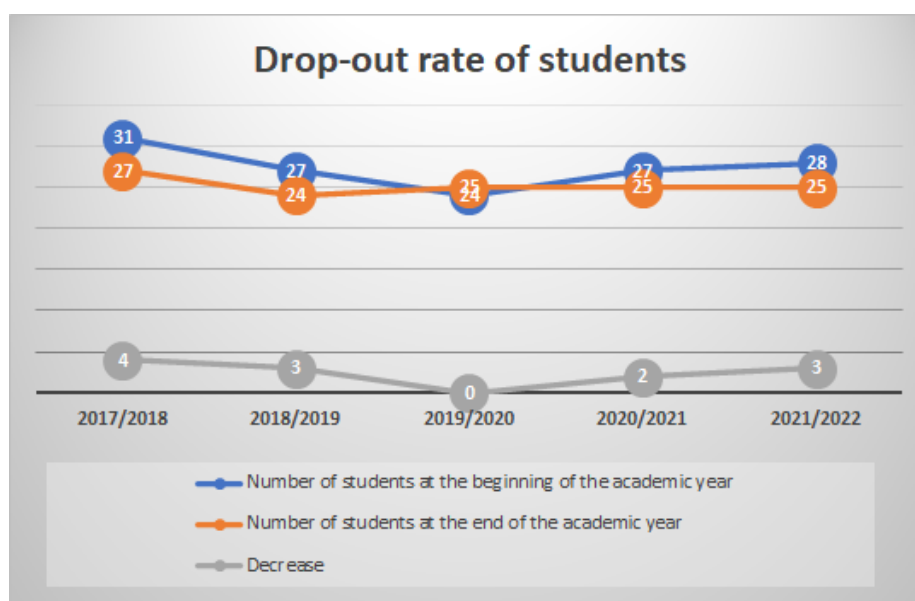


Figure 17. Drop-out rate of students the programme "Theology", 2017-2021.

The figure shows that the number of drop-outs from the programme is not large, an average of 2-3 people per year. However, considering the total number of students, it makes up an annual percentage of 4%-11% from the total number of students. When comparing these indicators with the data of OECD and IZM, it shows that only 50% of students in Latvia graduate from higher education institutions (https://ej.uz/latv_studentsi_nebeidz_augstsk - only in Latvian); the LA programme shows very good performance. Drop-out rate tends to increase slightly. See the main reasons for exclusion of students in Figure 18.

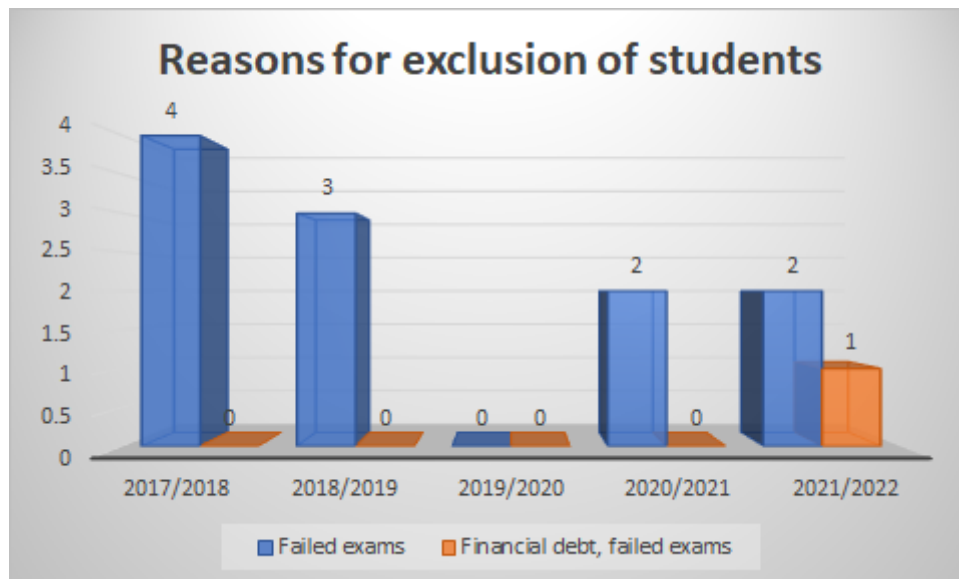


Figure 18. Reasons for exclusion of students of the programme "Theology".

Data show that the main reason for drop-out is inability of students to combine their work with studies, or problems of financial nature.

The number of the programme graduates during the reporting year is shown in Figure 19.

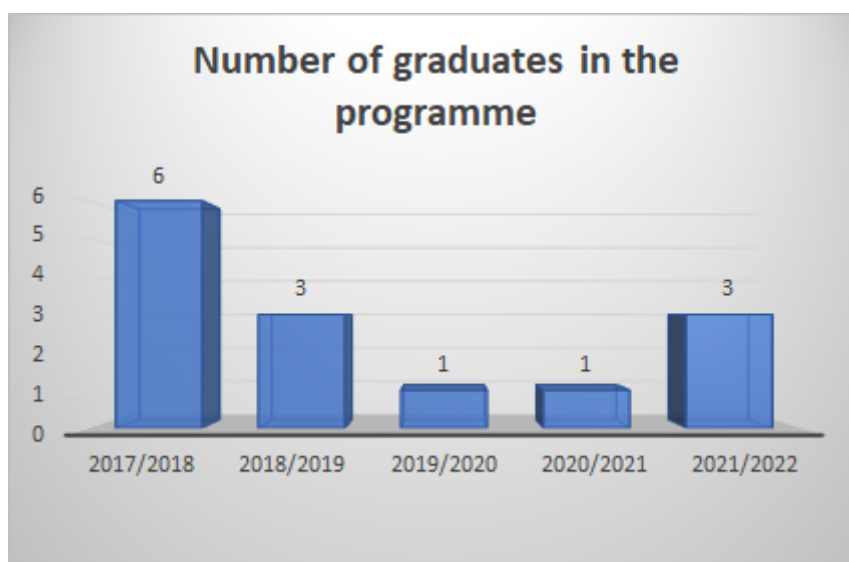


Figure 19. Number of graduates in the programme "Theology", 2017-2022.

The figure shows that the largest number of graduates during the reporting period was in 2017; then a rapid decrease in programme graduates can be seen, and an increase was experienced again in 2022.

The small number of students can be explained by drop-out rate and sufficiently high requirements for the study process due to which not everyone can always successfully complete studies and receive a Bachelor diploma. Figure 20 shows a correlation between students who have not finished their studies for various reasons and the excluded students who have successfully completed the programme.

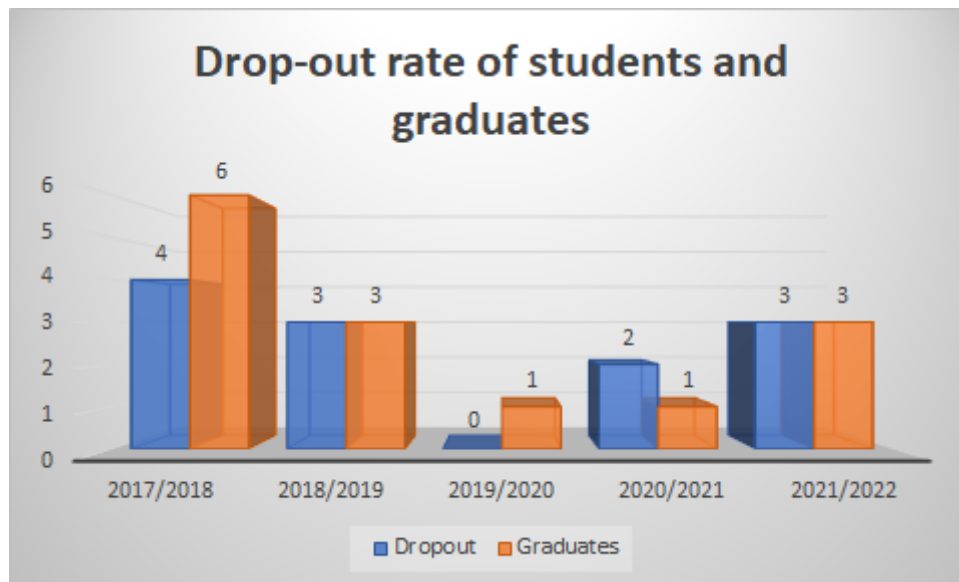


Figure 20. Drop-out rate of students and graduates of the programme “Theology”, 2017-2022.

The figure shows that at the beginning of the reporting period the number of graduates mostly exceeded the number of those who did not finish their studies; drop-out in 2020 was greater; whereas in 2018 and 2021 the ratio of those who have and have not completed their studies was identical.

Graduates highly appreciate the advisory function implemented by the LA and the support during the studies (see Figure 21).

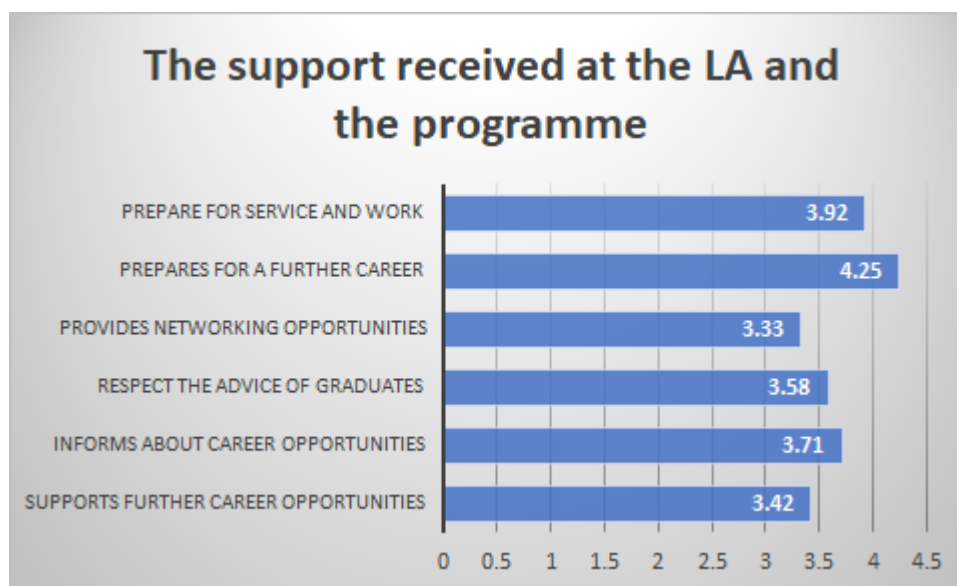


Figure 21. Support in career selection and implementation at the LA and the programme in the view of graduates.

The figure shows that graduates have highly appreciated knowledge and practical skills acquired during the programme because they are useful in selection of further career – 4.25 of the maximum possible rating of 5.0. Qualitative provision of information to students and respect towards opinion and recommendations of graduates has also been appreciated.

The opinion of graduates on the programme in general is very positive as shown by comments in the survey, e.g., “Thank you very much for the Luther Academy”, and an invitation “to enhance the preparation for pastoral consultation work”, and to ensure “the opportunity to continue Master studies”.

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

3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

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

Content of the Bachelor study programme “Theology” has been created in accordance with requirements set out in the *Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia* (<https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=37967>), *Cabinet Regulation No. 240 (13.05.2014)*, as well as *LA Regulations on Studies* (decision of Senate No 11, 01.11.2017. https://ej.uz/LA_Study_regulations) (https://ej.uz/regulat_study_field_programm).

Students of the programme receive knowledge, skills, and competences corresponding to Level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Descriptions of study courses and final papers have been developed in high quality and in line with requirements of the LA external and internal regulatory documents; content corresponds to the aims of the programme and ensures achievement of the study outcomes, as well as corresponds to the needs of the field and the research trends.

Principles of student-centred learning and teaching are taken into consideration when implementing the study process and evaluating the study outcomes.

Quality of studies is regularly monitored; results received from surveys of students, employers, and graduates, as well as methodological conversations between students and academic staff and chaplain of the LA implemented by the Programme Director and the LA management are used to improve it.

During the reporting period, intentional changes to the aim, objectives, achievable outcomes, and content of the Bachelor study programme were made based on global trends in development of higher education, novelties in the sector, as well as due to respect towards recommendations of students, employers, graduates, and experts. The content of courses has been adapted to ensure research-based studies relevant to innovations in science. The connection between the chances of the study programme and the aim, objectives, achievable outcomes of the study field are supervised by the Programme and Field Director and the LA Vice Rector for Studies. Content of the

course is monitored also by the relevant teaching staff member who is in charge of the course in line with renewal of content, literature, and other resources, latest trends in research.

Information included in the study courses is rooted in the aims and achievable outcomes of the study course which in turn are based on the aim and achievable outcomes of the programme. The link is clearly visible in the mapping of the study programme. Each study course provides acquisition of 2 to 4 achievable outcomes of the programme. Each achievable outcome of the programme is met at least by 1 study course, but on average it is covered by 2 or more courses.

Much attention in content provision is dedicated to intersectoral vision and improvement of transversal competences of students.

Transversal competences can be treated as the ultimate outcome of acquisition of the courses in the study programme. Today's social development trends are set by creating the study programmes so that a set of skills would be developed during the courses, e.g.:

- critical thinking and problem-solving when a student carefully and purposefully learns during the study courses, analyses and evaluates various types of information and situations while understanding the context, e.g., when understanding only the world religions, it is possible to hold a high-quality discussion on Christianity and its role in society; when learning philosophy and ethics, it is possible to make considerate decisions in the management of the Christian Church, use effective problem-solving strategies to develop and implement solutions.
- creativity is promoted by means of practical work, public speaking, pastoral counselling, and other courses;
- self-guided learning is promoted in each course with a large volume of studies on literature and sources, and interpretation of these sources;
- cooperation is at the basis of completion of all courses. It is facilitated by joint discussions, promotion of skills in argumentation, joint research projects, as well as daily living when forming the learning environment at the LA;
- civic participation is an integral part of theology as a sector; therefore, each completed course, e.g., Church History; Mission and Evangelism; Christian Pedagogy; Church and Office, etc., promote participation of students in formation processes of social spiritual development and values;
- digital skills are at the basis of the courses when students obtain, select, process, and present the necessary information. Successful studies are unthinkable without such skills.

Synergy of all courses creates the global transversal competence for the students characterised by the skill to evaluate the local, global, and cross-cultural issues, understand and assess different perspectives and global views, be involved in an open and effective interaction with individuals from various cultures, as well as act for the good of collective prosperity by promoting a sustainable development.

Since the LA offers studies based in research, transversal research competence is being purposefully promoted as well; those are relationships based on cooperation and trust when undertaking research activities in the professional (and/or study) environment resulting in a solution for the problem of the independent research. A significant focus is placed on promotion of the research interest, as well as responsible and ethical research.

Study programme "Theology" consists of mandatory, restricted elective and free elective study courses the total volume of which is 160 credit points or 240 ECTS. The content and structure of the study programme are reflected in **Annex No 22 "The Plan of the Study Programme"**.

The LA Bachelor study programme "Theology" consists of the mandatory part (A) which includes the most significant mandatory courses of the field; restricted electives part (B) consisting of

diverse courses of the field and include acquisition of deeper knowledge and methodology in theology; and free electives (C) which can be completed both in the LA and in another higher education institution. Bachelor paper is a significant part of studies.

The study content is created in compliance with the principle of graduality and succession meaning a logical succession of course completion, mutual links between the courses, and equal workload of the students. During the first study year, emphasis is placed on acquisition of introductory courses (Introduction to Theology and Dogmatics; Biblical Overview; Introduction to Scientific Research; Fundamentals of Biblical Hebrew, etc.) which form the basis for successful studies in the following courses. The content of studies provides that almost each study course includes research papers, developing the scientific literacy of students, their argumentation skills, discussion culture, skills in public speech, skills of analytical criticism, and ability to accept criticism. It purposefully and gradually directs the students towards development of their Bachelor paper which is the main final component of the mandatory part (20 CP).

A significant emphasis in the programme is placed on work with original texts underlining the role of language (New Testament Greek; Fundamentals of Biblical Hebrew; Theological English, etc.) in research of ancient texts and providing knowledge of context. Courses are mostly taught in the form of seminars and discussions with the main emphasis on reasoned explanation of thoughts based on systematic learning of literature with the current issues of the relevant field. Student-centred approach is applied in the content and form of courses. Study courses are mutually harmonised and correspond to the objectives of the study programme to create a motivating study environment for improvement of independent learning skills and critical understanding of theology as science.

Course descriptions of the Bachelor study programme "Theology" are included in **Annex No 23 "Descriptions of Courses of the Study Programme "Theology"".**

A significant part of the study process is monitoring of the student's individual growth (progress) ensured by diverse offer of study and examination forms revealing the student's talents and pointing towards opportunities for growth. Motivation camps are offered within the framework of the LA study programme. These camps are organised outside the LA premises (e.g., in Saldus) with an objective of not only providing education but to unite in faith, create the professional network, improve communication and other skills which are vital for the chosen profession. Development of professional competences is ensured by means of practicals manifested as preaching, leading liturgies and vespers, etc.

Historically the Bachelor programme includes also a conditioned system of rituals and traditions stimulating the spiritual belonging to LELB and LA, e.g., beginning classes and other events with a prayer or devotion.

The content and plan of studies is compared with other higher education institutions in Europe and Latvia (Estonian ELB TI; Oberursel Seminary; LU TF; EKra; RARZI) offering similar programmes. The content of studies offered by the LA is recognised as unique and competitive. A positive aspect is the fact that regular renewal of content takes place (based on results obtained from employer and student surveys) according to the paradigm shift in social development which even more increases the competitiveness of students in labour market.

3.2.2. In the case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation. In the case of a doctoral study

programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels (if applicable).

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

Study programme is organised as lectures and seminars; students have to do independent research as well finalising it with a Bachelor paper. Mostly lectures are interactive, student-centred, based on research; the task of lectures is to introduce the students to the problems and methodologies of the content in a systematic way by combining results, as well as discuss a certain problem critically and creatively. Such study methods as work in groups, in pairs, and individual work, discussion (planned and structured, as well as spontaneous), a report, a presentation, cinematology, case analysis, creative writing of texts, etc., are all widely used in classes. For certain study courses, a guided tour is used as a learning method (a visit to churches and synagogues; discussions with church members) and a motivation camp.

The last semester includes development of a Bachelor paper under the advisory supervision of a scientific supervisor – a specialist in the relevant field. When writing the Bachelor paper, the student shows outcomes of his or her research and the methodology learned during the study process. The research often results as a report in a scientific conference or an article in a collection of the scientific articles.

Verbal, written, and combined study and evaluation methods are used during acquisition of study courses and examinations. Depending on specifics of each study course, examination methods are accurately explained in the description of each individual study course available to each student (in Canvas environment, “cloud”, as well as the website). When beginning the study course, the teacher introduces the students with the course requirements and evaluation methods.

One or several interim examinations (an examination during acquisition of the study course) and a final examination are provided under each study course. Interim examinations form at least 50% of the total evaluation of the study course.

Interim examinations are very important because they provide a timely signal on problems in acquisition of the content, allow for mitigation of the drop-out risk informing the teacher of it in a timely manner, allow a more balanced distribution of student workload during acquisition of the course throughout the semester, as well as allow the use of student-centred approach and adaption to the students’ needs when necessary.

Taking interim examinations during the study course takes place during the periods set by the teaching staff until the period of final examination specified in the study schedule.

The following interim examinations are often used in the LA Bachelor study programme:

- a test;
- performing and defending a creative or practical work (a prepared topic and reading in an auditorium with a following analysis and discussion, and a following reflection appropriate to the learned content);
- a colloquium;
- a report;
- an essay;
- a practical check of methodology and identification of problems, etc.

Students take the exam, which is the final examination at the conclusion of the study course, during the period specified in the study schedule.

By means of the final exam students show their knowledge, skills, and competence in accordance with specification and requirements of each study course. A student should be able to discuss the issues and their context, meaning, and practical application mentioned in the course with understanding; able to analyse content and show a meaningful use of methods; able to present the outcomes of their scientific research; able to think critically, effectively, and to communicate in a tolerant way; able to solve problems of various complexity; able to use acquired knowledge and methods in an independent work of research.

In accordance with the specification of the study course, the final exam may take place in various forms: in writing (tests; answers to exam questions), verbally, as an academic research, or a practical research.

The main objective of the study process is to promote development of students' independent scientific research competences encouraging them to record their achievements in writing scientific articles; therefore, a written scientific research must be developed in almost all study courses.

Acquisition of study courses is evaluated based on criteria defined in regulatory documents: the volume and quality of acquired knowledge; acquired skills; acquired competence ([LA Regulations on Examinations](#)).

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

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

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

In accordance with the profile, aims, and objectives of the Luther Academy, the final papers of the students apply to basic fields of theology: systematic theology, Biblical theology, Church history, practical theology. The work on student's topic of the Bachelor paper takes place purposefully and gradually. The choice of topic is determined by the topicality of the topic in the field, as well as individual interests of the student. The paper is written in close cooperation with the supervisor by involving other LELB experts as consultants, if necessary. Since the development of research papers is provided in the study plan of almost every course of the programme, students have a broad range of topics to choose from; moreover, when selecting a topic, the student can develop it gradually, creating an intersectoral research.

Among final papers of students a significant place is taken by papers dedicated to practical theological topics related to defining Church aims and objectives in the current social and political context (e.g., *"Identification and Application of Ministry Gifts in the LELB Mission"*, *"Luther's Catechism Teaching in Current Society in Latvia"*, *"Can God Be Pictured? Insight into Paradigms of Informative Media in Church and Society"*, etc.).

Research of Latvian Church history and theological heritage of Latvians is one of the primary research fields at the LA. It is manifested in research on distinguished Latvian theologians and church leaders, as well as LELB congregations and their history (e.g., *"Prehistory of Reformation in Riga"*, *"Pastor Kārlis Goldbergs and His Impact on Lutheran Church in Liepāja"*, *"Called and Appointed: Ministry of the Pastor Valdis Amols"*, *"Ministry of the Pastor Roberts Slokenbergs in Rūjiņa St. Bērtulis Congregation from 1929 to 1942"*, *"Activity of Mērsrags Evangelical Lutheran Church from 1990 to 2000"*, *"History of Riga Old St. Gertrude Church from 1944 to 1982"*). This area includes also research on Latvian worship traditions (e.g., *"Church Service Procedures in Latvia in the 15th Century in Light of 'Confessio Augustana' and Luther's Writings"*, *"Origin of the Memorial Day and Current Situation in Kandava Dean District"*, *"Office Signs and Symbols of a Bishop in Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church"*, etc.).

A significant place in research is taken also by matters of Biblical and systematic theology proving that students see the sources of Christian faith, ancient church and denominational theology documents and the following relevant consequences as a significant part of their studies (e.g., *"Importance of Anthropological Insights of Saint Atanasius"*, *"Dr. Luther's 'Small Catechism' as a Tool for Sanctification"*, *"Confession Theology and Its Practical Use in LELB"*, *"Old Testament Sacrifices as a Reference to Jesus Christ"*, etc.).

Several works are related to the field of religion psychology (*"Psychological Aspects of Mission Motivation of Alberts Šveicers"*, *"Spiritual and Psychoemotional Processes when Confronted with Death"*), as well as ancient languages (*"Teaching Material in Old Testament Hebrew, Based on Professor Paulis Žibeiks' Work 'Old Testament Language'"*); issues relevant to religious workers in the state and social institutions have also been researched, e.g., in defence or healthcare institutions (*"Ministry of a NAF Chaplain in Circumstances of Hybrid War"*, *"Influence of the Ideology of Russian Federation on Argumentation of Antireligious Propaganda"*, *"Effectiveness of Spiritual Healing in the Programme of Alcoholics Anonymous"*, etc.).

In most cases, the results of research are not only informative but also carry a practical application for today's society in Latvia: both for its part related to Church and others. Works of the students

are used both as auxiliary study aids (when teaching their courses, the teaching staff recommend their students to use them) and to form communication of the Church with the part of society which do not link themselves to Church.

By their research, students promote increased depth of their knowledge and development of skills to obtain competences that let them become highly appreciated and wanted employees in the Church, state and public institutions, as well as in the private sector especially in fields related to mental health.

Defence of Bachelor papers takes place in the presence of a commission which assesses in detail the scientific and methodological contributions of the paper. Each member of the commission evaluates the quality of work individually by assigning a grade. The reviewer's evaluation of the paper is especially respected. The final evaluation is formed as a result of commission discussions, considering the individual evaluation of each member of the commission.

Evaluations of the final papers during the reporting period can be viewed in Figure 22.

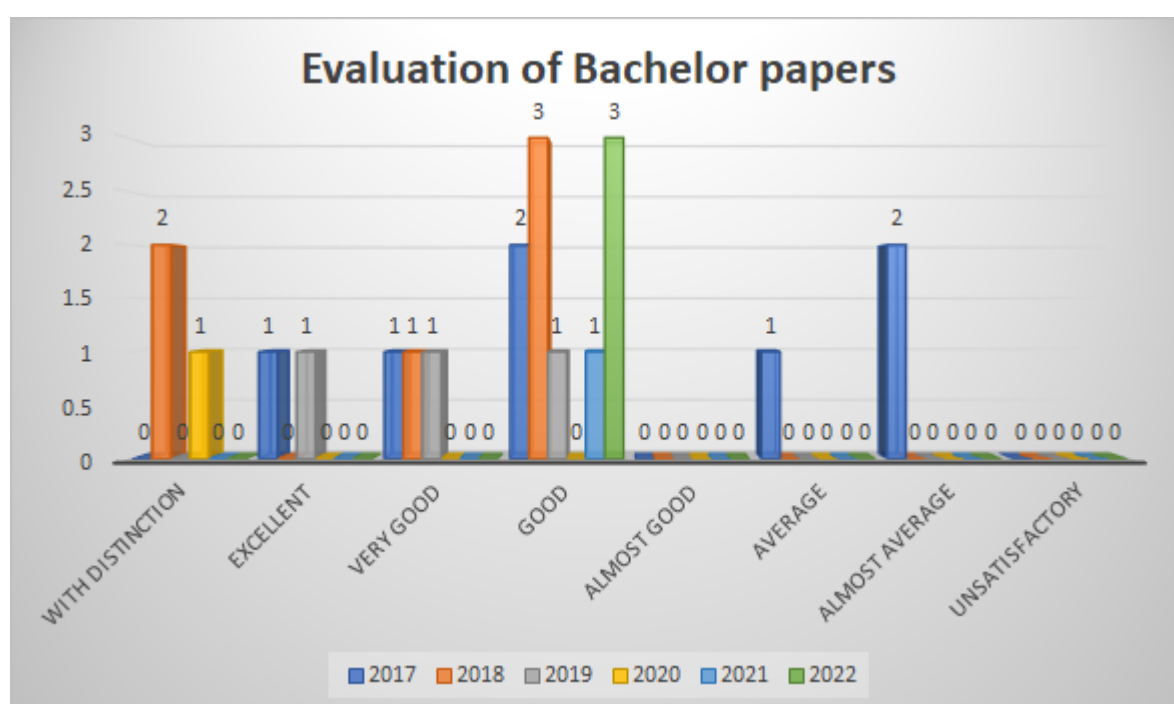


Figure 22. Evaluation of Bachelor papers, 2017-2022.

Figure 22 shows that papers of students have received various evaluations ranging from “almost average” to “with distinction”. It proves that objective evaluation criteria are used and that high requirements are set for the Bachelor papers.

The average evaluation of the final papers during the reporting period: 7 (2022); 8.5 (2020); 8 (2019); 8.16 (2018); 6.28 (2017).

A very positive aspect is that there are research papers which were graded by commission as “with distinction”, e.g., Bachelor paper by T. Freimanis “*Teaching of Vladimirs Losks on Leaving of the Holy Spirit form the Viewpoint of Confessional Lutheranism*” (2018), paper by O. Smolaks “*Interaction between Deacon’s Position and Church*” (2018), research by A. Irbe “*Worship on the Three Holy Days*” (2020).

In general, the results prove a good level of knowledge and skills obtained from studies. Most of the students are more oriented towards a practical activity, while others are more interested in research and theory (as shown by performance of the topic and papers). However, in general it can be found that graduates are prepared both theoretically and practically to successfully perform

their work in the Church (pastor; church employee) or outside of it (a chaplain in the Armed Forces or in a health institution) an employee in social institutions.

3.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

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

Information reflected in Chapter 3.3 shows that the study base, informative base, material and technical base, and financial base correspond to the specification of the study programme, implementation conditions, provide preconditions for achievement of study outcomes, and prove that it is possible to continue ensuring a high-quality study process.

A detailed evaluation has been provided in Sections 2.3.1-2.3.3 of Part II, Chapter 3.

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

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

Revenue of the programme

To provide for resources necessary to implement the study programme “Theology”, the LA uses:

1. Tuition fees, which were EUR 800 per year for full-time studies in 2022/2023
2. LELB financing – EUR 83,810 per year;
3. Targeted donations – approximately EUR 12,000 per year;
4. Other donations – approximately EUR 3,000 per year.

The total annual budget of the study programme is EUR 113,310 per year.

Costs of the programme

To evaluate the volume of resources necessary for financial provision, the LA calculates the cost price of the study programme by using a certain methodology taking into account the costs for ensuring the study process described in Section 2.3.1 of Part II and information on the plan of the study programme, involved teaching staff, planned number of students and other aspects; thus ensuring trustworthiness of forecast.

For calculations of the study programme “Theology” are used the following:

- data of students for academic year 2022/2023 – there are 28 students (paying the fee) in the full-time intramural programme;
- the existing plan of the study programme, providing also for the planned changes;
- existing and planned structure of the academic staff.

Taking into account the above-mentioned, the full cost price calculated for the full-time intramural programme per student is EUR 2,830 per year, and the total costs of the programme are EUR 110,595 per year.

When calculating the goods, services, and indirect costs in proportion to the revenue, the costs form EUR 110,595 per year; EUR 3,949 per one student. A more detailed percentage distribution of costs is shown in Table No 6.

Table No 6

Percentage distribution of costs for the study programme

| Item of expenses | Percentage distribution |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Costs for teaching staff | 26 |
| General staff | 34 |
| Other costs | 29 |
| Property and services | 7 |
| Indirect costs | 4 |
| COSTS, TOTAL | 100% |

When performing calculations, it was found that for the programme to be cost effective and students to be provided with a qualitative study process the number of students paying the fee for the programme (in all study years together) should be at least twice as large, and the tuition fee should be increased to EUR 1,415 per year.

To ensure cost effectiveness of the study programme, the number of students should be increased, and foreign students should be attracted. Until such time when a positive outcome will be reached, the programme can additionally be financed from revenues received from the Open Academy and other services, as well as from the financial resources accrued by the structural unit.

3.4. Teaching Staff

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

The Bachelor study programme "Theology" is implemented by 28 teaching staff (13- with a PhD, 15- Masters), and their qualification fully corresponds to requirements of laws and regulations, including [Section 55 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions](#).

Table No 7

Teaching staff involved in the Bachelor study programme, 2022/2023.

| No | Name, surname | Scientific degree | Academic position |
|----|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | GUNTIS KALME | Dr.theol. | Assistant Professor |
| 2 | UĢIS SILDEGS | Dr.theol. | Assistant Professor, researcher |
| 3 | JURIS RUBENIS | Dr.theol. | Assistant Professor, researcher |
| 4 | VILIS KOLMS | Mg.art., Dr.cand. | Assistant Professor |
| 5 | LAILA ČAKARE | Mg.theol., Dr.cand. | Lecturer |
| 6 | GINTS GRAUDIŅŠ | Mg.theol. | Lecturer |
| 7 | HARIJS TUMANS | Dr.hist. | Guest Professor |
| 8 | ELIZABETE TAIVĀNE | Dr.theol. | Guest Associate Professor |
| 9 | IEVA ROZENBAHA | Dr.art. | Guest Assistant Professor |
| 10 | JĀNIS VANAGS | Dr. h.c. | Guest Assistant Professor |
| 11 | ANTRA LĪNE | Dr.paed. | Guest Assistant Professor |

| | | | |
|----|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 12 | INESE AUGŠKALNE | Dr.paed. | Guest Assistant Professor |
| 13 | ANDRIS PRIEDE | Dr. hist. eccl. | Guest Assistant Professor |
| 14 | JĀNIS PLAUDIS | Mg.phil. | Guest Lecturer |
| 15 | RINALDS GRANTS | Mg.theol. | Guest Lecturer |
| 16 | HANSS MARTINS JENSONS | Mg.theol. | Guest Lecturer |
| 17 | SIGITA DIŠLERE | Mg.geol. | Guest Lecturer |
| 18 | INDULIS PAIČS | Mg.theol., Dr.cand. | Guest Lecturer |
| 19 | EDGARS MAŽIS | Mg.theol. | Guest Lecturer |
| 20 | VIJA BEINERTE | Mg.art. | Guest Lecturer |
| 21 | ROBERTS OTOMERS | Mg.theol. | Guest Lecturer |
| 22 | TĀLIS FREIMANIS | Mg.theol. | Guest Lecturer |
| 23 | AIVARS MEDNIS | Mg.sc. ing. Mg. paed. | Guest Lecturer |
| 24 | KRISTĪNA ĒCE | Mg.theol. | Guest Lecturer |
| 25 | ALEKSANDRS BITE | Mg.theol. | Guest Lecturer |
| 26 | CHARLES CORTRIGHT | Dr.theol. | Guest Assistant Professor |
| 27 | DANIEL JOHANSON | Dr.theol. | Guest Assistant Professor |
| 28 | TIMO LAATO | Dr.theol. | Guest Assistant Professor |

The study programme is implemented by high-level academic staff and visiting lecturers of which 43% hold a PhD; all teaching staff have a significant practical work experience in the field of theology, as well as related fields (history, art, etc.). Two teaching staff are studying in doctoral studies: V. Kolms – University of Greifswald (Germany); L. Čakare – LU (Latvia). It is expected that

in 2023 both representatives of the academic staff will receive their PhD.

Academic staff implement 43% of the study programme, i.e., study courses with the volume of 60 credit points.

Many members of the teaching staff serve in LELB congregations alongside their work in the LA; a part of the teaching staff have acquired their education abroad, and so create opportunities to enhance the use of international experience in the study process.

The results of the international experience transfer are evidenced by the use of new methods in the study process, e.g., the approach of “learning by doing”, practicals, so-called informal learning at the workplace – observation of everyday work of LELB representatives (*shadowing*).

Teaching staff actively participate in various scientific conferences, research projects, are members of local and international organisations, e.g., EuroISME (The International Society for Military Ethics in Europe), Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Hymnologie, etc.

This international experience lets them create a student-centred study environment aimed at creation and development of individual research skills in students, oriented at motivating students to engage in lifelong learning.

Very positive is the long-term experience of the LA in involving foreign visiting teachers for the programme, and their contribution to development of the programme should be assessed as significant and promoting the ecosystem of international higher education.

The high professionalism of the academic staff and visiting teachers is evidenced by such aspects as student’s words in the survey: *“I am very honoured to be found worthy to learn and get to know such wonderful personalities as the LA teachers. I recommend to keep up this high level”*, and general results of LA student surveys prove it as well, as shown in Figure 23.

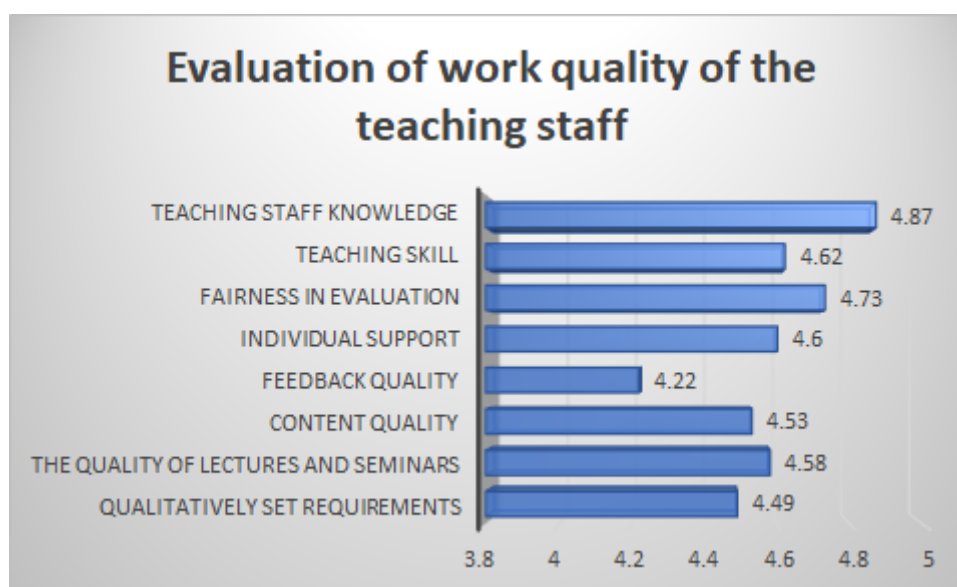


Figure 23. Evaluation of work quality of the teaching staff in the opinion of students, 2022

In cooperation with other higher education institutions of Latvia (LU, RARZI, LKuA, JVLMA, European Christian Academy, etc.) and the main employer (LELB), the LA ensures a highly qualified, academic, and professional team of teaching staff by involving visiting teachers (see in section *Other Annexes Annex No 5 "Guest lecturers' courses in study programme "Theology" 2017-2022"*).

If in certain cases, criticism has been received on work quality of teaching staff related to methodology of exposition of the study course, communication problems, insufficient hand-out

materials, consultation times, etc., then during quality evaluation of the LA the teaching staff have received recommendations and support for professional development training, recommendations for experience exchange between colleagues. In one case, teaching staff were replaced.

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

Quality of teaching staff and its improvement is one of the primary items in the LA strategic development.

During the period from 2012 until 2022, a total of 54 teaching staff (both academic staff and visiting teaching staff) were involved in ensuring the programme. Each year, teaching of the courses was provided in accordance with the increasing requirements for quality. During the last ten years, the LA has established a steadfast family of teaching staff who are loyal to the Academy: 12 teaching staff work at the LA during the whole reporting period, the length of work period of 7 other teaching staff at the LA exceeds 5 years.

Such stability of the team of the teaching staff allows not only to develop the academic culture and traditions of the LA, but also promotes the processes of mentoring and team learning improving the content of the courses of the programme and offering novelties in the use of teaching methods.

The most significant reasons for changes in the team of teaching staff during the reporting period were as follows:

- teaching staff moved to another country or changed their place of residence in Latvia;
- the course has been consolidated;
- a foreign member of the teaching staff was replaced with a local and vice versa;
- a member of the teaching staff was replaced due to failure to comply with the quality indicators.

A very positive trend is to recruit new teaching staff who have proven themselves as professionals in their field. An example of this best practice is the professional activity of musicologist Ieva Rozenbaha, LELB Head of Diacony Centre Sigita Dišlere, Academic Director of the Latvian Bible Centre Kristīna Ēce. Involvement of foreign teaching staff plays a significant role for internationalisation; as the best practice here should be mentioned lectures read by Timo Laato (*Paul's Writings*), Charles Cortright (*Introduction to Dogmatics; Overview of the Bible 2 / Introduction to the New Testament; 1st Epistle to Corinthians*).

LA teaching staff composition during the reporting period see in section *Other Annexes* **Annex No 6 "Dynamic of the LA Teaching Staff 2012-2022"**

During the reporting period, the teaching staff have continuously improved in the scientific and academic area. Research fields of the academic staff involved in the programme are aimed at successful implementation of the study programme and mostly are related to the specialisation of the teaching staff within the framework of the programme. Teaching staff prepare scientific articles, incl. for international peer-reviewed journals, participate in conferences and practical seminars, training, skill improvement and various scientific events, publish textbooks, and develop methodological materials, as well as participate in research projects. Various practical studies are continuously conducted in cooperation with students, academic staff of higher education institutions in Latvia and abroad. Participation of students in scientific and practical conferences

and seminars as attendees is also continuously and purposefully stimulated. The LA promotes development and improvement of the academic staff towards a competent team of faculty.

In general, it may be concluded that during the reporting period the teaching staff involved in the programme continuously focus on enhancement of research interests, their professional improvement, and continuous improvement and development of quality of the taught courses. Qualification of the academic staff involved in implementation of the study programme corresponds to achievement of the outcome of the study programme, as well as implementation of the LA aims and objectives.

Development and renewal of the team of teaching staff has improved the quality of the study programme in several ways:

- teamwork and cooperation in development of study content has improved reducing or even eliminating overlapping content;
- the content is adjusted to the development needs of the field;
- improved organisational capacity of the teaching staff;
- improved teaching skills; improved development of e-solutions and implementation in the study process;
- improved pedagogical innovations; improved implementation processes thereof;
- improved mutual cooperation culture and cooperation with students;
- improved research process by using strategies tested in research to ensure more effective studies.

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

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

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

Teaching staff of the Bachelor study programme are characterised by longstanding and purposeful cooperation when preparing descriptions of study courses, creating courses in e-environment, working in research directions and projects. Teaching staff are united in research fields where they jointly work at research of certain issues and compilation, publication and reporting of results under the supervision of the coordinator of research field.

To promote cooperation of teaching staff in the organised events of qualification improvement, international and non-formal events, a performance of joint tasks is organised which is aimed at the quality of results and the process. The LA promotes mentoring system as well for the teaching staff who are more experienced to share their academic and research experience by informing on innovations in the field and scientific activity.

The ratio of academic staff to number of students is 1:5. It means that the academic staff are able to implement a personalised approach during the study process.

Annexes

| III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme | | |
|---|--|---|
| Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme | Annex No19_Sample of Diploma and supplement.7z | Pielikums Nr.19_Diploma un pielikuma paraugs.7z |
| For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable) | | |
| Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable) | | |
| Statistics on the students in the reporting period | Annex No20_Statistics on students.pdf | Pielikums Nr.20_Statistika par studejosajiem.pdf |
| III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof | | |
| Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard | Annex No21_Programme compliance with the national standard.pdf | Pielikums Nr.21_Programmas atbilstiba valsts standartam.pdf |
| Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable) | | |
| Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable) | | |
| Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme | Annex No24_Mapping of the study courses.pdf | Pielikums Nr.24_Studiju kursu kartejums.pdf |
| The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme) | Annex No22_The curriculum of the programme.pdf | Pielikums Nr.22_Studiju programmas plans.pdf |
| Descriptions of the study courses/ modules | Annex No23_Descriptions of the study courses.docx | Pielikums Nr.23_Studiju kursu apraksti.docx |
| Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable) | | |
| III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff | | |
| Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable) | | |
| Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable) | Annex No25_Confirmation_the academic staff.pdf | Pielikums Nr.25_Aplicinajums par atbilstibu 55p.pdf |