

## APPLICATION

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

Study field	<i>Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology</i>
Title of the higher education institution	<i>Rīgas Stradiņa universitāte</i>
Registration code	<i>3341702042</i>
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# **Self-evaluation report**

Study field "Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology"

Rīga Stradiņš University

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# 1. Information on the Higher Education Institution/College

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

Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU, information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)) is a state-founded institution of higher education and science, which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia and has been closely integrated into the national healthcare system since 1950. RSU was registered in the Register of Higher Education Institutions on 15 April 2002, registration No. 3341702042. It was accredited on 13 December 2001. RSU is the third largest university in Latvia with a strong international orientation – in October 2023, 27.4% of RSU students were from foreign countries. RSU's legal address is Rīga, Dzirciema iela 16, but RSU's study programmes are also implemented at other addresses, for example in the recently built building at Konsula iela 21 (200m from RSU's main building), in the building at Baložu iela 14, as well as at Kuldīgas iela 9a, where the premises have been specially renovated for the needs of the newly developed Faculty of Social Sciences and the Social Sciences Research Centre. All buildings are fully suitable for the work of the higher education institution. Classrooms are equipped with modern equipment that ensures quality learning, including online lectures.

RSU is one of the best-rated institutions of higher education in Latvia, as evidenced by, for example, various international university rankings. RSU ranks third among all Latvian higher education institutions in the *Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings*. RSU scored the most in international outlook (62.7) placing it the second in this category among all the universities of Baltic countries included in this ranking. In *QS World Universities 2022* ranking RSU is 801<sup>st</sup>-1000<sup>th</sup> in the world. It is the second best indicator among Latvian higher education institutions. In the comparative approach ranking of higher education institutions, *U-Multirank World University Rankings 2022*, RSU received a total of 12 highest (A) and nine (B) ratings, while in the *U-Multirank World University Ranking 2021-2022 by Subject* in the medical rating, RSU received a total of nine (A) ratings, as well as was nominated in the Innovative forms of assessment and was ranked 25<sup>th</sup> among the best universities of the world. RSU was also ranked high in the world in the *SCImago Institutions Rankings 2022*, an international ranking of academic and research institutions, where it is the 1<sup>st</sup> in Latvia and 641<sup>st</sup> in the world (35 places up compared to 2021).

For eight years in a row (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)), RSU has been recognised as the highest-quality higher education institution with the best reputation in Latvia in the higher education reputation survey by *Kantar TNS*. The value of RSU's diploma, as well as the ability of the higher education institution to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed in the labour market, are consistently appreciated by Latvian residents.

The RSU **vision** is to be a leading research university in Europe, where talent is concentrated and where excellent research- and practice-based education and experience are provided. The RSU **mission** is to ensure the creation, accumulation and transfer of knowledge valued by the international scientific community and to offer excellent, inclusive and sustainable educational opportunities in the health, life and social sciences to realise everyone's potential throughout life.

RSU implements 10 study directions (StD):

- "Healthcare" (25 study programmes (StP));
- "Life Sciences" (2 StP);
- "Information and Communication Sciences" (7 StP);

- “Education, Paedagogy and Sports” (3 StP);
- “Social Welfare” (3 StP);
- “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” (currently 5, consolidation to 4 StP during accreditation);
- “Law” (3 StP);
- “Management, Administration and Real Estate Management” (7 StP);
- “Psychology” (3 StP);
- “Internal Security and Civil Defence” (4 StP).

In 2017-2019, RSU has developed a plan for the development and consolidation of StP (approved at the RSU Presidium on 4 January 2019, Minutes No. 3-1/2/2019, approved by the commission for evaluating the development and consolidation plans of StPs established by the Ministry of Education and Science, Letter of the Ministry of Education and Science No. 4-6e/2018/3795), which was implemented with the support of the project |Reducing study programme fragmentation and promoting study internationalisation at Rīga Stradiņš University (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)). During the development of the project, 19 existing study programmes (including 6[1] in the study direction “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology”) were consolidated until 30.11.2023, as well as six study programmes were developed and started to be implemented, including the academic Master’s StP “Russia and Eurasia Studies”, the title of which has been changed during the accreditation to “International System Transformation Studies”.

The StP governance approach implemented by RSU has promoted the provision of StP offer that is of high quality and relevant to the fields as shown by the growing number of applicants and students in the StDs implemented by RSU (see Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2), especially considering the circumstances of the demographic crisis and decrease in the total number of applicants in Latvia. On 1 October 2023, the total number of students at RSU was 10,663.

**Table 1. Number of students in the study directions implemented by RSU over the last nine academic years**

<b>Study direction</b>	<b>2015/ 2016</b>	<b>2016/ 2017</b>	<b>2017/ 2018</b>	<b>2018/ 2019</b>	<b>2019/ 2020</b>	<b>2020/ 2021</b>	<b>2021/ 2022</b>	<b>2022/ 2023</b>	<b>2023/ 2024</b>
Healthcare	5285	5652	6043	6222	6306	6707	7316	7708	7912
Law	1139	1105	1084	993	847	704	778	718	654
Management, Administration and Real Estate Management	207	225	226	243	218	261	334	366	407
Education, Paedagogy and Sport	236	232	228	235	266	285	273	226	174
Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology	234	227	230	252	285	311	338	291	278

Social Welfare	138	146	126	143	150	125	120	100	88
Information and Communication Sciences	428	396	369	397	365	425	420	395	393
Psychology	66	111	121	143	167	279	391	461	558
Life Sciences	6	6	6	6	6	5	10	9	23
Internal Security and Civil Defence	0	0	45	82	101	146	157	162	176
<b>Total</b>	<b>7739</b>	<b>8100</b>	<b>8478</b>	<b>8716</b>	<b>8711</b>	<b>9248</b>	<b>10137</b>	<b>10436</b>	<b>10663</b>

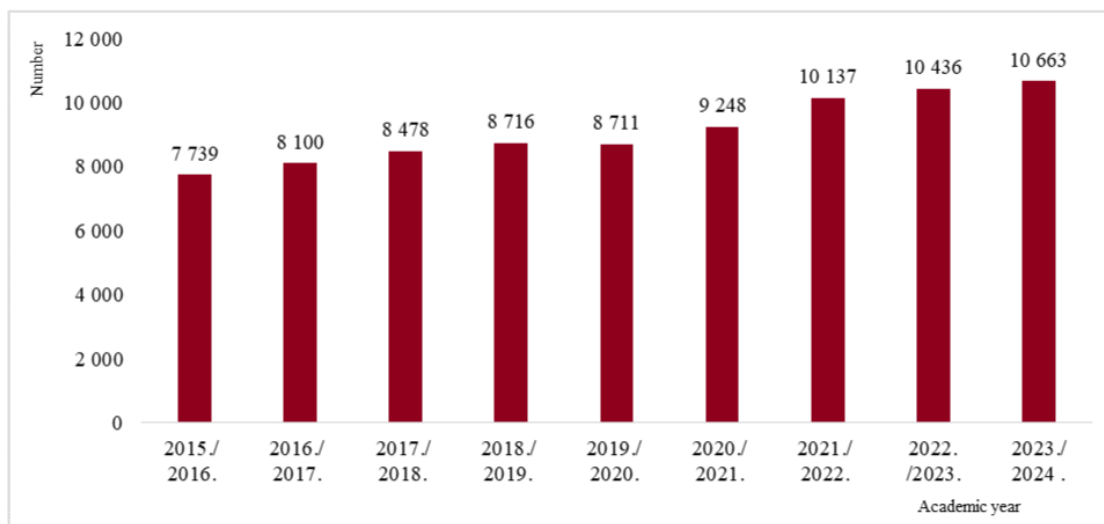
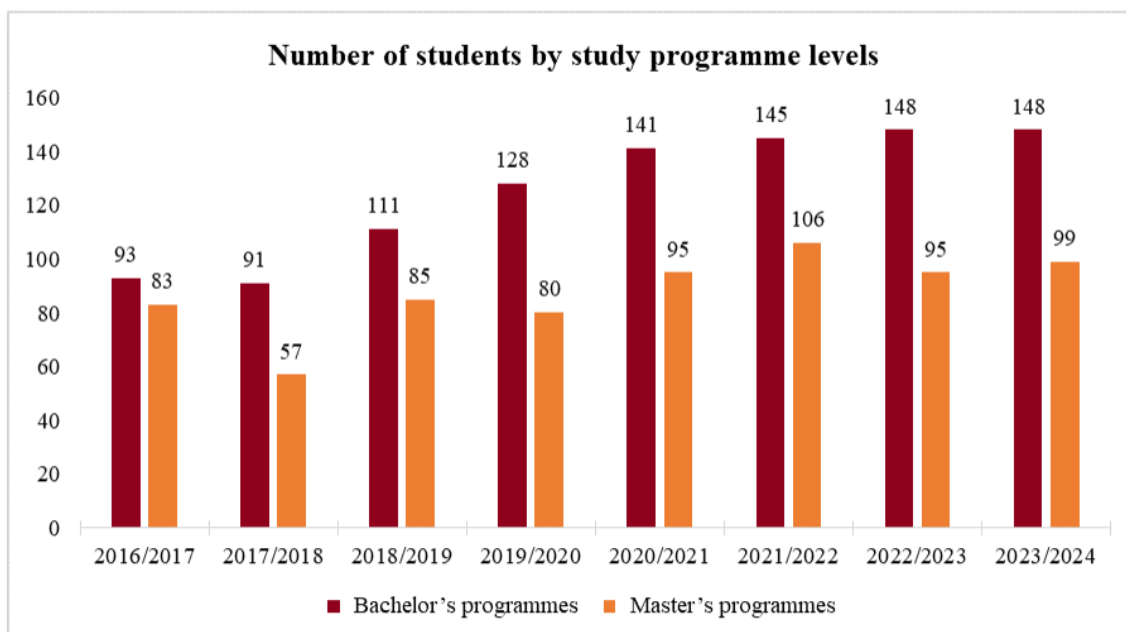


Figure 1. Total number of students in the study directions implemented by RSU over the last nine academic years



**Figure 2. Dynamics of the number of students by study level in the study direction “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” in the last eight academic years**

RSU Development Strategy 2022 – 2027 is available on the RSU website (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)). The main development goals of RSU are innovative studies in a contemporary environment and research of health, life sciences and humanities, including social responsibility for sustainable development of the university and society, twinning for integration in the labour market and internationalisation and reputation for international recognition.

The main RSU development goals are:

- generating locally and internationally significant scientific results;
- implementation of education corresponding to the needs of the society and individuals to increase the total capacity of human capital.

The priority goals of sustainable development set by RSU and the contribution to their implementation are described on the website (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)).

RSU strategy provides for progress towards a modern education system compliant with the requirements of future labour market.

The development of RSU’s StPs is based on the following principles:

- integrity of research and placement;
- modernisation of the study process (digitisation, introduction of innovations, simulation-based learning approach, etc.) for effective achievement of learning outcomes;
- promotion of academic integrity;
- cooperation and sharing of resources with local and foreign higher education institutions;
- development of interdisciplinary cooperation of industries with professional organisations;
- compliance of StPs with the development of the national economy and industries;
- promotion of export capability of higher education and science;
- cooperation between higher education institutions in the implementation of StPs, combining resources for extension of the study, research and innovation potential;
- oversight of the quality of studies and activities for its targeted improvement.

An RSU development plan has been developed in accordance with the RSU mission and vision, as well as the main development goals set in the RSU Strategy 2022 – 2027, which includes six directions:

1. Science
2. Education
3. Cooperation
4. Digital transformation
5. Management
6. Internationality

Each direction has its own sub-goal, main tasks and measures to be taken, as well as the main impact indicators of the strategy have been developed and their target values have been determined in order to ensure the monitoring of the progress of implementation of the strategy.

See Annex 13 for the awards, collaboration with schools, and marketing activities of RSU.

[1] ABSP “Politics and Political Communication”, ABSP “Sociology of Organisations and Management”, AMSP “Social Process Analysis and Management”, AMSP “Regional Politics and Public Administration”, DSP “Political Science”, DSP “Sociology”

**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.**

Activity of RSU is regulated by the Law on the Constitution of Riga Stradiņš University, Law on Higher Education Institutions, as well as other external and internal laws and regulations. The said laws and regulations define the powers and duties of each institution. RSU decisions are made by the Constitutional Assembly, the Council, the Senate, the Rector and the Academic Arbitration Court (information on the RSU website in [Latvian](#), [English](#)).

As amended at the Council meeting of 20 March 2024, Minutes No. 1-P-1/2/2024  
Enter into force on 21.03.2024.

**RĪGA STRADIŅŠ UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION**

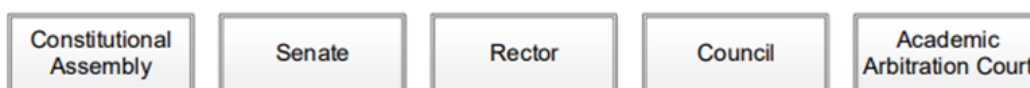
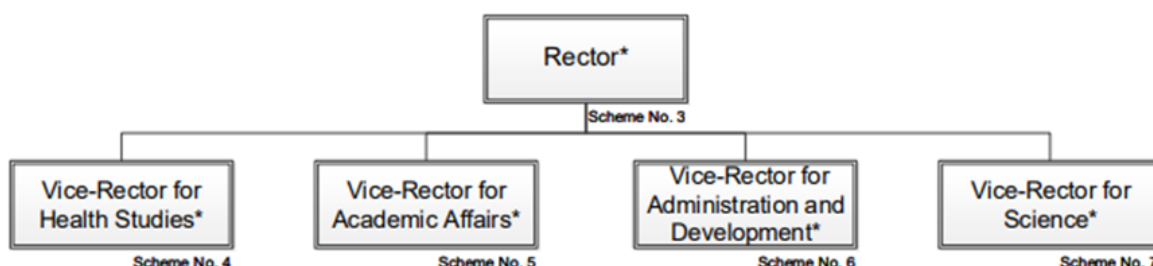


Figure 3. Administration of Rīga Stradiņš University

The current RSU Senate was elected at the meeting of the Constitutional Assembly on 23 September 2021. The composition corresponds to the RSU Senate Regulations: The Senate consists of 31 senators, incl. the rector *ex officio* and 30 elected senators, among whom are 23 academic staff representatives (of which 15 are professors and associate professors, and eight are representatives of other academic staff), six student representatives and one representative of the general staff of RSU. The study direction is represented in the Senate by the Deputy Chairman of the Senate, Senator Assistant Professor Mārtiņš Daugulis (Vice-Dean for Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences).

Effective governance and supervision of operational tasks are carried out by RSU’s four Vice-Rectors: Vice-Rector for Health Studies, Vice-Rector for Studies, Vice-Rector for Administration and Development, Vice-Rector for Science, as well as their subordinate study, science, administrative and economic structural units.

**RĪGA STRADIŅŠ UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



#### Figure 4. Organisational structure of Rīga Stradiņš University

##### **Participation of external partners in decision-making**

External partners cooperate in RSU's Convent of Councillors, Alumni Association, Study Quality Councils, faculty councils, departments, as well as cooperate with the directors of the study programme groups of the Faculty of Social Sciences (considering that the new FSS organisational model has no departments, but this function is performed by the study programme group directors).

Foreign and local specialists from various sectors participate in the RSU Convent of Councillors as external partners. The Convent of Councillors advises the Senate and the Rector on the matters of RSU development strategy in order to promote development of RSU by determining strategic directions of its activity in accordance with the needs of the national economy. The Convent of Councillors meets approximately four times a year and deals with current issues of RSU. Current issues for consideration may be raised by any member of the Convent during the meetings. For example, the issue of the RSU's plans for the development and improvement of social study programmes was considered at the meeting, with emphasis on improving interdisciplinary studies and research. During the meeting, the views of faculty leaders on the research potential of StPs, as well as the views and recommendations of the participants of the Convent of Councillors on the improvement and adaptation of StPs were presented.

The Study Quality Council consists of both StD/StP management, lecturers and representatives of students, as well as representatives of employers. The Council evaluates compliance of the StP content with the requirements of the laws and regulations of Latvia and the EU, public interests and requirements of the labour market, as well as the long-term development of the respective study direction. (See Paragraph 1.4 of this section for more information on the activities of this council.)

Faculty councils consist of lecturers, student representatives and employers. Composition of the faculty council is approved by the Senate on the basis of a proposal by the faculty's dean.

The Alumni Association (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)) brings together alumni of different generations who graduated from former Riga Medical Institute, Medical Academy of Latvia, and RSU. The Alumni Association is the contact point for alumni, students, academic staff, and industry representatives. Cooperation between the parties involved is important for the improvement of the quality of studies and research, for the development of the field, and for the purposeful orientation of students' professional activities. The association promotes involvement of RSU alumni in lifelong learning activities.

##### **Participation of students in the governance process**

The Student Union (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)) represents the interests of the students at the Constitutional Assembly, Academic Arbitration Court, the Senate, faculty councils, Ethics Committee, Loan Granting Commission, Scholarship Granting Commission, Library Council, Museum Council, Rectorate, Dean's Council, Study Quality Council, and Committee for Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved in Prior Education or Professional Experience. Student representatives have a veto right at the faculty councils; rights of deferring veto at the Senate in relation to matters affecting student interests.

International students' interests at RSU are represented by the International Student Association (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)).

The Student Union cooperates with the International Student Association, ensuring that interests of both the Latvian and international students are represented in the governance process.

The RSU Student Union was established in 1993, and it has been operating in order to represent the interests of students in the matters of academic, material and cultural life at the university and other state institutions; it represents the students of the higher education institution in Latvia and abroad, lays down the procedure for students to be elected in collegial institutions of the higher education institution.

The Student Union is financed from the budget of the higher education institution to such amount that is not less than one two-hundredth from the annual budget of the higher education institution (in accordance with Section 53(4) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia (available in [Latvian](#), [English](#)). At the end of each calendar year, the RSU Student Union presents to the RSU management the budget use of the current year and the budget planning for the following calendar year, which is accepted by the Rector. (See Annex 5 for more information on the activities of the Student Union.)

### **Participation of structural units in decision-making**

Based on the developed medium-term strategy, the management of RSU annually delegates specific objectives to the structural units. In order to achieve these objectives, each RSU structural unit has to plan its own resources during the annual budget planning session, requesting the funds necessary to achieve the delegated objectives. Along with the development of a detailed budget, responsibilities are clearly separated because the structural units have to operate within the framework of the approved budgets. Working groups, discussions, and brainstorming sessions are set up to implement new projects, processes, and innovations, thus maximising the involvement of employees and direct managers in decision-making.

See Annex 1. List of internal regulatory enactments according to RSU core business processes, which also includes links to documents.

See Annex 3. RSU organisational structure (available also on the website in [Latvian](#), [English](#)).

See Annex 23. “Compliance of the Study Programme with Part I of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) Part 1”.

The study direction and the corresponding StP governance structure is oriented towards the development of the study direction (see section 2.1 Governance of the study direction, Paragraph 4.1 “Study direction development plan” and Paragraph 4.2 “Study direction governance structure”), decision-making takes place efficiently, the support provided by administrative and technical staff ensures all the needs of the StP corresponding to the study direction.

### **Information about the structural units involved in the implementation of the study programmes and the required support staff**

StPs of StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” have been so far implemented sufficiently autonomously, involving only individual RSU academic units, such as the Language Centre (for language courses) and the Medical Education Technology Centre (for civil defence and environmental protection courses).

In the newly established RSU Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS), which started working on 6 February 2024, several existing RSU structural units were united – the Faculty of European Studies, the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Communication, the Department of Humanities, the Health Management Group of the Department of Public Health and Disease Prevention, the Language Centre.

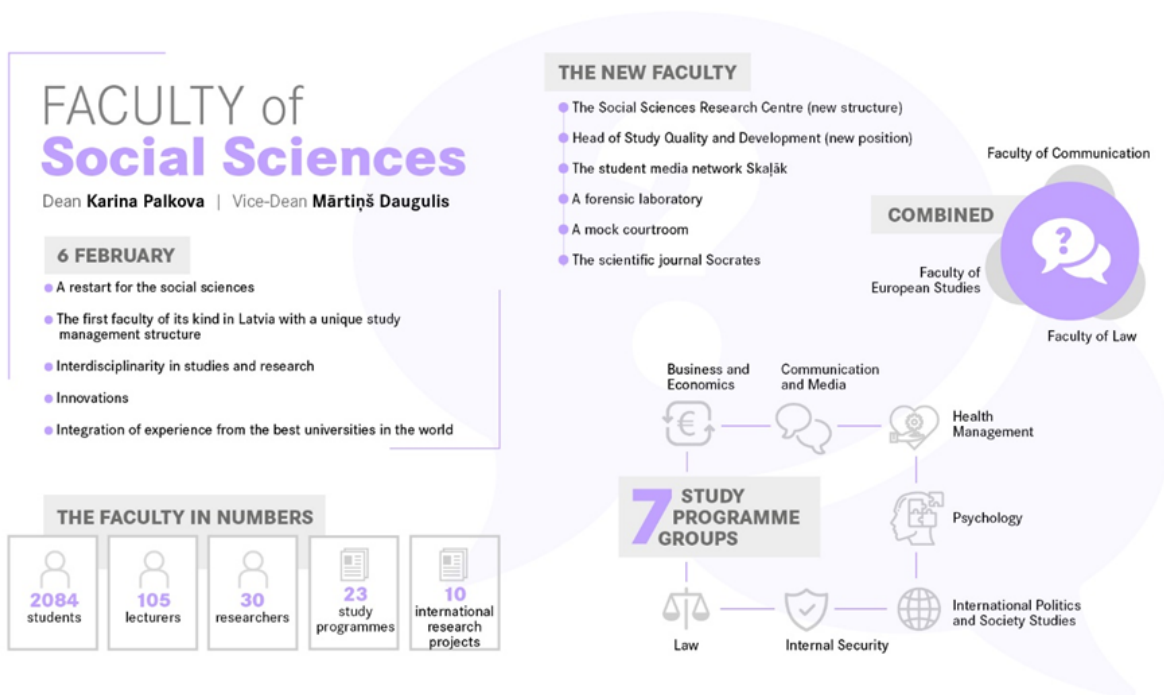


Figure 5. Rīga Stradiņš University Faculty of Social Sciences

To ensure the quality of academic activities and studies, learning support staff – study process coordinators – are employed at the FSS, who provide support to students and academic staff, as well as ensure circulation of documentation. An appropriate amount of support staff for the learning process is provided for each group of study programmes, according to the spectrum of programmes and students included into it. From March 2024, along with the redistribution of functions, the RSU Student Services, which takes over many technical responsibilities within the scope of its functions, also begin to provide significant co-support, thus giving the study process coordinators the opportunity to focus more on the study process, rather than student governance issues.

The support provided by the administrative and technical staff of the higher education institution within the StD is appropriate. Technically, state-of-the-art newest generation information technology equipment is available. From the first day of studies, students know where they can seek assistance in case of questions. Technical issues of the systems are solved by the Information Technology Department; issues of study process are supported by the Academic Affairs Department and office of the faculty, ensuring also feedback in communication with students.

### 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.

RSU has a defined quality policy (it is publicly available), a quality assurance system has been established and is maintained, which helps to achieve the goals and results of the study direction and corresponding study programmes. The system ensures continuous improvement, development and operational efficiency of the study direction “Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology” and the corresponding four study programmes (one Bachelor’s level and three Master’s level).

The RSU Quality Policy is based on the university’s strategy and values and includes four basic

principles – quality, partnership, student-centred approach and education and experience based on research and practice.

The Quality Policy is available on the RSU website (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)). Both the staff and students of RSU are involved in the implementation of the Quality Policy. In general, study quality assurance is a multi-level system (see Figure 6).

The duty of the RSU senior management is to set strategic and quality goals and quality policy, to make a decision on quality approach, to manage resources, and determine the internal procedures. At the university level, one of the indicators of study quality is the public attitude and opinion, as well as the popularity of RSU. Evaluating the level of RSU staff satisfaction and engagement as well as the results of the university reputation survey, guidelines are set to strengthen the image of RSU.

In accordance with the approved study quality assurance system, at the StP level, the duty of the StP director is to ensure compliance of the content of the StP with internal and external laws and regulations, requirements of the labour market, sectoral development trends and needs of students, to analyse the data that might provide information on the factors affecting results and quality of the StP, and to implement necessary improvements to the StP. Quality indicators of StPs that are directly linked to the remuneration of the StP directors are measured annually. This aspect promotes taking responsibility and motivates StP directors to achieve higher defined quality standards. In the newly created FSS governance model, the StP director is replaced by the Director of the study programme group, who most often supervises more than one StP, but has similar responsibilities as the StP directors before.

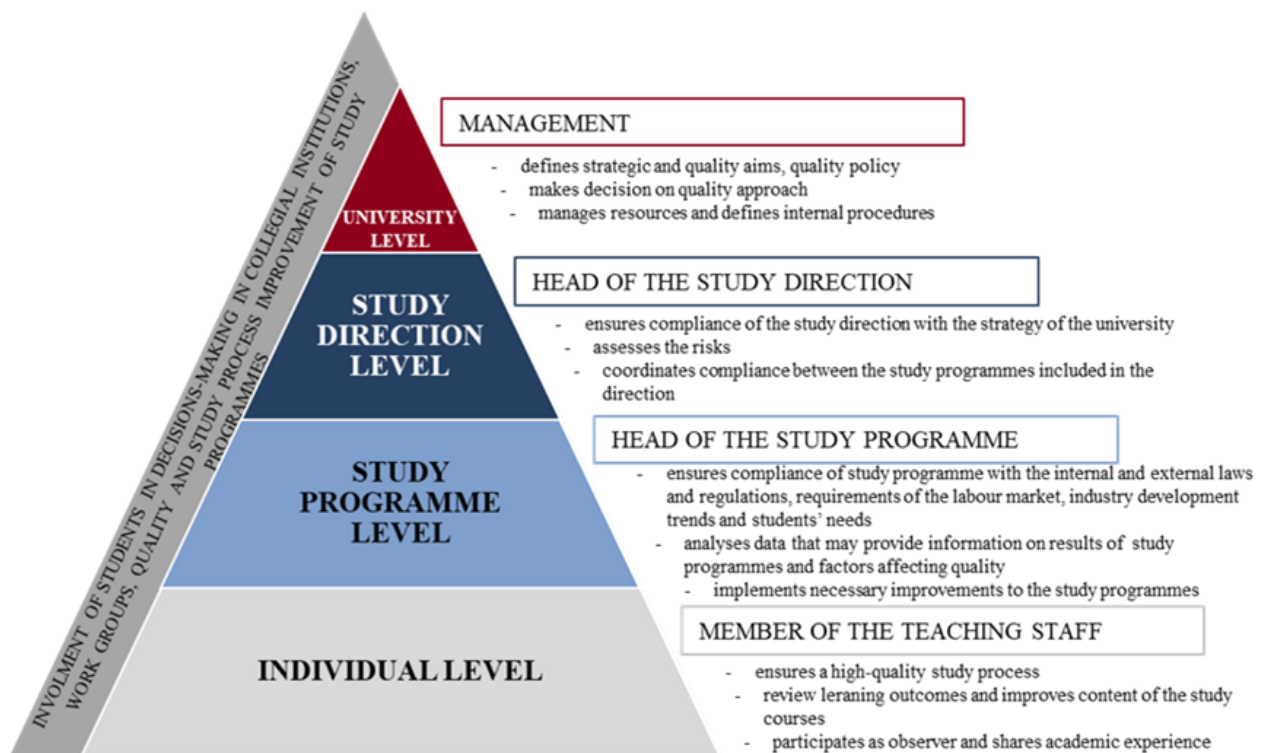


Figure 6. **Quality assurance of RSU study process and outcomes**

Supervision of the system introduced at RSU is performed by both the internal system and quality auditors and independent external experts.

External and internal laws and regulations (available in [Latvian](#), [English](#)) governing student achievements and evaluation of learning outcomes:

- Law on Higher Education Institutions
- Education Law
- Academic Regulations I - regulations of undergraduate and Master's studies (available in [Latvian](#), [English](#))
- Academic Regulations III - regulations of Doctoral studies (available in [Latvian](#), [English](#))
- Regulations on the development and presentation of the qualification paper, student's research paper, Bachelor's thesis and Master's thesis (available in [Latvian](#), [English](#))
- Process Description No. 6 "Assessment and Submission of Learning Outcomes" etc. (available in [Lavian and English](#))
- Student performance analysis is performed twice per academic year after the end of the study semester. As a result of performance monitoring risks to successful study process are identified as well as for reasons for exclusion on the basis of which it is possible to perform preventive actions.

In 2016, RSU performed an international external assessment of the implementation of student-centred learning approach performed by the group of assessment experts of project *Peer Assessment of Student Centred Learning (PASCL)*. Report of PASCL experts on the implementation of student-centred approach at RSU is available both in [Latvian](#) and [English](#). It was an EU-level project promoted by the European Students' Union in cooperation with other European higher education organisations, whereas the visit of experts in Riga was initiated by the RSU Student Union. RSU is one of the few higher education institutions in Europe that accepted an institutional decision to be involved and was elected within the framework of the PASCL project.

The expert opinion described RSU as a student-centred higher education institution that actively involves students in the improvement of the study process. The report also included recommendations for further facilitation of student involvement in the study process and general institutional improvement of the understanding and implementation of a student-centred approach at all levels, which RSU has used to improve work with student feedback on learning, improve the e-learning environment, update assessment approaches and promote the efficiency of internal communication. Since RSU participation in the *PASCL* project, various aspects of student-centred learning have been regularly put forward as guiding principles in the work planning of the Board of Studies, coordinating the projects to be implemented with the aspects of student-centred learning that need to be improved.

Assessment procedure of the student achievements and learning outcomes has been established in the description of each course of study. The head of course determines the assessment system of his or her course. Successful completion of final and interim examinations, active participation in seminars and discussions, independent work, presentation of acquired skills in various simulations of practical situations (e.g. mock courts, foreign policy debates), etc. are most often set as criteria for passing the course. Before the course is started, the students are informed about the planned learning outcomes of the study course, the examinations that will certify the achievement of the learning outcomes, and the assessment criteria of these tests. Operating in the RSU e-learning environment, the support staff of the faculty office prepares test assessment lists, which are issued to lecturers at the end of the study course. After accepting an examination, the staff lecturer personally or the invited lecturers, with the help of the faculty office staff, publish the final assessments in the e-environment, which is linked to the students' personal accounts. In the student's personal account, each student can see his/her study information and assessments.

#### **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>RSU has established policy and procedures for quality assurance in higher education, defined by internal regulatory documents described in Paragraphs 1.3, 2.1.1, 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 and Paragraph 1.1 of Annex 23.1 (Compliance of RSU study programmes with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) Part 1) of the Self-Assessment Report.</p> <p>They also determine the quality mechanisms of the study process at RSU, which apply to absolutely all StPs.</p>
2.	A mechanism for the creation and internal approval of the study programmes of the higher education institution/ college, as well as the supervision of their performance and periodic inspection thereof, has been developed.	<p>RSU has established mechanism for the development of StPs of the higher education institution, monitoring of their performance, and periodic testing, described in Paragraphs 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 and Paragraphs 1.2, 1.7 and 1.9 of Annex 23.1 (Compliance of RSU study programmes with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) Part 1) of the Self-Assessment Report and it applies to all StPs. It is supervised by the Centre for Educational Growth (CEG) of RSU, which at the same time, taking into account the experience within its competence, also improves the system, supports StP directors and heads of the division during the process. An example of this are the StPs developed within the framework of the specific objective, which are described in Latvian and English.</p> <p>Improvement and development of StPs takes place by creating a development plan of StD. The implementation of the plan is discussed at the meeting of the Quality Council of the Study Direction and/or at the Council meetings of the Faculty of Social Sciences. The StP development process is monitored regularly, analysing academic achievements, number, dropout of students, technical support, assessments, the quality of work of lecturers and other relevant indicators.</p>

3.	The criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, have been developed and made public.	For the criteria, conditions and procedures for assessing student performance, which make it possible to make sure that the expected learning outcomes have been achieved, see Paragraph 2.1.5. and Annex 17.1 (compliance of the study programme with the national education standard (for each study programme)) and Paragraph 1.3 of Annex 23.1 (Compliance of RSU study programmes with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) Part 1).
4.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for ensuring the qualification and work quality of the academic staff are described in Paragraphs 2.3.5, 2.3.6, 2.3.7 and Paragraph 1.5 of Annex 23.1 (Compliance of RSU study programmes with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) Part 1) of the Self-Assessment Report. Compliance assessment is carried out every year, and the mechanisms themselves are reviewed.
5.	The higher education institution/ college ensures the collection and analysis of the information on the study achievements of the students, employment of the graduates, satisfaction of the students with the study programme, efficiency of the work of the academic staff, the study funds available, and the disbursements thereof, as well as the key performance indicators of the higher education institution/ college.	<p>Information on academic performance of students is summarised in Section 2.1.5.</p> <p>For information on employment of graduates, see section 3.1.3. (for each study programme).</p> <p>Information on graduate feedback mechanisms can be found in Paragraphs 1.2 and 2.2.4.</p> <p>For information on student and graduate satisfaction with StP see Section 2.2.3 and Annexes: 21.1 Study programme and study course evaluation questionnaire results, 21.2 Results of the graduate questionnaire and Paragraphs 1.7 and 1.9 of Annex 23.1 Compliance of RSU study programmes with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) Part 1.</p> <p>For information on the efficiency of the work of the academic staff, see sections 2.3.7. and 2.4.4, 3.4 (for each study programme) and annexes 6.1 Basic information about the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology", 6.2 Biographies of teaching staff, 6.3 Summary of statistical data on incoming and outgoing mobility of teaching staff in the reporting period and 6.4.1 List of publications of teaching staff in the reporting period and 24.7 Analysis of the composition of lecturers (for each study programme).</p> <p>For information on available study funds and their costs, see section 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 2.3.4 and 2.3.8 and Paragraph 1.6 of Annex 23.1 (Compliance of RSU study programmes with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) Part 1) and annexes: 23.2 Assessment of the informative and methodological provision regarding library resources for the implementation of the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology" in accordance with the requirements of the guidelines and 23.3 Assessment of the information and methodological base on IT resources.</p> <p>See the information on the essential indicators of the higher education institution's activities in Sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and on the RSU website in Latvian and English.</p>

<p>6. The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.</p>	<p>The higher education institution shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their quality assurance systems. This is described in Paragraphs 1.3, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and Paragraphs 1.9. and 1.10 of Annex 23.1 (Compliance of RSU study programmes with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) Part 1), see StD development plan in Annex 4.1, Study direction governance structure in Annex 4.2 and Recommendation implementation plan in Annex 11.</p>
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## 2.1. Management of the Study Field

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

The RSU strategy 2022-2027 (available in [Latvian](#), [English](#)) defines the vision and mission of RSU, as well as sustainable development goals and main development goals until 2027, including research platforms and directions. The RSU vision and one of the main goals of RSU is to ensure research-based, exportable and quality higher education in Europe and in the world. The RSU forms a solid foundation for academic and professional education, as well as research work.

The RSU strategy identifies three main RSU research platforms - medicine, public health and social sciences. At interdisciplinary level it concentrates RSU resources on conducting world-class research. RSU is constantly modernising the study process, which provides new specialists with wider opportunities for growth.

Compliance of StD goals with the area of the university's activities is determined in two new development plans - Study Quality and Study Programme Development Plan (approved by RSU Senate on 13.02.2024) and RSU Science Development Plan (approved by RSU Senate on 13.02.2024).

The Study Quality and Study Programme Development Plan, viewed in the context of internal consolidation processes, focuses on the pursuit of excellence in social sciences and sustainability in scientific replacement. Indicators and processes such as international appreciation, rankings, selection of young scientists and support system, strengthening of research and study quality are essential for this. This can be achieved by promoting development in four directions:

1. Research-based studies (modern forms of studies, research methodologies, opportunities for student research and innovation, etc.);
2. Strategic specialisation and interdisciplinarity (work on topics where RSU can achieve international level results, build cooperation);
3. International levelling (doctoral grants, post-doctoral grants, research grants, research projects, doctoral support package);

4. Operational efficiency (sharing of resources, better profitability indicators, quality management, support and development in all study processes).

The transition period has been defined until 31.08.2024 due to the consolidation, after which, starting from 01.09.2024, the FSS will start full-fledged operation. In general, it is expected that because of the implementation of the consolidation plan, up to 20% new study courses will be developed at FSS, which will include both those developed in cooperation with the Social Sciences Research Centre and corresponding to specialisation directions, as well as transversal courses (according to industry demand). Quantitatively, this will mean that audit of all StD and all StP throughout the FSS for all study levels will ensure that:

- 10-15 shared courses are developed (sharing 2-6 StP within one StP group or several StP groups);
- 3-4 FSS and university-level shared study modules are developed (they will basically consist of restricted elective (Part B) and free elective (Part C) courses);
- 4 modernised study programmes are identified;
- 20-30 study courses are consolidated.

In the process of internal consolidation, a significant emphasis will also be placed on digital transformation, which will include both the creation and implementation of new courses promoting digital literacy, as well as approbation and integration in the study process of the courses developed in existing projects (for example, the project “Ensuring the acquisition of high-level digital skills” No. 2.3.1.1.i.0/1/22/I/CFLA/003 or Language Technology Initiative). The integration of artificial intelligence solutions and their application at various stages of the study process will be important both in the context of the development of transversal skills and in the context of the modernisation of study courses and StP.

The goals of RSU’s Science Development Plan are described in the report on the development of the scientific direction, but it should be noted that the synergy of the two mentioned plans directly affects the perspective of the study direction, accordingly building a unified ecosystem of the study environment and scientific activity, which is inextricably linked to the entry of research into the study process and at the same time the replacement with young scientists in an interdisciplinary perspective. In general, in accordance with the RSU strategy, the indicators reflected in Tables 2 and 3 must be achieved by 2027:

*Table 2. Fulfilment of the indicators set in the RSU strategy*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2027</b>
<b>Number of students</b>	10000	10500
<b>Number of applicants</b>	2223	2223
<b>Number of paying students</b>	5956	5956
<b>Number of students supported by private target grants</b>	167	167
<b>Proportion of students graduating in the expected time:</b>		
<b>In Bachelor’s study programmes</b>	89.27%	89.27%

<b>In Master's study programmes</b>	83.79%	83.79%
<b>In Level 2 professional programmes</b>	89%	89%
<b>Employment of graduates in highly qualified professions</b>	92%	92%
<b>Satisfaction with the quality and outcomes of study programmes</b>	3.30	3.32
<b>Number of students per academic staff</b>	17.7	17.7
<b>Proportion of academic staff engaged in mobility activities (incoming)</b>	+25%	+50%
<b>Proportion of academic staff engaged in mobility activities (outgoing)</b>	+25%	+50%

Table 3. Performance of indicators in addition to the RSU strategy

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2027</b>
<b>Number of holders of doctoral degree in academic staff</b>	70%	73%
<b>RSU reputation index</b>	78 points	78 points
<b>Completion of study course questionnaires</b>	90%	90%
<b>Reduction of student dropout rates</b>	-10%	-10%
<b>Erasmus+ activity of students (outgoing)</b>	+10%	+10%
<b>Continuing education of lecturers by attending training organised by CEG</b>	At least 1 per year	At least 1 per year
<b>Internal observations, participation of each lecturer</b>	At least 1 per year	At least 2 per year
<b>Military medicine course</b>	At 4 faculties	At 4 faculties
<b>Simulation-based education</b>	At least 1 study course in each StP	At least 1 study course in each StP
<b>Stable operation of the Stade branch in Germany</b>	At least 25 students study for 1 year	At least 25 the students study for 2 years

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**Foreign visiting lecturers**At least 1-2 in each  
acad. structural unitAt least 1-2 in each  
acad. structural  
unit

Focusing specifically on the objective and direction of development of StD, StPs of StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” are implemented at RSU, which has obtained the ISO 9001 international quality management system certificate (see RSU quality policy (information in [Latvian, English](#))). The RSU quality management system standard includes the ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) study internal quality assurance standards and guidelines for quality evaluation in the European higher education space, as well as the requirements of the Latvian Higher Education Law. The quality management for the StP is implemented according to the Higher education institution management process defined by the ISO standard.

**The strategic objective of the StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology”**

corresponds to the strategic mission of RSU – to prepare highly qualified specialists in sociology, political science and anthropology for the society of Latvia, Europe and the world, and the aim is also for the knowledge, skills, competence and attitude acquired during the studies to meet the European Union requirements and humane traditions, and to build a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

**The tasks set by of the StD** are:

- to provide students with comprehensive and detailed knowledge of social and political processes in the world and Latvia – about the role and significance of history, economics, philosophy, communication, anthropology, law, sociology, cultural studies and other sciences in the development of social and political theory;
- to improve students’ understanding of the structure, functioning and development laws of society (including Latvian society);
- to create knowledge and develop the necessary specific skills in the methodology and methods of sociology, politics, anthropology, methodology for obtaining information, data processing and scientific analysis, preparing students for independent scientific research activities;
- to provide students with comprehensive knowledge of the theoretical and practical aspects of social sciences and the possibilities for their use;
- to provide students with the opportunity to specialise and study in depth one of the directions of sociology, political science or anthropology;
- to develop the ability to approach social and political processes and developments in an analytical and contemporary way, understanding the possibilities for applying theoretical knowledge and research skills to solve specific societal, public administration problems;
- to create awareness and ability for students to choose an adequate research method for each social, political and anthropological process and phenomenon;
- to teach students to conduct both independent research and work in a team, to prepare a research plan, to develop a study design and put it into practice, to write research reports, as well as articles in the press regarding the results of research;
- to create and promote motivation for students to conduct independent research with an applied and specific or theoretical and fundamental orientation and to use the results of the research obtained in practice;
- to prepare students for work by organising placement in state administrative institutions – legislative and executive bodies, for work in other political institutions: parties, local governments, as well as media and research companies, foundations and non-governmental

organisations;

- to develop in students the professional and civic conscience;
- to provide the possibility to obtain highly qualified and competitive education in sociology, political science and anthropology, fostering the introduction and implementation of lifelong learning and open university principles.

### **Study programmes included in the StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology”**

The following study programmes are currently active in StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology”:

1. Academic Bachelor’s study programme “International Relations - European Studies” (until 05.02.2024, director Lelde Metla-Rozentāle)
2. Academic Master’s study programme “International Relations and Diplomacy” (until 05.02.2024, director Elīna Vroblevska)
3. Academic Master’s Study Programme “Russia and Eurasia Studies”, which was applied for accreditation with a new programme title “International System Transformations” (until 05.02.2024, director Mārtiņš Vargulis)
4. Academic Master’s study programme “Social Anthropology” (until 05.02.2024, director Ieva Puzo)

As already described in section 1.2, starting from 06.02.2024, upon creation of the new FSS, the supervision of all StPs of StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” is ensured by the director of StD groups, in this case, also the head of the StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” Lelde Metla-Rozentāle.

Until the end of the implementation of the SO project, when 19 study programmes were consolidated at RSU (until 30 November 2023), StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” included 11 study programmes. Since the beginning of 2019, six StD study programmes were gradually closed or consolidated, as part of the implementation of the StP development and consolidation plan.

The following StP of the study direction were closed:

1. Academic Bachelor’s study programme “Politics and Political Communication”;
2. Academic Bachelor’s study programme “Sociology of Organisations and Management”;
3. Academic Master’s study programme “Social Process Organisation and Management”;
4. Academic Master’s study programme “Regional Politics and Public Administration”.

The following programmes were consolidated in the doctoral study programme “Social Sciences” as sub-programmes:

1. Doctoral study programme “Political Science”
2. Doctoral study programme “Sociology”

The implemented decision on consolidating programmes opened wider opportunities in the student-centred approach. The closure of the programmes has actually taken place according to the merger principle - the effective and qualitative aspects of small programmes were migrated to the large programmes, expanding the content value and students’ opportunities in the study process. This, in turn, has made it possible to develop innovative approaches in the content and forms of the remaining study programmes (for example, the provision of two language flows, wider compulsory elective or free elective courses, aspects of interdisciplinarity and other modern pedagogical and administrative forms).

As already described, upon creation of the new FSS, starting from 06.02.2024 the supervision of all

StPs of the StD is ensured by the head of the StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” Lelde Metla-Rozentāle.

The growing role of the StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” can be noted within the new RSU structure. In the process of internal consolidation, namely, by establishing the Faculty of Social Sciences, which currently includes study programmes of the accredited direction, as well as by ensuring the fulfilment of Order of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 345 “On the conceptual report “On the Introduction of the New Doctoral Studies Model in Latvia””, the direction of “Social Sciences” has a special role to play when developing the interdisciplinary doctoral study programme corresponding to the new model.

Namely, both in providing the study process and in research, the specifics of the group of the branch of social sciences are based on the study of the needs and interests of society, man, and the state. When developing an interdisciplinary approach in the study process and research, including at the doctoral level, sociology, political science and anthropology are the unifying basic element in ensuring interdisciplinarity. Within the framework of the mentioned direction, the overarching goals of both the faculty and the doctoral study programme are implemented, namely, to provide opportunities for talented and motivated students to carry out innovative interdisciplinary research in social sciences based on individual research work. It should be noted that such research addresses issues that require a multifaceted approach and extends the traditional boundaries of social science disciplines, emphasising dynamic approaches in the fields of law, business, health management, communication and social work. However, it is based on an undoubted foundation of sociology, political science and anthropology.

At the same time, the importance of the direction in fulfilling the tasks of the sub-programmes of the doctoral study programme should also be noted - to carry out industry-relevant, cross-sectorally relevant original and innovative research, to increase scientific excellence at the level of scientific articles published in international journals. To provide doctoral students with the opportunity to acquire competences in a perspective of interdisciplinary integration, which contributes to the dissemination of knowledge in society at national and international level and to the strengthening of transversal skills. To provide doctoral students with the opportunity to acquire the competence to independently improve their scientific qualifications in order to implement and manage research and development projects meeting international criteria at national and international level, including the application of new digital skills in research areas of relevance to the sector. Analysing the execution of the mentioned tasks, it can be concluded that the role of the direction to be accredited is obvious, which is primarily reflected in the specifics of the activity of researchers corresponding to the direction and the involvement of these researchers both in working with doctoral students and in international research, implementing Horizon projects, LCS (Latvian Council of Science) projects and performing other types of scientific activity.

In addition, it should be noted that all existing programmes of the direction are still implemented within the direction, additionally strengthening their connection with the direction. In 2024, within the scope of consolidation research grants, RSU FSS priority research topics are additionally defined, which creates the importance of the direction and role in the implementation of programmes in an interdisciplinary framework.

The priority research topic is “Security in the Baltic States: internal and external aspects in the public, political, communication and military spheres”. It can be concluded from the priority direction that the programmes of the direction to be accredited provides relevant expertise. The second direction of development in the mentioned document - Trust in a Highly Mediatized Environment: Community Cohesion and Resilience - is also applicable to the direction programmes. On the other hand, the third priority topic - Issues of Interaction Between Patients and Healthcare

Professionals: Ethical, Legal, Social, Communication Aspects - emphasises more the sociological and political contribution, which is also applicable to the content of the existing programmes of the direction (available in [Latvian](#)).

Considering the above, it can be concluded that the study programmes are even more closely related to the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology", the aforementioned is strengthened both in the study process and in the provision of research.

**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.**

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

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- High-quality content of study programmes provided by lecturers – industry professionals, scientists and practitioners
- A module system that results in an even study load throughout the study process
- A large proportion of students' independent work and systematic and varied control of students' independent work
- Student-oriented environment and good material and technical support
- RSU funded study places in most study programmes
- Possibility for doctoral students to do teaching practice at the Faculty of Social Sciences and other structural units of RSU
- Scientific interests of RSU lecturers, which allow them to undertake a wide range of study work, supervision of Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral theses in political science
- The lecturers involved in the implementation of the programmes are opinion leaders in their fields
- Prestige, recognition and appreciation of StP in the industry
- Possibilities for learning practical skills – practice in an academic Bachelor's study programme, visiting lecture programme, visits to institutions, meetings with industry representatives

- The workload of lecturers teaching in various study programmes and extracurricular activities
- Low salary of lecturers
- Small number of experts of the Latvian Council of Science and, therefore, the narrow circle of potential supervisors of doctoral theses
- Difficult involvement of foreign lecturers due to limited financial resources

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### External factors

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#### Opportunities

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#### Threats

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- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stably constant volume of base students who apply to study in the programmes</li> <li>• Expanding the range of students with international students</li> <li>• Greater promotion of international mobility of lecturers and doctoral students</li> <li>• Wider implementation of scientific projects and involvement of doctoral students</li> <li>• Interdisciplinarity of studies within the framework of the new FSS - adaptation to the current requirements of the labour market</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of funding for programme implementation</li> <li>• Increasing tuition fees, reducing interest in applications for study places funded by personal funds</li> <li>• Demographic indicators - an objective decrease in the number of students, growing competition</li> <li>• Young people's motivation and interest in studies at a higher education institution, as well as the willingness to devote time to studies, are decreasing</li> <li>• Declining interest in doctoral study programmes in general (impact on research and replacement of lecturers)</li> <li>• Interaction with the framework of scientific activity inappropriate for social sciences</li> <li>• Changes in the long-term plans of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

RSU FSS and StD management are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the direction, as well as opportunities and threats of the StD, StD opportunities can generally be divided into three large groups - quality of programme content and lecturers' competence, study process organisation, industry evaluation. To keep StD strengths, it is necessary to continue to build and improve existing aspects that have proven successful and effective. For example: (1) to improve and regularly update the content of study programmes by attracting new industry experts, scientists and practitioners as lecturers and seminar leaders. To promote an interdisciplinary approach by integrating the latest scientific knowledge and practice trends from the fields of political science and anthropology; (2) to continue to analyse student feedback on the study load and the module system in order to identify possible improvements and, in accordance with the recommendations, continue to optimise the order and content of the modules to ensure a more even study load and more effective knowledge acquisition; (3) to introduce additional tools and methods for monitoring the efficiency and quality of students' independent work, for example, in an effort to reduce the unfair use of artificial intelligence, as well as seminars on conducting research works and writing scientific articles; (4) to continue to invest in material and technical support, improving the lecture room and available technology base, to organise regular discussions and workshops where students could share their experiences and opinions about the study environment and process; (5) in cooperation with institutions (for example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the private sector, to look for additional funding sources for funding studies, as well as scholarships; (6) to promote cooperation between various RSU faculties and structural units in order to offer doctoral students wider opportunities for pedagogical practice, allowing them to gain valuable teaching experience; (7) to promote the scientific activity of lecturers by organising regular events where lecturers could present their scientific achievements and research, thus promoting scientific discourse and cooperation between colleagues and students; (8) to expand cooperation with industry institutions, organisations and companies to provide students with practical skills and experience through placements, visiting lectures and projects, as well as promote the involvement of graduates in mentoring programmes for new students; (9) to be active in social media and other communication channels in order to talk about the studies, academic and scientific successes of students and lecturers, achievements of graduates and important projects, thus promoting the recognition and

prestige of the programmes.

As for the weaknesses of StD and the possibilities to reduce them, first of all, they have been identified and will be addressed also at the management level of FSS and RSU, looking for ways to prevent or reduce them, while also implementing the following activities at the level of the programme director: (1) optimisation of lecturers' workload, accurately separating the functions of lecturers and support staff, as well as using IT solutions to optimise routine functions and inviting lecturers to review course content and evaluate the usefulness of various activities and the possibility of replacing them with others (innovative teaching methods and digital tools that could improve the efficiency of the teaching process and reduce workload of lecturers). Attention will also be paid to the fair distribution of the workload and the more intense involvement of doctoral students in the implementation of the study process; (2) discussions on the balance of lecturers' remuneration rates and workloads will be continued; (4) active cooperation with the Latvian Council of Science and academic staff of the appropriate level will be continued in order to motivate the fulfilment of the requirements necessary to be included in the range of LCS experts; (5) networking events, seminars and conferences will be organised in cooperation with the FSS faculty management and the Social Sciences Research Centre to promote cooperation between researchers in different fields, as well as to develop international cooperation projects that would help find funding for attracting foreign visiting lecturers.

In general, the untapped potential and opportunities to further improve the performance and quality of the specific StD are also seen. For example, (1) an intense emphasis on the new FSS marketing campaign and awareness strategy to retain and attract new students – personalised FSS marketing strategies aimed at the target audience through social media platforms, educational exhibitions and open door days. This approach would attract both local and international students; (2) expansion of international cooperation and partnership by increasing the range of exchange students, continuing to expand student participation in international summer schools, thus promoting knowledge exchange, networking and bringing the name of RSU ESF to the world and attracting international students to independent Bachelor's and Master's studies in the programmes included in direction "Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology", as well as for all programmes that did not have it, a parallel offer in English has been developed; (3) strengthening of scientific capacity in the newly established Social Sciences Research Centre by increasing the number of scientific publications and projects, attracting doctoral students and students of other levels, increasing their practical experience and professional development; (4) use of the potential of interdisciplinarity offered by the inclusion in the new FSS – development of new, interdisciplinary study courses, integrating fields such as data science, digital marketing and public health; (5) more intensive involvement of the industry in the study process, continuously updating the study process according to the needs of the industry. Using these opportunities, the study direction "Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology" could not only improve its competitiveness and student experience, but also significantly promote its academic and research potential.

At the same time, it is important to focus on the following activities to reduce the impact of external threats: funding diversification, student attraction and retention strategies, as well as improving the academic environment. Funding stability can be facilitated by the search for additional funding sources, as well as cost optimisation and maximum resource efficiency of the programme. Marketing strategies should be adjusted to attract and retain students, improving cooperation with secondary schools and offering flexible learning opportunities, as well as promoting the motivation of young people with interactive activities and practical opportunities. It is also important to offer stimulating research grants for doctoral studies, promote international cooperation and organise scientific conferences to increase interest in academic activity. In the medium and long term, it is necessary to build a strong academic team with a sustainable staff development strategy, offering

professional development opportunities and a motivating environment for lecturers.

It is important to continue actively lobbying, for example, the idea of public and private sector support in the field of education. This could help maintain stability and financial support by reducing the threat of funding cuts. In addition, close cooperation with companies and government institutions can help identify opportunities and address any potential problems, thus reducing their impact on the faculty's operation and development.

StD "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology" is attached in Annex 4.1, the recommendations implementation plan given by the previous accreditation experts can be found in Annex 11.

**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.**

**Study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology" management (governance) structure, its effectiveness**

The management (governance) structure of the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology" and corresponding study programmes is oriented towards the development of the study direction, decision-making takes place efficiently, the support provided by administrative and technical staff ensures all the needs of the study programmes corresponding to the study direction.

Programmes are managed in accordance with the process description No. 35 "Planning and administration of the study process".

The governance structure consists of:

- academic structural unit – Faculty of Social Sciences;
- study quality council – quality council of StD "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology", which includes also students and representatives of employers;
- head of the study direction – the head of StD "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology" (after 06.02.2024, also the head of StP group "International Politics and Society Studies") Lelde Metla-Rozentāle;
- StP directors (until 05.02.2024);
- lecturers of study courses.

In general, much attention is paid to cooperation with the industry in the operation and development planning of StPs implemented by StD; the development trends of the industry are regularly followed, the professional competences required in the industry are analysed and their dynamics are monitored.

The effectiveness of the governance structure can be stated in context with the RSU Quality Policy[1] using the set quality criteria[2] and the achievement of aims of the study direction and corresponding StPs.

RSU quality indicators include institutional level, content level, individual level (students, lecturers) and employer outlook – a total of 14 criteria.

Student satisfaction with studies, success indicators, participation of students in StP development, as well as employment of graduates in the sector and feedback from employers regarding the work of students during training placement or the competence of graduates indicate the effectiveness of the management structure and process in achieving the aims set.

### **Role of head of direction and directors of study programmes**

StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” in the context of the development of the programmes included in the programme is important and multidimensional. The head of the study direction is responsible for several important aspects:

1. Programme planning and development: the head is responsible for the strategic planning, development and improvement of study programmes so that they meet both academic standards and student needs and current trends in sociology, political science and anthropology.
2. Quality assurance: the head ensures that the content of all programmes of the direction meets the highest academic standards and quality requirements. It also includes monitoring the qualifications of lecturers and evaluating the learning process.
3. Research: the head promotes research activity in the relevant disciplines – development of research projects, cooperation with other scientific institutes and industry, as well as involvement of students in research work, development and defence of theses.
4. International cooperation: the head creates and maintains international partnerships with other higher education institutions and research institutions to promote student and faculty mobility, joint research and international projects.
5. Student support and involvement: the head follows up on the results of student questionnaires, provides conceptual support in connection with the study process, and also promotes active involvement in university and social and political life.
6. Communication and representation: the head represents the study direction inside and outside the university, building cooperation with industry representatives, potential employers and other stakeholders.

On the other hand, the director of study programmes and from 06.02.2024 the role of the head of StP group in ensuring the operation and development of the programme is aimed at achieving the objectives and qualitative implementation of each programme. The most important functions are:

1. Strategic planning and development of programme content to ensure compliance with labour market requirements and student needs. This includes defining study programme objectives, updating study plans and course content, as well as introducing new study directions and specialisations.
2. Quality assurance, which is implemented through the assessment of the study process and study content, monitoring of the work of lecturers, as well as the analysis of student feedback and the implementation of improvements corresponding to high academic standards.
3. Resource management, providing the necessary resources to achieve the programme’s objectives – a team of university teachers, material and technical base and necessary IT provision.
4. Cooperation with other academic institutions, research centres, national and international organisations to expand study, placement and research opportunities for students. This may include developing joint study programmes, exchange programmes, as well as cooperation with employers.
5. Student support in solving academic and administrative problems, as well as their involvement in academic activities – visiting lectures, conferences, seminars, field trips that

promote professional development.

6. Communication and recruitment – promoting the programme’s popularity (advertising activities) by popularising it among potential students.

The main task of StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” and the directors of the Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes included in it (from 06.02.2024 – one director, L. Metla-Rozentāle) is to ensure the academic and administrative management of the study process, with the aim of achieving the academic and scientific excellence and relevance to the dynamically changing demands of the labour market. In the new RSU FSS structure, the director of the programme group works in close cooperation with the study process coordinator (Ilze Speķe), the Head of Study Programme Quality and Development (Līga Ozoliņa), the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Studies (Mārtiņš Daugulis) and the dean of the faculty (Karina Palkova), where the achievement and further development of the objectives and tasks set by StP is ensured through interaction. Support functions are also provided by the Information Technology Department, the Academic Affairs Department and the Student Services, as well as representatives of the Student Union and students in the study programmes, especially group leaders, who ensure daily information exchange and feedback between the director of the programme group, the study process coordinator and students.

See Annex 4.2. Study direction governance structure.

[1] The RSU Quality Policy is available on the website in [Latvian](#) and [English](#).

[2] Quality indicators of RSU study programmes. Approved by rector’s order No. 2-3/166, 2016.

#### **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.**

RSU has established the unified system and developed/implemented procedures for student admission, recognition of study period, professional experience, previously acquired formal and non-formal education and evaluation of student achievements and learning outcomes, these systems are logical and effective.

Admission to RSU takes place on the basis of admission requirements of the respective study level approved by the RSU Senate as defined for the particular academic year. RSU has admission regulations for each level of studies. The admission regulations are available on the RSU website in [Latvian](#) and [English](#), as well as in Annex 1. For more information, see Annex 23, Paragraph 1.4: Enrolment of students, process of studies, recognition of qualifications and certification.

RSU ensures admission procedures corresponding to the aim that are based on previously defined and published admission regulations. The admission regulations are revised and updated every year by the Academic Affairs Department in cooperation with directors of study programmes. For example, the admission requirements for Bachelor’s programme “International Relations – European Studies” of StD “Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology” are similar to those for a large part of other FSS undergraduate studies at RSU: secondary education, centralised examination certificate in Latvian, mathematics and a foreign language (or by presenting the

examination document of an international testing institution), but if the applicant wants to apply for a study place financed by RSU, he/she must take the complex examination (professional examination). The admission requirements for the Master's study programmes implemented by StD differ from programme to programme, in addition to submitting documents confirming previous higher education, asking to write a motivation letter, an essay reflecting the research topic and/or organising interviews.

RSU admission policy, enrolment procedures and criteria are implemented consistently; applicants are admitted on the basis of open and equal competition. RSU ensures an equal admission process: uniform admission regulations have been set for all candidates with specific and previously known requirements rooted in respective conditions of the state level and principles of law. That way, the rights of the most suitable applicants to study in their selected StPs are ensured. RSU fulfils its obligation to accept the documents submitted by the applicants and to decide on compliance thereof with the requirements mentioned in annexes to the admission requirements. RSU also announces the admission results in accordance with the provisions of the admission requirements and organises signing of study agreements with the applicants who have passed the competition. After signing of the study agreements and fulfilment of the defined applicant's obligations, RSU ensures matriculation of these applicants.

Recognition of qualifications is based on cooperation with other higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre (Academic Information Centre) to guarantee harmonised recognition of qualifications throughout the country. Appropriate qualification procedures are based on the qualification recognition practice of the higher education institution, which is in line with the principles of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications.

RSU has successfully organised its work with a single recognition commission, ensuring involvement of a respective expert from the respective thematic area of the education. Such approach (one commission for all thematic areas of education) has ensured uniform approach throughout the university; different interpretation is avoided, thus providing equal attitude towards persons.

It should be emphasised that the recognition commission includes a student delegated by the Student Union, thus fully ensuring student participation in decision-making.

Enclosed:

Annex 24.2. Certification that in case the StP is no longer implemented, the university will provide the students with the opportunity to continue their education in another StP or another institution of higher education (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college)

Annex 24.3. Certification that the higher education institution guarantees compensation of losses to the students if the StP fails to be accredited due to activity of the higher education institution, or if the StP licence is withdrawn and the student does not wish to continue their studies in another StP

Annex 24.8. Study Contract Sample

**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.**

Students can familiarise themselves with the criteria, conditions and binding procedures for the assessment of student performance in the RSU Academic Regulations I (documents are available in [Latvian](#) and [English](#) in the section “studies”). Requirements for defining and evaluating learning outcomes – knowledge, skills, competence – are included in Process Description No. 6 “Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes” (available in Annex 1). The assessment criteria of each specific course and the lecturer’s requirements are detailed in the specific Course description. A unique course description or “contract” between the lecturer and the student is developed for each study course, in which the student, upon commencing the course acquisition, may become acquainted with all the requirements of the lecturer, tasks to be performed, assessment criteria, etc. or all information describing the progress and results of the course.

The student assessment process as a result of the study course takes place in accordance with the requirements specified by the particular lecturer and in conformity with the topic to be studied in the study course and the number of ECTS. The final assessment of students’ knowledge and skills is expressed in a ten-point system – objective, accurate and understandable to the student. The lecturer also has the right to give intermediate assessments as pass/fail, informing students precisely about the assessment methodology.

When assessing written and practical works, students are always given feedback on the performance in written or oral form. Any written works (including visual presentations) should be submitted by students to the e-learning system where they are assessed and checked for signs of plagiarism.

The overall assessment of the study course most often includes several parameters – participation of the student in lectures, involvement and quality of answers in seminars, as well as in practical classes, quality of drafting of the report, quality of essays and other written works (e.g. mini tests), examination result. However, the teacher specifies the exact assessment system to be used in each particular study course in the particular course description and the assessment criteria are presented to students at the beginning of each module. This type of system excludes the possibility for a student to obtain a successful assessment by learning only for an examination and therefore stimulates them to study systematically, throughout the module, making the knowledge acquired more lasting and durable.

The academic freedom of each lecturer is respected in the implementation of the study courses, including the development and implementation of study examinations, at the same time providing that the teaching and examination methods must be chosen according to the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study course. In order to ensure that the methods, procedures and principles of student performance assessment are in line with the objectives of the study programme and the needs of students, the quality of study courses is regularly monitored within the framework of the study direction, involving both course lecturers, heads of the StPs and RSU structural units of study process support, in this case the RSU Centre for Educational Growth or the Academic Affairs Department reviewing and approving study course descriptions, as well as employer and student representatives, including in the Study Quality Council. This cooperation and exchange of information includes the organisation of observation of teaching in study courses, seminars for the exchange of experience for teaching staff and heads of StPs, as well as mapping of StPs, during which special attention is paid to the close link between study course outcomes and StP outcomes. The assessment methods used in the study courses are discussed by the teaching staff and students, evaluating the relevance of the methods to the study programme objectives. Best practices are adopted and further used during the annual updating of study courses. The methods of study course evaluation are being reviewed, taking into account the results of the student course

evaluation questionnaire, which includes a special section on evaluation methods.

Both summative and formative assessment are combined in the study process to enhance students' individual performance and assess the level of learning outcomes achieved. In the context of learning outcomes, both study course-specific and transversal knowledge, skills, and attitudes are important, therefore, students' active involvement and participation, initiative, and taking responsibility are additionally evaluated. Individual assessments of interim and final examinations of study courses are available to each student on their student profile in the RSU e-learning environment.

Creative, research, practical and self-reflection works are assessed according to the objectives of each study course and course assessment criteria, which the lecturer introduces to the students at the beginning of the course. The criteria for research works are available in the methodological instructions for research works, which were improved and updated in 2023 for both Bachelor's and Master's degree students of StP (information in [Latvian](#) and [English](#)).

**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.**

RSU has clearly defined principles and mechanisms of academic honesty – a Code of Ethics has been developed and an Ethics Commission has been established, which examines violations and cases of disputes based on submissions. The RSU Academic Integrity Policy has been developed to strengthen the management of academic integrity, which includes explanations of academic integrity and its violations, investigation of violations and applicable actions. RSU has developed and approved document “Methodological Guidelines for References and Listing of Reference Sources and Literature” (available in [Latvian](#) and [English](#)), which explains to students the principles of using the works of other authors and making correct references. In order to promote compliance with academic integrity and make it easier for lecturers to check student papers, RSU has implemented and uses the Unified Computerised Plagiarism Control System of Latvian institutions of higher education to verify the originality of any written paper, and for wider use, RSU has acquired a license for the *Turnitin* content originality control tool (since 2015). For ease of use, the tool is integrated into the RSU e-learning website not only for the assessment of final papers, but also for interim examinations. Example of application: intended study papers, all final study papers and individual course reports must be submitted in e-learning to the *Turnitin* assignment upload request indicated in the relevant course. After uploading the papers, the work content originality (comparison) results are also available in the e-learning, which show both the total percentage of matches and visually show the matching places in the submitted work, identifying the used original sources with which a part of the text matches. Study paper supervisors evaluate the matching results, also taking into account the *Turnitin* user manual developed by RSU (the document is only available in [Latvian](#)) for academic staff, which indicates the principles of interpreting the results (page 7 of the manual). Considering these results, the supervisor of the relevant paper evaluates whether the submitted paper complies with the principles of academic integrity and provides an assessment accordingly or informs the student if the paper needs to be corrected. When evaluating *Turnitin* results, it is taken into account that a relatively high (over 20%) similarity with other sources may not mean that the submitted paper has signs of plagiarism, but indicates a lack of contribution by the author of the paper, that is, the author has used other sources of information

and referred to them correctly, but the analysis, argumentation, interpretation added by the author is missing, which the supervisor also indicates to the student when providing an assessment or returning the paper for correction.

In order to improve the lecturers' knowledge of the possibilities of this tool and to develop the skills for using it, RSU Information Technology Department and CEG regularly organise practical trainings for lecturers and support staff on the benefits and use of this tool for checking, correcting students' independent work and providing feedback in the study courses, as well as for checking final (Master's) papers at the end of the study programme.

RSU has developed and implemented process description No. 48 "Checking the originality of final papers, residents' scientific research papers and doctoral theses and monitoring academic integrity", which explains in detail the steps of checking the originality of final papers step by step. RSU's actions in the event of a violation of academic integrity are regulated by the following regulatory enactments:

1. Academic Regulations I of Rīga Stradiņš University (approved at the meeting of RSU Senate on 23 November 2021, minutes No.2-1/10/2021);
2. Academic Integrity Policy of Rīga Stradiņš University (approved at the meeting of RSU Senate on 16 June 2020, minutes No.2-1/6/2020).

A process has been developed for reviewing violations of academic integrity, and several forms have been developed for reporting various types of violations of academic integrity:

- Form No. AG-1 "Academic Integrity Violation Form for Interim Examination in a Study Course"
- Form No. AG-2 "Academic Integrity Violation Form for Final Examination in a Study Course"

A disciplinary process is governed by Internal Rules and Regulations for Studies of Rīga Stradiņš University (approved at the meeting of RSU Senate on 21 April 2020, minutes No.2-1/3/2020).

Implementation of academic integrity in programmes of the direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology":

- students of all levels learn the basic principles of academic integrity, for example, at the Bachelor's level, in study courses such as "Introduction to Studies and Specialty", plagiarism, academic integrity, academic ethics are explained in detail, as well as practical training in creating references and using various applicable software, additional students are provided with access to video lectures offered by the RSU Library;
- the head of StP group is to inform about the principles of academic integrity and the procedure of prevention at RSU (examination of plagiarism cases is the joint responsibility of the director of the programme group and the teacher of the specific course or paper supervisor, a plagiarism register is maintained, recording each case; in case of repeated plagiarism – potential exmatriculation of the student);
- all stages of the study process or final papers (course, Bachelor's, Master's theses) are uploaded to the e-learning website and checked with the help of the *Turnitin* tool;
- most of the examination papers of the study courses are also checked with the help of the mentioned tool;
- there are regular tutorials with the RSU Union on issues of academic integrity.

In order to promote the implementation of a uniform approach to definition, detection, consideration of violations of academic integrity and application of punishment, RSU has developed the initiative to create the framework for compliance with academic integrity culture and its principles with other higher education institutions in Latvia. This initiative is included in specific objective 8.2.3 "To ensure better governance at higher education institutions" of the Ministry of

Education and Science in the implementation of the project.

Within the framework of development of a support system, the main activities are:

- promotion of prevention strengthening compliance of the principles of ethics and academic integrity, includes the development of a single e-learning study course, regular studies and discussions at the university, educational self-learning materials, self-assessment tests. Three main target groups have been specified for the activity of the action: students, academic staff, and scientific staff;
- improvement of the internal system - development and improvement of the RSU's internal regulatory enactments, which allow to align the definition and implementation of unified principles of ethics and the management of academic integrity for students, lecturers, and scientific staff. The types of violations are defined in the internal regulatory enactments, the procedure for examining violations is explained in more detail, as well as the applicable action and punishment, thus promoting transparency and consistency in decision-making. In a situation of conflict of interest or disputes, there is a possibility to create a commission that examines the specific case of possible violation.

In order to promote alignment of basic principles of ethics and academic integrity and compliance with these principles in Latvia, cooperation has been established between several Latvian higher education institutions, envisaging intellectual cooperation in strengthening common principles, developing shared materials, as well as further cooperation in promoting ethics and academic integrity and solving problem issues on a national scale. Currently, RSU has formally signed a declaration of strategic partnership with RSU Red Cross Medical College, University of Latvia and Riga Technical University.

Artificial intelligence has entered the modern study process as a new challenge to academic integrity. To respond to the challenges caused by the widespread use of artificial intelligence and also the risks to academic integrity, RSU CEG has developed guidelines "Artificial intelligence in higher education", where the risks and correct use of artificial intelligence tools in the academic environment are explained in chapter "2.1. Artificial intelligence and academic integrity".

Additional information about RSU's involvement in issues related to academic integrity:

- article of 05.03.20219 "Integrity is an integral part of academia" (available in [Latvian](#), [English](#)),
- article of 15.11.2019 "The seminar "Academic integrity and ethics in higher education" was held" (only available in [Latvian](#)),
- RSU Academic Integrity Policy (available in [Latvian](#), [English](#)).
- Guidelines: Academic integrity and ethics in higher education (available in [Latvian](#)).

## **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.**

Deming cycle is used for the implementation and application of the internal quality system: Plan -

Do - Check - Act (see Figure 7).

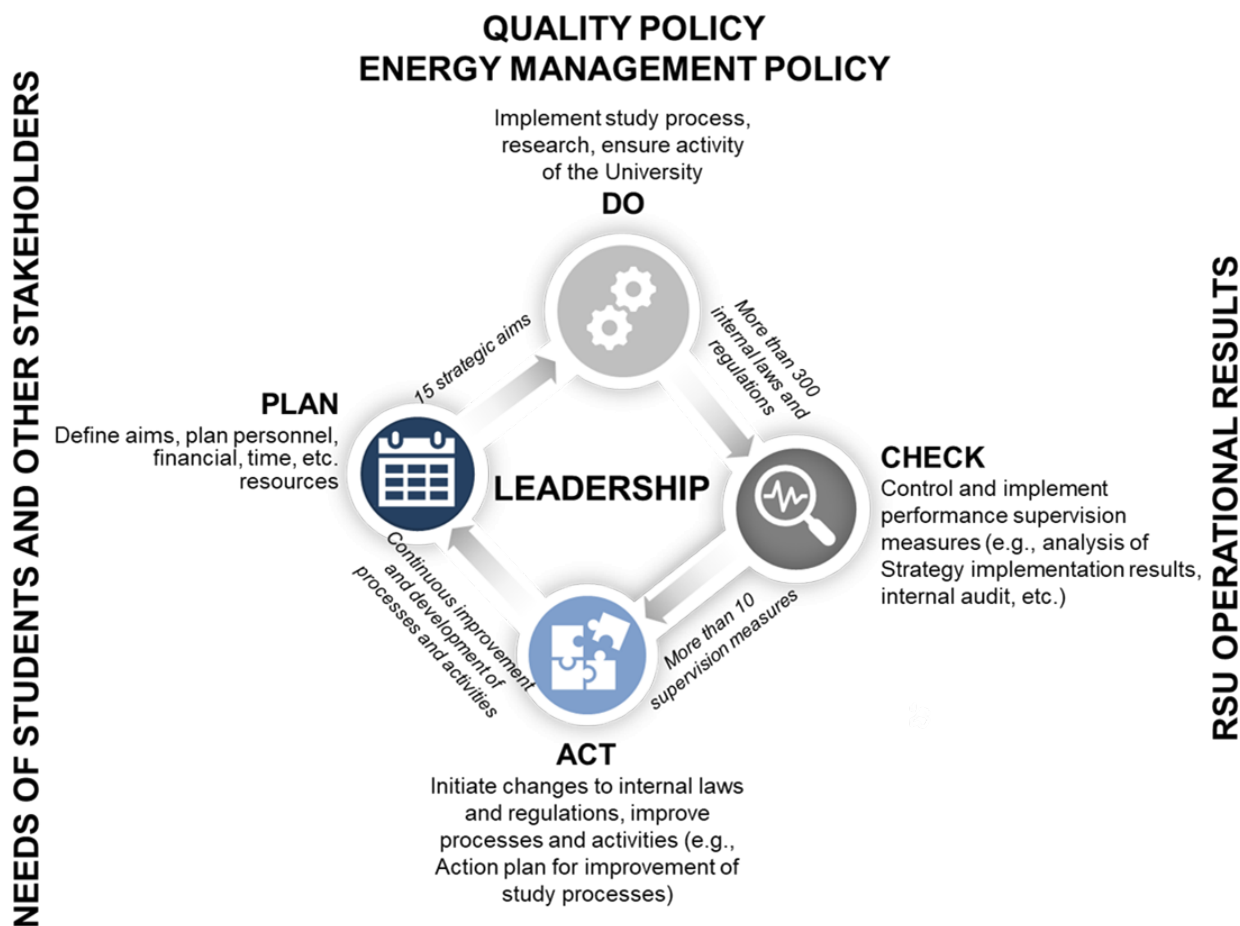


Figure 7. Implementation and application scheme of the internal quality system

In general, supervision of RSU activities is ensured by activities that are integrated in everyday activities, for example, evaluation of work quality, distribution of duties and responsibilities, coordination of documents. At the same time, targeted control measures have been introduced, which are implemented at different times throughout the year.

Requirements for planning, supervision, and quality control of the study process in RSU are determined by Process Description No. 35 "Study Process Planning and Administration". Requirements for defining and assessment of learning outcomes - knowledge, skills, competence - are included in Process Description No. 6 "Assessment and Submission of Learning Outcomes" and Academic Regulations I.

To ensure the supervision of the quality of studies, once a year an evaluation of study directions is carried out, a review of study programmes and a study direction development plan / report, as well as a plan / report for the implementation of the recommendations of external evaluation experts are drawn up. The report of the programme should include an analysis of the quality indicators of StP (approved in 2016).

According to the document "Procedure for Assessment of Quality Indicators of StPs" (only available in [Latvian](#)), heads of StP collect and evaluate the StP quality indicators and include the results in the StP reports every year. Study-related data are also evaluated, including academic performance, analysis, study course survey results and observation results analysis, other measures.

In order to ensure supervision of processes taking place at the university, analysis of quality criteria performance of processes is performed once a year. For example, one of the criteria in Process Description No. 6 "Assessment and Submission of Learning Outcomes" is: "The input of

assessments of interim examinations and final examinations of study courses in e-academic performance is ensured:

- for oral tests – within one working day;
- for written interim examinations – no later than within six working days (or until the beginning of the session, if the period until the session is shorter – in the study system of regular classes);
- for written examinations at the end of the study course – no later than within six working days.”

The results are reported at the management meeting – the rectorate, where decisions are made for further action.

**The existing system ensures a comprehensive supervision of study quality with control measures throughout the year.**

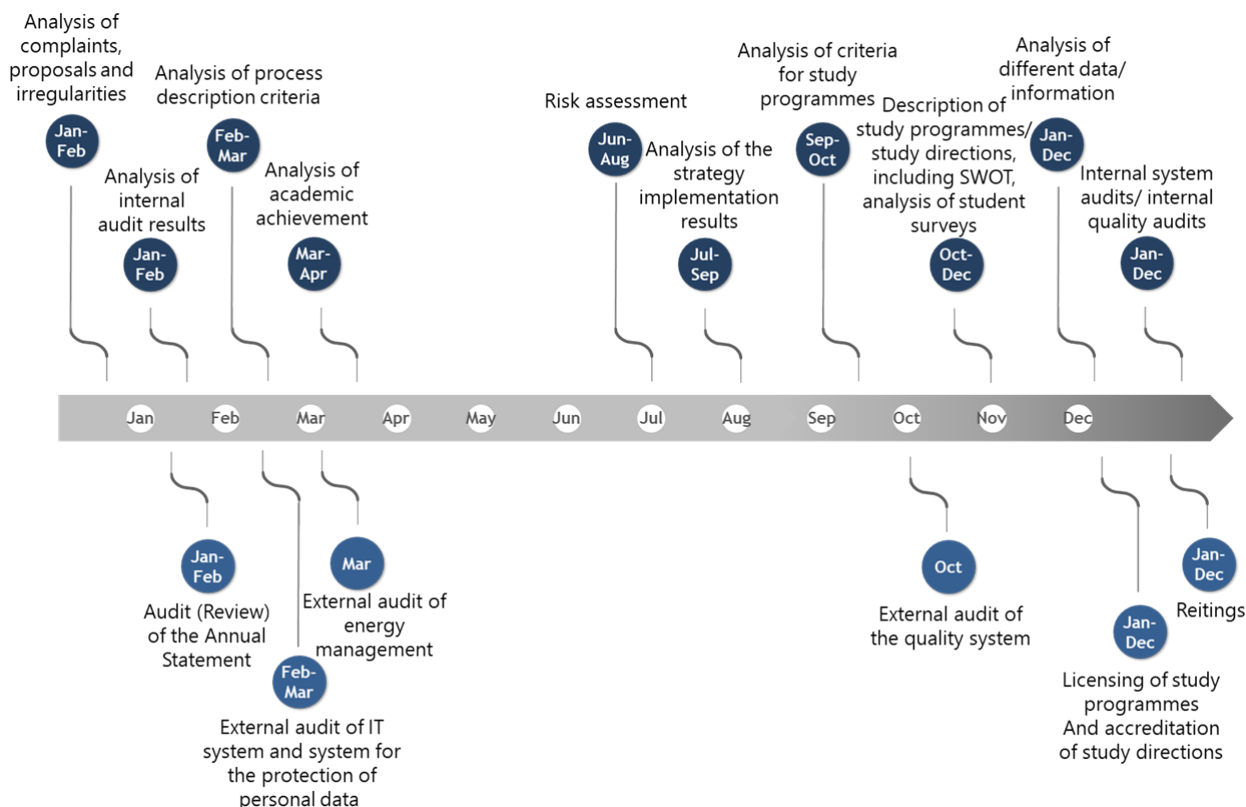


Figure 8. Measures of internal quality control

In accordance with the results of the quality control measures performed, quality of studies is reviewed, and measures are performed to improve the quality.

In addition, see section 3.2.3 of StP description on the evaluation of the implementation of StP.

**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).**

RSU has a set procedure for development, internal approval of StPs, supervision and periodic inspection of their operation. These requirements are determined in the Regulations for Development and Approval of New StPs at Rīga Stradiņš University and in detail – in Process Description No. 34 “Updating and Development of Study Courses, Study Programmes, Study Directions” (the link is available in Annex 1) in accordance with the requirements of external laws and regulations. Necessity, usefulness, and compliance of a new StP to the set aims is evaluated by CEG and Vice-Rectors for Studies, while developed StP licencing, accreditation and change introducing documents are coordinated by several RSU structural units and collegial institutions, including the Study Quality Council, Faculty Council, Dean’s Council, Rectorate, and Senate. Supervision over the implementation of StP and its quality is ensured by the StP director by evaluating the study process, learning outcomes, analysing the results of student surveys, changes to the trends in the labour market, and current events in the sector and world. Several administrative structural units are also involved in monitoring the quality of studies, including CEG (information [Latvian](#), [English](#)), Academic Affairs Department (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)), Human Resources Department (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)), Quality Assurance and Internal Audit Department (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)).

Drafting and approval of StP until submission to the Quality Agency for Higher Education (QAHE) includes certain sequential activities carried out by the StP developer (usually the StP director) in cooperation with the CEG study development project manager and coordinator, who perform informative, supervisory, coordinating, organisational functions, provide the necessary support during programme development, as well as content creation and content expertise functions, which are listed in Paragraph 1.2 of Annex 23.1 “Development and approval of programmes” (Compliance of RSU study programmes with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) Part 1, information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)).

Annual revision process of StPs and study directions is regulated by instructions of the study administration, and the goal is to prepare a summary of the annual study process quality monitoring. For more information, see Annex 23, Paragraph 1.9 “Survey and regular inspection of programmes”.

The annual study direction report is prepared in accordance with the above-mentioned procedure for the annual review process of StP and study direction. Programme directors and members of the Quality Council of the course participate in the preparation of the study direction report. The report includes an analysis of significant indicators of the development of higher educational institutions and learning outcomes, as well as a plan for the development of the study direction and a plan for the implementation of the recommendations of evaluation procedure experts, as well as the instructions of the Study Quality Commission of the Higher Education Quality Agency, which are contained in the final decision of the procedure.

Study direction reports are prepared using various sources of information. These sources help to comprehensively analyse study programmes, evaluate previously implemented changes and identify future improvement opportunities. The main sources of information include the dynamics of the number of students, students’ academic performance and assessments in study courses, feedback provided by students, the results of student questionnaires from the last year of studies about the study programme in general, feedback from graduates and employers, as well as feedback from lecturers about the implemented and planned improvements in study courses.

The various sources of information used help identify improvements by analysing trends and the effects of past changes. For example, the dynamics of student numbers can reveal whether certain

study programmes are more popular than others and whether admission requirements need to be adjusted. Students' academic performance and assessments in study courses can indicate in which areas students are experiencing difficulties and where it may be necessary to improve study materials or methods. Feedback from students, graduates and employers can provide valuable information on how the planned outcomes of each study programme are being achieved. On the other hand, feedback from lecturers about the implemented and planned improvements in study courses can help to assess whether and how these improvements have affected the students' learning experience.

A specific position is planned for the head of quality and development of study programmes in the structure of the newly established FSS faculty, whose primary task is to provide supreme supervision of the quality and content of study programmes, to monitor the quality of all StPs implemented by FSS, and to analyse various indicators confirming the quality of study courses in the format of a coordinated framework, for example, completed by students study course assessment questionnaires, in connection with other criteria of the quality management system and the strategic objectives of the direction. From 6 February 2024 this position is held by Līga Ozoliņa.

Overall, the content of the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology" has been created by carefully adapting it to the requirements of regulatory enactments, the objective and learning outcomes of the programme. In parallel, the content of the programme is aligned with the recommendations formulated by the sector (employers) and the latest trends in scientific development. At the start of each academic year, lecturers conduct an audit of course/module content and implement the necessary innovations and improvements. However, the director of the study programme group and the study process coordinator follow up and provide the necessary support and motivation for the implementation of this process. An additional incentive is also the expected assessment by students, which requires lecturers to mobilise to update the course concerned.

The content of StPs is created based on the complementary chain principle, starting from the so-called basic or introductory courses in the first year of studies and moving towards more specialised and high-level courses in the following academic years. This whole process ends with the drafting of a final (Bachelor's or Master's) paper, which is a certification of the student's ability to summarise and demonstrate all the knowledge gained during the previous semesters.

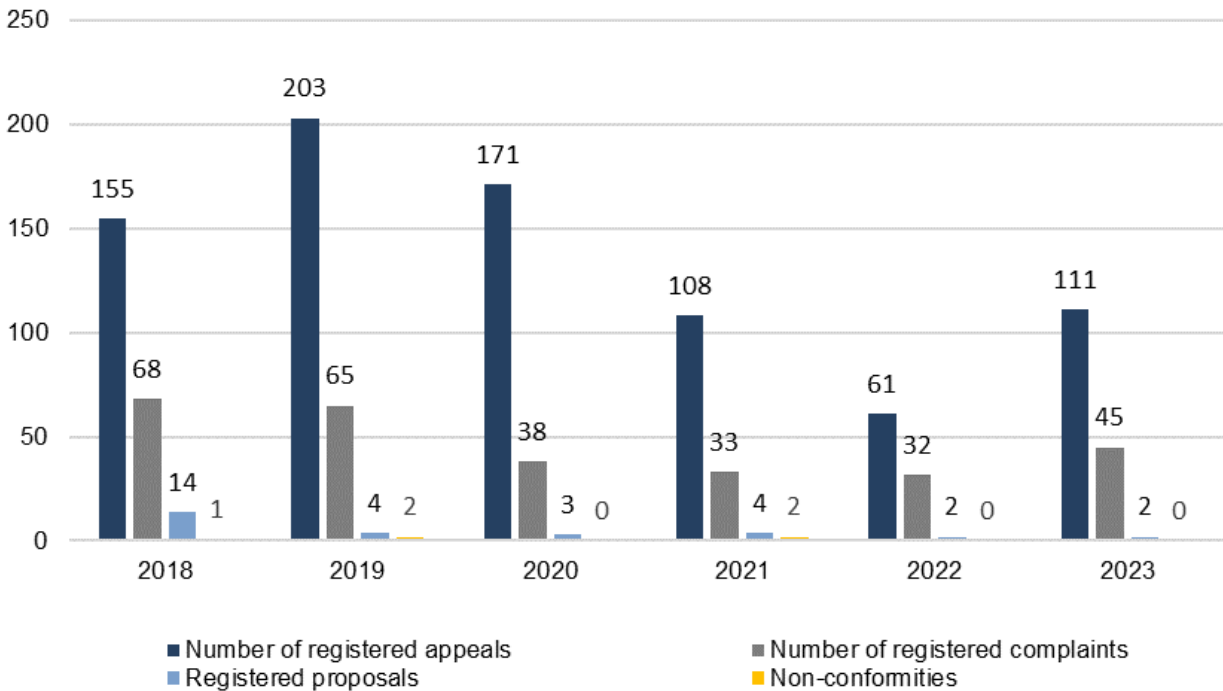
It should be emphasised that students' opinions are obtained in two stages - after each course of study (learning the opinion regarding the particular course and the lecturer) and after graduation of the study programme (learning the opinion about the whole programme and the study process). The first stage is necessary for operational monitoring of the quality of studies, while the second stage helps to assess the overall usefulness and consistency of each specific programme with the student's wishes and future plans.

It should be mentioned that during the accreditation period, a new study programme "Russia and Eurasia Studies" was included in the direction (during accreditation, taking into account the irreversible geopolitical changes in the world, the title of the programme will be changed to "International System Transformation Studies") and the content of this programme was created by carefully analysing and evaluating the world's long-term political transformations, the unique competence of Latvian and Eastern European teaching staff in the political history and development of the region, as well as the demand of the international education market - the desire of potential students for high-level regional expertise. Summarising all these aspects, a unique study programme was created in Latvia and internationally, the potential of which can be seen in the future as well. In the process of creating and approving the study programme, positive opinions were received from both Latvian and international experts, which is also confirmed by the allocation

of state-funded study places to those studying in the programme. The study programme is implemented in cooperation with two more RSU partner organisations – Central Asia Institute for Strategic Studies (CAISS) and Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages of Kazakhstan.

**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.**

Procedure for submission, review of student complaints and suggestions has been defined in Process Description No. 31 “Management of Complaints, Appeals, Non-Conformities and Suggestions”. The requirements for the submission and consideration of appeals are additionally defined in Academic Regulations I. In accordance with the internal procedure, students may submit complaints to the Student Services, Student Union and Quality Assurance and Internal Audit Department. Mentioned structural units ensure registration of complaints and suggestions and transfer them for review to the responsible structural unit. After evaluation of the complaint/suggestion and performance of corrective actions, the submitter of the complaint is informed in writing regarding results of the review and actions performed. Once a year, the information on all received complaints/suggestions is summarised, and results are included in the document “Report on the Quality Management System”. Information is taken into account when performing RSU risk assessment. Information on possibilities of students to submit complaints or proposals is available on the RSU website in [Latvian](#) and [English](#) and on the Student portal.



**Figure 9. Total number of appeals, complaints and proposals registered by RSU from 2018 to 2023**

In 2023, structural units registered a total of 45 complaints, 111 appeal complaints and two proposals. An increase in complaints is observed compared to the previous year. Evaluating the overall content of RSU complaints, it was stated that most complaints were about the implementation/quality of the study process (16 complaints) and the course of the knowledge examination (7 complaints). The number of complaints about the implementation of the study process has remained at the previous year's level. In 2023, 3 complaints were registered that were not observed before – complaints about mutual relations between students (ignoring, mobbing, incorrect treatment).

In 2023, compared to 2022, the number of appeals has increased by 50 units, which is equivalent to the number of appeals in 2021. In the reporting year, varying trends can be observed by structural units where appeals are registered. Most appeals are in the Faculty of Medicine (75 appeals), the Faculty of Dentistry (11 appeals) and the Faculty of Law (7 appeals). There are several structural units where no appeals were submitted in 2022, for example, the Faculty of European Studies, the Department of Political Science, etc.

To monitor the level of student satisfaction and prevent possible complaints in the study direction “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” regular meetings are organised for students with programme directors (after 06.02.2024 with the director of the StP group). The purpose of these meetings is to learn about the most pressing problems and challenges, as well as to provide the necessary moral or substantive support. Since student groups are optimal, it is possible to carry out such regular microclimate monitoring and preventive problem solving. Programme directors/group director, as well as the study process organiser, are also in regular communication with the leaders of each study programme group, who can at any time formally or informally approach the representatives of the specific positions, present the problem and it will be solved immediately.

Analysis of study course assessment questionnaires is also an important mechanism for identifying complaints from the students' point of view. In response to individual comments expressed in them, the head of the group of programmes takes preventive actions to prevent potential more serious complaints. Also, this information is used in the development of the annual study programme and study direction development plan, thinking about adjustments and improvement of the content of study programmes, as well as other issues included in the development plan of the direction – programme consolidation, qualitative growth and internationalisation, digitisation and promotion of interdisciplinarity of study programmes, as well as adaptation to the latest social environment and labour market trends/evidence-based learning, synergy of sectoral study programmes and sharing of resources, strengthening of interinstitutional cooperation, ensuring the growth of scientific research, strengthening the scientific and professional capacity of lecturers and integrating science into the study process, as well as ethical, academically fair, inclusive and “green-thinking” academic environment in the academic, support and student environment, and finally – promoting excellence in the study process.

Student surveys in the higher education institution are organised in a centralised way twice in the academic year. Students complete an anonymous electronic questionnaire for each study course mastered during the semester, in which the content, outcomes, organisation of the study course are evaluated, as well as the work of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study course are evaluated. The survey results for all lecturers, as well as heads of structural units and programme directors, are available in aggregated form on the RSU academic portal (available only in [Latvian](#)). It is the duty of the head of each study course to become acquainted with the results of the course survey and to provide structured feedback to students regarding the identified strengths and weaknesses of the course, as well as planned improvements in the improvement of the study course, if such are necessary. Feedback is submitted by the head of course at the RSU Academic Portal and is automatically published on the Student Portal in *MyRSU* and the E-learning course,

where it is available to both students who learned the course and students who start the course in the next academic year. Thus, when starting the study course, students have access to the results of the evaluation of the previous course, as well as feedback provided by the head of the course regarding the planned improvement of the study course.

Once a year, students of the last year of studies complete the evaluation questionnaire of the study programme, in which feedback regarding the content and outcomes of the study programme are provided. This questionnaire is also anonymous and is organised electronically and its results are automatically collected and published on the RSU Academic Portal, where they are available to study programme directors, heads of study directions and faculty deans.

The information obtained in the surveys is analysed at all relevant levels (at the level of the University, study direction and study programmes, departments and study courses), evaluated and discussed in collegial institutions (faculty councils, department meetings, study quality councils and Dean's Council), in which the experience obtained is summarised and decisions regarding necessary changes in the implementation of the study course or programme are taken.

**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.**

RSU regularly collects and analyses information (statistics) about study programmes corresponding to the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology", and it is effectively used for improvement of the study direction. A system for centralised collection and analysis of key data related to the study process has been developed. The system has a clear division of responsibilities for data analysis at various levels (RSU institutional level, study direction and programme levels, faculty and academic structural unit levels and study course level), drawing conclusions and providing feedback on the changes planned and implemented in the study process as a result of the analysis. To ensure data integration, they are periodically automatically backed up from various RSU information systems in the data warehouse, where information can be analysed in different sections by integrating data from different industries. RSU collects data on general statistical indicators characterising the higher education institution, such as the number of students, student success rate, drop-out rates and its causes, as well as admission results. Key performance indicators have been developed, which are periodically measured and monitored, and an in-depth analysis of key indicators is underway.

Every month, RSU collects the most up-to-date data on the number of students, including student status (active, inactive), type of tuition financing (state budget funds, paid studies). Information about the reasons for student drop-out is collected, compiled, and analysed, which is used to identify necessary improvements in the StP.

Data on admission results - the number of individuals enrolled in a particular StP - and the total number of applications is collected, keeping track of the demand for the StP. The number of students admitted to the StP is also summarised.

Data on the use of the e-learning environment are regularly collected in order to monitor the content and quality of e-courses, identify gaps and provide support to lecturers in improving the e-

learning environment.

The obtained statistical data are used for the improvement of StD, for example, in the following ways:

- The number of study applications, including by programme, is used to evaluate the recognition of StD and its StPs. In case of a reduced number of applications, the possible reasons are analysed and changes are made to StPs and/or StP publicity activities are strengthened.
- Study application priority statistics – used to identify opportunities for interdisciplinarity in the StP offer.
- Study applications by regions and secondary schools – are used to improve publicity activities in certain regions and secondary schools in the next period.
- The statistics of the number of concluded study contracts / admitted students – are used both for a more objective evaluation of the number of applications in the following periods, and for the analysis of the dynamics of the number of students, which affects many other indicators (dropouts, number of graduates, number of budget places, publicity activities).
- Academic performance statistics – are used to analyse both the dynamics of students' knowledge and skill level, as well as the compliance of study courses with the students' needs to identify possible changes in the study course assessment system and, accordingly, in the structure of content and learning outcomes, and possibly in the teaching of the course in general.
- Dropout statistics – are analysed especially in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of studies and during the programme period. Along with the reasons for dropping out, dropout statistics are used to identify possible differences in the demand and supply of higher education, to perform a gap analysis of students' expectations and, accordingly, to strengthen the communication of lecturers, StP directors and support structural units with students about the relevant reasons for dropping out and their prevention (e.g. different options for paying tuition fees, options for individual tutorials during studies). Also, dropout statistics are analysed over the total programme period along with graduate statistics, which are used both in programme publicity activities and in the overall programme complexity and relevance assessment.
- The statistics of the number of graduates – are analysed together with the dropout statistics of the total period of the programme and are used in the publicity activities of the programme, as well as in the assessment of the overall quality and relevance of the programme.
- Statistics of study payment methods (loans, sponsors, scholarships, self-financing) – are largely considered along with the analysis of dropouts and their reasons, used in communication with students to reduce the risk of dropout and for programme publicity activities, as well as in cooperation with support structural units in the administration of programme management, e.g., determining payment schedules, possible discounts, tuition fees.
- Status of study course descriptions – information on the status of study course descriptions is analysed to ensure regular updating of study courses, including updating of the literature and other sources indicated in the course description.
- The results of study course assessment questionnaires are used every semester to review study courses, evaluate management and mastering, and update them.
- Statistics of the reasons for dropping out of studies – are analysed together with dropout statistics in order to reduce the risks of dropping out by eliminating the reasons for dropping out of studies as far as possible. For example, the most common risks during the study process are academic and related to the curriculum (motivation, combining with work, complex content, etc.), as well as financial, related to difficulties in paying for studies.

- The statistics of the number and qualification of lecturers – are used for evaluating the conformity of programmes with regulatory requirements, for publicity activities, identifying the quality of programmes and strengthening the qualifications of lecturers, financial calculations of the study process, etc.
- Distribution of lecturers’ types of work – information on the lecturers’ types of work is analysed in order to plan the development of the personnel of academic structural units, to balance the pedagogical, research and methodical work of lecturers.
- Completion of e-learning – the content of the e-learning environment is analysed (study materials and activities available to students, content usage activity, etc.) in order to identify and eliminate gaps in the availability of digital learning materials and activities and to provide support to lecturers.

### Mechanism of obtaining and providing feedback from/to employers

Since April 2020, the “Employers” section has been created on the RSU website (available in [Latvian](#), in [English](#)). It contains a survey questionnaire (available in [Latvian](#), in [English](#)), which is freely available to any visitor to the website, including RSU employers and cooperation partners.

Since 2020, the “Employer” field has been included in the Certification of Fulfilment of Obligations to develop the up-to-date database of employers of graduates, which all graduates must fill in before exmatriculation.

Twice a year, when the exmatriculation of graduates has taken place, a report is prepared, from which current employers are obtained. An individual e-mail is sent to all employers twice a year – at the beginning of February and in July, with an invitation to fill out a survey questionnaire. Once the data is collected, the staff of RSU Career Centre summarises and compiles statistical data, as well as highlights recommendations. The results of the survey are presented and sent to the Council of Deans and study programme directors.



Figure 10. Centralised employer survey

There were also regular contacts of the head of each study programme (after 06.02.2024, the head of StP group “International Politics and Society Studies” Lelde Metla-Rozentāle) with employers, both in the form of a survey and organising student placement, inviting employers to participate as members of the Faculty Council, as well as attracting employers (for example, employees of ministries) as lecturers to provide the study process.

At the moment, when planning solutions for the interdisciplinarity of study programmes, particular attention is paid to the recommendations provided by Baiba Braže, Diplomat and Ambassador-at-Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, regarding professional skills and abilities, which would be useful for every student of the programme and which do not belong directly to the political science and international relations segment. All state and local government institutions (city councils, ministries, Cabinet of Ministers, Saeima, State Chancellery, political parties, etc.), as well as

international organisations (EU institutions, NATO Strategic Communication Centre of Excellence, etc.), NGO sector (Delna, Zaļā brīvība, etc.) have been regular cooperation partners in the period up to now.

**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).**

*Table 4. Websites, where information about the study direction and the corresponding study programmes is published*

<b>Study programme / study direction</b>	<b>Sections[1] of the RSU website, where information about the study direction and the corresponding study programmes is published:</b>
Academic Bachelor's study programme "International Relations - European Studies"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the programme in <a href="#">Latvian</a></li> <li>• Information about the programme in <a href="#">English</a> (minimum translation from Latvian)</li> </ul> (responsible: head of StP group)
Academic Master's study programme "International Relations and Diplomacy"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the programme in <a href="#">Latvian</a></li> <li>• Information about the programme in <a href="#">English</a> (minimum translation from Latvian)</li> </ul> (responsible: head of StP group)
Academic Master's study programme "Russia and Eurasia Studies" (in the accreditation, changes its title to "International System Transformations"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the programme in <a href="#">Latvian</a></li> <li>• Information about the programme in <a href="#">English</a></li> </ul> (responsible: head of StP group)
Academic Master's study programme "Social Anthropology"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the programme in <a href="#">Latvian</a></li> <li>• Information about the programme in <a href="#">English</a> (minimum translation from Latvian)</li> </ul> (responsible: head of StP group)

Study programme / study direction	Sections[1] of the RSU website, where information about the study direction and the corresponding study programmes is published:
Study direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” in <a href="#">Latvian</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">English</a></li> </ul> (responsible: head of the study direction, head of StP group); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the Faculty of Social Sciences, which oversees the implementation of StP in <a href="#">Latvian</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">English</a></li> </ul> (responsible: dean of the faculty and office manager)

RSU employs a wide range of modern marketing communication tools that provide information about the higher education institution, which is a modern, open university and offers high-quality education. RSU ensures presence of the university and high-quality content in traditional and digital media, such as a website that was reconstructed in 2017, strategic work is carried out with the audience on social media, and innovative solutions for communication with young people in social media are implemented. Study programme brochure is complemented by augmented reality application Overly. Advertising campaigns are dominated by digital media and the effectiveness of the selected advertising channels is monitored. Advertising materials and channels are tailored to the respective audience.

In the long term, relations are established with secondary schools all over Latvia, as well as secondary school students are offered direct contact with RSU, developing the RSU messenger programme, possibility to attend programme lectures they are interested in, organising open days, tours etc.

RSU participates in industry events (exhibition “School”, etc.), works with a database and e-mail marketing, develops various activities and events also for the target groups of Master’s and doctoral StPs.

The information published on the [website](#) of the higher education institution regarding the StPs corresponding to the study direction corresponds to the information available in official registers, provides basic information to applicants and students, and is published in all languages of the StP.

[1] The RSU website is maintained by the Communication Department (information in [Latvian](#) and [English](#)).

## 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.**

Income of study programmes of the study direction is used for staff remuneration, taxes,

maintenance of IT infrastructure, purchase of equipment and devices, and placement expenses. In addition to the direct costs of the implementation of lectures and classes, the study programme must cover the infrastructure maintenance costs (premises, IT solutions) and other RSU common resources used in the study programme (Student Services, Library, organisation of the study process, grant for the Student Union and other support and administrative functions).

The largest costs in the implementation of study programmes are the costs of academic staff remuneration. The remuneration rates of academic staff are determined in accordance with the regulation on types and accounting of work of academic staff developed by RSU. The amount of compensation for academic staff is determined considering the staff's academic position, structural unit and the amount of pedagogical work performed in the academic year. The amount of pedagogical work is determined based on the planned number of pedagogical work units in the study courses implemented by the structural unit in the relevant academic year. Pedagogical work units according to the types of pedagogical work are planned, calculated and listed in accordance with the regulations developed by RSU.

Funding for the implementation of the study direction is provided by:

- State budget grants for studies and social payments;
- Tuition fees and fees for courses;
- Funding for science (state budget and EU structural funds, international project funding, revenues from contract work, etc.);
- Income from other services, such as student dormitories, room and equipment rental, etc.

In the annual RSU budget planning process, each department plans its structural unit's budget, which is necessary for the implementation of study programmes, research, as well as infrastructure expenses. In budget planning, the head of each study programme discusses with the head of the department the provisions necessary for the study programme, while departments submit budget applications, which are further evaluated by deans, persons responsible for procurement, vice-rectors and the Rectorate. The submitted budget is coordinated by the Senate and approved by the Council.

The budget allocated to a structural unit depends on several factors, such as the planned number of students, the planned amount of pedagogical work, the necessary investments in infrastructure, the necessary investments in the development of study programmes, the costs of maintaining the structural units, revenue trends in the specific faculty, scientific activities, etc. The financial results of each programme in the given academic year are also considered in budget planning. A detailed budget is approved for each structural unit, that is, specific costs for a specific purpose are approved. Within the framework of the budget year, it is possible for structural units to request additional funding if there have been changes in some factor, for example, a larger number of students apply for a specific programme, as was planned when preparing the budget application (revenues have also increased accordingly).

External funding is provided by participation in various EU and national level programmes and initiatives - in the largest EU research and innovation programme "Horizon 2020" and "Horizon Europe", funding opportunities such as joint programming initiatives, international cooperation programmes, EU structural funds and other programmes are also used. From local funding initiatives: National Research Programme and Fundamental and Applied Research Programme. External financing is also made up of revenues from cooperation with the private sector (contract research, commercialisation projects).

RSU internal programmes funded from RSU resources are actively used. Volume of financing for internal research projects is granted during the planning of annual RSU budget. There are several

internal financing programmes – grants for doctoral students, RSU internal grants, cooperation grants between higher education institutions, aid to certain projects from the RSU Alumni Association, cooperation with the Boris and Inara Teterev Foundation.

Artistic creation activities (dance team and choir) are financed by:

- funds earned by RSU;
- co-financed by the Riga City Council.

To stimulate research and help researchers in the early stages of their career to start working in the profession, RSU has created incentive schemes and practices:

- RSU's internal grant system (about 400 thousand EUR per year);
- joint RSU and Riga Technical University (RTU) grant programme for multidisciplinary research;
- grants for postdoctoral fellows and researchers in the early stages of their career (European Social Fund);
- grants for doctoral students;
- co-financing for the creation of international cooperation networks and mobility (*Erasmus+*).

**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.**

RSU has consciously identified the infrastructure resources and material and technical support necessary for the implementation of the study direction “Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology” and they are at the disposal of the higher education institution in full. Students and teaching staff get access to resources. A unified system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of material-technical, methodical, informational and other provisions have been established.

**IT Service Centre**

In order to ensure continuous availability of IT resources in the study process, an IT service centre has been established – IT support for students, administrative staff and teaching staff providing answers to questions related to RSU IT systems. The applicant can ask questions using the IT User support system – [help.rsu.lv](http://help.rsu.lv), e-mail: [it@rsu.lv](mailto:it@rsu.lv) or call to 67061515. Open hours on working days from 7:30 to 20:00 and on Saturdays from 9:00 to 16:00.

**Wireless internet**

RSU employees and students have the possibility to use the *Eduroam WiFi* network free of charge. *Eduroam* is a free service that makes it possible to connect to the WiFi network in more than 6000 locations in more than 100 countries worldwide: universities, research centres, educational establishments, schools and other research and education institutions. Students may connect to the *Eduroam* wireless network using their username and password. RSU students may also use public access computers with provided access to the student IT systems and internet resources.

**Infrastructure**

Multimedia projectors are available in 193 training rooms for use of audiovisual materials for studies; most of these are high-resolution interactive projectors that are connected to a sound

system. A centralised management system of the multimedia equipment of auditoriums has also been developed. Also, ten computer rooms with more than 200 work stations that are used both for the implementation of certain study courses, as well as for provision of electronic examinations and other types of knowledge testing are available for the needs of study process:

1. 28 hybrid auditoriums with automatic tracking for conducting hybrid lectures and classes;
2. eight lecture auditoriums designed for more than 100 students and equipped with the possibility of conducting online lectures and classes;
3. other auditoriums are equipped with standardised equipment, including interactive projectors or interactive TV screens, and centralised management of multimedia equipment;
4. a recording room for recording high-quality audio and video content for lectures and live events, as well as for recording podcasts or audio tracks;
5. a specially equipped studio for creating interactive content. Various technological solutions are available in the studio – green screen, interactive display and the first transparent board in the Baltics (learning glass), with the help of which it is possible to prepare even more engaging, even more enjoyable video lectures and classes.

### **The physical IT infrastructure of RSU consists of the following:**

- RSU computer network located in 23 buildings, connections thereof, with a total of 4418 network connection ports, 323 wireless network access points, including provision of a wireless network at the student hostels;
- RSU uses the infrastructure and resources of the data centre of the Latvian Academic Network, which has been supplemented with the secondary data centre created by RSU, which consists of 48 physical servers, four redundant disk arrays, *VMware* virtual server infrastructure with more than 200 virtual servers, a backup power supply system, cooling, data backup infrastructure;
- IT equipment and systems system *Nagios*, *HP IMC*, *MS SCCM* with more than 2000 monitored devices and services;
- communication platforms – *MS Teams* and *Zoom* – available to all employees and students; *Zoom* is used as the main distance learning platform, where more than 74,900 lectures and classes have taken place in 2022;
- *Panopto* – a video lecture recording system, which contains more than 31000 video recordings and an average of 30 new video study materials are added every day, and there was a total of more than 300,000 hours of viewing per year;
- e-mail systems for employees – *Exchange*, ensuring management of calendar and contacts; cloud service *Office 365* is provided for students;
- *MS Active directory* based maintenance of electronic identity management infrastructure (one username and password for all IT systems maintained in a centralised way);
- maintenance of the file server;
- servicing of computerised workstations and computer classrooms (2144 computers, 456 printers, scanners, and other equipment);
- maintenance of equipment in classrooms (193 stationary equipped);
- self-service photocopying/printing/scanning system.

RSU lecturers and employees have the opportunity to use the *Booker* room reservation system, which is linked to the *Timetable* lecture and class planning system. In the *Booker* room reservation system, it is possible to find all the rooms intended for the study process at RSU, view the occupancy of the rooms, incl. see also lectures and classes, as well as make room and table reservations.

The *Timetabler* lecture and lesson planning system is a cloud service that provides the opportunity

to plan the academic events of students and lecturers in a fast and efficient way.

The system provides the following functionalities:

- Check for room, instructor and student collisions.
- Automatic event scheduling solution *Autoscheduler*.
- Creation of detailed reports.
- Integration with the *O365* calendar solution.

The infrastructure and material and technical support created by RSU are equally accessible to all RSU StPs. More detailed information on infrastructure and material and technical provision is available in Annex 23.2 “Evaluation of the informative and methodological base on IT infrastructure and resources available”.

The study environment – both premises and material and technical provisions are essential both for the quality of the study process and for the mental well-being of students. This aspect has also been highlighted as important in the satisfaction assessment questionnaires of students of the programme, where, in addition to the opinion on the work of the lecturer and the content of the study course, there is also an opinion on classrooms – environment and technical provisions. It should be noted that over the last decade the study environment and material and technical provisions have improved significantly, but the level of student requirements is also growing.

A student-centred approach and a modern study environment are a setting that permeates the decisions made and working methods used by each lecturer of the programmes included in the direction, and in particular the director of the group of study programmes, as well as support staff. Both the content and form of studies are chosen by balancing the priority of the quality of education with the opportunities of students. Each student group is approached individually, if necessary, anonymous questionnaires are conducted, as well as students are encouraged to report immediately if they experience any difficulties both in terms of the content and form of the study process, such as being unhappy with classrooms, too cold/hot, having problems with the IT system or having any other problems. Individual approach and individual solutions have been identified as the most effective tool for reducing student drop-offs and motivating.

Studies are implemented both in a regular way and using remote communication forms – Zoom, Panopto, the MyRSU student portal, etc. At least 50% of classes take place in a regular way, the rest (respecting students’ wishes) remotely. If necessary, not only study courses, but also tutorials and the process of developing Bachelor’s/Master’s thesis, as well as pre-defence and defence take place online, for example, when a student is in long-term justified absence (health problems, being out the country). The situation created by Covid-19 has served as a catalyst for significant improvements in the digital literacy of lecturers and students by developing skills to use a variety of digital tools and programmes. The overall ability of RSU to work online (e.g., MyRSU student portal, the E-learning platform or the availability of library resources) is also considered excellent.

**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 total area of library premises is 2044 m<sup>2</sup>, including premises to serve readers – 1318 m<sup>2</sup> (290 places for readers, 33 computer places, wireless internet). The open access loan includes well-equipped premises, the possibility to loan books for home use, the use of self-service equipment, a place for reading clubs and individual work. To provide access to facilities for visitors with reduced mobility, there is a lift in the Library in the central building allowing the library users to move from floor to floor. The library is located in the main RSU building (Riga, Dzirciema iela 16), and it has three service points:

Library Branch Information Centre for Healthcare Professionals at RSU Red Cross Medical College (Riga, J. Asara iela 5, Riga);

- Medical Educational Technology Centre (METC) (Riga, Anniņmuižas bulv. 26a);
- RSU Liepāja Branch Library (Liepāja, Riņķu iela 24/26).

**Library services:** large collection of information resources, consultations in searching information, incl. searching based on thematic requests. Library specialists read information literacy classes, which are included in study programmes and offer support to researchers (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)).

Students can communicate with the Library remotely on different matters by phone or on [help.rsu.lv](http://help.rsu.lv). Information resources, which are not available in the collection of the RSU library, can be ordered from other libraries using the **Interlibrary Loan (ILL) or International Interlibrary Loan (IILL)**.

Every year the library environment is gradually improved and modernised, new technologies and services are introduced (self-service devices with the possibility for users to borrow books by themselves, return, renew them, view own reader account, as well as print, copy, scan, use multifunctional devices). At the entrance to the RSU building at Dzirciema iela 16 and J. Asara iela 5, there are book returning units, where books can be returned to the library also outside its working hours.

### **Information resources**

The collection includes 536,200 physical units, incl. 248,200 books. The subscribed databases provide access to about **~534,000 subscribed electronic resource units** (about 90% of these are e-books).

The funding for resources is growing. It was EUR 44 per library user in 2023. Approximately 91% of the budget spent on assembly of the collection are used for subscription to electronic resources/purchasing of e-books.

*Table 5. Funding spent in total and on subscription of resources*

<b>Year</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Financing used (EUR)</b>	<b>442360</b>	<b>475460</b>	<b>503480</b>	<b>507234</b>	<b>563074</b>	<b>682807</b>

incl. for subscribed resources	301870	317532	337500	339360	468931	580797
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## Databases

Access to more than 30 online e-resources is provided. Students and lecturers can access the subscribed databases remotely using the RSU username and password.

The statistics of usage of databases is high. It is evaluated once a semester. Usage statistics remain high and are tending to increase.

E-book databases, such as the Ebook database, have very high utilisation rates, e.g. information units of the Ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO) were viewed 49365 times in 2023. Proquest Ebook Central Academic Complete is the most used e-book database, with 141,310 information items viewed in 2023. Such data show the importance of e-books in the study and research process of study programmes of the direction Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology.

To search for individual research, e-journal databases are used in the study and research process. The EBSCO LV national package, which consists of several collections, is used the most, for example, in 2023, RSU lecturers and students used 571,694 information items in this database. However, no less important and impressive is also the use of, for example, the database of special sociology e-journals, such as 46058 information units of the Sociology Source Ultimate (EBSCO) database were used in 2023. In 2023, 29505 information items were used in the Wiley Online Library e-journal database, while 20139 information units in the Sage Journals database.

The most used database in 2023 is Encyclopedia Britannica (1086906 information items viewed), where students and academic staff have searched for a wide variety of facts about important events, achievements in various industries, notable persons and events in the world.

## Procedure for supplementation of the library collection and database subscriptions

RSU has in place a support process, which is implemented by the Library, which defines how to provide RSU's study programmes and scientific research activity with necessary information sources and services. Process description defines: 1) planning of acquisition of information sources, evaluation and supplementing of supplies; 2) determination of the level of satisfaction of users.

Subscription to databases takes place after trial periods, analysis of usage statistics, user feedback and costs.

In order to improve the compliance of the Library collection with the needs of students, work is ongoing with lists of study course readings, there is cooperation with university lecturers to inform about the situation with supplies of study course literature. Lecturers and students can send orders / recommendations for supplementing the collection electronically on help.rsu.lv.

## Availability of library data in the digital environment of the higher education institution

The *Primo* unified search engine is used for management of e-resources, which ensures quick and rationalised search in e-resources. Information on databases is available also from the RSU Student portal *MyRSU*.

RSU students can access graduation papers of students and other RSU publications in the **Institutional Repository** *DSpace* platform.

From 2020, publications of RSU's academic and scientific staff are entered in the new **scientific activity information system (ZDIS) Pure** (a unique tool for searching for research in RSU

research areas).

You can follow current events of the library on Facebook profile – Rīgas Stradiņa universitātes bibliotēka.

**RSU Library is an accredited library of national importance.** Another accreditation was received in November 2021. The library's resources and services can be evaluated as very good, and they meet the demand of students and teaching staff to ensure successful completion of the respective study course. Simple procedures were introduced to recommend supplementing the collection or contact the Library regarding its services. Surveys of both students and teaching staff confirm a good and very good assessment of the Library. In recent years, the library has received both the Annual Award of the Student Union (to show satisfaction of students with the quality of the resources and services) and Annual Award of RSU administration as the best RSU structural unit. E-resources are currently a priority of the RSU Library as other universities of the world.

Detailed information on infrastructure and material and technical provision is available in the Annex 23.1 "Assessment of the information and methodological base of the Library resources for the implementation of the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology" in accordance with the requirements of the guidelines".

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

The students and employees of Rīga Stradiņš University (hereinafter referred to as RSU) are provided with a developed IT infrastructure and IT services that are continuously developing, taking into account the increasing requirements for IT from students and employees.

**E-learning environment**

One of the main websites used by RSU students is the e-learning environment. The E-learning environment provides access to absolutely all study courses implemented in all curricula, therefore e-learning can be used by any RSU lecturer, and students have access to e-learning courses that the student is studying or has studied. The e-learning environment is used as a tool for the organisation of study process in each study course – for posting various materials, execution of test works and home assignments, checking originality of the content of works, and publication of assessments. Additionally, e-learning environment provides both the calendar of pending events and latest RSU news and discussion forums, study materials and all latest information on what the lecturer of the student's course wishes to transfer to the students – different assignments, sample tests, useful additional materials, etc.

E-learning environment provides access not only to the courses of the current semester, but also the courses studied in previous semesters, and the content of previous courses as it is for the students of the current semester. RSU e-learning is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from any location with internet access, including from mobile devices. The *MyRSU* student portal is linked to the e-learning environment.

In the e-learning environment, lecturers develop and post interactive study materials using the *H5P* solution integrated into the *Moodle* platform, which allows the study materials to be supplemented

with various types of interactions. Popular are interactive video materials in which lecture videos are supplemented with regular knowledge test questions, interactive books in which text and images are supplemented with interactions, as well as branched scenarios in which decision-making competence is developed by solving authentic problems, obtaining and interpreting information, as well as making decisions.

### **Student portal *MyRSU***

RSU students have access to the *MyRSU* student portal, which combines the possibility to view the necessary information about studies and to use the e-services necessary in the study process in one place. *MyRSU* is available as both a browser and a mobile app, which enables to get faster and more convenient access to all the necessary university information, for example, e-learning and final assessments in study courses, the schedule of lectures and classes, invoices, the platform for application for restricted and free elective study courses, skills learned, study course and study programme evaluation questionnaires and feedback, most important contacts, access to *Office 365* apps, management of self-service printouts (printing, scanning, copying). Using *MyRSU*, students can extend periods of use of books and access the databases, to which RSU is subscribed. In the Statements and Applications section, the student can request different statements, which will be signed with a secure electronic signature and sent to the student's e-mail.

### **Remote lectures and final examinations**

In the conditions of the global pandemic, the e-learning environment has become a foundation for the interaction of the university with students. E-learning also makes it possible to create online classes where the lecturer and students can meet virtually. The recordings of these online virtual audience meetings can also be watched later in the e-learning course. In some of the courses in the e-learning environment, students can also find electronic tests for successful learning of the study course, which allows the students not only to assess their knowledge quickly and in high quality, but also use the self-test method to learn the course contents. In each e-learning course, the lecturer can electronically record student attendance at lectures and classes, and the attendance data automatically appears in the e-grades section, providing a more convenient overview of student performance in the course. The e-learning environment is also used as a tool, with the help of which it is possible to remotely apply for placement, consultations, examination times, and other events.

Remote lectures and classes are mostly implemented using *Zoom*, video recordings are available using the *Panopto* service (relevant licences have been provided to lecturers by RSU). In these circumstances, RSU lecturers demonstrate convincing IT skills. Not only study courses, but also the process of development, pre-defence and defence of Master's theses takes place fully online.

This experience does not leave any doubts about the possibilities of implementing study programmes as distance learning. The e-learning environment is already used as a tool for the organisation of the study process in each study course and provides proper opportunities for the implementation of study programmes as distance learning. Based on the experience of the global pandemic and in response to the interest and demand of students, in 2022, the implementation of the Bachelor's study programme "Law" was started in the form of distance learning. The experience of this study programme shows that the material and technical base of RSU allows for the provision of high-quality distance learning studies. The experience gained in the implementation of the programme has made it possible to improve RSU processes and study methods for the implementation of distance learning programmes.

RSU provides students with the possibility to submit graduation papers in the video format using the *Panopto* service. The possibility to have electronic tests in a safe environment using the *Safe*

*Exam Browser* in RSU computer rooms has been provided. The *Safe Exam Browser* is integrated with e-learning (*Moodle*) and has been created to increase safety during tests. When the student uses the *Safe Exam Browser*, it is not possible to perform actions like copying, visit other internet links or apps, close the test before it is submitted for evaluation, the test cannot be minimised or window size cannot be changed, key combinations and the right-click menu, operating system menu bars are disabled, messaging and screen sharing links are disabled.

RSU academic staff can make video recordings of lectures and presentations. Links to video recordings can be posted in the RSU e-learning environment, as well as on other websites. The service is provided using the Panopto platform. RSU academic staff can make live broadcasts of lectures and presentations. The service also includes the possibility to create a link to a specific live broadcast, which can be posted in the RSU e-learning environment, as well as on other websites.

Panopto enables parallel recording from multiple cameras and screens, search for phrases in slides, add subtitles or tests, as well as user view reports.

### **Tools that help to verify the originality of contents**

RSU academic staff and students can use the *Turnitin* tool. *Turnitin* is the world's leading tool for the correction of written papers and combating plagiarism. *Turnitin* is fully integrated RSU e-learning environment and provides full service of submitting, correcting, verifying the originality and return of the submitted papers.

All student papers are submitted to the lecturer-created *Turnitin* assignment, which not only facilitates the collection of papers, but the system also automatically checks the originality of the paper, providing a full report of content plagiarism. The tool has the option of creating sections and comment templates, as well as peermark assignment. Checking originality is possible when comparing a paper to the work of other students (both at RSU and other higher education institutions in Latvia and in the world that use *Turnitin*), the Internet resources that are freely available to everyone, and journals, other publications, and resources included in the *Turnitin* database.

### **E-resource repository**

The e-resource repository *DSpace.rsu.lv* stores digital research. This website contains articles, documents, conference documents and other documents in a variety of digital formats. In the e-resource repository (*DSpace*), it is possible to access the Bachelor's, Master's and other final papers of RSU students defended since 2020. The repository also regularly publishes various RSU publications in open access.

### **Repository of study materials**

RSU has implemented a repository of study materials, which is a well-structured storage base for digital study materials, where study materials developed for RSU's educational purposes or obtained as a result of cooperation are placed. These include presentations, video lectures, educational videos, infographics, digital interactive scenarios, digital books and other types of information. The materials in the repository are structured by topics and collections, so that the necessary information can be found easily and quickly. Filters make it possible to search by author, year of creation, keywords or the format of the material, for example whether it is a video, book or presentation. Searching with the help of filters will help narrow down the amount of information and quickly find the study material needed.

The repository will give lecturers the opportunity to share materials, saving resources, as well as to familiarise themselves with examples of good practice from their colleagues.

## E-services for students

When commencing studies at RSU, each student is assigned a username and, using the RSU self-service services available to students, the student can obtain a password, which can be used for RSU IT systems intended for students.

RSU offers the students an opportunity to use *Office365*, providing an option to use a full *Microsoft Office*, *OneDrive* file storage without additional fee. While studying at RSU, students have access to all the software necessary for successful study process. The student can install *Microsoft Office* software: *Word*, *Excel*, *PowerPoint*, *OneNote*, on five computers (*Windows* or *Mac*) and five mobile devices (for example, a smartphone, laptop, and tablet computer). Students may use *OneDrive* of 1 TB for automatic synchronisation of devices. Using *Microsoft Office 365* synchronisation, RSU students can see their schedules of classes and lectures in their phones and other smart devices. The service is available through calendars built into smartphones or using *Microsoft Outlook*. Students are provided with data exchange through the *OneDrive* cloud service of the RSU student account.

RSU students and employees have access to a modern application system (*JIRA*) on the platform [help.rsu.lv](http://help.rsu.lv) to receive necessary IT or other support.

## Study programme mapping system

A study programme mapping system has been introduced for more effective study programme management, where the catalogue, descriptions, outcomes and implementation plans of study programmes and directions implemented by RSU are available. The system contains the following sections:

1. Study directions - study directions implemented by RSU and the study programmes included in them.
2. Study programmes - programmes implemented by RSU, their descriptions, outcomes and curricula.
3. Implemented programmes - catalogue of programmes implemented by RSU (includes different types of programme implementation (full-time / part-time), languages (Latvian / English) and locations (Riga / Liepaja).
4. Comparison of curricula - an interface for comparing curricula to review the extent of programme changes and their impact.
5. Requirements documents - documents regulating the content of study programmes (regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers, professional standards, etc.) and the requirements included in them, which are used in mapping learning outcomes.

## Student Information System

The RSU administrative staff has the possibility to use the Student Information System (SIS), where all the data of RSU students are available, such as student admission data, final assessments, study courses. The academic portal is a user interface of the Student Information System through which RSU academic staff, directors of study programmes, heads of departments and other personnel involved in the education process have access to certain datasets deployed for Student Information Systems.

## Academic Portal

An academic portal was developed for RSU needs, which together provides access to information available in different RSU information systems and related to the RSU study process, e.g. study course register, clinical skills register, survey results, feedback on survey results, etc. The modular structure of the Academic Portal is based on a *Microsoft SharePoint* platform.

## **Improving digital skills**

RSU CEG regularly organises continuing education courses on learning both intramurally and remotely, as well as advises lecturers on the use of appropriate pedagogical methods and the selection of optimal e-learning support tools.

In order to improve the qualifications of teaching staff, the Information Technology Department organises regular thematic training on IT tools, as well as provides the possibility of applying for online individual expert consultations for improving digital literacy of lecturers. Consultations are mainly provided through one of the communication platforms (*Zoom, MS Teams*).

More detailed information is available in Annex 23.2 “Evaluation of the informative and methodological base on IT infrastructure and resources available”.

### **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.**

When developing a new SP, academic and scientific staff in compliance with provisions of Section 55(1)(3) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (LHEI) and Law on Scientific Activity are involved in its provision. Academic and pedagogical staff with high qualifications, relevant competences and good reputation are involved in the implementation of the study direction and achievement of results.

The process of recruitment and evaluation of lecturers is transparent, effective and one of the preconditions for high quality of the study process.

The duty of the StP director is to ensure compliance of the content of the programme with internal and external laws and regulations, requirements of the labour market, sectoral development trends and needs of students, to analyse the data that might provide information on the factors affecting results and quality of the StP, and to implement necessary improvements to the StP. Quality indicators of StPs that are directly linked to the remuneration of the StP directors are measured at StP level.

At RSU level, the duty of the management is to set strategic and quality aims and quality policy, to make a decision on the quality approach, to manage resources, and determine the internal procedures. Supervision of the system introduced at RSU is performed by both the internal system and quality auditors and independent external experts. At the university level, one of the indicators of study quality is the public attitude and opinion, as well as the popularity of RSU. It is regularly established by participating in a reputation survey and evaluation of brands.

More information about the attraction and/or employment processes of teaching staff is available in the Regulations on Academic Elections specified in Annex 1 and Section 1(1.10) of Annex 23 process description No. 29 “Academic Staff Elections” and “Compliance of the study direction with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)”.

### **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.**

For the lecturers involved in the study direction and programme implementation, the teaching load is planned according to the curriculum of each academic year and study semester. Study courses can be organised in modules and the load is reviewed according to necessity and regulations. RSU promotes a balanced workload for lecturers, and promotes a healthy lifestyle to reduce and eliminate the risk of burnout for teaching staff.

Academic and research activities at RSU are carried out by distinguished and highly regarded permanent employees elected to academic positions. In order to ensure comprehensive knowledge and skills appreciated by the labour market, educational staff performing the duties as the teaching staff only for a certain time are involved in addition to the permanent staff. The staff include experts of the industry and teaching staff elected in other higher education institutions.

Annex 6.2 provides biographies of the teaching staff attached electronically (*Curriculum Vitae Europass* format). Annex 6.1 (in *Excel* format) provides basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction, specifying their scientific degree/qualification, election status at the higher education institution, StPs and study courses, in the implementation of which they participate, and certification of official language and foreign language proficiency (if applicable). Annexes 24.6/24.7 reflect the analysis of the data of lecturers.

RSU employs general and administrative staff to provide training and study process support functions, to carry out record-keeping and quality management, human resource and financial management, and deal with legal matters. At the same time, the operating staff is responsible for the management of the buildings and the territory, for the development of the infrastructure, etc.

The academic staff application and selection procedure at RSU is regulated by internal regulations:

- Regulations on Academic Elections at Rīga Stradiņš University.
- Regulations on the procedure of inviting visiting university lecturers at Rīga Stradiņš University.

Qualification for an academic position takes place according to the requirements set for the job in the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the tasks of academic positions defined in the RSU Constitution and the RSU's election process taking into account the individual's:

- education,
- experience,
- competences,
- potential,
- achievements,
- scientific contribution,
- pedagogical skills,
- service record,
- recommendations of experts and industry representatives.

The career development of academic staff is one of the main ways, how RSU can affect the renewal of human resources for research and studies.

An RSU Centre for Educational Growth (CEG) was created in 2014 for the improvement of the quality of studies, the modernisation of the study process and competence of university lecturers. Within the scope of its operations, it provides support in the improvement of the quality of studies by analysing the study process, providing support and advising lecturers on the modernisation of StP, courses, organising pedagogical growth of academic staff in continuing education activities according to current needs.

CEG learning activities are based on the following thematic blocks:

- paedagogy (didactics and educational management of a higher education institution),
- technology-enriched learning and teaching (information and communication technologies, digitalisation),
- transverse competence (e.g. skills to communicate, collaborate, innovate, improvise, work in an interdisciplinary way and in data-based research).

At the beginning of the activity, in the thematic activities, more emphasis was placed on the definition of learning outcomes, assessment, creation of the pedagogical design of the study course, focusing on the basic learning of pedagogical legalities. Over time, these topics have been supplemented with a wide range of courses for improving the pedagogical digital skills of lecturers. The great work we had contributed to strengthening digital skills paid off significantly during the pandemic when remote work began. With the active cooperation of the Centre with the RSU Information Technology Department, a huge number of learning activities were implemented on the use of communication platforms *Zoom*, *Teams*, e-learning *Moodle* environment, organising remote group work in the *Miro* tool, creating interactive digital scenarios in the *Twine* environment, creating self-assessment tasks on the *H5P* platform and the use of many other digital tools in the study process.

In its daily work, CEG mostly performs advisory activities, which, especially during the period of remote and combined studies, has provided significant support for the improvement of the pedagogical digital skills of lecturers and the meaningful implementation of the technology-enriched study process.

The most frequent thematic groups identified in the consultations:

- **assessment in the digital environment** – formulation of learning outcomes, design of activities, adaptation of the type of examinations for full-fledged summative, formative and cumulative assessment;
- **organisation of group work and independent work in the digital environment** – promotion of student involvement, team cooperation, adequate assessment of individual contribution;
- **high-quality combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities** – creation of a study course design for combined, remote and hybrid studies;
- **increasing the interactivity of learning activities** – the student is an active participant in the process, not a passive consumer of content.

The lecturers involved in the StPs included in the study direction “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” have access to the entire continuing education content offer updated every semester in the Centre for Educational Growth (PIC). The contribution to the quality of the study process is made not only by attendance of thematic training by lecturers, but also by their attendance by the support staff involved in the organisation of the study process, which increases pedagogical understanding of the study process and strengthens effective cooperation with students. Every semester of an academic year, up-to-date content corresponding to the needs of lecturers is offered in different forms.

To date, the centre has developed more than 40 trainings of different content, the form of which is adapted to the goal to be achieved. These can be interactive workshops, seminars, conferences, think tanks, thematic cycles, visiting lectures, play-out of simulation-based scenarios, etc. Since March 2020, the training has been conducted remotely, maintaining equal participation of participants in regular learning activities, while also providing the opportunity for a wider range of participants to join training activities. Every semester, CEG offers university lecturers more than ten different thematic trainings in the amount of more than 140 academic hours, interest in which is constantly growing.

In the period from 2014, when CEG held the first training activities for lecturers, until February 2024, 32 lecturers from the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology" actively participated in the continuing education activities for lecturers implemented by CEG and, since the spring of 2020, by the Information Technology Department, attending more than 150 training activities of different content. The lecturers of the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology" spent 2708 academic hours on mastering continuing education activities.

The lecturers participated in the following CEG activities, for example: Academic Integrity – Transfer of Theory into Practice; Questionnaire Creation (Mis)Practices and Useful Tips for Work; Remote Study Group Work with the *Miro* Tool; Interactive Presentations and Real-Time Feedback in the *Mentimeter* Tool; Contextualizing the use of Webinar in Higher Education; Creating Engaging and Interactive Online Course Design and Delivery; Digital Nuisances – Changes and Innovations Encouraging Organisations to Change, Lecturer's Guide to Assessment: Summative, Formative, Cumulative; *EndNote* Tool for Reference Management; E-Studies up Close, or Simply and Quickly About the Complicated; Step into the Student's Shoes: What Does the Competency Approach Look Like in Action; Inclusive University from A to Z; Improvisation in Pedagogical Activity; How Games Activate Teaching and Learning; How to Promote the Acquisition of Transversal Skills Relevant to the Work Environment During the Study Process; How to Create Effective Image and Text Compositions in Study Materials; The Potential of Conflict to Build Cooperation; Research Impact – Opportunities and Comparison of Databases *Web of Science* and *Scopus*; The Art of Elocution; Student-Centred Learning and Teaching: Theory, Experience and Evaluation; Content Visualisation in Presentations; *Turnitin*: How to Assess Students' Works More Qualitatively and Efficiently?; Easy Language; Creating Videos: Complex in a Simple and Short Way and many others.

The knowledge gained during the training process directly and indirectly improves the lecturers' performance in working with students – the results of surveys and informal communication with students show that the following skills of lecturers have improved – empathy towards students, presentation skills of class content, communication skills, visual design of presentations, IT tools, used to diversify the content of lessons, conflict resolution skills. Also, the lecturers pointed out the benefits received – improved academic knowledge in various fields – English language skills, easy language, integration of the principles of academic integrity in practice, improvement of the skills of using reference tools, etc. In general, the offered courses give the opportunity to improve the teacher's academic and scientific competences, as well as to make a new contribution to the content and form of studies, improving the quality of the study process.

To motivate lecturers to participate in continuing education and use the training opportunities offered by CEG, participation in them is included in the performance bonus criteria for academic staff, the fulfilment of which enables the lecturer to receive a monthly bonus in addition to his/her salary. Thus, more and more lecturers are motivated to improve their knowledge and skills, providing a higher quality, more interactive and innovative study process for students.

The return of competence development measures is reflected in the improvement of performance of study quality indicators, as well as in the evaluation of RSU's external reputation, in which RSU

has been recognised as the university with the best reputation in Latvia several times in a row. RSU is also engaged Kantar to conduct an employee satisfaction study. In 2019, the assessment of the English language learning project was included in the questions of the RSU employee satisfaction and engagement survey, thus receiving confirmation that 85% of the employees who participated in the survey (731 employees in total) consider the English language skills testing and learning project as an opportunity to improve their qualifications. On the other hand, in the question of ensuring the growth of lecturers' competences, the majority of 367 lecturers (86%) answered affirmatively to the statement "I receive sufficient support in growth of my teaching competence".

Lecturers have access to:

1. training provided by the Medical Education Technology Centre, the Career Centre and the Human Resources Department;
2. taking study courses at the Open University;
3. the possibility to use materials and other library services available in the collection of the RSU Library;
4. the opportunity to participate in the Erasmus+ exchange programme and gain academic or administrative experience in one of the universities of the European Union and its cooperation higher education institutions;
5. the opportunity to participate in the IT excellence programme for the improvement of digital skills for half a year at the University at Buffalo in the United States;
6. opportunities for qualification improvement outside the RSU within the framework of the budget of the structural unit.

In general, it can be concluded that systematic and regular activities are carried out to strengthen the capacity of teaching staff, which is also appreciated. (For more information, see Annex 23, Paragraph 1.5)

### **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.**

RSU has established, implemented and observed procedures (for the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology" and the corresponding study programmes) for attracting qualified teaching staff. It is monitored so that, as far as possible, the academic and research load of teaching staff is balanced. 8 professional and didactic improvement needs of teaching staff are determined in a targeted manner, as was described above, appropriate improvement measures are used, and the effectiveness and efficiency of these measures are evaluated. Teaching staff also participates in both outgoing and incoming mobility, which provides added value to the implementation of the study process and the quality of studies.

The lecturers involved in the StD and StP implementation are planning their teaching load according to the teaching programme of each study semester and academic year. Individual study courses are mainly organised in modules and the load is reviewed according to necessity and regulations.

Highly qualified lecturers are involved in the implementation of StD are industry experts and specialise the study course topics, including professors, associate professors, assistant professors

and lecturers with specialisation in political science, law, philology and anthropology, history, etc. Lecturers, whose qualification and abilities are of high level and assessed over a long period of cooperation, are involved in the implementation of the StD and StPs, therefore, changes in the staff composition are not significant.

Most of the teaching staff have obtained a doctoral degree or are doctoral candidates to ensure they meet the highest academic standards and regulatory requirements.

This versatile professional expertise enables the programme to provide students with a complex understanding of political science, international relations and anthropology, as well as the inclusion of various interdisciplinary issues on the sectoral agenda, which are essential and helpful in achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of the programme.

Combining the scientific and practical experience of lecturers with innovative information technology solutions provides an opportunity for students to acquire a wide range of qualitative academic knowledge in current political science and international relations matters, as well as to develop the skills to independently perform scientific analysis in conformity with the outcomes of the study programme.

Full-time university lecturers are required to participate in research activities that are regulated by staff job descriptions. The proportion of duties and responsibilities of the employee in scientific and research activities has been determined depending on the type of academic position.

The division of responsibilities within a structural unit may be changed by the head of the structural unit in agreement with the employee according to the planning of the pedagogical work and the projects to be implemented.

The scientific activity results of the academic staff are summarised once a year and included in the scientific activity report. For some groups of staff, they are related to the principles of remuneration and motivation. Achievements of lecturers are visible not only in personal CVs, they can be read in the RSU scientific activity information management system (*ZDIS Pure*), where information on the scientific performance results of structural units and academic staff is added, collected and maintained.

RSU is constantly planning and implementing activities aimed at motivating the academic staff to engage in high-level scientific and research work, in particular associate professors and professors (aiming to reach 60% of working time spent on research), which encourage new specialists to engage in industry research, and contribute to the overall development of science at national and international level.

The range of lecturers of each programme can be found in more detail in the annexes attached to the programme descriptions - Analysis of the composition of teaching staff, as well as in the annexes of the direction report listed below.

Enclosed:

Annex 6.1. Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction (in *Excel* format)

Annex 6.2. Biographies of the teaching staff (in *Curriculum Vitae Europass* format)

Annex 6.4. List of publications of the teaching staff for the reporting period (collected information on the scientific activity of the teaching staff)

Annex 24.4. Certification that the official language skills of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the StP corresponding to the study direction comply with the regulations

regarding the amount of the knowledge of the official language and the procedures for examination of the knowledge of the official language for the performance of professional duties and duties of office

Annex 24.5. Certificate of regarding the respective foreign language proficiency of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme of at least level B2 according to the European language proficiency levels

Annex 24.7. Analysis of the composition of the teaching staff

### **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.).**

RSU has identified the necessary support for students and based on the needs of students, has created a functioning support system. RSU student with special needs is a RSU student with functional restrictions requiring adaptation of the study environment and process in order to create equal opportunities to receive the higher education. RSU supports students with special needs in various stages related to studies - selecting a suitable StP, when enrolling with the higher education institution, and in the study process (study materials, taking examinations, etc.) and creating appropriate social and physical environment (for example, availability of environment of the Medical Education Technology Centre, information in [Latvian, English](#)).). The aim of the support measures is to promote the independence and inclusion in the study process of the students with special needs. Guidelines and support policy have been developed regarding support to RSU students with special needs (information in [Latvian, English](#)).

Since 2012, all RSU students have access to psycho-emotional support. This service was introduced to help students overcome adaptation problems at the start of their studies and to reduce the emotional manifestations of stress, stress-related health disorders, psychosomatic disorders or illnesses, overcome relationship-building difficulties, crisis situations. Human being is a single entity, and only an emotionally stable and balanced student rarely gets sick and achieves more. The availability of the service has been appreciated by both local and international students. The student may choose to attend group or individual visits to the resident physician. The introduction of the service has helped to reduce the number of students who have dropped out of the study process, and has promoted efficiency of study work by reducing students' stress and adaptive disorders.

The Career Centre is operating at RSU (information in [Latvian, English](#)). The Career Centre is an active member of the Latvian Career Development Support Association (LKAAA). LKAAA is a non-governmental organisation established with the aim of promoting the development of the career development support system (KAAS) intended for strengthening the national economy and well-being of the people of Latvia. LKAAA cooperates with the European Commission career guidance and information network Euroguidance. In Latvia, Euroguidance is represented by the Information and Career Support Department of the State Education Development Agency. *Euroguidance* aims to promote the policy and practice of the KAAS by providing information to policy makers, support to career guidance counsellors and other actors in the system.

The services of the Career Centre are available to all RSU students, prospective students, as well as employees. Group career counselling is particularly appreciated and sought after. Individual consultations are held regularly for any interested party upon request. Events organised by the Career Centre on current issues in the labour market, as well as other career and self-development related topics, are regular (weekly) and in demand among the students. Students can post their CVs and get information about vacancies of employers at the [RSU Career Centre portal](#) (available in Latvian only). RSU Career Centre provides literature and information materials on career topics that students can read on the spot or take home for reading. "My Career Book" was published in collaboration with author Arta Citko – a workbook for young people to discover their potential career, business or study choices and other experiences for discovering and fixing experience.

Since 2019, there is excellent cooperation with the National Library of Latvia (NLL) - "Come with the classmates on an excursion to the NLL and participate in a class of the RSU Career Centre!". Prospective students, i.e. secondary school students, are provided with the opportunity to learn about career choices, higher education options during the seminar, as well as to perform an express test developed at the Career Centre in cooperation with the specialists of the RSU Psychosomatics Clinic.

Cooperation with the employers takes place continuously and on several levels. In order to promote cooperation with employers' organisations, their involvement in the education of future specialists, as well as to increase the RSU students' competitiveness in the labour market, meetings, visiting lectures and trips to cooperation companies and institutions are organised on a regular basis. Employers' organisations give presentations where employer representatives tell about the career opportunities in the respective organisation, offer RSU students and alumni the current vacancies, as well as give practical advice on how to succeed in the job market.

International students, who have confirmed their wish to start studies, receive informative support from the RSU International Department (ID) to ensure their successful and fast integration into the university and Latvia. New international students receive electronically an invitation to the RSU Orientation Week, an informative edition *Survival Guide*, internal rules of the university, other documents regulating students and a sample of the study contract in Latvian and English, information on different accommodation options in Riga, etc. The RSU website provides extensive information on RSU and life in Riga. In order to facilitate everyday life of students, the university offers several accommodation options, including the modern RSU student hostel opened at Dārza iela 5, Riga, at the end of 2017. ID supports third country nationals in settling immigration procedures.

One week before the beginning of each semester, ID organises an Orientation Week, where international students are informed about the university, the assessment system, rights and obligations of students, e-systems for students, immigration and accommodation matters, Latvian culture and language. During the Orientation Week international students learn about different RSU structural units (for example, the Student Services, the Information Technology Department, the library, faculties, etc.) and the support available. RSU's student organisations, the RSU Student Union and the International Student Association, participate in activities of the week. In cooperation with ID they provide a cultural programme for new international students.

A mentor programme is supported for the purposes of helping new students to adapt at the university. The mentor programme is primarily intended for international students; however, any local student can also apply for mentor support and will be provided with it. Regarding international students – before the newly admitted students arrive to Latvia, they may contact mentors – local and international RSU students of senior years. Before the beginning of each semester ID organises an informative exhibition providing new international students with the possibility to get

information, for example, about different RSU student organisations, amateur teams, the sports club, the ambulance and a psychosomatic assistance, etc.

At the stage of starting the study process, students always have a meeting with the director of study programmes (from 6 February 2024 – the director of the group of programmes), who provides informative and emotional support for integration into the environment of the higher education institution. Also, for Bachelor's level studies, to ensure integration, the study course "Introduction to Studies and Specialty" has been created, which helps to learn the basic knowledge necessary for the entire further study process – about the content and form of the study process.

## 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).**

**RSU is a European scale modern research university**, where excellent research- and practice-based education and experience are provided. The objectives of RSU research is generating locally and internationally significant scientific results, the main sub-objectives are:

- increase in internationally high-quality scientific results,
- integration of research in the study process,
- organisation of a scientific process based on synergistic cooperation,
- digitisation of scientific processes,
- closer integration of science and study structural units,
- ensuring a balanced development of internationality.

RSU research objectives are implemented based on a strategy; up-to-date Development Strategy 2022 – 2027 (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)).

RSU researchers not only carry out fundamental and applied research, but also actively cooperate with Latvian and European businesses, as well as with other scientific institutions, providing scientific services and expertise. RSU supports and promotes interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, as well as data-intensive research and research involving the re-use of data.

**RSU research is carried out in three scientific platforms – medical platform, public health platform, social sciences platform**, each of which conducts research in several groups of scientific fields, in the directions of science that are of priority for the Latvian economy and in the areas defined by Latvian and EU health policy (information on RSU science platforms is available in [Latvian](#) and [English](#)). Research areas are updated as policy documents are updated.

### **Social Science Platform**

The Social Science Platform is developing as an independent and fully-fledged unit of research on people and society. The Social Science Platform carries out research in all sectors of social sciences: politics, law, economics, educational sciences, sociology and social work, mass media and communication research, etc. The main areas of empirical and theoretical research are political and

state processes; media studies and strategic communication; national, international and cyber security, sociology and social anthropology, international business and economic development – labour market and social policy, business studies; international and national justice systems and legislation: international and EU law, medical law. It is also a platform for research in education and pedagogy. In multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research, research methods tested over time are complemented by the use and development of innovative digital tools, incl. with elements of artificial intelligence. The RSU Social Science Platform works synergistically with the RSU Medical and Public Health Platform to promote a comprehensive understanding one of the RSU's values – people.

**RSU was awarded a high rating in the 2019 International Evaluation of Scientific Institutions** – a rating of “4” on a scale of 1 to 5. More detailed scores were also given for individual RSU research platforms: medicine – 4, public health – 3, social sciences – 3.

One of the recommendations of the International Evaluation of Scientific Institutions on doctoral theses is to tailor-make doctoral study programmes to promote human resources development in RSU research areas. This requires driving changes in the external framework to bring more flexibility into the everyday study process. In addition, the International Evaluation of Scientific Institutions highlights the need for improvements in doctoral study programmes and residency programmes, because the current system meets European standards at minimum level. In 2008, when ERDF funding was raised, a **Technology Transfer Office** (hereinafter referred to as TTO) was created at RSU, the purpose of which was to create and maintain external communications with the private sector by providing information on research activities and experience of RSU. The TTO identifies and popularises the research capacity of RSU, is involved in the protection and management of RSU's intellectual property, as well as organises cooperation with the private sector (contract research, commercialisation offers to companies, contact exchanges, exhibitions, etc.). In 2024, the functions of TTO are divided between RSU Innovation Centre and the project division of RSU Research Department.

Research organisation at the university is determined by the Law on Scientific Activity. The highest collegiate organ in research is the RSU Council of Science – a collegiate institution that operates constantly and, within the scope of its competence, deals with and coordinates issues related to scientific activity (information is available only in [Latvian](#)). The functions and tasks of the Council of Science are determined by the Regulations of the RSU Council of Science (approved at the RSU Senate meeting on 19 May 2020, available only in [Latvian](#)). The role of the Council of Sciences is to oversee the development, implementation and coordination of the scientific strategy of RSU.

The Council of Science elects the RSU Research Ethics Committee (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)), which helps RSU lecturers and students by consulting and evaluating ethical aspects of medical research. The Research Ethics Committee follows its Regulations, provisions of laws of the Republic of Latvia and international laws and is independent in adopted decisions.

RSU follows the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity** (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)) adopted by All European Academies (ALLEA). This document serves the European research community as a self-regulation instrument. The European Commission has recognised this Code of Conduct as the reference document for research integrity for all EU-funded research projects.

RSU research data management (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)) is implemented based on *FAIR* principles (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable), following ethical conditions, enduring safety and quality of data. RSU supports data-intensive research and research involving the re-use of data.

At the level of operative administration, management of scientific activity is conducted by Research

Board headed by the Vice-Rector for Science.

Annual monitoring in research is ensured by summarising results of scientific activities of the structural units. All the data are retrieved from the RSU Research Portal (available only in [English](#)). The RSU Research Portal collects information on the results of the scientific activities of the academic staff of RSU – publications, projects, awards, research activities, datasets, performances, communications in the press and media and others.

The portal is publicly available and enables RSU's achievements in research and academic work to be demonstrated in one place, scientific results to be visualised and communicated, and research results to be shared. The RSU Research Portal promotes collaboration with university researchers and research teams, communication and knowledge dissemination.

The RSU Research Portal displays information included in the RSU scientific activity information management system (*ZDIS Pure*), where information on the scientific performance results of structural units and academic staff is added, collected and maintained. The data collected by *ZDIS Pure* is used to generate reports, track progress in meeting the objectives of the structural unit, prepare scientific activity reports for external institutions, while reducing the administrative burden on researchers, structural units and staff.

In accordance with financial possibilities of RSU and topicality of the research direction, RSU supports participation of academic staff in scientific conferences by assigning a paid period of absence or creative leave, provides financial support for the payment of high citation publications.

#### **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 integration of the results of the research papers of the study programmes “International Relations – European Studies” (BA), “International Relations and Diplomacy” (MA), “Social Anthropology” (MA) and “Russia and Eurasia Studies” (MA) in the study process is implemented through various methods and activities that promote student involvement, knowledge exchange and practical skills development. First, research conducted by students is used as study materials in lectures and seminars, providing an opportunity to analyse and discuss real research cases. This not only makes the learning process more interactive and engaging, but also helps students better understand theoretical knowledge in context (for example, in the course “Development of Scientific Research and Methods of Research”).

Second, the results of students' research papers (especially Bachelor's and Master's theses) are integrated into the development of courses and modules, allowing to update the learning content according to the latest research and trends in the relevant sectors. This ensures that study programmes are dynamic and reflect the current level of academic and practical knowledge.

Third, the publication of research conducted by students in popular scientific and academic journals and their presentation at conferences (e.g. RSU International Student Conference) promotes the exchange of knowledge between students, teaching staff and the wider academic community. This not only increases the visibility of student research, but also promotes academic cooperation and knowledge integration between different disciplines.

Fourth, the results of research papers are used to develop and improve the base of practical

research at RSU, providing students with the opportunity to participate in real projects and research. This provides practical experience and promotes professional skills that are essential for their future careers.

Finally, special sessions and discussions of student research presentations, as well as simulations of scientific conferences, are organised where students can share their experiences and acquired knowledge. This not only promotes the exchange of knowledge and experience among students, but also stimulates critical thinking and research interest.

**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.**

International cooperation is ensured and purposefully developed within the study direction and corresponding study programmes. The compliance of the scientific research of the academic staff with the study direction is monitored, while at the same time, in an interdisciplinary perspective, it is directed towards a close connection with the Scientific Development Plan defined by the RSU (approved by the RSU Senate on 13.02.2024).

In accordance with the Science Development Plan, for planning the achievement of outcomes, each structural unit responsible for science is expected to set specific indicators corresponding to the RSU strategy – the number of publications in the WoS and SCOPUS databases, their proportion in Q1 scientific journals and in cooperation with foreign partners, the number of doctoral theses defended, the increase in external revenues in million euros in scientific activity programmes, incl. Horizon Europe, in the NRP and FARP programmes, as well as the creation of new scientific groups.

For the allocation of targeted funding, it is planned to review the distribution of research base funding among all structural units involved in scientific work, to continue the internal grant programme of RSU, as well as to direct the programme “Consolidation and Management Change Implementation Grants” to the development of priority topics defined by scientific structural units. Support for open access publishing will be continued with the aim of improving the visibility of RSU research, as well as motivation programme incentives will be revised to encourage publication in high-impact journals.

In order to monitor the achievement of the planned outcomes, it is planned to introduce regular meetings of heads of scientific structural units.

**Structural changes**

The structural changes foresee the implementation of research coordination in the faculties and the consolidation of scientific structural units. For the coordination of research in the faculties, from February 2024, the dean of the faculty is responsible for planning and achieving scientific outcomes. The Social Sciences Research Centre will be established at the Faculty of Social Sciences, which will provide research infrastructure for social sciences research both for the faculty and for the other structural units of RSU. The Social Sciences Centre will cooperate with the Baltic Studies Centre and other partners.

One joint international advisory board is established for the structural units of the RSU Science

Centre and the Social Sciences Research Centre, which will advise on the development of the RSU Science Centre structural units, promotion of excellence and increasing the quality of scientific research during the implementation of the RSU project programme “Consolidation and Management Change Implementation Grants”.

### **Launch of new state research programmes**

In order to fulfil the state order for science, RSU is starting to participate in 5 new national research programmes financed and supervised by the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development. A science communication specialist will be engaged for the communication of national research programmes and a developed communication plan will be developed and implemented.

### **RRF research projects/grants**

To build and strengthen excellence in structural units that are reorganised in the process of internal and external consolidation, grants for scientific excellence and capacity strengthening are implemented in the priority research topics and sports science defined by the heads of structural units. RSU's priority topics were defined based on the following principles:

- compliance with RSU's strategic specialisation;
- is an active group of scientists which:
  - has been able to attract funding or is actively preparing project applications (including international ones);
  - regularly publishes in high-ranking journals;
- are doctoral students (and doctoral students who defended their theses);
- the field is recognised as innovative in the international scientific assessment.
- RSU has adequate infrastructure for the development of this field or requires relatively small investments;
- International cooperation – a wide network of cooperation or participation in an international consortium;
- Cooperation with industry – technology transfer, patents, innovations.

### **“Horizon Europe” project applications**

To increase the volume of Horizon Europe project applications and projects, funding for writing projects, attracting consultants, as well as the creation of a one-stop agency for project preparation is planned. Performance indicators for the preparation of project applications and the volume of funding will be determined for each scientific structural unit, as well as for tenured professors, and measures for the development of new interdisciplinary groups and international cooperation with strategically important partners will be provided.

### **Preparation for international assessment**

The preparation of the self-assessment report will begin. First, data will be collected in accordance with Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 619 for the established assessment structure and criteria at RSU in three areas of specialisation – natural sciences, medicine and health sciences, and social sciences. The development of the overall self-assessment report, as well as the preparation of the parts of the individual structural units will begin. The development of impact case descriptions will be initiated in each of the main research areas of social and economic impact.

In order to promote cooperation and attract funding for the development of priority research areas, RSU actively participates in various EU and national programmes and initiatives – the largest EU research and innovation programme *Horizon Europe*, international cooperation programmes such as *COST Actions*; *ERA-NET*, *ERDF*, *FLAG-ERA*, etc. RSU is a member of international research

infrastructures (*EATRIS, BBMRI, EOSC, SHARE*), *EIT Health*, participates in international consortia (*CIMBA, BCAC*).

A total of 130 international research projects were submitted for 2017-2021, of which 39 have been funded. These include 13 *Horizon 2020* projects and 9 *ERA-NET* projects. Overall, *Horizon 2020* has an average success rate of 13%, while the *ERA-NET* programme has 22%, slightly higher than the EU average. The most important projects for the EU Structural Funds are related to infrastructure improvements, improvement of management processes and modernisation of study programme content, strengthening of academic staff capacity, reduction of fragmentation of study programmes and promotion of internationalisation of studies. During this period, RSU has welcomed foreign visiting researchers into its family of researchers.

Doctoral School (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)) – one-stop shop for raising research competence attracts visiting lecturers who read lectures, tutorials, participate in the Breakfast of Scientists (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)), networking events for academic and scientific staff, in which current research matters are discussed. The Doctoral School organises international webinar cycles with involvement of a visiting lecturer – a leading expert, such as a discussion for representatives of the networking social platform “**Systems thinking and its impact on research work**” webinars on applying *FAIR* data principles in health and social sciences, etc.

To promote closer cooperation in research, RSU concludes cooperation agreements with leading scientific institutions.

RSU organises international scientific conferences, (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#)) supports international symposiums and conferences organised by other scientific institutions.

**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.**

RSU has developed mechanisms to promote the involvement of teaching staff in scientific research. First, in the direction “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology”, as in the other 9 study directions, the scientific and applied research goals of the academic staff are clearly defined every year, according to the academic and strategic objectives of each study programme, faculty and study direction. The Growth Portal RSU Grow is used to perform these activities. It is the place where the manager meets the employee, the RSU strategy meets the employee’s individual goals and development wishes, and a conversation about growth takes place. The growth portal RSU Grow helps heads and employees effectively implement the work performance management process needed to boost employee motivation, growth, development of competences, and improvement of job quality in conjunction with the RSU’s strategic objectives. Second, together with the definition of goals, the opportunities for professional and career growth offered by involvement in scientific work are emphasised. Third, the necessary support system is offered, which has significantly increased with the establishment of the Social Sciences Research Centre, such as access to databases, research grants, administrative and methodological support. Fourth, a financial motivation system is applied – a bonus for high quality publications. Professional support is also provided – trainings and seminars on research methodologies, writing project applications and popularising research results. A mentor programme is also provided – School of Junior Academics,

which helps young teaching staff to navigate research opportunities and promote their involvement in scientific work. In parallel, attention is paid to the integration of research into the study process and content, as well as promoting the attraction and involvement of students as supporting researchers in research projects, making it part of their study process, thus building research skills and motivation to continue an academic career.

Such an integrated approach to motivating teaching staff in scientific and applied research promotes academic excellence and research activity, as well as strengthening the competitiveness of study programmes and the quality of student education.

RSU structural units, the Research Department (information in [Latvian, English](#)), the Development and Project Department (information in [Latvian, English](#)), regularly conducts various activities in which they address lecturers involved in scientific activities, offer not only specific opportunities for scientific projects, but also provide practical support both in project preparation and implementation, as well as linking with industries.

For aggregated numerical information on the scientific research activities of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction during the reporting period, see the enclosed annexes.

Enclosed:

Annex 6.4.1. Summary of data on the publications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field

Annex 6.4.2. List of high-ranking publications of lecturers by journal impact factor IF with summary

Annex 13.2. Projects implemented by RSU

**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.**

RSU has developed mechanisms to promote student involvement in scientific research and/or artistic creation, they function and are effective, students of all programme levels are involved in scientific research and/or artistic creation). In general, RSU students can engage in scientific activities in the following ways:

- vertically integrated projects, which have been created to provide students with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for research in an in-depth and practical way. More information about the VIP event is available on the RSU website (information in [Latvian, English](#));
- applying for research project funding student research and innovation grants (SRIG), the purpose of which is to support and motivate RSU students to conduct research. More information about the SRIG event is available on the RSU website (information in [Latvian, English](#));
- developing research skills by participating in RSU business incubator B-Space (information in [Latvian, English](#)) in PINK and INK programmes. More information about the programmes is available on the RSU website (information in [Latvian, English](#));

- by participating in student scientific interest groups in various areas. Currently, 39 scientific interest groups have been formed and work actively (information in [Latvian](#), [English](#));
- by applying for receipt of financial aid from the Student Union for participation in conferences or seminars in the country or abroad, as well as for publishing a scientific article in one of peer-reviewed international journal (each year, more than 10 students receive financial aid for participation in conferences);
- by applying at the student portal with a doctoral student of RSU, as well as to assist in the development of a scientific paper;
- participating in RSU's international scientific conference "Research week" (information is available only in [English](#));
- by participating with their own research in RSU International Student Conference (ISC), information is available only in [English](#)). RSU ISC is an annual project hosted by the Student Union that became international in 2015, and each year it attracts more and more students from various countries. In 2024, the conference reached new peaks, being organised for two days and involving more than 365 students with research works both in healthcare and social sciences. More information about RSU's international student conferences is available on RSU's website (information is only available only in [English](#)).

The most active RSU students are involved in the organisation of the RSU International Student Conference. Student research interest groups participate in the creation of workshops. RSU professors are involved in the assessment of papers, while management and structural units are involved in various organisational issues.

Each year, a new team of organisers is created for this project; therefore, each year, the project manager faces a challenge to set a higher standard than the previous year, so the outcome depends on the vision and ambitions of the manager.

From April 2019, annual Research Week (RSU Research Week 2021, RSU Research Week 2019) is held, which includes an international scientific conference of researchers and students. It contributes to the wider development of international cooperation, involvement in scientific networks and associations, allowing to involve international partners into joint projects, research and publications.

Students studying in the programmes included in the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology", both Bachelor's and Master's level, have responded to the lecturers' offer and have been involved in scientific projects, for example the FARP project *From indifference to making difference in climate policy: improving the interaction between political narrative and societal perceptions in Latvia*, within the framework of which also developed their final papers. Currently, students are also being selected and addressed to participate in the new NRP "Climate Neutrality Decision Models in Action".

**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.**

No specific boundaries are defined for pedagogical innovations of RSU, but their task is to change the usual way of learning and teaching in order to promote the quality of studies and enrich the learning experience of students. Learning and teaching innovation is the successful use of new

ideas, rethinking traditional learning and teaching approaches and methods, re-improving them for the needs of today's world. Therefore, pedagogical innovations are not the same as excellence. Innovations can be different for each lecturer, at the same time the same innovation can be something big for one person, but something that has been done a long time ago for another person. However, the most important thing is that the innovation changes the way of learning and teaching, creating a better study experience for students. Innovations in learning and teaching are viewed from two perspectives: first, methodological innovations, i.e., promotion of studies based on approaches and methods of research, work environment, search activity, projects, problem situations, etc.; second, technological innovations – *H5P*, *Miro*, *Turnitin QuickMark*, 3D printers, augmented and virtual reality and other solutions for the development of a technology-enriched study process. In order to promote a culture of learning and teaching innovation, RSU organises not only learning and best practice experience exchange sessions, but also developed learning and teaching innovation guidelines (available only in [Latvian](#)), which have been approved by lecturers and received feedback that the guidelines help lecturers understand the full innovation cycle and start working on modernising study courses. Several StD lecturers – Mārtiņš Daugulis, Edijs Bošs, Lelde Metla-Rozentāle, Lāsma Šķestere – enrich the study process with simulations and various mocks.

### **Support materials for learning and teaching innovations**

RSU lecturers have access to the support material “Teaching and learning methods and techniques” (available only in [Latvian](#)), which includes a wide range of different learning methods and techniques for lecturers to promote students' active and self-regulated learning. The purpose of the material is to encourage lecturers to evaluate and integrate these methods in their study courses to improve teaching efficiency and the acquisition of learning outcomes. The methods and techniques included in the material promote student involvement, promote their independence and responsibility for their learning, and help achieve higher learning outcomes. It encourages lecturers to critically evaluate and adapt methods according to the specifics of their study courses and teaching approach, thus modernising the study process and making it more efficient and more in line with modern education requirements.

Following the development trends of higher education, the Centre for Educational Growth has developed the guidelines “Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education” (available only in [Latvian](#)), which provide a thorough introduction to the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education, offering lecturers practical recommendations for the use, limitation and learning how to use AI. The guidelines cover the variety of AI solutions, their compliance with pedagogical paradigms, ethical use, as well as the potential of AI in modernising the study process. The material encourages lecturers and students to responsibly experiment with generative AI tools while maintaining academic integrity and data privacy, and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of integrating AI solutions. In parallel with the developed classes, the Centre for Educational Growth offers RSU lecturers various forms of learning activities (lectures, discussions, workstations) on the integration of various artificial intelligence solutions in the study process.

### **Mapping**

According to the expert recommendations of the previous accreditation of the study direction, in 2017-2018, the mapping of the StP was carried out, which has now become part of the StP management process and supports the implementation of student-centred learning. When mapping StPs, an analysis of the mutual compliance of the programme content, mainly the programme's learning outcomes, is performed at the level of the StP and study courses. The results of the StP mapping process – the obtained maps and observations – are used for the improvement of the study programme, as well as for the improvement of the course content, outcomes and assessment

methods, and for the revision of the overall StP planning.

Initially, mapping is performed by using the *MS Excel* mapping tool developed by Study Programme Administration Unit of the Centre for Educational Growth of RSU, which extracts data from descriptions of study courses of the respective StP in the RSU register of study courses. In 2022, the RSU StP planning IT system was supplemented with mapping functionality, which was developed within the European Social Fund specific support target project “Improving governance processes and modernisation of StP content at Rīga Stradiņš University”. Currently, the mapping system is integrated into RSU’s IT systems and ensures the mutual mapping of the outcomes and study courses, monitoring of the mutual coherence of the outcomes, mapping of the outcomes against professional standards, external regulatory enactments, as well as any other documents that describe the outcomes relevant to the programmes (e.g. recommendations of international professional associations, UN Sustainable Development Goals, etc.).

### **Targeted scholarships of the Boris and Inara Teterev Foundation**

From 2014/2015, every semester of the academic year RSU lecturers have an opportunity to receive a targeted scholarship from the Boris and Inara Teterev Foundation: for the development of new innovative study courses, for the modernisation of existing study courses, as well as for the integration of international experience at RSU.

Target scholarship activities can be implemented in two ways: for the new or experienced lecturer, working individually, or for the new lecturer, working together with a mentor, where both target scholarship recipients are equally responsible for both the progress of the process and the quality of the work result. Within the framework of the target scholarship, four months are planned for the implementation of the planned activities, during which lecturers both introduce innovative learning and teaching solutions, such as, for example, gamification activities, digital scenarios and other interactive learning materials and resources, student mutual assessment activities, etc., and develop new studies courses. During the target scholarship, lecturers receive pedagogical and technical support, as well as financial gratitude for their work. Within the framework of study programmes, lecturers can also receive a targeted scholarship for attracting visiting lecturers to the study course, for leading individual lectures and classes, for advising students and doctoral students, and even for strengthening the professional continuing education of lecturers.

### **RSU Research Portal**

In 2021, RSU introduced a new scientific activity information system – RSU Research Portal, which lists various scientific results: data on publications, projects, intellectual property, doctoral theses, awards, public speaking and various other scientific activities (incl. participation in collegial units, speaking at events of various types and scales, reviewer and expert activities, etc.).

The system replaces the previously used method of listing data that was created and stored in *Microsoft Excel* and *Word* applications. The possibility of multiple versions is replaced, data quality is improved, time is saved (for both academic and administrative staff, as data does not have to be re-submitted to multiple units, but access is provided to both parties), and employees are no longer required to submit data in one narrow window stage, but the system can be accessed and data added at any time convenient for the employee. The system offers a wide range of options, incl. to see one’s “fingerprint” (the term used most often in scientific results), to exhibit one’s scientific results more publicly, as well as to see one’s true cooperation network, at the level of people and organisations (as well as the scale – Latvian or global). The system facilitates the registration and submission of scientific results to various external institutions, incl. submission to the Ministry of Education and Science (in the NZDIS system) when creating the RSU’s annual report, which is taken as a basis for science base funding calculations.

In order to increase the quality of studies by using advanced technologies and e-solutions, RSU has set the following tasks:

- to supplement the existing RSU Register of Study Courses in order to ensure vertical integration of the content of study courses that will provide a possibility to link topics of study courses within the framework of the StP in support of succession of study courses. A dictionary of keywords of study courses and visualisation of keywords will be developed that will reflect the related topics of the study courses and courses;
- to establish a link between the thematic planning of the course description and the corresponding e-learning environment course, where the lecturer would be allowed to choose whether to create the respective e-course with the same thematic division as indicated in the study course description;
- to use the RSU library of audiovisual study materials, including descriptions of various study objects, for example, clinical cases, dissection cases, simulation scenarios, interactive training videos, ensuring systematisation and collection of study objects, as well as the possibility to share study objects with other higher education institutions; thus, helping the students to easier find the necessary simulation cases, clinical cases, and other study objects easily;
- to develop a new system that would make it much easier for students to register for elective study courses available to them at times they are comfortable with. Establishing a system would facilitate the work of the administrative staff, allowing students to be added to elective courses more easily and quickly;
- to improve the Electronic Admission System by reducing the administrative load, automating manual actions, improving the user interface, supplementing functionality, etc.

In order to ensure an advanced internal information exchange system for solving administrative issues, speeding up the circulation of information and decision-making, as well as to ensure electronic circulation of documents within RSU, the following tasks for increasing administrative efficiency are set by RSU:

- migration to electronic storage of the student file - in accordance with Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 203, applications, requests of the students and orders on the movement of students and study process may be stored only electronically. It will decrease the processing time of documents, help increase the efficiency of administrative work and data quality, as well as decrease the use of natural resources;
- acquisition of additional HOP modules to provide availability of new e-services: enhancement of HOP functionality by implementing new e-services for the staff, for example, record keeping of business trips, e-instructions;
- develop a quality and process management system. RSU Quality Assurance and Internal Audit Department already uses process management tool *QPR Enterprise Architect* with success. In May 2019, an agreement was signed, under which additional licenses were acquired to use the process modelling tool in a more comprehensive manner and to access the latest version of *QPR*. In 2023, the purchase of a new process modelling tool with wider functionality is planned, which will enable each RSU employee to view the processes created, customise the content of the site to their own needs, keep track of changes made and monitor the activities under their responsibility, as well as ensure the registration and monitoring of quality criteria.

When evaluating innovative solutions implemented in order to support the study process, it can be said that it is a continuous process of growth guided by the RSU management and respective structural units.

## 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.**

Within the framework of the study direction "Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology", cooperation is implemented with Latvian and foreign institutions (higher education institutions, employers, employers' organisations, local governments, non-governmental organisations, research institutes, etc.), which serve as a stimulus for the achievement of direction and its corresponding study programmes achievement of objectives and learning outcomes of the direction and corresponding study programmes. The cooperation partners of each study programme are selected according to the specificity of the field of study and study programmes. The partners are selected on the basis of a number of criteria which ensure that the partners meet the requirements of the field of study and the programme, the main criteria being:

1. Reputation and experience: the partner's professional experience in the relevant field, demonstrating their competence and quality.
2. Relevance of the opportunities offered to the study programmes: the partner's ability to provide students with practical experience, study placements or research projects that are aligned with the study programmes and learning objectives.
3. Previous cooperation and references: the quality of the partners' previous cooperation experience and references from other academic departments or research institutes.
4. Long-term cooperation opportunities and potential to develop new initiatives and projects in the future.

Cooperation between academic institutions and partners takes the following forms:

1. Practical training and placements: providing students with internship opportunities in partner organisations to gain practical skills and experience, as well as providing partner organisations with access to the knowledge potential of RSU academic staff.
2. Research projects and joint research: cooperation within research projects, joint research, data exchange and publications.

Academic exchanges: organising guest lectures and seminars with partner experts, involvement in the implementation of the study process.

4. Joint organisation of seminars, conferences, working groups and other academic events.
5. Developing and implementing joint projects and initiatives that contribute to the development of new ideas and solutions.

Several mechanisms are used to attract partners to ensure effective and sustainable cooperation:

1. Networking.
2. Targeted communication and the development of offers based on the interests and needs of both parties.

3. Marketing and publicity: promoting the field of study and the programmes through different communication channels in order to attract attention and generate interest in the cooperation.
4. Agreements and Memoranda of Cooperation: the conclusion of formal agreements and memoranda of cooperation which define the conditions, objectives and obligations of both parties.

These mechanisms and approaches ensure structured and effective cooperation that contributes to the development of the field of study and programmes, as well as to the professional development of students and staff. Lecturers from Riga Graduate School of Law, University of Latvia, Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, University of Liepaja and Latvian Academy of Culture are involved in the implementation of study programmes and final thesis defence committees, as well as in reviewing and managing final theses (as consultants), as well as in various scientific projects. There is also a cooperation agreement with the Riga State German Gymnasium and Riga 41st Secondary School. An agreement with the Riga English Gymnasium is currently being drafted. Cooperation is also being pursued in developing the range of guest lectures, providing students with information on guest lectures organised at other higher education institutions and integrated into the content of their chosen study programme.

The management of the study direction and study programmes, as well as the lecturers, are in regular contact with industry, such as the Latvian Institute of Foreign Policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries, foreign diplomatic services, foreign embassies, the Saeima, the Cabinet of Ministers, municipalities, the EU House, members of the European Parliament, in cooperation with whom student visits to Brussels are also organised. A cooperation agreement with the European Court of Auditors is currently being drawn up to implement different types of cooperation models. The lecturers of the study programme “Social Anthropology” are active members of the Latvian Association of Anthropologists and maintain social life by organising and participating in various thematic events.

Cooperation between the study direction and other Latvian higher education institutions, schools and industry organisations, as well as other institutions helps to promote the circulation of information, exchange of professional and academic knowledge and skills, as well as opportunity to hear the experience of other colleagues, which enables qualitative improvements in the study process. Guest lectures in schools also broaden the knowledge base of young people and prepare them for possible studies at the university, in the study programmes, thus fulfilling both the recruitment and university preparation functions for the students. The third block of cooperation, employers and industry organisations, serves as the most direct support in the planning and implementation of study content, both by identifying and incorporating into the study content the latest news, knowledge, skills and competences relevant to the industry, and by inviting industry representatives as guest lecturers or long-term lecturers in the implementation of study programmes. All these activities are aimed at achieving the overarching goal of the study direction - the pursuit of excellence in the social sciences and sustainability in scientific outgrowth.

The criteria for the selection of cooperation partners described above apply to both Latvian and foreign partners, the range of which is described in section 2.5.2.

**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.**

StD and StP management and lecturers are in regular communication and coordination with foreign embassies, EU institutions, NATO, UN representations, which help to regularly update the study content and provide various activities – visiting lectures, visits to institutions and organisations, to identify placement opportunities. The principles and mechanisms for recruitment of partners is outlined in Section 2.5.1.

It should also be mentioned that RSU International Department (ID) has established an extensive network of partnering higher education institutions in Europe. Partnering higher education institutions are informed on *Erasmus* exchange possibilities at RSU, including the field of exchange of visiting teaching staff, on a regular basis. In addition to electronic communication, RSU ID every year organises *Erasmus+* International Week, the programme of which includes several professional networking events. Within the framework of this event, contacts are established with new *Erasmus+* cooperation partners.

In addition to these events organised by RSU, representatives of RSU ID regularly attend annual events of professional international associations with a purpose to ensure exchanges, including visiting teaching. For example, RSU participates in networking exhibitions organised by the European Association of *Erasmus* Coordinators and European Association for International Education.

RSU ID supports *Erasmus* visiting teaching visits both before the visiting teaching staff arrives in Riga and during the period of their visiting teaching (for example, administers documentation of the visiting teaching, develops the plan of activities, assists in the process of the visit). The existing development of cooperation and internationalisation is in line with the objectives of the orientations and the development plan and is generally considered sufficient.

In order to implement the study programme, RSU has cooperation agreements with other institutions (see Table 1 of Annex 7). RSU students have the opportunity to go on exchange studies or international placement for one semester or the entire academic year abroad with an *Erasmus+* scholarship. The programme applies to all StPs, as well as to all levels of higher education, including doctoral studies (information in [Latvian, English](#)). In total, more than 200 bilateral cooperation agreements have been signed, providing mobility of the students and staff in all cycles of studies: during Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral studies. Partnering universities are selected on the basis of available information on equal StPs and conditions of the language of studies. One of the main conditions is alignment of the study courses during the student exchange programme in order to be able to recognise study sources and add them to the diploma supplement of the respective RSU StP. Thus, a complete study process is ensured, supplemented by experience gained abroad. For example, in the reporting period, the students of the bachelor's study programme "International Relations - European Studies" who participated in the mobility, went to Dutch universities with which RSU has *Erasmus+* cooperation agreements, such as The Hague University of Applied Sciences, while the majority of outgoing mobility students of the master's study programme "Social Anthropology" = to Università Degli Studi di Padova (University of Padova), Italy.

In the international environment, RSU has been assessed positively. International university rating *QS World University Rankings 2022* has included RSU among 1,000 best higher education

institutions of the world, especially appreciating the university's ability to attract international students. RSU also regularly receives the highest evaluation "A" in various categories of the *U-Multirank* rating of higher education institutions of the European Union (information about ratings in [Latvian, English](#)).

University has also received other international recognition. For example, as mentioned above, it was recognised as a student-centred higher education institution in the *PASCL* evaluation by the European Student Association. The World Bank experts in their research of 2016 also positively evaluated involvement of students in RSU decision-making, presence of international students, and strategic planning at the university.

The broad Erasmus network of partnering higher education institutions is a proof of international recognition of RSU. In 2017, RSU also received recognition from the State Education Development Agency on successful implementation of Erasmus programme of the European Commission.

Enclosed:

Annex 7. Information on cooperation agreements signed with other institutions

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

The attraction of international students is about attracting two levels of students:

- short-term mobility within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme in both Bachelor's and Master's level studies;
- long-term mobility related to studies in one of the two Master's study programmes implemented in English.

Both incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities are mostly used by students of the Bachelor's study programme "International Relations - European Studies". The outgoing mobility opportunities were used by the students of the Master's study programme "Social Anthropology", but no foreign students have come to RSU in this study programme, because so far it had only one language of implementation - Latvian. With the evaluation procedure, all study programmes in the field of study will also be implemented in English, which means that in the long term all study programmes offered in the field of study will be suitable for the admission of foreign students.

Several mechanisms and strategies are used to attract foreign students and faculty members to the study programme "Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology". Here are the main ones:

1. Establishment of international partnerships and networks (see Annex 7)
  - Erasmus+ programme: offers opportunities for students and staff to participate in exchange programmes that promote international mobility.
  - Bilateral cooperation agreements with foreign universities and research institutions: facilitates student and staff exchanges.
2. International study programmes and courses

- Programmes offered in English, thus attracting students from different countries who wish to pursue their education in an international environment.
3. Active recruitment of international students
    - Participation in international education fairs: representatives of RSU regularly participate in fairs and exhibitions to promote study programmes to international students.
    - Online and social media campaigns: digital marketing campaigns and the use of social networks help to reach a wide audience worldwide.
  4. Support systems for international students and staff
    - Mentoring and support programmes: help international students and staff to integrate easily into their new environment.
    - Cultural and language courses: help international students to adapt to local life.
  5. Organisation of international scientific events
    - Organisation of international scientific conferences and seminars: attracts international researchers and students who want to share their research and experience.
  6. Funding opportunities
    - Scholarships and grants instrument to attract foreign faculty.

The combination of these strategies helps to attract and retain international students and faculty, creating a diverse and internationally recognised academic environment.

#### **Assessment of the outgoing mobility of the teaching staff during the reported period**

Outgoing mobility of the teaching staff is implemented within the framework of the *Erasmus+* programme, bilateral cooperation and several Eu-funded projects. Cooperation agreements have been signed with other higher education institutions of the European Union, in which equal StPs to the study content are implemented in order to insure full cooperation. Before going for a visiting lecture, the teaching staff contact the receiving higher education institution in order to develop the lecture plan of suitable content. Main condition of a guest teaching visit of *Erasmus+*: the lecturer must provide at least eight academic hours that can be both lectures and seminars. Visiting lectures must be read in accordance with Common European Framework of Reference of Languages. RSU has defined the minimum mobility of lecturers – one visit in five years.

#### **Assessment of the ingoing mobility of the teaching staff during the reported period**

Incoming mobility of teaching staff during the reporting period has been quite limited, taking into account the unfavourable financial conditions, however, some cooperation projects have been successful, for example in 2022: the Chairman of the MD Defence Commission Andrey Makarychev, in 2021: Chairman of the MD Defence Commission Michael Kaeding (Germany), in 2019: Geoffrey David Thorpe, taught the study course “Development Cooperation: Theories, Problems and Challenges”, as well as lecturers in the study programme Social Anthropology – *Carlo Cubero, Michael Strmiska, Hanna Nieber, Susanne Fehlings*. The range of visiting lecturers consists of lecturers whose primary place of work is an institution of higher education outside Latvia – United States, United Kingdom, Estonia, Germany, etc.

Enclosed:

Annex 6.3.1. Statistical data on incoming and outgoing academic staff mobility

Annex 7. Information on cooperation agreements signed with other institutions

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

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

The recommendations made in the previous accreditation procedure of the study field “Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology” have been fully implemented (except for those recommendations that could not be implemented due to programme closure). Careful work has been carried out to analyse the recommendations and to adapt them to the specificities of the field of study and the four study programmes it comprises. A detailed description of the implementation of the recommendations is available in Annex 11. The main tasks completed during the evaluation period are:

1. Relationship between the topic of doctoral theses and medical sociology: due to significant structural changes, the direct implementation of this recommendation was not possible, however, the topic of many (almost all) doctoral theses in the newly created doctoral study programme in Social Sciences is directly or indirectly related to the healthcare sector – all developed doctoral theses have an interdisciplinary trend and resonate with the health sector – “The effectiveness of secular and religiously justified resocialisation measures in the resocialisation of prisoners and women released from prison”, “Nutrition as part of the social environment: the influence of socio-cultural factors on the formation of nutritional consumption habits of young people in rural Latvia”, “The role and challenges of patient organisations in the protection of patients’ rights”, “Social work organisation in rural areas of Latvia under the influence of digital transformation”, etc.
2. Improvement and transformation of the programme “Politics and State Management”: the study programme has been closed, so the recommendations on systematising the programme content and improving the argumentation are no longer applicable, however, this recommendation has been respected when planning and improving the content of the other programmes included in the direction.
3. Improvement of library resources: there is regular and high-quality cooperation with the library, ensuring the availability of library resources appropriate for the implementation of studies and scientific activities – industry databases are subscribed, literature and periodicals are ordered, special attention is paid to the literature required within the Master’s and doctoral study programmes. Since the previous accreditation, the Library has acquired new databases: Sage Research Methods Core, SRM video collections Practical Research and Academic Skills un Research Ethics & Integrity, HeinOnline, EBSCO Sociology Source Ultimate, EBSCO Communication Source, Encyclopaedia Britannica Academic. Since 2020, the Library participates in the Berghahn Open Anthro initiative “BOA-S20 Select Title Level”, by subscribing to anthropology journals. As for the supply of e-resources, two e-book

databases and seven full-text multisectoral databases of journals are available for the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology". E-books in sociology, political science, anthropology and other relevant thematic areas are available in subscribed databases ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO) and Ebook Central (Proquest). For example, searching by subject "Political Science", the ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO) database has 32957 e-books for the last 10 years, but Ebook Central (Proquest) - 13,182 ebooks, when searching by subject "Sociology", the ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO) database has 12557 e-books, but Ebook Central (Proquest) - 5,506 ebooks, when searching by subject "Anthropology", the ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO) has 11261 e-books for the last 10 years, but Ebook Central (Proquest) - 2,797 eBooks. Subscribed multidisciplinary databases Ebook Central (ProQuest) and EBSCO eBook Academic Collection offer e-books in different fields and from different publishers that provide selected information results searching by various topics/keywords. More information in Annex 23.2.

4. Summer school of social sciences to build connections with foreign visiting lecturers and attract international students: international students use the ERASMUS study courses offered by RSU to a positive extent. The data is available in Annex 8.2. The range of study courses offered in English is wide and includes various directions of international relations - "US Institutions and Foreign Policy", "Political and International Economics", "Chinese Politics and Strategic Communication", "The Anthropology of Globalisation", "Russia in World Politics", "Introduction to Foreign Policy and Diplomacy", etc. Currently (in February 2024), work is underway to organise at least one summer school by the end of 2024, dedicated to matters such as strategic communication and change management, using the opportunities offered by the ERASMUS programme and corresponding to the following format - a microcredit point (3ECTS) summer school (intensive) programme held between at least 3 higher education institutions, consisting of both virtual and regular activities. In this way, the recommendations of experts on building connections with foreign visiting lecturers and attracting international students will be fulfilled. Our students also regularly go to various foreign summer schools, such as the summer school organised by the University of Iceland from August 2024.
5. Provision of premises. For Student Union and study group activities: during the reporting period, the necessary improvements have been made and suitable premises have been found for the implementation of the activities. From 2012, the Student Union is in new premises at Dzirciema street 16, building C, No. 213.

Enclosed:

Annex 11. Execution of the plan for implementation of recommendations provided by experts of the previous accreditation of the study direction.

Annex 4.1. Development plan of the study direction.

Annex 23.2. Assessment of the informative and methodological provision regarding library resources for the implementation of the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology"

**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).**

During the reporting period, apart from the closure of programmes under internal consolidation, two procedures were implemented:

1. A new study programme “Russian and Eurasian Studies” was licensed (the name of the study programme is being changed to “International System Transformation Studies” as part of the evaluation procedure).
2. The procedure of inclusion of the study programme in the accreditation sheet of the study field for the above-mentioned study programme was carried out.

As a result of both procedures, the experts gave their recommendations. A detailed implementation plan of the expert recommendations of both procedures is available in Annex 11. The most important work carried out has been the improvement of the study programme “Russian and Eurasian Studies” as a whole. The quality of the content of the programme has been regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that it meets the requirements of contemporary international relations and diplomacy. In planning for the next academic year, increased attention has been paid to reviewing the content and sequencing of courses to ensure a focused and logical acquisition of knowledge. The sequence of courses has been reviewed so that the core courses, which provide the necessary knowledge and skills, are offered at the beginning of the studies. This allows students to have a solid foundation before specialisation courses. This includes general courses on international relations, regional politics and economics, before moving on to specialised courses focusing on specific issues in Russia and Eurasia. Additional focus was also given to the existing research methods course, which provides students with an in-depth knowledge of research methods and theories in international relations and diplomacy. In order to improve the efficiency of the programme and to focus on the most relevant issues, courses that were considered to be of little relevance or overlapping with other courses were removed. This helped to focus resources and attention on those courses that provide the greatest added value for students. Measures were taken to balance the workload of lecturers to ensure that no lecturer was overloaded and that the learning process was efficient. This included redesigning courses to evenly distribute teaching loads among lecturers and to improve the quality of teaching. Attention has also been paid to academic format in the process of producing theses and final papers. Continuous efforts (both nationally and internationally) continue to be made to recruit new students. A promotional campaign and information materials in English were developed. As part of the evaluation procedure of the study field, it is planned to rename the study programme “Russian and Eurasian Studies” to “International System Transformation Studies”, taking into account the complex geopolitical situation. The formulation of this name is the result of careful work by experts in the field, which allows the uniqueness of the programme to be preserved while emphasising not the central role of a single superpower, but rather a conceptual view of the irreversible transformations of the political system in the world and in some of its regions.

In general, the measures described above reflect the targeted approach of Riga Stradiņš University and the representatives of the study field “Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology” to implement, as far as possible, all expert recommendations made during the previous accreditation period, except in cases where study programmes have been closed.

Enclosed:

Annex 11. Execution of the plan for implementation of recommendations provided by experts of the previous accreditation of the study direction.

# 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	01.1_pielik_leksejo_normatiivo_aktu_saraksts-2.pdf	01.1_pielik_leksejo_normatiivo_aktu_saraksts-2.pdf
The management structure of the higher education institution/ college	03_Anx_RSU_organisational_structure.pdf	03_pielik_RSU_parvaldibas_strukturshema.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.1. Management of the Study Field		
Plan for the development of the study field (if applicable)	04.1_Anx_SID_Development_plan_2022-2023_Soc_Polit_Anthrop.pdf	04.1_pielik_STV_Atistibas_plans_2022-2023_Soc_Polit_Anthrop.pdf
The management structure of the study field	4.2_anx_RSU_management_structure_of_study_direction.pdf	04.2_pielik_STV_parvaldibas_strukturshema.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.	24.2_piel_Studiju_turpin_apl_LV_ENG.pdf	24.2_piel_Studiju_turpin_apl_LV_ENG.pdf
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.	24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf	24.3_pielik_Aplicinajums_par_studejoso_zaudējumu_kompensāciju.edoc
Standard sample of study agreement	24.8_Studiju_ligums_par_studijām_fizisko_un_juridisko_personu_finansētājās_vietās_2023.pdf	24.8_Studiju_ligums_par_studijām_fizisko_un_juridisko_personu_finansētājās_vietās_2023.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System		
Analysis of the results of surveys of students, graduates and employers	Analysis_St_course_graduate_employer_survey.pdf	Stud_abs_darba_dev_apt_analize.pdf
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	06.1_Anx_Academic_staff_list_Soc_Pol_Ant_ENG_new.xlsx	06.1_pielikums_Docetaju_saraksts_AMSP_Startp_att_diplo_LV.xlsx
Biographies of the teaching staff members (Curriculum Vitae in Europass format)	6.2_Anx_Teaching_staff_CV.pdf	6.2_pielik_macibspeku_CV.pdf
A statement signed by the rector, director, head of the study programme or field that the knowledge of the state language of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes within the study field complies with the regulations on the state language knowledge and state language proficiency test for professional and official duties.	24.4_Anx_Certification_Regarding_the_Knowledge_of_Latvian.pdf	24.4_pielik_Aplicinajums_par_studiju_virzienu_”Socioloģija, politoloģija un antropoloģija” studiju programmām.edoc
A statement of the higher education institution/ college on the respective foreign language skills of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme at least at B2 level according to the European Language Proficiency Assessment Levels (level distribution is available on the website www.europass.lv, if the study programme or part thereof is implemented)	24.5_Anx_Certification_Regarding_the_English_Language_Knowledge.pdf	24.5_pielik_Aplicinajums_par_studiju_virzienu_”Socioloģija, politoloģija un antropoloģija” studiju programmām_valodu_prasmes.edoc
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation		
Summary of quantitative data on scientific and/ or applied research and / or artistic creation activities corresponding to the study field in the reporting period.	6.4.1_Anx_Publication_data_Teaching_Staf.pdf	6.4.1_pielikums_Docetaju_publicaciju_dati.pdf
List of the publications, patents, and artistic creations of the teaching staff over the reporting period.	6.4.2_pielik_doc_publicaciju_statistika_SocPolAnt_ENG.pdf	6.4.2_pielik_doc_publicaciju_statistika_SocPolAnt_LV.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation		
List of cooperation agreements, including the agreements for providing internship	07_Inter-institutional_Agreements_ENG.pdf	07_pielik_sadarbibas_ligumi_LV.pdf
Statistical data on the teaching staff and the students from abroad	08.1_Anx_Stats_on_guest_lecturers_mobility_ENG.pdf	08.1_pielik_Statistika_par_arvalstu_macibspekiem.pdf
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of students (by specifying the study programmes)	08.2_Anx_Statistics_on_student_mobility_ENG.pdf	08.2_piel_Statistikas_dati_par_studejoso_mobilitati.pdf
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff	06.3_Anx_Incoming_outgoing_staff_SocPol_Anthropol_ENG.pdf	06.3_pielik_macibspeku_mobilitates_apkopojums_par_virzienu_LV.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.	11_Anx_Expert_Recom_comp_overview_SID_Soc_Pol_Antr.pdf	11_pielik_Eksp_Rek_iev_parskats_STV_Soc_Pol_Antr.pdf
An application for the evaluation of the study field signed with a secure electronic signature	RSU_Application_SID_Sociology_PolSci_Anthropology.pdf	Iesniegums_studiju_virzienu_”Socioloģija, politoloģija un antropoloģija” novērtēšanai.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
20.2_pielik_Brivas_izveles_studiju_kursu_piedavajums_RSU.pdf	20.2_pielik_Brivas_izveles_studiju_kursu_piedavajums_RSU.pdf
20.2_Anx_Offer_elective_study_courses_RSU.pdf	20.2_Anx_Offer_elective_study_courses_RSU.pdf
21.3_pielik_absolventu_anketa.pdf	21.3_pielik_absolventu_anketa.pdf
21.3_Anx_graduate_survey.pdf	21.3_Anx_graduate_survey.pdf
23.1_pielik_ESG_standarta_istenosana.pdf	23.1_pielik_ESG_standarta_istenosana.pdf
23.1_Anx_Compliance with ESG standards.pdf	23.1_Anx_Compliance with ESG standards.pdf
25_pielik_Senata_lemuma_izraksts_akreditacija.pdf	25_pielik_Senata_lemuma_izraksts_akreditacija.pdf
25_Anx_Senate_decision_extract.pdf	25_Anx_Senate_decision_extract.pdf
Studiju virziena dome un kvalitātes padome	04.3_pielik_SZF_domes_un_kval_padomes_sastavs_LV.pdf
Study programme council and quality board	04.3_Anx_SSF_council_members_ENG.pdf
Statistikas dati par studējošajiem studiju virzienā	16_pielik_statistika_par_stud_LV.pdf
Statistical Data about the Students of the study direction	16_Anx_StD_student_statistics_eng.pdf
10_pielik_Absolventu_nodarbinatiba_LV.pdf	10_pielik_Absolventu_nodarbinatiba_LV.pdf
10_Anx_Graduate_employment_ENG.pdf	10_Anx_Graduate_employment_ENG.pdf
Studentu, absolventu, darba deveju aptauju analize	Stud_abs_darba_dev_apt_analize.pdf
Studentu, absolventu, darba deveju aptauju analize	Analysis_St_course_graduate_employer_survey.pdf
01.2_Uzņemšanas kārtība studiju programmās angļu valodā_LV.pdf	01.2_Uzņemšanas kārtība studiju programmās angļu valodā_2023_2024_LV.pdf
01.2.Admissions_procedure_in_English_tought_study_programmes.pdf	01.2.Admissions_procedure_.pdf
01.3_Anx_internal_regulations.pdf	01.3_Anx_internal_regulations_2.pdf
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13.1_marketinga_aktivitates_RSU.pdf	13.1_marketinga_aktivitates_RSU_atjaunots.pdf
13.1_Anx_RSU_marketings_ENG.pdf	13.1_Anx_marketings_ENG.pdf
13.2_ Istenotie projekti_StV_2013-2023.pdf	13.2_ Istenotie projekti_StV_2013-2023.pdf
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23.3_Anx_Inform_methodol_provision_regarding_IT_ENG.pdf	23.3_Anx_Inform_methodol_provision_regarding_IT.pdf
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05_Anx_Activities_of_Student_Union.pdf	05_Anx_Activities_of_Student_Union.pdf
01_StD_List_of_Annexes.pdf	01_StD_List_of_Annexes.pdf
01_StV_Pielikumu_uzskaitijums_lv.pdf	01_StV_Pielikumu_uzskaitijums_lv.pdf
30_piel_Rekomendācijas_pārejai_uz_jauno_kredītpunktu_sistēmu.pdf	30_piel_Rekomendācijas_pārejai_uz_jauno_kredītpunktu_sistēmu.pdf
24.2_pielik_Apliecinajums_par_stud_turp.edoc	24.2_pielik_Apliecinajums_par_stud_turp.edoc
24.2_Anx_Agreement_cont_studies.pdf	24.2_Anx_Agreement_cont_studies.pdf
Answers_23.07.2024.docx	Answers_23.07.2024.docx

# International Relations and Diplomacy (45312)

Study field	<i>Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>International Relations and Diplomacy</i>
Education classification code	<i>45312</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic master study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Lelde</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Metla-Rozentāle</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>lelde.rozentale@rsu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>mg.oec.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>Train highly qualified professionals in the field of international relations who will be able to conduct scientific research that can be used in practical work and to analyse and evaluate international processes at global and regional level. The strategic aim of the academic education programme is to acquire theoretical knowledge and research skills preparing for independent scientific research in the chosen field of science.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Provide theoretical knowledge of developments and influencing factors in international politics.</i></li> <li><i>2. Learn about the current issues in the global and European political economy, as well as EU development trends.</i></li> <li><i>3. Acquire knowledge of the process of defining international policy in Latvia in comparison with other European and world countries.</i></li> <li><i>4. Assess the place of Latvia and other Baltic States in the political and social space of the European Union in the future.</i></li> <li><i>5. Teach how to conduct independent scientific research based on modern methodological and methodological principles.</i></li> <li><i>6. Develop critical thinking and the ability to anticipate development of political processes, and develop skills in analysing alternative situations.</i></li> <li><i>7. Prepare for further doctoral studies by creating a positive motivation for obtaining a doctoral degree.</i></li> </ol>

Results of the study programme	<p><i>Knowledge:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Knowledge of the dynamics of international relations and modern trends.</i></li> <li><i>2. In-depth knowledge of theory and methodology, which allows to consider research problems in a broad conceptual context.</i></li> <li><i>3. Thorough knowledge of the different regions of Europe and the world in comparative politics, using theoretical concepts.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Skills:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Apply theoretical knowledge and use the acquired skills in working with methodology to analyse, interpret and deal with theoretical and/or practical problems.</i></li> <li><i>2. Communicate clearly their conclusions and the reasoning used to draw them, and explain and discuss complex issues of international relations, globalisation and regional development.</i></li> <li><i>3. Formulate and conduct research independently and find its practical application in the professional field.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Competence:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Manage research and academic processes that require innovative, strategic approaches.</i></li> <li><i>2. Pursue an interdisciplinary approach to research.</i></li> <li><i>3. Take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic outcomes of groups.</i></li> </ol>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>Defence of Master's thesis</i>

## Study programme forms

### Full time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>2</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>120</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>First cycle higher education in the following social sciences or humanities: political science, economics and business, sociology and social work, law, social and economic geography, media and communication, military science, history and philosophy, ethics and religion Entrance examination</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master's degree of Social Sciences in International Relations and Diplomacy</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>-</i>

### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

### Full time studies - 2 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
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Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	english
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>First cycle higher education in the following social sciences or humanities: political science, economics and business, sociology and social work, law, social and economic geography, media and communication, military science, history and philosophy, ethics and religion Entrance examination For studies in English, a minimum B2 level of proficiency in English is required</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master's degree of Social Sciences in International Relations and Diplomacy</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

## 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.**

Table 1. Changes in the StP Parameters

<b>No.</b>	<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period</b>	<b>Planned changes within the assessment procedure</b>
1.	Study direction	—	—
2.	Title of the StP	—	—
3.	Code according to the Latvian Education Classification	—	Amended to reflect the changes in CM Regulations No. 322

No.	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period	Planned changes within the assessment procedure
4.	Head of the StP	Head of StP changed due to academic staff career growth and other professional challenges (prof. Dr. sc. pol. Andris Sprūds, assoc. prof. Dr. sc. pol. M.Andžāns refused to head the programme), as well as structural reforms within the higher education institution (Mg. sc. pol. E.Vroblevska). The group of study programmes "International Politics and Society Studies" and therefore the Master's programme "International Relations and Diplomacy" included into it are currently headed by Lelde Metla-Rozentāle (doctoral candidate)	—
5.	Academic degree of the head of the StP	PhD. cand.	—
6.	Objective of the StP	Basically, the objective of the study programme has not changed, but was updated using the current European and Latvian educational policy documents, as well as on the basis of the results of surveys of employers and graduates.	—

<b>No.</b>	<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period</b>	<b>Planned changes within the assessment procedure</b>
7.	Tasks of the StP	The tasks of the study programme have been updated in conformity with the revised learning outcomes, as well as using the current European and Latvian educational policy documents, following the development trends of the politics and international relations discipline in the European and US higher education area, as well as guided by recommendations of students, graduates and employers.	—

No.	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period	Planned changes within the assessment procedure
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	<p>The information regarding the analysis of the learning outcomes performed during the mapping process are reflected in Annex 18. The learning outcomes have been specified in accordance with the study objective, tasks and descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to the 7<sup>th</sup> level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (which corresponds to the European Qualifications Framework) (hereinafter - LQF/EQF), as well as the AIKA guidelines on the number of outcomes. Thus, the competences, knowledge and skills learned in individual courses in a logical sequence contribute to the achievement of the defined study results. Mapping has allowed the programme management to better review the interaction between the competences, knowledge and skills to be acquired in individual courses and the compliance of the study programme outcomes with the objectives and tasks.</p>	—
9.	Final examination upon the completion of the StP	—	—
10.	Type and form of studies	—	—

<b>No.</b>	<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period</b>	<b>Planned changes within the assessment procedure</b>
11.	Duration of implementation	—	—
12.	Language of implementation	—	The implementation in Latvian will be supplemented with the implementation in English, adding the flow of international students, who previously studied the Master's programme "International Governance and Diplomacy", taking care of the profitability and competitiveness of the programme in the higher education market.
13.	Volume of the StP (ECTS)	Following the transition to ECTS, the CP mastered are expressed in ECTS, so the total volume of the study programme is 120 ECTS.	—
14.	Admission requirements	—	Changes made in accordance with Section 8.1 (2) of the Education Law
15.	Degree to be awarded	—	—
16.	Qualification to be awarded	—	—
17.	Place of implementation	—	—

Table 1 demonstrates that the changes in the programme have been driven by both external factors (change of heads of the programme, adjustment of the amount of credit points) and improved and adapted to the requirements of the changing higher education environment of the

programmes, existing and potential students, and labour market.

The code of the study programme has been changed from 45310 to 45312 on the basis of Article 5(1) of Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 322.

Heads of the study programme have changed several times during the reporting period analysed. At the beginning of the reporting period, head of the programme prof. Dr. sc. pol. Andris Sprūds left the position, becoming the Dean of the Faculty of European Studies and remaining in the programme as a course lecturer. Assoc. prof. Dr. sc. pol. Māris Andžāns took over from him. He also worked as an Assistant Professor in this study programme until he became a Vice-Rector at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences. Mg. sc. pol. Elīna Vroblevska became acting director of the programme in the previous academic year through the internal staff rotation. Currently, along with the structural changes in the governance of RSU – the creation of a new Faculty of Social Sciences, Mg. sc. pol. Lelde Metla-Rozentāle also carries out the duties of director of four study programmes.

As already mentioned, the objective of the study programme has not changed conceptually, however, it is not stagnant, but adapting to the latest environmental trends in political science and practical international policies. The knowledge of regions of the world that are relevant in the context of international geopolitics, such as China, the Middle East, the new regions of power, etc., is integrated in the content of the programme. In parallel, the content of studies is also adapted to developments in the latest technologies, offering study courses that help to master the latest information technologies, digital environment, research methods. It is monitored in a targeted manner that study courses are complementary, oriented towards the development of successive knowledge and understanding, as well as conform to the defined objective, tasks of studies and descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework.

Due to the centralised transition from the national to international (ECTS) credit point system, all courses for which the total number of ECTS was not expressed in whole numbers were subject to a point volume adjustment, with the number of contact hours being adjusted accordingly. All lecturers have reviewed and adapted the content of their courses in terms of implementation format and content to the new amount of credit points.

As a potential innovation, the programme is expected to be implemented in parallel in the English language by closing the similar English-taught programme “International Governance and Diplomacy”. The availability of the English-taught programme enables the development in two directions – first, to attract international students. The interest of international students in the topic of the programme has been stable, however, the size of groups was not resource efficient in accordance with the RSU criteria. In this format, the number of English-taught students is linked to the total number of students in the group and improves group management efficiency. Second, the availability of the English-taught programme makes it possible to address ERASMUS+ students.

As part of the evaluation procedure, the admission requirements for the study programme have been changed to the following: *first cycle higher education in the following social sciences or humanities: political science, economics and business, sociology and social work, law, social and economic geography, media and communication, military science, history and philosophy, ethics and religion; entrance examination; for studies in English, a minimum B2 level of proficiency in English is required*, thus ensuring the compliance of the admission requirements with Section 8.1 (2) of the Education Law.

### **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 study programme harmoniously complements the range of educational opportunities offered by RSU in the study direction “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” in the field of political science. Two other programmes are already functioning in this direction: “International Relations – European Studies” with a Bachelor’s degree and “International System Transformation Studies” with a Master’s degree, which form a whole with the study programme under consideration. When students graduate from the programme, they are awarded a Master’s degree of Social Sciences in International Relations and Diplomacy which is included in the segment Political Science in the Latvian education classification and corresponds to the defined programme content (spectrum of study courses). The programme code starting with “45” indicates the academic level of education after Bachelor’s or professional Bachelor’s degree, and the second part of the code, “312,” indicates belonging to a group of political science programmes included in the field of social sciences. The programme and the degree to be awarded comply fully with the government regulations regarding the classification of education in Latvia and comply with the objective, tasks and outcomes of the programme.

The programme promotes the expansion of the range of RSU study programmes in political sciences ensuring simultaneous links with other programmes offered in this field. Its administrative and academic activities are supported by the team of the Faculty of Social Sciences, which promotes strategic coherence and efficient use of resources. The Master’s programmes “International Relations and Diplomacy” and “International System Transformation Studies” share both theoretical and methodological courses and the Master’s thesis development process, laying the foundations for possible integration of future programmes.

This study programme continues the RSU’s approach to the internationalisation of social sciences, offering students the opportunity to study and analyse in depth the knowledge acquired in Bachelor level studies. The content of courses of the programme has been carefully coordinated with normative regulations and has been developed in such a way as to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the changes in the modern international system and diplomacy, complying with both Latvian and European educational standards and requirements.

Admission requirements are designed to ensure that students are prepared and able to continue their studies in the fields of politics and international relations, promoting not only the acquisition of theoretical knowledge but also the development of practical skills and competences. The programme is designed to achieve high educational goals and standards by preparing students for successful careers in diplomacy, international relations, science and other sectors, thus contributing to their contribution to society, in particular to strengthening democracy.

The study programme supplements the range of Master’s study programmes in political sciences implemented by RSU at the same time retaining a tight functional and administrative link to other political science programmes:

- The administrative support to the StP is provided by the administrative staff of the Faculty of Social Sciences;

- The Faculty of Social Sciences is led by a single management team that ensures strategic unity and efficient resource management;
- StP “International Relations and Diplomacy” and StP “International System Transformation Studies” have joint theoretical and methodological study courses, as well as the Master’s thesis writing process. Other study courses will also be shared;
- at least 50 percent of lecturers of StP “International Relations and Diplomacy” and StP “International System Transformation Studies” match making it possible to share resources;
- Cooperation between programmes sharing resources may eventually provide the basis for merging programmes in the future by developing specialisation directions within a single programme.
- StP continues the course for internationalisation of social sciences at RSU;
- from wider international relations-related discussions in Bachelor studies, StP offers the next step – studying in depth the topics mastered in Bachelor studies, complementing them with specific and more nuanced knowledge and higher analytical requirements.

The study programme is designed according to current and expected labour market trends, offering students not only theoretical knowledge, but also skills necessary for successful professional activity in international organisations, diplomatic service, public administration and private sector. The content of the study programme has been carefully adapted to provide graduates with the ability to effectively address complex international conflicts, build diplomatic relations and work on developing and managing international cooperation projects in line with the highest labour market standards and requirements.

Furthermore, the study programme is essential in the context of academic science and research, as it promotes critical thinking and scientific approaches in the field of international relations and diplomacy. The programme offers opportunities for in-depth research related to current problems and challenges in international relations, fostering the development of new knowledge and theories, which is an important contribution to both academic literature and practice. This approach ensures that the programme is not only in line with modern requirements, but also promotes innovation and scientific progress.

In addition, the study programme highlights a multidisciplinary approach, which is particularly important in both academic and research work. It gives students a broad perspective and understanding of international systems, politics, economics and cultural dynamics. As such, the programme not only prepares graduates for professional challenges of the highest level, but also forms a strong foundation for future academic careers and research in response to both today’s and tomorrow’s global challenges.

The study programme is designed and offered in Latvian and English, both versions offering full-time studies (study duration 2 years). The rationale for this is to be as open as possible to potential applicants in terms of language choice, including both local and international audiences. Taking into account the analysis of the demand of applicants so far, the decision has been taken not to offer this programme in a part-time format, focusing only on full-time studies and varying the delivery methods (face-to-face/online) where necessary.

However, despite its openness to a multilingual audience, the selection process remains a matter of constant attention. Entry criteria are designed to ensure that students are ready and qualified to pursue further studies in the field of political science and diplomacy or any other specialisation related to international systems. The admission requirements define the acceptable range of prior learning, and interviews with the programme director and several other programme lecturers are a mandatory part of the admission procedure. The interviews include an assessment of the student’s motivation to study, a check of prior knowledge in the field, and a test of English or Latvian

language skills (must be at least B2 level) to ascertain the applicant's ability to integrate into the study process, within which students not only acquire theoretical knowledge, but also develop the skills and competences needed to succeed in this dynamic and changing field of international relations and diplomacy.

The implementation of the study programme in two language flows brings significant added value by providing students with the opportunity to learn course materials in a more versatile way, improving their foreign language skills and intercultural communication abilities. This approach contributes to the competitiveness of graduates in the international labour market, where the ability to operate in different cultural and linguistic environments is highly appreciated, as well as to a deeper understanding of different perspectives and approaches to solving problems in international relations and diplomacy.

Enclosed:

Annex 24.1. Model Diploma and Supplement Thereto.

Annex 24.8. Study Contract Sample.

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

In the period from December 2019 to March 2020, at the order of RSU within a project SIA "Dynamic University" (DyU) conducted a study summarising its results in the final report "Study of competitiveness of study programmes of Rīga Stradiņš University and RSU Red Cross Medical College and compliance with medium-term and long-term labour market and industry development trends". Phase 1 and Phase 2 report looked at study programmes of StD "Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology". According to the results of the DyU study, in the group of StPs "Social and Behavioural Sciences", demand for specialists is expected to decrease and this will lead to labour surplus due to limited employment opportunities. However, not all students are planning to work in the given sector, so the role of the higher education institution is to help students develop not only sector-specific skills but also cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary skills.

The DyU assessment of labour market trends identified a number of skills the need for which increases: public dialogue, political administrative skills, emotional intelligence, creative thinking, experimentation, quick learning skills, interdisciplinary cooperation, as well as working with big data. The results of the DyU study also highlighted the need to incorporate technology literacy opportunities into StP content.

The skills acquired in the study programme make it possible not only to contribute substantively to the development of foreign and security policy of Latvia, the EU and third countries, but develop analytical, representative and representation skills that allow for graduates' successful entering into the labour market.

The survey of graduates of the study programme reveals that, for the most part, the programme was graduated by people born after 1990 who have highly appreciated the quality of studies – all respondents marked it as good or very good. Average or poor assessments are not generally observed, with individual exceptions. Graduates also appreciate the theoretical knowledge and practical skills acquired, which are actively applied in work thanks to programme development and improved cooperation with employers. About 80% of respondents work in sectors directly related to the area of the study programme and 70% confirm that the programme has contributed to finding a

job. It has been observed that 80% of graduates would recommend the programme to others showing its significant impact on career building and professional opportunities.

When evaluating the existing student assessment questionnaires, the average assessment of the quality of the programme varies around 3.5 (on a 4-point scale), reaching the highest assessment during the pre-pandemic period and during the period of exit from the pandemic. It is significant that student activity in completing assessment questionnaires is increasing again making it possible to obtain representative data. Overall satisfaction of students in other parameters also reaches the level of “fully satisfied” or “rather satisfied”. For the summary of student questionnaire results see Annex 21.1, for the summary of graduate questionnaires see Annex 21.2.

Enclosed:

Annex 21.1. Results of the study course and study programme assessment surveys.

Annex 21.2. Graduate survey results.

Annex 21.3. Graduate survey questionnaire.

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

The Master’s study programme “International Relations and Diplomacy” is implemented as full-time intramural study programme, in Latvian and English. Student survey data show that most of students combine studies with full-time work in different sectors (e.g., business, journalism, work in public institutions, etc.). The survey data also shows that students most often choose to pursue Master studies in the particular programme to supplement their basic knowledge, obtain better paid job, as well as acquire additional education, improve competences and opportunities for deeper understanding.

Due to the restrictions caused by the global pandemic, more flexibility has been introduced in the full-time study process, offering both regular and online (to a limited extent) study process. According to students’ assessments, the ability of the study programme to function online is described as excellent and is highly supported in both Latvian and English student flows.

Students appreciate the opportunities offered by the content of the study programme, moreover, the study planning is designed to meet the needs of students and different levels and specificities of prior knowledge, and to ensure full-time study opportunities without interrupting professional activities.

The dynamics of the number of students in the study process are most often negatively affected by the inability to combine professional activity with studies, at the same time this negative tendency manifests itself in very rare cases and students resume their studies after a short break and complete them successfully. Basically, there are two stages, when students discontinue studies the most: several students leave every year during the first months following the beginning of their studies because they have not sufficiently considered their interests and opportunities, and before or while writing a Master’s thesis they are expelled mainly because of academic failures, or because they are unable to effectively manage their time to complete the final phase of their studies. In the programme, international students most often stop studying due to academic failures or unsettled

liabilities.

Overall, the number of students in the programme has been volatile, with an average of 13-30 students enrolled per study year. Fluctuations in the number of students can be attributed to several external political, social and economic factors, such as changes in the economic situation in the country, foreign political instability and other factors often dominate the choice of persons to start self-financed studies. Every year, the management of the study programme is working on popularising the study programme organising various information campaigns and actively promoting it in the media, as well as conducting individual and group discussions with students who acquire a Bachelor's degree in political science. Individual marketing and communication activities are implemented to attract international students, where the target audience is international students constantly living in Latvia or elsewhere.

In general, fluctuations in the number of students is one of the largest threats to the development of the study programme, and the management of the study programme is therefore constantly focused on finding students, finding out their study work conditions and other contextual factors, with a view to improving the studies so that they meet the needs of potential students entering the higher education market to choose the Master's study programme.

The mobility (incoming and outgoing) of Master level students is less active than in lower-level studies. On average, one student uses incoming and outgoing mobility every year. This is due to several factors, where one of the determinants is that the planning (compulsory Part A courses) and duration of studies provide a limited period of time for using mobility. Moreover, given the life routine of students, not everyone is prepared and able to use mobility due to personal reasons. However, overall, when comparing reporting periods, interest in mobility activities has increased slightly and is seen every academic year. Students who have used mobility opportunities at Master level recognise the experience acquired and additional knowledge as useful in their study and professional career development.

Enclosed:

Annex 16. Statistical data on students.

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

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

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

## **of the relevant industry, labour market, and science.**

The structure of study courses is designed to ensure a logical sequence of study blocks, clearly defining the objectives of each part and the links between them. This allows for gradual development in students of their understanding of the field of studies by promoting the mastering of more complex topics based on a stable knowledge base. Courses are updated through regular workshops and individual cooperation of lecturers making it possible to combine personal initiative with joint experience, thus ensuring updating of content and compliance with recent academic and sectoral trends.

Digital skills are developed by integrating them into course programmes and practical classes, focusing on both the use of technology in the study process, data analysis and digital communication. Since the development of the university's artificial intelligence guidelines, in individual courses students have been offered to take exams using the opportunities offered by artificial intelligence as a pilot project. For example, in the course "Global Governance: Institutions and Processes", in the final examination students should request an explanation of the artificial intelligence tool on specific problems of international governance followed by a multi-stage analysis. Students check the facts and context of the responses provided (identification of matches/mismatches), identify national narratives in the responses (many topics of international relations include opposing national narratives - AI as "excellent mediocrity" in collection of information is not free of prejudice). Analyse the effectiveness of prompts in dialogue with AI when attempting to get the details of a question that was not originally retrieved. Draw conclusions on the aspects of the presentation of the information space in a specific area of foreign policy and international governance, as well as provide recommendations and reflections on cooperation with AI models.

The acquisition of transversal competences, including communication and data analysis, is integrated into the study process, with particular emphasis on practical classes using modern technologies and work-based teaching methods, as well as simulation studies that contribute to realistic replication of work situations and problem solving. Students' work practices are linked to the acquisition of knowledge in lectures, while seminars manifest in pedagogically different ways.

Course content is updated taking into account global trends, scientific developments and sectoral changes, thereby ensuring that study content is directly related to students' future career opportunities and reflects the latest knowledge and practices. With the support of the Baltic Information Technology Fund (BITF), Part C course Fundamentals of Artificial Intelligence and its Application in Practice, lecturer Agate Ambulte, was updated, demonstrating the efficient use of external resources to improve and deepen the study content of the programme. This reflects the study programme's commitment to up-to-date and meaningful education, which prepares students for success in the changing labour market and supports their professional development.

As the programme is oriented towards providing internationally high-quality and sustainable knowledge, skills and competences that would ensure academic and professional competitiveness of graduates of the programme in Latvia and abroad, it has been developed taking into account the multi-faceted and varying levels of knowledge characterising students at this level. Lecturers adapt course content and make it diverse to adapt it to students with different previous study experiences. The content of the study programme is designed for the full implementation of the objectives and tasks of the programme. It is important to note here that students enter the Master's programme with interdisciplinary experience, which is strengthened during the programme and results in different topics of graduation papers. For example, a student interested and working in

the field of sport wrote a graduation paper on international sport policy as an instrument of soft power in third countries of the world; students with previous experience in law specialise in international law, diplomacy and governance, etc.

The Master's study programme is designed for full-time students and is implemented in four semesters (two academic years), with the total volume of 80 CP (120 ECTS). The study programme is implemented in two languages - Latvian and English. According to the language of implementation, students are divided into flows.

During the first three semesters 12 study courses, 6 of which are compulsory study courses and 6 are compulsory elective study courses. As part of student flow differentiation (English and Latvian flow) variations in Part B or compulsory elective course CP are offered to ensure appropriate mastering of studies by students. The last semester is fully devoted to the drafting and defence of the Master's thesis (20 CP, 30 ECTS), which includes study, evaluation, selection of theoretical material and doing empirical research.

To ensure the achievement of the objectives of the programme, fulfilment of tasks and to ensure the planned learning outcomes, the content of the Master's study programme "International Relations and Diplomacy" is generally composed of study courses, which address the current topics of modern international politics, theoretical and methodological approaches to learning, as well as study courses, which allow specialisation in certain current research directions, aspects, sub-sectors of international relations, and Master's thesis. The content of study courses of the study programme is aimed at a thorough and in-depth review of theoretical and practical topics of policy sciences, which improve and supplement the previously acquired knowledge of students and promote successful development of Master's thesis, as well as motivates continuation of studies in doctoral studies.

For the successful completion of studies, it is necessary to master all study courses, prepare research papers and essays, exams should be successfully passed obtaining 60 CP (90 ECTS), the Master's thesis should be drafted and defended (20 CP, 30 ECTS).

Considering the close interaction of the study programme with political and international fluctuations and changes, the practically oriented study courses, which cover the implementation of certain policies and are based on real-time situations, are adapted annually to current and global developments. Meanwhile, the courses based on theory and methods provide a solid basis for continuing student research in the specified discipline. All study courses in the curriculum of the programme stimulate students to think, judge and build their research projects in an analytical way. To bring the study process closer to practice and to raise academic and research debates, students are regularly offered to attend visiting lectures read by specialists, diplomats and high-ranking officials in their field.

In the period since 2012, the curriculum of the study programme has been gradually developed following the development trends in the industry and the labour markets, as well as political science. In implementing the principle of lifelong learning, the study programme is open for graduates from Bachelor's studies and Master students with a longer practical service record in different fields. Novelty and changes relate to changes in curriculum within the framework of study courses as heads of study courses constantly update the Curriculum taught and sources of literature. A specific method in the experience of updating the curriculum of study courses can be seen in the context of the internationalisation of the study programme. Foreign lecturers are purposefully sought and invited to teach several study courses to offer a different approach, bring the exchange of experience into the study process and also prevent the content of study programmes from being "stagnated". The internationalisation of study processes has also been promoted by the inclusion of the flow implemented in English in the study programme, expanding

the range of representation of students, who are not from Latvia.

Labour market development analyses and forecasts show that, despite the popularity of study programmes in social sciences and possible overproduction of employees with such education, graduates of the Master's study programme "International Relations and Diplomacy" are competitive in the Latvian and European labour market, moreover, the interdisciplinary nature of the study programme ensures the ability of graduates to work in different professions and sectors, which are not only directly related to the topics of studies (public administration, organisations, diplomatic service), but are related to them (journalism, entrepreneurship, international companies). In addition, demand for employees with interdisciplinary knowledge is increasing in the labour market, which means that education acquired does not have to correlate more directly with daily work responsibilities, but can be a competitive advantage.

Descriptions of study courses/modules, placement and final papers are developed in high quality and in conformity with the requirements of regulatory enactments, the curriculum is up-to-date, complementary, conforms to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, as well as conforms to the needs of the sector and scientific trends. It is important to note that, in the context of the newly created faculty, the system of programme modules serves as a model for other study programmes that are intended to be developed by the faculty – directly in the context of the module planning that is student centric and subordinate to the acquisition of the quality content in the study process.

Enclosed:

Annex 17.1. Compliance of the Study Programme with the National Educational Standard.

Annex 18.1. Mapping of the Study Courses for the Achievement of Learning Outcomes of the Study Programme.

Annex 19. Planning of the Study Programme (For Each Type and Form of the Implementation of the Study Programme).

Annex 20.1 Description of Study Courses.

**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).**

Paragraph 21.<sup>1</sup> of Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 240 on the National Standard of Academic Education as amended on 3 October 2023 provides that: "Upon completion of the Master's study programme, a Master's degree corresponding to the learning outcomes in the respective field of studies is awarded to students." The learning outcomes of the RSU Master's study programme "International Relations and Diplomacy" directly identify and put forward the knowledge, skills and competences specific and relevant to political science and international relations.

Acquiring a Master's degree in political sciences is deeply rooted in the theoretical understanding of discipline and scientific discoveries of recent years, serving as a model for academic excellence and a source of expanding knowledge. Study courses are carefully calibrated to reflect not only the

latest theoretical, methodological and methodical innovations in the field of political science, but also to track the dynamics of empirical phenomena, giving students access to the most advanced understanding and analytical skills.

In addition to classic study methods such as lectures and seminars, the study process has been enriched with innovative and interactive approaches, including simulation games, strategic war mocks, and modelling economic systems that promote students' analytical thinking and problem-solving abilities. These methodologies are further reinforced by visiting lectures from leading experts in foreign and security policy of Latvia and the European Union, offering students a rare opportunity to get closer to the real policy-making process and practical understanding.

Lecturers of the programme not only ensure the transfer of academic and professional knowledge, but also actively participate in scientific activities developing scientific and popular scientific publications, as well as managing and implementing various scientific projects. This activity is documented and available in detail in the RSU ZDIS Pure system, which provides transparency and openness to scientific achievements and research activities.

Such an integrated approach combining theoretical insights with practical methods and scientific activity not only improves the quality of the study process and prepares students for real professional challenges, but also promotes their personal and professional development. Thus, the Master's programme in political sciences at RSU stands as a bastion of excellence that provides students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in a modern and ever-changing global landscape.

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

The main forms of studies in the study programme are lectures and practical classes or seminars, where educational material corresponding to the study programme and the course paper programme is outlined, as well as students' independent work. The programme uses the following study methods: specification of the theoretical knowledge acquired in seminars, problem situation analysis, tests and development of individual projects. Special attention is paid to students' independent work – the analysis of information included in the development of individual research papers – reports or essays. Lecturers of study courses act as coordinators, consultants and experts in the process of independent work of students. The aim of the study methods used is to improve students' ability to critically analyse political situations using theoretical knowledge, logically assessing the development of these situations in the future. The lecturer's task is to assist students with organising their independent work and provide consultations and advice when necessary.

Regular tutorials with the lecturer are provided to students within the scope of each study course. To facilitate the availability of communication between lecturers and students, the form of a tutorial can be in a regular and remote form, which is particularly supported by Master level students.

A detailed course description is drafted for each study course, which provides detailed information on the subjects of lectures and classes, course requirements, required readings. The assessment process in study courses takes place in accordance with the requirements specified by the lecturer and in conformity with the topic to be studied in the study course and the number of ECTS. The assessment of students' knowledge and skills is expressed in a ten-point grading system, making it as objective, accurate and understandable to the student as possible. When assessing written and practical works, students are always given feedback on the performance in written or oral form. Submitted written works are posted on the e-learning platform where they are assessed and checked for plagiarism. The assessment in the subject includes an assessment of students' responses in seminars and practical classes, a report grade, an assessment of essays, as well as an examination grade. This type of assessment excludes student learning only for exam time and stimulates student learning systematically throughout the module. The assessment system for each particular course is specified in the course description. At the beginning of each module, the students are informed about the assessment criteria.

The RSU Study Process Development Plan for Social Sciences and Health Studies, approved at the Senate meeting on 13 February and 12 March 2024, stipulates that, starting with the 2024 intake, study plans should reflect ECTS credits. The transition to the ECTS credit system in each study programme is the responsibility of the programme directors. According to Article 1(8) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (available in [Latvian](#), partially translated into [English](#)), one credit point corresponds to 25-30 hours of study work. Each lecturer assesses the amount of work within the course of study within the limits of the Law on Higher Education. For further information, see the recommendations in the study direction annexes (Annex 30 – available in Latvian only).

RSU has started to strategically develop digital resources – educational technologies, digital skills of the staff and digital teaching aids to ensure the achievement of the set goal (see Annex 26).

Methods of assessment of student performance and achieved learning outcomes, as well as assessment criteria for study course completion, are defined in the description of each study course and are available to all students prior to starting the study course. The academic freedom of each lecturer is respected in the implementation of the study courses, including the development and implementation of study examinations, at the same time providing that the teaching and examination methods must be chosen according to the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study course.

Both summative and formative assessment are combined in the study process to enhance students' individual performance and assess the level of learning outcomes achieved. In the context of learning outcomes, both study course-specific and transversal knowledge, skills, and attitudes are important, therefore, students' active involvement and participation, initiative, and taking responsibility are additionally evaluated. Individual assessments of interim and final examinations of study courses are available to each student on their student profile in the RSU e-learning environment. Students can familiarise themselves with the criteria, conditions and binding procedures for the assessment of student performance in the RSU Academic Regulations I.

RSU quality policy is based on student-centric approach, partnership and quality principles closely linked to the strategic guidance and core values of the university. Compliance with these principles was confirmed in 2016, when Rīga Stradiņš University was examined by an international expert group from the project “Peer Assessment of Student-Centred Learning” (PASCL) organised by the European Student Union in cooperation with several higher education institutions in Europe. This project and the visit of experts to Riga was initiated by the RSU Student Union, and experts recognised RSU as an institution of higher education where a student-centric approach is not simply a promise, but a real practice that promotes the involvement of students in improving the study

process.

Manifestations of a student-centred approach at RSU include a wide range of initiatives and practices that promote active participation of students in the study process, such as the ability to participate in the creation of the study programme, as well as the choice of study methods that meet their individual needs and learning styles. The university also provides support for the academic and personal development of students by offering mentor programs, tutorials and seminars that help build a strong sense of academic and social community. Examples include out-of-course activities – student hackathons for solving political changes, visits paid by the European Parliament for student groups, possibilities to participate in innovation incubators, and other activities.

Moreover, RSU pays close attention to integrating student feedback and opinions to improve study programmes and courses through regular surveys and forums for discussion. In this way, students can not only to express their thoughts on the content of studies and methods of ensuring the study process, but also to have a significant impact on the development and quality of the study environment. This culture of dialogue and shared responsibility promotes openness, innovation and continuous improvement of the education process, demonstrating the RSU's commitment to education that meets both today's academic requirements and the personal and professional needs of students.

**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.**

Students choose the topics for their graduation or Master's thesis independently, however thematic blocks are provided as guidelines according to the competence of each lecturer and the current events of the specified time period. Most often, students choose their research topics according to the current political, economic or social developments. However, since students choose topics

independently and formulate them together with scientific supervisors of the study programme and the paper, graduation papers may also be on innovative topics differing from the above-mentioned ones.

Overall, thematic directions of Master's theses can be broken down into four large blocks:

- International and regional security;
- National foreign policy – bilateral and multilateral relations;
- International organisations and interactions between countries in these organisations;
- Analysis of decision-making processes.

Students receive an assessment for their final paper by successfully defending it – presenting and answering questions of the commission. It should be noted that papers of many students in the period being covered were assessed as excellent and with distinction and have been a valuable contribution to the development of political sciences in Latvia and Europe. Overall, assessments of Master's theses are above average. Thanks to the competence of study programme and paper supervisors, students are able to successfully and independently develop their final papers. Support is provided in the form of individual tutorials, as well as by offering special seminars explaining the methodology of and approaches to the development of a Master's thesis, as well as by reading a course dedicated to the preparation for development “Theories and Methods in International Relations and Diplomacy” at the end of the third semester. The first version or the draft is presented to the commission of the teaching staff in a pre-defence of the paper, where the quality of paper is evaluated very carefully advising not to submit the paper if its quality is not high enough. It should be noted that the majority of students who do not submit their paper based on the recommendation of the commission develop it more qualitatively and defend it in one of the following years. In parallel to writing a Master's thesis, students, if they wish, can participate with their research at the RSU International Student Conference, which takes place annually in March. A bonus system is used as an incentive for participating in the conference and developing research paper skills and presentation skills – when determining the final assessment of the Master's thesis, speaking at the conference serves as an extra positive point that raises the assessment (all students have been informed in advance).

Enclosed:

Annex 22. Topics and assessments of students' graduation papers.

### **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.**

When starting studies, students are given the opportunity to use a wide range of databases of scientific journals that facilitate the daily learning process and provide the necessary support for in-depth analysis and Master's thesis development. The RSU library offers students of the study programme “International Relations and Diplomacy” various E-resources such as E-journal

databases: *ProQuest* platform *Proquest Central* databases – *Political Science Database*, *Social Science Database*, *Sociology Database*; *EBSCO* platform *Sociology Source Ultimate* database. Ebook databases: *Ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO)* and *Ebook Central (Proquest)*, which contain subscription ebooks and ebooks purchased specifically for the programme. The information provision for English language students is equivalent to that for Latvian language students. Latvian students have very few additional books in Latvian.

Students are also actively involved in university networks, for example, by participating in the activities of the RSU Social Sciences Research Group, which promotes early participation of students in scientific work already during their studies. Every other year, RSU organises a scientific conference that not only expands the horizon of knowledge on topical topics for students, but also enables them to present their research and projects, making a significant contribution to academic research.

The sectoral cooperation aspect is particularly important in offering students direct access to the library of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs, the Centre for Geopolitical Studies Riga and various event platforms organised by the Latvian Institute of International Affairs. This cooperation provides students with up-to-date and direct information from the area of action policy and foreign, access to important research and its results as an essential resource for studies and research.

Close cooperation with state and European institutions, such as the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia, the State Chancellery, the Cabinet of Ministers and the European Parliament, which is based on effective networking and ensures regular access of students to institutions, supporting the practical dimension of study content, is also important. The participation of visiting lecturers who are diplomats, senior officials and industry experts is an essential part of the study process, exposing students to developments in the sector in a direct and immersive way. With the creation of the new faculty, students are increasingly being offered opportunities to engage in the activities of the RSU Social Sciences Research Centre, participating in scientific research projects and engaging in Vertically Integrated Projects that promote the development of students' skills in the long term, using science infrastructure also within the framework of the course on qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Examples include regular lectures by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at RSU, lectures by former presidents, lectures by the Prime Minister, lectures by senior officers of the National Armed Forces, lectures by deputies of the European Parliament, lectures by the UN diplomatic representations (all these activities are also offered to a wider range of students and interested person). The lectures take place in the format of visiting lectures and lectures integrated in courses, depending on the political agenda of the moment and international developments. Students are also given the opportunity to visit national and international governance level institution of their interest, for example, to visit the European Parliament.

Enclosed:

Annex 23.1. Assessment of the informative and methodological provision regarding library resources for the implementation of the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology" in accordance with the requirements of the guidelines

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

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

The full-time Latvian and English-taught StP is planned to be financed from the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee of EUR 2550 for the Latvian flow and EUR 2800 for the English flow for the academic year 2024/2025. 26 students are expected to be enrolled in the Latvian flow, 4 students are expected to drop out in the second year of studies. 20 students are expected to be enrolled in English flow, 6 students are expected to drop out in the second year of studies. Such a number of students is optimal to ensure a high-quality study process and to make the study programme cover its implementation, as well as development costs.

The funding is used for staff remuneration, attraction of visiting assistant professors, taxes, maintenance of IT infrastructure, purchase of equipment and devices, and study visit costs. In addition to the direct costs of implementation of lectures and classes, the StP must cover infrastructure maintenance costs (facilities, IT solutions) and other RSU common resources used in the StP (Student Services, Library, organisation of the study process, grant for the Student Union and other support and administrative functions).

StP was so far implemented by the Department of Political Science of the RSU Faculty of European Studies, the Department of Clinical Skills and Medical Technologies of the Faculty of Medicine, the China Studies Centre and the Language Centre. After 6 February 2024, according to the new RSU structural scheme, it will further be implemented by the Faculty of Social Sciences involving other departments, if necessary, in accordance with study course plans.

As a result of the structural consolidation process of RSU, an improvement in efficiency in the context of cost items is expected, which will ensure a balance of revenue and expenditure over the long term.

Table 2. **Information on student costs**

**Costs of the study programme in the Latvian and English flow**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Result</b>
Average income per student, EUR	2654
Average cost per student, EUR	2650
Academic staff, %	75

Department resources, %	1
Scholarships, %	0
Other direct expenditure, %	4
Fixed costs, %	2
Eligible, incl. development costs, %	18

### 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 recruitment process assesses a potential employee's competences, professional skills and self-motivation, English language skills, digital skills and critical thinking skills. RSU academic candidates are required to have higher scientific, pedagogical qualifications, organisational and professional competences than those required by external regulations. The qualifications and competences of the academic staff are continuously improved through pedagogical skills development, English language development and professional training in the field. 21 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the study programme. Of these, 6 have a Master's degree and 13 have a PhD degree.

The Latvian lecturers' knowledge of the national language fully complies with the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation of 7 July 2008 No 733 "Regulations on the scope of knowledge of the national language and the procedure for testing the national language for the performance of professional and official duties, for obtaining a permanent residence permit and the status of a permanent resident of the European Union and the state fee for the national language proficiency test". The RSU Personnel Department verifies the state language skills during the recruitment process, as well as during the collection of documents for the preparation of academic elections.

Heads of Unit pay particular attention to succession issues and the interaction between different generations of staff. In order to improve the content of study programmes, as well as to introduce innovative methods in study processes, RSU attracts foreign guest lecturers.

At the study programme level, the study programme manager is responsible for ensuring that the study programme content complies with internal and external regulatory enactments, labour market requirements, industry development trends and students' needs, for analysing data that

can provide information on factors affecting the results and quality of study programmes, and for introducing necessary improvements in the study programme. At the level of study programmes, quality indicators are measured, which are directly linked to the remuneration of study programme leaders. This aspect promotes accountability and motivates study programme managers to achieve higher defined quality standards.

At the university level, management is responsible for setting strategic and quality objectives and quality policy, deciding on the quality approach, managing resources and setting internal procedures. The monitoring of the system in place at RSU is carried out both by internal system and quality auditors and by independent external experts. At the university level, one of the indicators of the quality of studies is the attitude and opinion of the public and the popularity of RSU. This is regularly ascertained through a reputation survey and brand evaluation.

The teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme not only fully complies with all standards for the implementation of studies, but also represent a unique combination in terms of academic and sectoral expert examination, guaranteeing the achievement of objectives and a high-value learning outcomes. Teaching staff is carefully selected, taking into account not only their academic and scientific qualifications but also their practical experience and professionalism in the particular field, enabling students to gain direct access to the knowledge and trends of the sector. This dual experience – academic and the sector concerned – provides students with the opportunity to acquire theoretical knowledge in the context of practical skills, promoting interdisciplinarity and internationalisation in the study process.

To ensure that the content of the study programme is always in line with the latest sectoral trends and the latest academic knowledge, the composition of the teaching staff is updated on a regular basis. This includes both the development of permanent teaching staff and the involvement of visiting lecturers, which broadens the perspectives of study courses with new views and fresh ideas. This approach allows the dynamics and openness to innovation of the programme to be maintained in response to changes in the academic environment and relevant sectoral requirements.

Thus, by combining academic theory with practical experience from different sectors, RSU promotes the comprehensive development of students by preparing them for effective functioning in both the scientific and practical areas. This integrated approach not only improves the quality of studies, but also forms a solid foundation for students' future careers, exposing them to broader opportunities and new perspectives.

Examples include Māris Cepurītis, who is a lecturer and at the same time an adviser to the Prime Minister on national security; Dr. Kārlis Bukovskis, who is a lecturer and at the same time Director of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs; Dr. Māris Andžāns, Associate Professor and at the same time Head of the Center for Geopolitical Studies of Latvia; Dr. Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova – lecturer and head of the China Studies Centre; Prof. Andris Sprūds – Professor and Minister of Foreign Affairs, etc.

Enclosed:

Annex 24.7. Analysis of the Composition of the Teaching Staff.

### **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.**

Lecturers, whose qualification and abilities are of high level and are appreciated in the sector and/or over a long period of cooperation, are involved in the realisation of the study programmes. Changes in the composition of lecturers in most cases are made by introducing new study courses into the study programme.

Scientific replacement, which also allows for the growth of scientific capacity of lecturers involved, can be mentioned here as important. Doctor of Sciences Kārlis Bukovskis (who has aligned the course content with his scientific research and currently qualifies for the status of an associate professor), as well as lecturer Elīna Vroblevska, who has historically expanded the topic of her doctoral thesis in the content of the course on methods (and currently qualifies for defending her doctoral thesis) can be mentioned as examples. Also in the perspective of historical replacement, the programme has been the “forge of content” for teaching staff in matching audience content with their own scientific research interests.

At the level of the institution of higher education, a clear system of support for scientific replacement is currently in place, which is specified in the plans adopted by the RSU Senate on 13 February 2024 - for the quality of studies and scientific activities.

As regards the changes in the composition of the teaching staff during the reporting period, in the course Politics and Religion: the Governance of the Middle East Dr. Simona Gurbo was replaced by a research fellow at the Institute of Foreign Policy and an expert on the Middle East region Sintija Broka. The replacement is based on the career development of Ms. Grubo outside the university and Ms. Broka’s high qualification in the subject of the course. In the course International and Diplomatic Law Dr. Jānis Grasis has been replaced by Dr. Aleksandrs Fillers, respecting the opinion of the students. As part of the generational change, and due to changes in the course content and language of course delivery, Prof. Ilga Kreituse was replaced by Prof. Karlis Bukovskis in the course Theories and Methods in International Relations and Diplomacy. In general, the turnover of lecturers is low and it is related to (1.) lecturers' career development and unwillingness to continue academic work, (2.) students' feedback and recommendations to change the lecturer and (3.) changes in the course content/delivery language which are incompatible with the professional qualification of the current lecturer. In all these cases, the rotation of lecturers has been planned and aimed at improving the quality of the study process and content and achieving the objectives of the study programme as efficiently as possible.

**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).**

Mutual cooperation of teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme is the basis for the promotion of high-value study process and scientific work. Several initiatives and practices have been developed to help maintain and develop cooperation at a high level. Regular meetings of teaching staff are one of these mechanisms, allowing for the sharing of experience and recent discoveries on study methods, up-to-date content of courses and challenges in international relations and diplomacy. Sectoral events (Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Latvian Transatlantic Organisation, etc.) are used as frequent platforms for meetings between teaching staff.

Joint research projects not only encourage the involvement of academic staff in important scientific work, but also provide students with a valuable opportunity to participate in significant research, which in turn enriches the content of study courses with practical experience and the mastering of scientific approaches. Professional development programmes organised by the RSU Centre for Educational Growth are essential support for lecturers, ensuring familiarising with the latest pedagogical methods and promoting interdisciplinary cooperation, which is vital in a modern educational environment.

To facilitate the coordination of the content of study courses and modules, lecturers work closely together in developing study materials and course plans that promote not only knowledge integration, but also provide students with logically related study experience. Such an approach is particularly evident, for example, in the course on research methods, in which students prepare for scientific conferences under the guidance of a team of lecturers. As a result of the study course, abstracts of scientific conferences are gradually transformed into final papers.

This synergy between teaching staff and students, characterised by the ratio of students to teaching staff of 1,5:1 in the Latvian language study flow and 1,2:1 in the English language study flow, not only ensures a high quality of studies, but also an individual approach to each student, fostering excellence and innovation in the study process. Thus, close cooperation and open communication between teaching staff and students are the cornerstone of the successful implementation of the programme, allowing the education process to not only meet but also exceed the standards of academic and professional education.

Since February 2024, a new role of staff - the quality manager and developer of the study process - has also been introduced, which ensures evaluation of interaction formats and provides recommendations for further development.



# 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	24.1_Anrx_Diploma_Diploma_Supplement_Intl_Relations_Diplomacy.pdf	24.1_pielik_Diploms_Dipl_pielik_Starpt_Attiec_Diplomatija_lv.pdf
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period	16_Anrx_student_stats_int_rel_gov_dipl_ENG.pdf	16_pielik_studentu_stat_st_att_parv_diplom_LV.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	17.1_Anrx_compliance_nat_educ_stand_eng.pdf	17.1_pielik_Atbalstiba_valsts_izglitiba_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	18.1_Anrx_St_course_outcome_mapping.pdf	18.1_pielik_St_kursu_karteļ_st_rezultatu_sasn.pdf
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	19_Anrx_STP_plan_AMSP_Intl_Rel_Diplomacy.pdf	19_pielik_STP_planojums_AMSP_Starpt_att_diplo.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/modules	20.1_Anrx_Course_Descriptions_Diplomacy.pdf	20.1_pielik_kursu_apraksti_Diplomatija.pdf
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)	24.7.1_Anrx_Cert_compliance_acad_prog.pdf	24.7.1_pielik_Aplicinajums_par_akademiska_magistra_otra_cikla_studiju_programmas_Starptautiskas_attiecibas_un_diplomatija_akademiska_personala_atbalstibu_Augstskolu_likuma_prasibam.edoc

# Social Anthropology (45314)

Study field	<i>Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Social Anthropology</i>
Education classification code	<i>45314</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic master study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Lelde</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Metla-Rozentāle</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>lelde.rozentale@rsu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>mg.oec.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>To train social anthropologists who meet international standards in social anthropology, and who are able to engage in both practical research and problem-solving and academic research and education.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Provide academic knowledge of social anthropology at a level appropriate to a Master's qualification.</i></li> <li><i>2. Train competent social anthropology specialists who are able to adequately understand societal problems from a socio-anthropological perspective and to cooperate effectively with professionals from their own and other fields</i></li> <li><i>Improve and develop theoretical knowledge for the analysis of social processes and cultures.</i></li> <li><i>4. Provide an in-depth knowledge of different societies and cultures in a global context, developing the ability to analyse social processes critically and comparatively and to demonstrate this knowledge.</i></li> <li><i>5. Improve and develop research skills in social anthropology by defining the research aim, selecting appropriate methods, collecting, processing, analysing and interpreting data, and documenting the obtained research results and drawing conclusions.</i></li> <li><i>6. Motivate the graduate students as future social anthropology specialists for growth and self-improvement for further education and life-long learning, by developing initiative, competence, and responsibility.</i></li> </ol>

Results of the study programme	<p><i>Knowledge:</i></p> <p>1. Able to demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of fundamental and current issues in social anthropology.</p> <p><i>Skills:</i></p> <p>2. Able to discuss socio-anthropological issues competently in societies of different regions, based on ethnographic data.</p> <p>3. Able to work individually and in teams to carry out research and studies under complex and unpredictable conditions.</p> <p>4. Able to explain and discuss the professional aspects of social anthropology in a reasoned manner in diverse audiences, e.g. complex ethical dilemmas, principles of field work, cultural relativism, ethnographic writing.</p> <p>5. Able to use social anthropology theories, methods and problem-solving skills to conduct research independently.</p> <p>6. Able to independently improve their competences as a social anthropologist by keeping abreast of current developments in the field.</p> <p><i>Competence:</i></p> <p>7. Able to identify, independently formulate and critically analyse current scientific problems to which the perspectives and methods of social anthropology are applied.</p> <p>8. Able to integrate knowledge from different areas of social anthropology, contribute to the development of new theoretical approaches and research methods, demonstrating an understanding and ethical responsibility for the potential impact of scientific results on society.</p>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>Defence of Master's thesis</i>

## Study programme forms

### Full time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>First cycle higher education Entrance examination</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master's degree of Social Sciences in Social Anthropology</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

### Full time studies - 2 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>First cycle higher education Entrance examination For studies in English, a minimum B2 level of proficiency in English is required</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master's degree of Social Sciences in Social Anthropology</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

### **Places of implementation**

<b>Place name</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Address</b>
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

## 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.**

Table 1. Changes in the StP Parameters

No.	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters
1.	Study direction	—
2.	Title of the StP	—
3.	Code according to the Latvian Education Classification	Amended to reflect the changes in CM Regulations No. 322[1]
4.	Head of the StP	Programme directors have changed during the implementation of the study programme. From March 2020, the programme management was taken over from the initial programme director Klāvs Sedlenieks (who also obtained a doctoral degree while managing the programme) by Ieva Puzo (PhD), while at the beginning of 2024 programme management was taken over by Lelde Metla-Rozentāle (doctoral candidate)
5.	Academic degree of the head of the StP	See 4.
6.	Objective of the StP	—

<b>No.</b>	<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters</b>
7.	Tasks of the StP	The tasks of the study programme have been updated in conformity with the revised learning outcomes, as well as using the current European and Latvian educational policy documents, following the trends of social anthropology education and science globally, as well as guided by recommendations of students, graduates and employers
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	The information regarding the analysis of the learning outcomes performed during the mapping process are reflected in Annex 18.1. The study results have been specified in accordance with the study objective, tasks and descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to the 7th level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (which corresponds to the European Qualifications Framework) (hereinafter - LQF/EQF), as well as the QAHE guidelines on the number of outcomes[2][3]. Thus, the competences, knowledge and skills learned in individual courses in a logical sequence contribute to the achievement of the defined study results. Mapping has allowed the programme management to better review the interaction between the competences, knowledge and skills to be acquired in individual courses and the compliance of the study programme outcomes with the objectives and tasks.
9.	Final examination upon the completion of the StP	—
10.	Type and form of studies	—
11.	Duration of implementation	—
12.	Language of implementation	The plan for the future is to implement the study programme also in English.

No.	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters
13.	Volume of the StP (CP)	Following the transition to ECTS, the CP mastered are expressed in ECTS, that is the total volume of the study programme is 120 ECTS.
14.	Admission requirements	—
15.	Degree to be awarded	—
16.	Qualification to be awarded	—
17.	Place of implementation	—

Table 1 clearly shows that the changes in the programme have not been extensive, although significant enough at certain points. The objective of the study programme, as well as the outcomes and tasks thereof have been updated to make them compliant with the current legal framework and QAHE recommendations, to follow the global trends in social anthropology education and scientific development, as well as following the opinions expressed by students, graduates and employers of the programme regarding the growth potential of the programme and the socio-economic impact of social anthropology on Latvian society.

The programme code has been changed from 45310 to 45314 on the basis of Annex 2 to Cabinet Regulation No 322, where the last three digits of the code "314" stand for the group of educational programmes "Sociology and Cultural Studies", which, according to [ISCED-F 2013](#) classification includes anthropology studies (*Sociology and cultural studies is the study of human beings and the way they behave in groups and in relation to society. The study of ethnology and social anthropology are included here, likewise the study of human and social geography.*).

While preparing for accreditation, the programme had a mapping of the content of the study programme. As a result, study course titles were updated and content was also updated for individual study courses. Course descriptions are available in Annex 20.1.

Due to the centralised switch from national to international (ECTS) credit system, all courses for which the ECTS total was not a whole number were adjusted by the number of contact hours. Each lecturer has reviewed the content of his/her courses and adapted their delivery format and content to the new credit volume.

[1] Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 322 "Regulations on Latvian Classification of Education", which entered into force on 16.06.2017. Available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitibas-klasifikaciju> (Latvian only)

[2] Recommendations for the preparation of the description/self-assessment report. - QAHE,

02.11.2021. Available at:

<https://www.aika.lv/ieteikumi-raksturojuma-pasnovertejuma-zinojuma-sagatavosana/>

[3] Practical guide Formulating and Using Learning Outcomes published on the website of the Quality Agency for Higher

Education: [https://www.aika.lv/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Studiju-rezult%C4%81tu-formul%C4%93%C5%A1ana-un-izmanto%C5%A1ana\\_praktisk%C4%81-rokasgr%C4%81mata.pdf](https://www.aika.lv/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Studiju-rezult%C4%81tu-formul%C4%93%C5%A1ana-un-izmanto%C5%A1ana_praktisk%C4%81-rokasgr%C4%81mata.pdf)

**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, code (45314, where the last three digits of the code “314” stand for the Education Programme Group “Sociology and Cultural Studies”) and the degree (“Master’s degree of Social Sciences in Social Anthropology”) of the academic Master's study programme “Social Anthropology”, as well as the aims, objectives and achievable results (see Study Programme Parameters) are interrelated in the field of social anthropology. In terms of relevance to the field of study, it can be seen that social anthropology is one of the three fields of science included in the field title (“Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology”) defined in the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No 793 “Regulations Regarding Opening and Accreditation of Study Fields” of 11 December 2018, thus showing interconnectedness and fully meeting the requirements.

The objectives, tasks and learning outcomes of the programme are all formulated according to the title of the programme and emphasising the central place of social anthropology in the learning process. Study courses (except the course “Civil Protection and Occupational Safety”, as well as courses of Part C) in the content of the programme are directly related to socio-anthropological placement. Admission requirements (see below) are consistent with the interdisciplinary nature of social anthropology and ensure that enrolled students are ready to participate actively in the learning process.

Paragraph 21.<sup>1</sup> of amendments of 3 October 2023 to Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 240 of 13 May 2014 “Regulations on State Academic Education Standard” provide that after acquisition of the Master’s study programme a master’s degree shall be awarded to a student, which conforms to the learning outcomes achieved in the relevant field of studies. Since the learning outcomes in the Master’s study programme (see parameters) are closely related to the knowledge, skills and competences required in the field of social anthropology, graduates of the study programme “Social Anthropology” should be awarded a Master’s degree in Social Anthropology.

The volume of the study programme in 120 ECTS and the duration of studies is 2 years, which complies with Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 322 “On the Latvian Education Classification” that state that the duration of Academic Master’s study programmes with “45” as the first two digits of the study programme code is one to two years. This is sufficient to achieve adequate competence in social anthropology.

The content, volume and duration of the programme is consistent with the fact that a large share of

students involved in the programme did not learn anthropology before. These students learn anthropology in addition to their first education. Consequently, the programme also provides a general introduction to the most important areas of social anthropology, as well as current global trends in this field.

Students who have obtained at least first cycle education from a state-accredited study programme are admitted to the study programme, which ensures that, in accordance with CM Regulations No. 322 *“On the Latvian Education Classification”*, the total duration of full-time studies is at least five years.

Following the tradition of social anthropology, admission regulations do not restrict the area in which a student must have completed previous education. This promotes the interdisciplinary approach inherent in anthropology. Students with prior education in humanities (e.g. history, law, linguistics), socio-scientific (e.g. political science, sociology, media studies), and technology and science (e.g. computer science, geography, medicine) were enrolled in the programme. Moreover, it should be noted that a large share of students entering the Master’s programme in social anthropology have already obtained a Master’s degree.

During admission, attention is paid to the suitability of applicants for intensive studies, while taking into account that students tend to come from areas not related to social anthropology and did not receive specialised anthropological education in the past. Applicants must successfully pass two entrance examinations:

- A reasoned essay in which the applicant can choose to either write on a subject of his/her choice, analyse one of the proposed anthropological literature works, or describe the area in which he/she intends to do his/her Master’s thesis. The fact that the applicant describes his/her intention for a Master’s thesis is not considered binding and the student is free to choose a different topic later – it is even expected of him/her. The essay is 1,100-1,300 words long. As the format of the reasoned essay is not widespread in the Latvian education system, the lecturers of the programme have developed guidelines which are available on the website of the study programme. When assessing the essay, the lecturers focus primarily on students’ ability to provide arguments for their opinions and express themselves in writing, and less on knowledge of anthropology.
- The interview is 30 minutes long. During it, applicants are asked questions about past experiences and interests and also opportunities to combine work with studies. Because most of the literature to be learned in the study programme is in English and at least one foreign visiting lecturer is involved each semester, part of entrance interview takes place in English to test applicants’ ability to communicate in English and can predict potential students’ ability to follow the study process.

Upon commencing the implementation of the programme in English, it is planned to supplement the admission requirements of applicants with a requirement to certify English language proficiency at least at level B2.

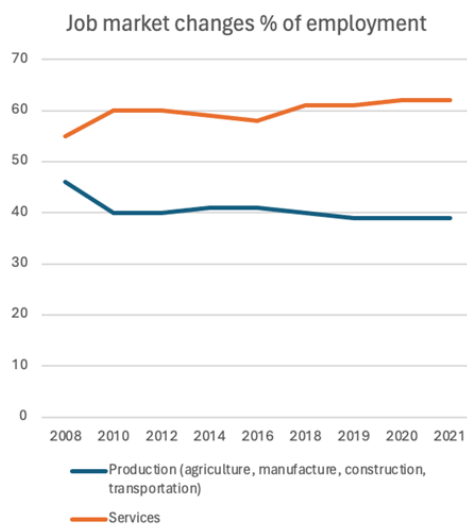
Enclosed:

Annex 24.1. Model Diploma and Supplement Thereto.

Annex 24.8. Study Contract Sample.

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

Despite predictions of a decline in demand for professionals in social sciences for years, data and challenges of modern life suggest that the importance of social sciences, including social anthropology, will only grow in the future world. Between December 2019 and March 2020, SIA “Dynamic University” (DyU) conducted a study at the order of RSU that also looked at the labour market potential for the study direction “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology”. According to the results of the DyU study, in the group of study programmes “Social and Behavioural Sciences”, demand for specialists is expected to decrease and this will lead to labour surplus due to limited employment opportunities. The findings of this study broadly repeat the opinions that have been common in recent decades and should be evaluated critically. First, it was carried out before the Covid-19 crisis, which demonstrated that it is much harder to find solutions of a social rather than technological nature for today’s global challenges (e.g. vaccines were developed quickly, but compliance with vaccination and isolation as well as communication were the real challenges). Secondly, despite long-standing predictions that demand for social sciences will fall, none of this is evident in practice. According to the British Academy, graduates of social sciences are not behind STEM graduates in crisis management and have the same potential to find jobs[1]. Given the current global challenges, as well as the growing role of the services sector in the economy, as well as the real data on the labour market in recent decades, it is clear that the demand for quality specialists with education in social sciences will only increase in the future. Figure 1 demonstrates the historical fluctuations in the labour market and shows that employment in the services sector (the area where graduates of social sciences are employed) has been constantly growing over the last 20 years (from 55% to 62% of total employment).



**Figure 1.** *Fluctuations in the labour market time from 2008 to 2021.*

The reality of modern life, both globally and locally, points to a growing demand for the kind of knowledge that social anthropology students obtain. Only few arguments are mentioned here:

- Cultural awareness and social integration. Social anthropology helps understand different cultures, behavioural patterns and social structures. Such knowledge can be useful in promoting diversity and integration of society, especially in diverse societal contexts such as Latvia. This knowledge is particularly useful in the context of increasing mobility, where awareness of cultural diversity is becoming increasingly important.
- Ethnographic research skills. Social anthropology teaches ethnographic methods and skills that can be useful in exploring and solving various social problems in the Latvian context. Ethnographic research is playing an increasingly important role in both business and public

governance planning.

- Community development and policy. Social anthropology can provide important insights into society's needs and social processes, which are essential for the development of policies and programmes that contribute to community prosperity and development.
- International cooperation and human rights: Social anthropology can contribute to international cooperation, protection of human rights and intercultural dialogue, which are important in Latvia's international relations and its role on the international stage.

Since its inception in 2007, the social anthropology programme implemented by RSU has been implemented without state budget funded places, successfully competing with similar programmes where this funding is available and students learn free of charge. This demonstrates that the study programme "Social Anthropology" implemented by RSU makes a valuable contribution to the commercially demanded market segment.

Over the last 5 years, 29 graduates have graduated from the study programme and obtained a Master's degree in Social Anthropology. The dynamics of the number of graduates can be seen in Annex 16 and the number of graduates mentioned there is also supplemented by 6 persons who graduated from the programme in the winter semester of 2023/2024. Guided by personal communication with Ieva Puzo, director of the study programme until February 2024, all these graduates are employed and work in a wide range of fields, both in state and local government institutions (for example, museums, libraries, universities, ministries) and in the private sector (for example, banks and other enterprises). Private sector employees are particularly active in the areas of communication and human resources, as they directly see the importance of knowledge, skills and competences in social anthropology for the successful development and career development in these areas. It should also be emphasised that some of these graduates associate their careers with research under the influence of the study programme, for example, by working in research institutions and/or starting doctoral studies at Rīga Stradiņš University or outside Latvia, as well as by attracting prestigious funding, such as Fulbright scholarship, for the implementation of these studies. Thus, the study programme provides its direct contribution to promoting the growth of scientists in Latvia.

The results of the graduate questionnaire (see Annex 21.1) show that the majority of the graduates of the programme who completed the questionnaire are employees, but they also include one employer and several self-employed persons. All the respondents have recognised the overall quality of the study programme as "very good" or "good". Only one person among 21 respondents answered the question "Is the knowledge and skills obtained within the study programme helpful in your profession?" with "rather useless"; the rest state that they are "definitely useful" (15) and "useful" (5). While 7 of the respondents indicated that the education obtained in the study programme did not contribute to finding a job (the remaining 14 indicated a positive link between the education acquired and finding a job), this is also due to the fact that the majority of students are already employed when starting their studies. This therefore highlights the fact that social anthropology studies, even if not directly linked to finding a new job, provide a new contribution - in the form of theoretical and practical knowledge and skills - in the existing workplace.

Enclosed:

Annex 12. Summary of employer survey.

[1]

<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/news/arts-humanities-and-social-science-graduates-resilient-economic-downturns/>

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

The volume of the academic Master's study programme is 120 ECTS and the duration of studies is 2 years. As it is also noted in 3.1.2, the study programme is designed in such a way graduates from different fields without a background in social anthropology can be enrolled and study successfully.

Students are recruited in various ways: with the support of the RSU Communication Department, by the presence of a study programme on social networks on Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter), and by the cooperation of lecturers of the study programme, students and alumni with the media. For example, in academic year 2023/2024, a successful cooperation was launched with the LSM portal, which published articles by several students and lecturers of the study programme. Since the beginning of the programme, the lecturers of the study programme have been actively responding to the invitations of media to provide an opinion on topics topical to society, thus increasing the visibility of the study programme in Latvian society. The "from lip to lip" approach is also undeniably important: in admission interviews, applicants are asked what has prompted them to study social anthropology at RSU; many of them answer that this has been a recommendation from alumni of the programme or others close to the programme, which has played a big role in making a decision in favour of the studies.

Since academic year 2018/2019, the number of students enrolled in the study programme has increased and stabilised (see Annex 16). In addition to the data shown in Annex 16, 12 students started their 1<sup>st</sup> year in the winter admission programme of 2024. When assessing this number, it should be considered that since the beginning of the study programme it has been implemented without funding from the state budget (with a small and random exception in academic year 2023/2024 - see page 4 in Annex 16). Admission rates are stable despite gradually increasing tuition fees, as well as access to state budget funded places in competing programmes in other institutions of higher education. This indicates the quality and visibility of the study programme in the educational landscape of Latvia.

Studies in the "Social Anthropology" programme are very intense, especially given that most students start studies without a background in social anthropology. It should also be emphasised that most students in the programme also work full-time paid employment. This means that some of the students - despite being delighted with the study process, quality and newly acquired knowledge - cannot always combine studies with work. In such cases, students take academic leave while taking individual courses of the study programme through the RSU Open University. When they return to their studies, they compare these study courses mastered at the Open University to a study programme, thus reducing their semester workload. In such cases, studies also extend beyond the duration of 2 years of studies provided for in the programme and this explains the dynamics of the number of students shown in Annex 16. Thus, for example, in spring 2024, 13 people started semester 3 of the study programme, while in academic year 2022/2023 8 applicants were enrolled in the study programme (see Annex 16). Therefore, the Open University opportunities are actively used in the study programme "Social Anthropology", which enable students to plan the study process more flexibly, moreover, their individual circumstances and opportunities are taken into consideration in the mastering of the study programme, while maintaining a high study quality level.

As part of the study programme, students are encouraged to use Erasmus+ mobility opportunities.

Detailed information on the mobility of students of the study programme “Social Anthropology” since academic year 2013/2014 can be found in Annex 8.2, but it should be emphasised that at least one student went to Erasmus+ mobility almost every year. Students of the study programme are encouraged to go to Erasmus+ study mobility in study semester 4 – at a time when they only need to take one course in RSU – the “Master’s Thesis” of 30 ECTS, that is, at a stage when students write their Master’s thesis. This call, which students also use and appreciate, is related to the fact that, when writing their Master’s thesis, students can take courses they want and consult experts in the field at the university of mobility, while not experiencing pressure to compare the acquired credit points when returning to Latvia with the credit points of the study programme “Social Anthropology”.

Erasmus+ graduate mobility opportunities were first used by graduates of the study programme in academic year 2021/2022 when they found placement abroad themselves. The two graduates who used the opportunity mentioned in personal conversations with Ieva Puzo, director of the study programme until February 2024, both a close connection between the practice and what was learned in the study programme and its role in career growth.

Several students first went for Erasmus+ short-term mobility in 2023, when the RSU started working with the University of Padua in Italy and Masaryk University in the Czech Republic on the implementation of the course “Latest Debates in Social Anthropology” (Part B, 3 ECTS). In spring 2023, students took the course both remotely and in a regular way at the University of Padua. In spring 2024, this course is planned to be carried out with a regular studies component at Masaryk University, while in 2025 it is planned to be carried out by RSU.

Students of the programme have so far enthusiastically welcomed foreign visiting lecturers who taught individual courses of the study programme (such as Carlo Cubero, Michael Strmiska, Hanna Nieber, Susanne Fehlings), and appreciate that the RSU study programme due to attracting foreign visiting lecturers is also in the international circulation of education and science. It is also important to note that most of the readings in study courses are in English. Similarly, several EU higher education institutions show interest in cooperation with the study programme, for example, within Erasmus+ study and teacher mobility, and at least one Erasmus+ cooperation agreement is concluded each year. Consequently, based on the successful experience of international cooperation so far (see also 3.4.2) and being aware of the large presence of English in the programme implemented in Latvian, it is planned to implement the study programme also in English in the future, targeting both Latvian residents who wish to study in English and residents of other countries who wish to study social anthropology in the second study cycle in an international environment.

Enclosed:

Annex 16. Statistical Data on Students.

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

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

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

The programme closely keeps up with the achievements and insights of social anthropology. Teaching staff of the Master's study programme "Social Anthropology" is constantly working to ensure that study courses conform to the objective and learning outcomes of the study programme. The objective defined for the programme is to prepare social anthropology specialists in line with international standards of social anthropology, who are able to participate in both research and solving practical problems and academic research and education work. In total, eight learning outcomes have been defined for the programme (see parameters and Annex 18.1) that are harmonised with courses of the programme.

Linking of the objective and the learning outcomes of the study programme to study courses is achieved by integrating into the learning outcomes of the study programme the learning outcomes of study courses and by specifically defining the knowledge, skills and competences to be mastered. Study courses provide for the mastering of theoretical knowledge and skills in the form of contact hours, as well as for the student to perform extensive independent work. The test forms used in study courses provide a basis for verifying the learning outcomes achieved at the level of individual courses. The national degree examination - a Master's thesis and its defence - is the basis for assessing the learning outcomes of the study programme in the case of each particular student. Thus, the study courses included in the study programme ensure the achievement of the objective set for the study programme and the outcomes of LQF/EQF level 7, as well as the theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and competences necessary in the field of social anthropology.

The volume of the study programme is 120 ECTS. The compulsory part, with the exception of writing a Master's thesis, includes research of theoretical knowledge in the field of social anthropology and an approbation of theoretical knowledge in the aspect of the current problems of social anthropology in the amount of 48 ECTS. The course "Master's thesis", during which a Master's thesis is written and defended based on a socio-anthropological study, is a part A course of 30 ECTS and is implemented during the last study semester.

In addition to Part A courses, an extended range of Part B courses as well as Part C courses (3 ECTS) are offered. The implementation of each particular Part B course is marked in the study planning of a specific semester based on the overall logic of the programme. For example, part B courses "Anthropology of Consumption" or "Anthropology of Money" are offered in the same semester as part A course "Political and Economic Anthropology", thus enabling students to gain an extended idea of the classical and current issues of economic anthropology. Similarly, the courses "Environmental Anthropology" and "Introduction to Multispecies Ethnography" are planned in one semester, implementing them one after the other. Part B 3 ECTS course "Civil Defence and Environmental Protection" is offered every semester, thus allowing students who have not completed an equivalent course in first-cycle studies to take it at the time they want.

Until now, a specific regional ethnography course (Part B, 6 ECTS) from a wide range of courses of

this type has been offered in the study programme every semester. Such courses were, for example, “Regional Studies (Ethnography): the Caribbean Sea Region”, “Regional Studies (Ethnography): Caucasus”, “Regional Studies (Ethnography): Siberia”, “Regional Studies (Ethnography): Amazon”, etc. During accreditation, an extended range of courses is replaced by three specific courses with an open name: “Regional Studies (Ethnography) I”, “Regional Studies (Ethnography) II”, “Regional Studies (Ethnography) III”. These changes were made in order to attract outstanding foreign visiting lecturers for a particular region each semester (e.g. following the interests of students or guided by the geopolitical situation in the world), while also making it easy to update and adapt the content of the course.

The study course “Latest Debates in Social Anthropology” (Part B, 3 ECTS) was also developed under similar motives. It is designed to enable lecturers to respond rapidly to current issues or research trends in social anthropology in the world, presenting them to students in real time rather than with a delay.

In general, the courses of the study programme are updated according to social anthropology and common global and Latvian societal trends. Thus, for example, the course “Introduction to Multispecies Ethnography” was created, realising that multispecies ethnography is becoming an emerging perspective for an increasing number of anthropologists in the world. The course “(In)visible Practices and current developments in Economics” was created following the discussions of Latvian society on the “shadow economy” to provide a socio-anthropological perspective on these issues.

Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 240 on the national standard of academic education (Paragraph 3.2) provides that one of strategic objectives of the second cycle study programmes is “to ensure that programme graduates are able to choose and use information technologies responsibly and safely in their professional activities, research and lifelong learning, as well as in the acquisition, creation and sharing of digital content”. The study programme “Social Anthropology” pays a lot of attention to the development of digital knowledge and skills. For example, the methods course “Research Methods in Anthropology” teaches digital ethnography, the importance and use of which has grown in recent years due to both the development of social networking websites and Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. When writing their Master’s thesis, students are encouraged to use digital ethnography as one of their research methods. In academic year 2023/2024, the Master’s thesis “Mothers walking the streets of Latvia”. Motherhood on the social media “Facebook” group “Atsaucīgo māmiņu forums” was defended, which chose digital ethnography as the central method. Similarly, students in various courses (“Introduction to Multispecies Ethnography”, “Research Methods in Anthropology”) operate on the Miro digital platform, a visual innovation workplace, where students create and manage their research projects in a creative and visually transparent way, both individually and in teams.

During studies, students are provided with both knowledge and practical skills in work with data analysis. For example, in the methods courses in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of studies, students practically learn data analysis in MAXQDA, a computer-aided data analysis software for qualitative and mixed methods for both academic and business environments. This software and the quality data analysis programme NVIVO are officially provided to students in the study process free of charge (see also 3.3.1). Students are also learning the use of reference management systems, such as Zotero (open access) or EndNote (provided by the RSU Library), from the 1<sup>st</sup> study semester.

At the end of each study course, students are asked to complete an assessment in the RSU e-environment, wherein they can express their opinion and provide proposals both regarding the content of the study course and the methods of implementation thereof, as well as competences and work style of the lecturers. Students also share reflections on course content with the

programme director. Therefore, study courses are updated each year also in accordance with the assessment given by the students.

The creation of new courses and the updating of existing courses are ongoing, also using the various resources and capabilities available to RSU. For example, the Boris and Inara Teterev Foundation in collaboration with RSU and the RSU Alumni Association, creates opportunities to financially support the modernisation of the study process, both in the direction of social sciences and health studies, by providing targeted scholarships to lecturers. Scholarships are intended for the development of innovative study courses or the improvement of existing study courses. Courses, such as “Media and Society” and “(In)visible Practices and current developments in Economics” were created, as well as the study course “Anthropology of Religion” was updated with the support provided by this fund.

New courses are also introduced in conjunction with the growing number of staff and the expansion of competence at the university. For example, in 2023, Marc Morell, socioanthropologist, lead researcher, started working at the university, who is also planned to be involved in the implementation of study programme courses.

Research results are also integrated into the study programme. Thus, for example, the theoretical and practical insights of FARP “[State Performance and Biosocial Relatedness \(RELATE.LV\)](#)” and “[\(Re\)moving Ties: Relatedness in Contemporary Mobile Work Regimes](#)” were integrated into the study courses “Kinship Systems”, “Research Methods in Anthropology” and “Principles of Ethnographic Work Practice”. On the other hand, the study course “(In)visible Practices and current developments in Economics” and the Wiki created during the course are planned as the starting point for a new FARP on economic processes in Latvia. Consequently, the content of the study programme is updated in various ways, based on trends in the field of social anthropology and scientific development in general in the world, as well as the digital skills required in the labour market.

Enclosed:

Annex 17.1. Compliance of the Study Programme with the National Educational Standard.

Annex 18.1. Mapping of the Study Courses for the Achievement of Learning Outcomes of the Study Programme.

Annex 19. Planning of the Study Programme (For Each Type and Form of the Implementation of the Study Programme).

Annex 20. Description of Study Courses.

**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).**

Paragraph 21.<sup>1</sup> of Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 240 on the National Standard of Academic Education as amended on 3 October 2023 provides that: “Upon completion of the Master’s study programme, a Master’s degree corresponding to the learning outcomes in the respective field of studies is awarded to students.” The learning outcomes of the RSU Master’s

study programme “Social Anthropology” (see parameters) directly identify and put forward the knowledge, skills and competences specific and relevant to social anthropology.

Social anthropology has been known in Latvia as since 1990s (see the National Encyclopaedia entry “Social Anthropology in Latvia” (only in [Latvian](#))) and is associated with a specific methodological approach and vision of global research. Although social anthropology is not isolated as a field in Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers on the Latvian Education Classification, it is mentioned in Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 49 on Latvian Branches and Sub-Branched of Science as a sub-sector of Sociology and Social Work. It should be noted that footnote 27 to CM Regulations No. 49 of these CM Regulations outlines that Sociology and Social Work “includes sociology, demography, anthropology, [...]”, which is an indication of the prominence of social anthropology within the meaning of the sector as such. It should also be noted that Annex 1 “Study Directions in Higher Education” to Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 793 “Rules of Opening and Accreditation of Study Directions” includes [social] anthropology in the name of the direction to be accredited – “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology”.

If we look into international practices, we can see that all kinds of European universities, such as University of Cambridge, Stockholm University, University of Oslo and many others, are award students degrees in social anthropology when students graduate from Master’s study programmes in social anthropology (note: certain universities in Europe, and in particular in the United States, award degrees in cultural anthropology, reflecting the different histories of today’s generally unified discipline in different parts of the world).

The identity of a social anthropologist is also an important factor. The title, objective, task and defined outcomes of the study programme are closely related, and in practice social anthropology is also perceived as a specific area in the scientific and public space of Latvia with certain methodological and analytical approaches that define it. Consequently, obtaining a degree in social anthropology is an important factor for students and then for graduates of the programme in the selection of the programme, which they have, for example, indicated in the entrance interviews and continue to emphasise in the course of their studies. Employers have also actively expressed their opinion in individual conversations that a potential employee’s degree in social anthropology is an important factor in demonstrating a specific employee’s knowledge, skills and analytical view, which is also directly related to their overall image and identity.

All these different factors indicate that students should be awarded a Master’s degree in social anthropology when they successfully complete their studies in the study programme “Social Anthropology”.

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

The main study forms in the study programme are lectures and seminars. The volume of classes represents about half of the total volume of classes. Study materials are presented at lectures

according to the study programme and the course programme. The other half consists of seminars and practical classes. Lectures may also be combined with a seminar if the lecturer chooses this form.

The programme is implemented both in a regular way and, since 2020, as a remote study process. RSU does not offer studies in hybrid format. The type of remote classes is associated with several factors. First, some students live and work daily in regions of the country, which makes it difficult to attend regular studies. The semi-remote format makes it easier to combine social anthropology studies with personal and work life. Second, some of visiting lecturers (such as Michael Strmiska) and invited lecturers (such as Anna Žabicka, Agnese Bankovska), with whom successful cooperation had developed over the years, have changed their place of residence by moving abroad (such as the United States, Finland) and are thus not available for regular classes, but are prepared to read courses remotely with great enthusiasm. The format of remote classes also makes it possible to attract foreign visiting lecturers who teach part of the course in a regular way and part of it remotely (e.g. Susanne Fehlings). In accordance with Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 111 "Procedure of Organisation and Implementation of Remote Studies", the remote format shall not exceed 50% of the total number of contact hours, and the regular format is still considered the most preferable and appropriate format for social anthropology studies.

The following study methods are used in the study programme: approbation of theoretical and practical knowledge in seminars, discussion, writing and presentation of reasoned essays, reports, individual and group projects, individual work with readings in a library or using electronic databases. In addition, students go on field trips to museums and other places suitable for social anthropological analysis. For example, in the study course "Sex and Gender" students go to the Pauls Stradiņš Medicine History Museum to deepen their knowledge of sex, gender and sexuality matters in socialism by looking at informative posters devoted to sexual and reproductive health in the Soviet Union. The programme also includes cooperation with the RSU Anatomy Museum, where students can apply methodological knowledge acquired through lectures and perform observation/participant observation.

Within the framework of the study programme, students are offered practical skills in research – both working on research projects and going on expeditions led by experienced researchers. Students have so far been involved in a number of research projects, developing both final papers for different courses and Master's theses related to FARP studies such as: "[Memento Mori: End of Life, Death and Imagined Afterlife in the Contemporary Latvian Lifeworld](#)", "[\(Re\)moving Ties: Relatedness in Contemporary Mobile Work Regimes](#)".

Students in the programme have had the opportunity to take part in several ethnographic expeditions. Thus, for instance, in 2017-2019, students took part in expeditions led by lecturer Agita Luce, revisiting the Latvian farms visited by ethnographic expeditions organised in 1920s. In the summer of 2023, students of the programme, along with environmental anthropologist Guntrs Aistars, organised an ethnographic expedition to Jurmalciems, collecting materials about the cultural, historical and culinary heritage of coastal fishermen during ecological change. This kind of expedition is organised within the scope of the course "Social Anthropological Expedition" and partly performed in summer to have a proportionate study load with the autumn semester.

In addition to research, students are encouraged to participate in international conferences, other public events to learn also academic speaking skills. Thus, on 30 March 2023, two female students of the programme spoke at the RSU International Conference "PLACES", presenting data obtained during the research project "[\(Re\)moving Ties: Relatedness in Contemporary Mobile Work Regimes](#)". In cooperation with the Latvian Association of Anthropologists, students and recent graduates may participate in the event "Bērzu sulas", where students of anthropology present their research for

their final paper during studies.

In general, the study programme also focuses on non-formal training of students, involving them in events of the Latvian Association of Anthropologists, organising summer anthropology schools, international conferences and other events during which students can freely contact teachers and/or other social anthropologists.

The independent work of students is crucial. The ratio between regular classes (lectures and seminars) and independent work when studying literature and preparing reports and research projects is three hours of independent work to one hour of lecture or seminar. Independent work is aimed at studying and analysis of scientific literature, acquisition and analysis of empirical material, use of scientific research methods, preparation of reasoned essays, reports and individual projects.

The task of lecturers is to help students organise their independent work, to provide tutorials and advice, and encourage discussion and motivate the choice of study directions. Lecturers are available for tutorials. Students can receive educational materials using digital tools and platforms (e-studies, e-mail communication), send homework (essays, etc.) for study courses to teachers and receive feedback – comments and assessment. Overall, the study programme is characterised by individual attitude towards students. The programme stimulates creative attitude, freedom of expression and academic ethics. Cases of plagiarism in student works are examined at a meeting of the faculty (formerly the Faculty of Communication, since February 2024 – the Faculty of Social Sciences). In the case of repeated deliberate plagiarism, the student may be exmatriculated without the right to be restored as an RSU student.

A detailed course description is drafted for each study course, which provides detailed information on the subjects of classes, the requirements of the teacher, required readings, topics of essays and projects. To facilitate the learning of material, students are offered electronic copies of required readings that can be printed or used by students in electronic form. The amount of required readings is about 500-800 pages for each study course.

The assessment system is indicated in the course description. At the beginning of each course, the students are informed about the assessment criteria and teacher's requirements. This contributes to the motivation of students to learn and eliminates conflicts between lecturers and students. Knowledge is assessed using the 10-point system, considering the assessment of 4 points (almost satisfactory) as the lowest successful assessment. The final grade is the sum of all grades that the students receive for various activities during their studies.

Mastering courses is assessed by the following forms of examination:

- attendance of lectures, seminars and practical classes;
- participation and quality of answers in seminar classes;
- drafting and defence of independent written papers or empirical research;
- an exam.

The assessment of students' knowledge and skills consists of several components – student activity and knowledge shows during seminar classes, quality of individual project or essay and examination grade. This type of assessment system excludes student learning only at the end of the course and stimulates the student to study systematically throughout the course.

The RSU Study Process Development Plan for Social Sciences and Health Studies, approved at the Senate meeting on 13 February and 12 March 2024, stipulates that, starting with the 2024 intake, study plans should reflect ECTS credits. The transition to the ECTS credit system in each study programme is the responsibility of the programme directors. According to Article 1(8) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (available in [Latvian](#), partially translated into [English](#)), one credit point

corresponds to 25-30 hours of study work. Each lecturer assesses the amount of work within the course of study within the limits of the Law on Higher Education. For further information, see the recommendations in the study direction annexes (Annex 30 – available in Latvian only).

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

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

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

The Master's thesis is a part of the state examination. The requirements for the development of Master's theses and their assessment at RSU are set out in the Regulations on the Development and Defence of a Qualification Thesis, Student Research Thesis, Bachelor Thesis and Master's Thesis (in [Latvian](#), [English](#)). In addition, every academic year, the Faculty Council develops and reapproves (if it is necessary to update any section) the Methodical instructions for development of Master's thesis in the RSU Master's study programme "Social Anthropology" (only in [Latvian](#)).

Students start choosing the topic for their Master's thesis in semester 3 within the framework of study courses "Research Methods in Anthropology", "Principles of Ethnographic Work Practice" and "Principles of Research for Master's Thesis", which are mutually related. In the course of study courses "Research Methods in Anthropology" and "Principles of Ethnographic Work Practice", students, on the basis of their own interests, perform an ethnographic study and prepare a so-called mini-ethnography, which may also serve as a first step in the direction of the Master's thesis – that is, students may continue the study topic selected in these study courses, expanding the field and methodological range of the study. Some students usually choose to do so, but some choose a different topic for their Master's thesis. The selection of a topic for the Master's thesis is finalised at the end of the study course "Master's Thesis Development": upon completion of the course, students submit an application for the topic of the Master's thesis and an outline of the topic application as their final paper. Since academic year 2021/2022, an application to the RSU Research Ethics Committee is also mandatory to get a confirmation that the topic and

methodological approach of the selected Master's thesis is ethical. Topics and supervisors of Master's thesis are approved by the Faculty Council (formerly the Faculty of Communication, since February 2024 – the Faculty of Social Sciences) 6 months before defending the paper.

Students can mainly choose a topic for their Master's thesis research in two ways: by proposing a topic or issue that is important to them, or by conducting research as part of a larger research project. Part of this research actively involves lecturers of the study programme. For example, the Master's thesis ““Beware of Terminology”: Constructing the Family in the Parliamentary Committees” defended in January 2024 was developed within FARP “(Re)moving Ties: Relatedness in Contemporary Mobile Work Regimes”. However, there is also research conducted by colleagues in other RSU structural units or even institutions that urge students of the RSU study programme “Social Anthropology” to conduct social anthropological Master's thesis research for a broader and more interdisciplinary understanding of a problem. For example, the Master's thesis ““We cannot appreciate what we have”: Drinking water consumption habits of apartment building residents in Riga” defended in academic year 2021/2022, was written influenced by the interests expressed by RTU researchers, while the Master's thesis “Life next to the harbour. Neighbourhood activism in the river Daugava delta communities” defended in academic year 2020/2021 was created within the framework of FARP implemented by UL sociologists.

As studies in the study programme “Social Anthropology” start in winter (i.e. in February) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> study semester closes in June, students are encouraged to use summer months for obtaining data for their Master's thesis research, i.e. fieldwork. In September, when the 4<sup>th</sup> study semester starts, students commence data analysis and writing their Master's thesis within the scope of the course “Master's Thesis” and in close cooperation with their Master's thesis supervisor. During the 4<sup>th</sup> semester, students are also invited to informal coworking sessions to discuss the progress of preparing their Master's thesis and challenges with course mates and lecturers. In December, students submit drafts of their Master's theses and present them in a pre-defence that simulates the defence expected in January. The Instructions for Developing a Master's Thesis require that at least 90% of the text be ready for pre-defence so that the student can fine-tune it for the rest of the period.

Master research reflects Master student's achievements. They provide a basis for assessing the research skills and abilities of students, confirm the ability to use adequate research methods, skills to process, analyse and interpret the obtained data, as well as the ability to provide a social anthropological opinion on the selected matter.

Defence of Master's theses is carried out by convening a commission for the defence of Master's theses. The Commission consists of the Head of the Commission from an institution independent of RSU, who has a doctoral degree and represents a related science sector, as well as four members of the Commission (usually teaching staff of the study programme).

Looking at the topics of Master's theses defended since academic year 2013/2014 (see Annex 22), a number of conclusions can be drawn:

- Over time, topics of Master's theses have become more specific and extended, paper titles include an outline of the problem, as well as a specific place where the particular topic is studied.
- Most of the topics of the Master's thesis are related to the studying of social problems in Latvian society and social anthropological analysis, also outlining topics that are relevant to society during the drafting of Master's theses. So, for example, the Master's thesis “The Kindergarten Lottery: Shortage of Care Work in the Preschool Upbringing Process” defended in the 2023/2024 addressed the issue of childcare practices in Latvian kindergartens – an issue that has been in the focus of Latvian society and the mass media for a long time. The

Master's thesis "Everybody burns out differently? Burnout as boundary object in Latvian society" was defended in academic year 2021/2022, which directly analysed the currently topical issue of burnout from a social anthropological point of view. The Master's thesis "Not food neither medication, or the modern alchemy" was defended in academic year 2017/2018, which focused on ethnographic research of the use of psychotropic substances in Latvia.

- Although research for most Master's theses is carried out in Latvia, students of the study programme also conduct research for their Master's theses in other countries and regions - for example, North Macedonia (ac.y. 2021/2022), China (ac.y. 2018/2019), Nagorno-Karabakh (ac.y. 2017/2018), Norway (ac.y. 2015/2016). In such cases, students are specifically invited to reflect on their positionality and how, for example, (not) knowing the language of a given region or the length of time spent there has affected the conduct of the study.

As shown in Annex 22, the assessments for the Master's theses defended range between 6 (almost good) and 10 (with distinction). Most papers were assessed as 7 (good), 8 (very good) and 9 (excellent). The assessment of 10 is given on very rare occasions when the Master's thesis surprises both with its ethnographic richness and theoretical depth. The assessment of 6 usually reflects the fact that either the student has not fully mastered anthropological thinking or the Master's thesis has been rushed for some reason. There were no lower assessments in the history of the study programme. This is due to several factors: students work in close cooperation with work supervisors; students tend to do the best at a given stage in their lives; the specificity of social anthropology research (extensive ethnographic work) means that if a student does not have ethnographic material and its analysis for pre-defence, they are urged to take academic leave and prepare and defend their Master's thesis next year.

Enclosed:

Annex 22. Topics and assessments of students' graduation papers.

### **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.**

All RSU infrastructure, as well as the study base created specifically for the social anthropology study process, for example, library resources developed are used for the provision of the study programme by thinking about the growth of social anthropology at RSU. So, for example, at the invitation of lecturers of the study programme, the RSU Library provides subscriptions for access to several anthropology journals published by Berghahn: Anthropological Journal of European Cultures, Focaal, Social Analysis, The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology, Journal of Legal Anthropology. Similarly, based on a recommendation of the lecturers of the programme, as well as other colleagues in the study direction, the RSU Library launched a subscription to the SAGE Research Methods database, which is currently actively used by both lecturers and students (detailed information on the resources provided by the RSU Library can be found in Annex 23.2).

The main website where there is access to all the necessary resources in each course of the study programme is the e-learning of each course. Lecturers of the specific course update it at least 10 days before the beginning of the course. There are detailed course descriptions, required and recommended readings, assessment criteria (to ensure that assessment is consistent and fair to all students – see 23.1. Annex), information regarding the development of independent work and information vital for the successful mastering of another study course. E-learning also actively uses the “News” section to inform students about current developments in the course.

If the course is conducted remotely (see 3.2.3), a Zoom link for each class is also posted in e-learning. The RSU Information Technology Department provides the institutional Zoom license to every lecturer who needs it. Regular classes mainly take place in study rooms on Baložu iela 14, where appropriate study supplies are available: computer equipment, the internet, sound equipment and multimedia projectors (see Annex 23.2, Paragraph 1.6).

As students learn qualitative research methods in the study programme “Social Anthropology”, RSU also provides access to the NVIVO qualitative data analysis programme for all lecturers and students. Students also learn and use the MAXQDA quality data analysis programme: several mobile licenses have been purchased and are used during studies.

As students in the study programme learn a wide range of high-quality research methods, including, for example, visual methods, they also have access to RSU shared resources that can be used for acquiring data. Such resources include photo and video cameras owned by the Faculty of Social Sciences, which students can borrow for several days for photo and video fixation of data. The purchase of a drone as a shared resource is also currently under discussion, thus expanding the range of methods and skills to learn.

Students are encouraged to use reference management programmes to successfully prepare their study papers. For example, the Zotero system is available in open access, while the RSU Library provides EndNote, as well as training in using this programme.

Students are actively invited to participate in various research projects, the implementation of which involves lecturers of the study programme, although in this way they promote research-based studies and create students’ interest in research work. For example, in the course “Social Anthropological Expedition” (Part B, 3 ECTS), students tend to go on small expeditions for several days with the head of the course. In such cases, the costs of students (e.g. accommodation, travel expenses) are expected to be covered by funds of the research project. When these costs cannot be covered, students are informed in good time – their participation in the expedition is voluntary.

Due to the methodological specifics of qualitative studies, students may also have to pay for coffee or purchase a small souvenir for their research participants from their personal resources. Students learn these practices and discuss them in study courses “Research Methods in Anthropology” (Part A, 6 ECTS), “Principles of Ethnographic Work Practice” (Part A, 3 ECTS) and “Master’s Thesis” (Part A, 30 ECTS). The course “Media and Society” (Part B, 3 ECTS) introduced a practice for research participants to provide RSU souvenirs by purchasing them at the expense of faculty representation expenses.

To ensure a research-based study process, individual students are also involved in research projects carried out by lecturers of the programme as scientific assistants and are also employed and get remuneration for a certain load. Typically, in such cases, the deliverable of students is a Master’s thesis written on the topic related to the project topic. Current projects include, for instance, FARP “(Re)moving Ties: Relatedness in Contemporary Mobile Work Regimes” and “Socially responsible green transition: strengthening governance solutions to empower Homo Climaticus in the healthcare sector”. In such cases, the costs related to the implementation of the

project, such as business trips or participation in conferences, are covered for students as RSU employees – from the funds of the relevant project.

Enclosed:

Annex 23.2. Assessment of the informative and methodological provision regarding library resources for the implementation of the study direction “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” in accordance with the requirements of the guidelines.

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

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

The full-time Latvian flow StP is planned to be financed from the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee of EUR 2500 starting from academic year 2024/2025. 15 students are expected to be enrolled in the first year of studies, 3 students are expected to drop out in the second year of studies. For an optimal study programme and to ensure a qualitative study process the study programme needs to have at least 16 students. The full-time English language StP is planned to be funded by private and legal entities, with a potential tuition fee of EUR 2900. Optimal enrolment of 18 students in the first year, with a drop-out of 3 students in the second year. Minimum enrolment of 14 students.

The funding is used for staff remuneration, attraction of visiting assistant professors, taxes, maintenance of IT infrastructure, purchase of equipment and devices, and study visit costs. In addition to the direct costs of implementation of lectures and classes, the StP must cover infrastructure maintenance costs (facilities, IT solutions) and other RSU common resources used in the StP (Student Services, Library, organisation of the study process, grant for the Student Union and other support and administrative functions).

So far, StP was implemented by the RSU Faculty of Communication and the Department of Clinical Skills and Medical Technologies of the Faculty of Medicine. After 6 February 2024, according to the new RSU structural scheme, it will further be implemented by the Faculty of Social Sciences involving other departments, if necessary, in accordance with study course plans.

As a result of the structural consolidation process of RSU, an improvement in efficiency in the context of cost items is expected, which ensures a balance of revenue and expenditure over the long term.

Table 2. **Costs of the study programme in the Latvian flow**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Result</b>
Average income per student, EUR	2500
Average cost per student, EUR	2252
Academic staff, %	67
Department resources, %	3
Scholarships, %	0
Other direct expenditure, %	2
Fixed costs, %	2
Eligible, incl. development costs, %	26

Table 3. **Costs of the study programme in the English flow**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Result</b>
Average income per student, EUR	2 900
Average cost per student, EUR	2 648
Academic staff, %	69
Department resources, %	2
Scholarships, %	0
Other direct expenditure, %	1
Fixed costs, %	2
Eligible, incl. development costs, %	26

### **3.4. Teaching Staff**

**3.4.1. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the**

**study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.**

At least 20 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the Master's study programme. 10 work in their main job (elected, acting or adjunct lecturer), but others are invited lecturers and visiting lecturers. The range of invited lecturers consists of social anthropologists and representatives of other related social sciences who either are doctoral students in Latvia or abroad or work in the sector. The range of visiting lecturers consists of lecturers whose primary place of work is an institution of higher education outside Latvia - United States, United Kingdom, Estonia, Germany, etc.

Almost all lecturers are employed in their main job, invited lecturers and also visiting lecturers either have a doctoral degree, are doctoral candidates or doctoral students. Only one invited lecturer, who also has a Master's degree in social anthropology, is not planning an academic career path, but he is an important industry practitioner in Latvia.

Most of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme have either obtained higher education degrees from foreign universities where the study process is conducted in English, or have studied in exchange programmes outside Latvia. For example, asoc. prof. Assistant Professor Klāvs Sedlenieks has studied at the University of Cambridge and obtained a doctoral degree at Tallinn University; lecturer Agita Lūse has obtained a doctoral degree at the University of Bristol. Visiting lecturer Anna Žabicka holds a Master's degree from Wayne State University in the USA and is currently a PhD candidate in Social Anthropology at the University of Vienna. Ieva Puzo holds a PhD from the University of Pittsburgh, USA, and has taught courses in the field there. Lecturers without study or work experience at foreign universities are also active international actors, for example through international projects, Erasmus+ mobility and other networks. Thus, the English language skills of the lecturers are also suitable for the implementation of the study programme in English.

It should be emphasised that due to the specificity of the programme - that is, the regional ethnography courses to be implemented each semester (see also 3.2.1), a foreign visiting lecturer is invited to teach a specific regional ethnography course each semester. This choice is built into the programme essentially for several reasons: to provide students with social anthropological perspectives of anthropologists from different regions; to respond to geopolitical trends in the world by attracting specialists with expertise in the specific region; for the lecturers of the study programme to develop educational and scientific work networks at different European and world universities; to enable young experts in the field to gain pedagogical experience.

Part A courses of the study programme are taught mainly by lecturers, for whom RSU is their main job to ensure continuity and intellectual tradition. At the same time, it should also be emphasised that lecturers of Part B courses, who are mostly invited or visiting lecturers, have been cooperating with the programme for a long time. For example, several of them have initially been students of the programme who continued with doctoral studies after graduating from the programme (for example, Anna Žabicka) or have already obtained doctoral degree (for example, Agnese Bankovska, Andris Saulītis) at universities outside Latvia and wish to transfer their knowledge to students of the programme, as well as to cooperate with the employed lecturers in research.

It should be emphasised that the experience of ethnographic fieldwork and research of the

lecturers of the programme is very important in achieving the objective and outcomes of the study programme. Lecturers of the programme conducted research in Latvia (all lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme, except foreign visiting lecturers), Montenegro (Klāvs Sedlenieks, Diāna Kiščenko, Ieva Puzo), Japan (Ieva Puzo), Spain (Marc Morell), Finland (Agnese Bankovska), Brazil (Diāna Kiščenko) and other regions.

Lecturers of the programme are also actively involved in research. Only some of the national and international level research projects in which lecturers of the programme have participated or participate are mentioned here:

- FARP “(Re)moving Ties: Relatedness in Contemporary Mobile Work Regimes”;
- FARP “Socially responsible green transition: strengthening governance solutions to empower Homo Climaticus in the healthcare sector”;
- FARP “State Performance and Biosocial Relatedness (RELATE.LV)”;
- Horizon 2020 project “INFORM: Closing the Gap between Formal and Informal Institutions in the Balkans”;
- NRP “Life with COVID-19: Evaluation of overcoming the coronavirus crisis in Latvia and recommendations for societal resilience in the future”;
- NRP “Challenges and Solutions of Latvian State and Society in an International Framework”.

The involvement of lecturers of the programme in research projects contributes to the achievement of the objective and outcomes of the study programme, as well as to the development of the study programme: first, lecturers learn and improve their experience, work in a team of researchers, including cooperating with partners from other countries; second, by working in research projects, teaching staff is deepening their competence in a specific subject. The obtained information and research results are used in the development of the study programme and individual study courses (see also 3.2.1).

Lecturers of the study programme are active participants in various international networks also outside specific research projects. For example, Klāvs Sedlenieks participates in the COST networking “Transnational Family Dynamics in Europe”. Ieva Puzo is co-chair of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF). All lecturers of the programme are members of various international sectoral organisations and participate actively in conferences and seminars organised by these associations. Lecturers of the programme also organise various international workshops in Latvia (for example, the Future States Conference in August 2023), actively inviting students to them.

Enclosed:

Annex 24.7. Analysis of the Composition of the Teaching Staff.

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

The main changes that have occurred during the reporting period of the study programme are as follows:

- Extension and increase in the number of lecturers involved in the study programme – among those employed in their main job, invited lecturers and visiting lecturers. For example, in 2017, Ieva Puzo, who was also awarded a doctoral degree at the University of Pittsburgh in

the United States that same year, joined the study programme as an adjunct lecturer and became the director of the programme in 2020 (until February 2024). Diāna Kiščenko started her doctoral studies and from an adjunct lecturer became a lecturer.

- Upskilling of lecturers involved in the study programme. For example, in the reporting period, the first director of the study programme Klāvs Sedlenieks obtained a doctoral degree (at Tallinn University), and also from an assistant professor became an associate professor. The invited lecturer Karīna Vasiļevska-Dāsa also obtained a doctoral degree (University of California, Berkeley). Several graduates of the study programme became invited lecturers, as well as began their doctoral studies: Agnese Bankovska obtained a doctoral degree from the University of Helsinki and Andris Saulītis from the European University Institute; Anna Žabicka is a doctoral candidate at the University of Vienna, while Ilze Mileiko pursues doctoral studies at RSU. Similarly, graduates of the study programme who have become lecturers have obtained prestigious funding for the development of their academic career: Anna Žabicka (Fulbright scholarship, scholarship of Austrian Government), Andris Saulītis (Fulbright scholarship), Matīss Šteinerts (Fulbright scholarship), etc. This external assessment demonstrates both the quality of the study programme and the international vision and academic career ambitions of its new lecturers.
- Although individual lecturers who taught the programme at the beginning of the reporting period of the study programme are no longer related to the programme for a variety of reasons (for example, Roberts Ķīlis, who taught the course “Kinship Systems” passed away in 2022; Viesturs Celmiņš, who originally taught the course “Urban Anthropology”, is currently active in private business), there has been an active replacement of lecturers. The replacement of lecturers goes hand in hand with the status of RSU as a university of science, that is, the lecturers of the study programme are also researchers, and the strategic emphasis on research also allows the programme to attract social anthropologists whose main activity is research but who are also open to teaching work.
- The model of attracting foreign lecturers is working successfully – mainly for the implementation of regional ethnography courses (see also 3.4.1), but also for the implementation of other courses (mainly, but not only, Part B courses). For example, in 2019/2020, cooperation was initiated with Michael Strmiska, associate professor of SUNY-Orange (USA), who arrived in Latvia with the support of the Fulbright scholarship and taught the course “Anthropology of Religion” (Part A; 6 ECTS); the cooperation proved to be so successful that it continues now and is planned for the future. For the most part, foreign visiting lecturers are found through international networks of lecturers of the programme, but over the past year several foreign lecturers, guided by recommendations from colleagues, have contacted the programme director themselves and expressed interest in reading a separate course in the study programme “Social Anthropology”.

**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 study programme cooperates in different ways:

- In the implementation of study courses. For example, the courses “Research Methods in Anthropology”, “Principles of Ethnographic Work Practice”, “Principles of Developing Master’s Thesis” involve close cooperation between teaching staff members of the programme by organising visiting lectures and seminars on a specific topic within the framework of these courses. Head of course Diāna Kiščenko involves Karīna Vasiļevska-Dāsa to ensure the development of ethnographic writing skills in students, while Klāvs Sedlenieks - to provide both theoretical knowledge and data analysis skills.
- Integration of research results into study courses. Lecturers of the programme discuss in different formats, such as research project meetings or meetings of lecturers of the programme, the most appropriate ways of approbating research results in study courses. As a result of such discussions, specific heads of courses are advised to include new literature in the bibliography of their study course or to invite a visiting lecturer to conduct a class on a particular topic.
- In peer observation of teaching. Lecturers attend each other’s lectures and classes enabling the lecturers to gain mutual feedback, discuss relevant issues of the academic work and share the experience.
- Faculty staff meetings. During the reporting period, cooperation took place in meetings of employees of the Faculty of Communication, while from February 2024 - in meetings of employees of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

At the time of submission of the self-assessment report, the ratio of the number of students and the teaching staff within the programme is 0.96:1

# Annexes

III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme	24.1_Anx_Diploma_Diploma_Supplement_SocAntrpo.pdf	24.1_pielik_Diploms_Dipl_Pielikums_SocAntropol_lv.pdf
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period	16_Anx_student_stats_Soc_antropol_ENG.pdf	16_pielik_Soc_antropo_statistika_LV.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	17.1_Anx_compliance_nat_educ_stand_eng.pdf	17.1_pielik_Atbalstiba_valsts_izglitiba_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	18.1_Anx_St_course_outcome_mapping.pdf	18.1_pielik_St_kursu_kartej_st_rezultatu_sasn.pdf
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	19_Anx_StP_plan_AMSP_Soc_antr.pdf	19_pielik_StP_planojums_AMSP_Soc_antr.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	20.1_Anx_course_descriptions_Soc_Antropo.pdf	20.1_pielik_kursu_apraksti_Soc_Antropo.pdf
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)	24.7.1_Anx_Cert_compliance_acad_prog.pdf	24.7.1_pielik_Aplicinajums_par_akademiska_magistra (otra_cikla) studiju_programmas "Sociāla antropoloģija" akadēmiskā personāla atbilstību Augstskolu likuma prasībām.doc

# International Relations - European Studies (43312)

Study field	<i>Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>International Relations - European Studies</i>
Education classification code	<i>43312</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic bachelor study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Lelde</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Metla-Rozentāle</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>lelde.rozentale@rsu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>mg.oec.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>To provide students first with comprehensive basic knowledge and then with specialised and in-depth knowledge in the field of politics and international relations from a European and global perspective, preparing professionals who are theoretically knowledgeable and ready for practical work, who, in addition to their knowledge of the political sector, are able to responsibly and safely choose and use the necessary information technologies and digital content when working in national, regional and global political institutions as well as in scientific research bodies.</i>

<p>Tasks of the study programme</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Provision of basic knowledge: the programme should provide students with a solid knowledge base in the field of political science and international relations, with a particular focus on the European Union and global political perspectives, as well as awareness-raising of the issues related to security, law, political economy, communication and other issues relevant to the development of international relations.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Development of specialised, in-depth and interdisciplinary knowledge: provide students with the opportunity to specialise in specific disciplines of political science and international relations through an in-depth study of the European Union or any other international political, economic, military and other organisations as well as bilateral and multilateral diplomatic relations between countries. At the same time, promoting the expansion of students' interdisciplinary knowledge and their ability to integrate it into the analysis and resolution of complex international issues.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Developing practical skills and competences and integrating them with theoretical knowledge: the programme should ensure not only the theoretical but also the practical readiness of students to work in the field, developing their ability to orient themselves professionally on current national, regional and global policy issues and to analyse them scientifically and practically. It also includes the skills to deal practically with current issues in the field and to apply information technology resources effectively both in the field of practical policy and scientific research, increasing the capacity to work in a changing international policy environment.</i></li> <li>4. <i>Use of information technology and digital content: prepare students for the responsible and safe selection and use of information technology and digital content, which are essential for work in national, regional and global political institutions and scientific research bodies.</i></li> </ol>
<p>Results of the study programme</p>	<p><i>Knowledge:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Will have knowledge of security, law, political economy, communications and other interdisciplinary issues related to the field of international relations.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Will have professional knowledge of the European Union and other international political alliances, and matters related to bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Skills:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <i>Will have professional knowledge of current national, regional and global political issues, and will be able to conduct scientific and practical analysis thereof;</i></li> <li>4. <i>Will be able to deal practically with the topical challenges facing the field in a changing international political environment as a result of globalisation and other international developments.</i></li> <li>5. <i>Will expertly apply the information technology resources needed in the field of practical policy as well as for scientific research.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Competence:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. <i>Will be familiar with, able to apply independently and adapt to the situation the acquired theoretical knowledge in the fields of political science and international relations from a global perspective.</i></li> </ol>

Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>Defence of Bachelor's thesis</i>
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## Study programme forms

### Full time studies - 3 years - latvian

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

### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

### Full time studies - 3 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>3</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>180</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education For studies in English, a minimum B2 level of proficiency in English is required.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor's degree of Social Sciences in Political Science and International Relations</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>-</i>

### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

## 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.**

Table 1. Changes in the StP Parameters

<b>No.</b>	<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period</b>	<b>Planned changes within the assessment procedure</b>
1.	Study direction	—	—
2.	Title of the StP	—	—
3.	Code according to the Latvian Education Classification	—	Amended to reflect the changes in CM Regulations No. 322

No.	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period	Planned changes within the assessment procedure
4.	Head of the StP	Head of StP changed due to academic staff career growth and other professional challenges (Mg.sc.pol.M.Cepurītis, Mg.sc.pol.E.Vroblevska refused to head the programme), as well as structural reforms within the higher education institution. The group of study programmes “International Politics and Society Studies” and therefore the Bachelor’s programme “International Relations – European Studies” included into it are currently headed by Lelde Metla-Rozentāle (doctoral candidate)	—
5.	Academic degree of the head of the StP	PhD. Cand.	—
6.	Objective of the StP	Basically, the objective of the study programme has not changed, but was updated using the current European and Latvian educational policy documents, as well as on the basis of the results of surveys of employers and graduates.	—

<b>No.</b>	<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period</b>	<b>Planned changes within the assessment procedure</b>
7.	Tasks of the StP	The tasks of the study programme have been updated in conformity with the revised learning outcomes, as well as using the current European and Latvian educational policy documents, following the development trends of the politics and international relations discipline in the European and US higher education area, as well as guided by recommendations of students, graduates and employers	—

<b>No.</b>	<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period</b>	<b>Planned changes within the assessment procedure</b>
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	<p>The information regarding the analysis of the learning outcomes performed during the mapping process are reflected in Annex 18.1. The study results have been specified in accordance with the study objective, tasks and descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to the 7<sup>th</sup> level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (which corresponds to the European Qualifications Framework) (hereinafter – LQF/EQF), as well as the QAHE guidelines on the number of outcomes. Thus, the competences, knowledge and skills learned in individual courses in a logical sequence contribute to the achievement of the defined study results. Mapping has allowed the programme management to better review the interaction between the competences, knowledge and skills to be acquired in individual courses and the compliance of the study programme outcomes with the objectives and tasks.</p>	—
9.	Final examination upon the completion of the StP	—	—

<b>No.</b>	<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period</b>	<b>Planned changes within the assessment procedure</b>
10.	Type and form of studies	—	—
11.	Duration of implementation	—	—
12.	Language of implementation	—	The implementation in Latvian will be supplemented with the implementation in English, respecting the overall higher education internalisation trend, as well as taking care of the profitability and competitiveness of the programme in the higher education market.
13.	Volume of the StP (ECTS)	Following the transition to ECTS, the CP mastered are expressed in ECTS, so the total volume of the study programme is 180 ECTS.	—
14.	Admission requirements	—	—
15.	Degree to be awarded	—	In accordance with binding regulations and long-term requests of students, the degree to be obtained is updated, providing a more detailed speciality.
16.	Qualification to be awarded	—	—

No.	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period	Planned changes within the assessment procedure
17.	Place of implementation	—	—

Table 1 demonstrates that the changes in the programme have been either driven by external factors (change of heads of the programme, adjustment of admission requirements, adjustment of the amount of credit points) or improved and adapted to the requirements of the changing higher education environment of the programmes, existing and potential students, and labour market.

The code of the study programme has been changed from 43310 to 43312 on the basis of Article 5(1) of Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 322.

During the reporting period analysed, heads of the study programme have changed twice: first Mg.sc.pol. Māris Cepurītis left the position of the head of the programme because he went to work for the Prime Minister's office as the Prime Minister's adviser on national security matters and could not combine it with administrative work at RSU, however, he remained as a lecturer of study courses. PhD. Cand. Elīna Vroblevska, who also acted as a lecturer in the specific study programme, took over from him. Shortly after, a vacancy for the head of another Master's study programme opened and Ms Vroblevska became director of the Master's study programme "International Relations and Diplomacy", she was replaced by PhD. Cand. Lelde Rozentāle. She is the lecturer who has led various study programmes in the academic discipline of political science for more than 15 years, both at the Bachelor's and Master's level. Currently, along with the structural changes in the governance of RSU – the creation of a new Faculty of Social Sciences, Metla-Rozentāle also carries out the duties of director of four study programmes. Ms. Metla-Rozentāle has both education in political science and several other sectors. She is currently working on the final phase of her doctoral thesis. The spectrum of her interdisciplinary education helps Ms. Metla-Rozentāle successfully develop study programmes not only by ensuring a high quality offer of the political science education programme, but also by promoting integration of interdisciplinarity Bachelor's study programme.

As already mentioned, the objective of the study programme has not changed conceptually, however, it is not stagnant, but adapting to the latest environmental trends in political science and practical international policies. The knowledge of regions of the world that are relevant in the context of international geopolitics, such as China, the Middle East, the new regions of power, etc., is integrated in the content of the programme. In parallel, the content of studies is also adapted to developments in the latest technologies, offering study courses that help to master the latest information technologies, digital environment, research methods and strategic communication skills. It is monitored in a targeted manner that study courses are complementary, oriented towards the development of successive knowledge and understanding, as well as conform to the defined objective, tasks of studies and descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework.

Due to the centralised transition from the national to international (ECTS) credit point system, all courses for which the total number of ECTS was not expressed in whole numbers were subject to a point volume adjustment, with the number of contact hours being adjusted accordingly. All lecturers have reviewed and adapted the content of their courses in terms of implementation

format and content to the new amount of credit points. Credit points amount adjustments were also used to complement the content of the programme with several new study courses relevant to current political and social environment trends, such as “Impact of Digital Technologies on Democracy”, “Strategic Communication – from Vision to Tactics”, “Quantitative and Qualitative Tools for Innovative Policy Analysis”, etc.

As a potential innovation, the programme is expected to be implemented in parallel in English (if there is a demand). Such a decision will not affect or alter the content of the programme, the team of teachers in any way, nor will require any specific additional investments, as several study courses are already being taught in English, if Erasmus+ exchange students join them or foreign visiting lecturers arrive. At the same time, this practice does not mean “forced” studies in English for the Latvian flow. Studies in English will be implemented as a separate/parallel flow to studies in Latvian. If Latvian students wish, they will be able to join the classes implemented in English (and vice versa), but classes in both languages will always be provided in parallel, as is currently practised in Master’s level study programmes. Such a model is in line with the general trend of international higher education in Latvia, which creates an open and included environment for the obtaining of higher education in the world higher education area at RSU.

The most qualitative adjustments of parameters are related to the degree to be obtained as a result of completing the study process. For many years, students, graduates and also employers in various international institutions were uncertain why, if a student has chosen to specialise in one specific subsector of political science – international relations, the diploma indicates something fundamentally different, more general – degree of a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Politics. We were forced to acknowledge that such a definition of a degree was not the choice of the university or head of the programme, but the legal framework. At the moment, along with changes in the regulation, we urgently encourage to adjust the degree to be obtained and express it as follows – the degree of a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Political Science and International Relations.

**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 Bachelor’s study programme “International relations – European Studies” accurately reflects the objective of the programme – to provide students first with comprehensive basic and then specialised and in-depth knowledge in the political and international relations sectors, from an EU and global perspective by preparing theoretical and practical professionals who, in parallel with knowledge of the political sector, are able to choose and use the necessary information technology and digital content responsibly and safely, working in national, regional and global policy institutions as well as scientific research bodies.

This objective is included in the study direction “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” and, at the same time, the strategic objective of RSU is to prepare high quality specialists in sociology, politics and anthropology for Latvian, European and global society, so that the knowledge, skills, competence and attitudes acquired during studies are in accordance with EU requirements and

humane traditions and that they form a stable basis for lifelong learning.

The content of the study programme logically fits into the group of education programmes in political science in the study direction "Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology" implemented by RSU; it currently has two other study programmes, in addition to the programme being analysed:

- Academic Master's study programme "International Relations and Diplomacy" (code - 45312);
- academic Master's study programme "International System Transformation Studies" (code - 45312).

The study programme forms the basis for other study programmes in political sciences implemented by RSU, forming a close functional and administrative link with higher level (master and doctoral) study programmes in the political science sector.

The code of the programme (43312 - academic education, Bachelor's degree), the duration of full-time studies (three years) and the degree to be obtained have also been selected in accordance with the title and objective of the programme: "the degree of a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Political Science and International Relations", complies with Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 322 "Regulations on the Latvian Education Classification".

The administrative support of the study programme is ensured by the study process coordinator in the group of programmes of the Faculty of Social Sciences "International Policy and Society Studies", but the faculty is headed by a single, small but purposefully formed management team - the dean, the vice-dean and the head of the quality and development of study programmes, thereby ensuring a strategically unified and efficient management of resources.

It should be noted that there is strong synergy between programmes of the political science sector included the direction, not only to ensure academic continuity (Bachelor, Master, doctoral level study programmes) but also to share resources and develop scientific capacity. There is an exchange of lecturers between different levels of study programmes (lecturers match by 42%), a succession of courses is planned, joint visiting lectures are organised, there is cooperation in science and research.

Parallel implementation of the study programme in Latvian and English will continue the internationalisation course of the social sciences sector of RSU, providing the possibility for foreign students to go through a full training cycle in the political sector at RSU - from Bachelor to doctoral studies. At the same time, this programme, as part of the new interdisciplinarity discourse, will provide students and graduates with much greater freedom of choice, not to pursue their studies in the direction of political science, but to choose another related sector of social sciences, such as the Master's programme "Social Anthropology", which falls into one group of related programmes.

Great attention has been paid to the close link between the objective and the outcomes of the programme, incorporating into the content of the study courses the specific skills and knowledge that the student must acquire in order to become a competent specialist in political science and, in particular, in the international relations sector. The structure of the programme (sequence and subject matter of courses), as well as the results to be achieved during the implementation of the course, is oriented towards implementation of the promise included in the objective of the programme.

To ensure the desired dynamics of the learning process and the achievement of high-value results, the selection of applicants in the admission process is used as an additional tool. Admission criteria are defined in accordance with the prerequisites necessary to enable students to ensure a high-

quality higher education learning process, as well as to ensure as equivalent knowledge base as possible for young applicants. A specialty test is used as an additional selection criterion to get RSU-funded budget places allowing identification of best-prepared applicants and granting of an excellence scholarship. Also in the subsequent study process (3-year period), the student achievements are evaluated and ranked at the end of each semester, with the highest student being awarded an RSU-funded study place. In this way, students are motivated to maximise their performance and fight for high-value results in healthy competition.

In total, studies last 3 academic years or 6 semesters, of which students spend the first five semesters in intensive training and scientific research, but have placement in the last semester (a special offer that is not mandatory in the academic Bachelor's programme, but is implemented respecting the recommendations of students and employers). Students have placement in an industry-related state, local government or private institution practicing in a real working environment 160 (6 ECTS) hours, in accordance with the tasks provided by the placement supervisor. At the end of the placement, students submit a placement report and an assessment by the placement supervisor, which serves as the basis for receiving the final assessment of placement performance.

The duration and intensity of studies have been aligned with *Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 240 of 13 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education"*. The number of contact hours per study course is calculated according to the normative regulation, taking into account the minimum and maximum amount of contact hours, i.e. at least 50 academic contact hours are scheduled for study courses corresponding to 5 ECTS (50x45 min); at least 40 academic contact hours are scheduled for courses corresponding to 4 ECTS (40x45 min); at least 30 academic contact hours are scheduled for courses corresponding to 3 ECTS at (30x45 min); on the other hand, at least 20 academic contact hours (20x45 min) are scheduled for courses corresponding to 2 ECTS.

Enclosed:

Annex 24.1. Model Diploma and Supplement Thereto.

Annex 24.8. Study Contract Sample.

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

The study programme makes a significant contribution to the preparation of new specialists of the Latvian public administration and in particular the foreign affairs department, as evidenced by employment statistics – graduates are employed in both local government and state administrative structures (legislative and executive power), as well as in EU institutions, NATO and other international organisations. To satisfy such labour market demand, the improvement and implementation of the content of the study programme takes place in close interaction with students, employers and graduates, because only by adapting the content of the programme to the vision of these three groups we can offer useful study content and satisfy students' expectations for job opportunities after graduation of the programme.

A questionnaire for students has played an important role in improving both the study process and the form and content. If initially perceived by students with scepticism and distrust, currently around 70% of students regularly devote their time and energy to completing questionnaires (see

Annex No. 21.1.). Two types of questionnaires are organised within the framework of the programme: 1) for each study course implemented; 2) for the study programme (at the end of the study programme). In general, students are satisfied with the choice of programme and the higher education institution, as well as the study process in general. The main items of dissatisfaction for students are related to the lecture and seminar planning matters of (some want more remote form classes, others quite the opposite – that all the classes are regular), the desire for a more practical approach to the study process is also expressed, which is only more integrated into simulation and different forms of study plays, but still retains the framework of an academic study programme. According to the completed study course questionnaires, satisfaction with study courses is characterised as high in more than half of cases, the rest indicate the following things as problem items – the need to explain the assessment criteria in detail, the duration of correction of works in individual courses or the overlapping of elements of study course content (which we prevent by mapping courses).

Students have particularly highlighted as positive the competence of lecturers, the exciting presentation style, especially in seminar classes, as well as the possibility to look at processes from new viewpoints as part of the course. To facilitate the completion of student questionnaires, the lecturers of study courses remind and urge students to complete assessment questionnaires during the course and in particular at the end of the course, providing for special time at the end of the course. Students complete the study programme assessment questionnaire on the day of defending their Bachelor's thesis. The results of the questionnaires are discussed jointly in a conceptual form – as a discussion between lecturers, as well as, if necessary, individual discussions are conducted with the lecturers of courses whose course assessments have shown marked dissatisfaction and low assessment. Information regarding the results of the questionnaire is available to students electronically, as well as in the case of study courses where they are assessed only as satisfactory, students are informed regarding the planned changes. In particular, it should be noted that a new position has been created for work with student questionnaires – the manager of quality and development of the study process, whose task is to analyse study course questionnaires in the form of a coordinated framework jointly with other criteria of the quality management system and strategic objectives of the direction.

As it has already been mentioned, students' opinions are obtained in 2 stages – after each course of study (learning the opinion regarding the particular course and the lecturer) and after graduation of the study programme (learning the opinion about the whole programme and the study process). The first stage is necessary for operational monitoring of the quality of studies, while the second stage helps to assess the overall usefulness and consistency of the programme with the student's wishes and future plans.

There are also regular contacts with employers, both in the form of a survey and organising student placement, inviting employers to participate as members of the Faculty Council, as well as attracting employers (for example, employees of ministries) as lecturers to provide the study process.

At the moment, when planning solutions for the interdisciplinarity of study programmes, particular attention is paid to the recommendations provided by Baiba Braže, Diplomat and Ambassador-at-Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, regarding professional skills and abilities, which would be useful for every student of the programme and which do not belong directly to the political science and international relations segment.

However, despite the positive aspects, we are also working to identify and, as far as possible, provisionally mitigate potential risk factors. In the period from December 2019 to March 2020, at the order of RSU within a project SIA “Dynamic University” (DyU) conducted a study summarising

its results in the final report “Study of competitiveness of study programmes of Rīga Stradiņš University and RSU Red Cross Medical College and compliance with medium-term and long-term labour market and industry development trends”. Phase 1 and Phase 2 report looked at study programmes of StD “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology”. According to the results of the DyU study, in the group of StPs “Social and Behavioural Sciences”, demand for specialists is expected to decrease and this will lead to labour surplus due to limited employment opportunities. It was this conclusion that made us to take action and take the decision to transform the block of social science studies at RSU, creating one large and powerful Faculty of Social Sciences, where students will much more freedom to acquire not only sector-specific skills but also cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary skills highlighted by the study conducted – public dialogue skills (course “Communication and Presentation Skills”, as well as “Media Training”), political administrative skills (courses “Diplomatic Protocol and Business Etiquette”, “Introduction to Foreign Policy and Diplomacy”, “Introduction to the Theory of Law”, etc.), emotional intelligence (course “The Anthropology of Globalisation”, creative thinking (course “Development of Scientific Research and Methods of Research”), experimentation, rapid learning skills, interdisciplinary cooperation, as well as work with big data and technology requirement (course “Innovative Policy Analysis Using Qualitative and Quantitative Method”, and course “Impact of Digital Technologies on Democracy”). Students also have access to a wide, thematically limitless range of free elective courses. Each of the above courses, as well as many other courses have been adapted in a targeted way to improve the interdisciplinary competence of students, enabling them to enter the wider labour market segment and thus mitigating the risks of unemployment.

#### **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.**

Admission results of the study programme “International Relations – European Studies” for the last decade, as well as for the last three years show a steady flow of students with a markedly growing trend. Of course, it was significantly negatively impacted by the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, but the admission results of 2023/2024 show a gradual improvement in the situation (see Annex 16). Approximately 50 students on average study each academic year, but it should be noted that the aim would be to gradually increase the number of students, and the structural changes that took place on 6 February 2024 will help to do that – the integration of the programme into the newly established Faculty of Social Sciences, increasing the range of elective courses offered to students and, in general, making the content of the programme more interdisciplinary and relevant to the perception of modern students and labour market requirements.

During the implementation of the study programme special attention has also been paid to monitoring of student drop-offs, minimising drop-off rates. To ensure this, a drop-off monitoring and mitigation algorithm was created – timely identification of difficulties in student learning outcomes, followed by individual conversations with each student, raising awareness of the reasons for difficulties and seeking individual solutions. During individual conversations, it has been identified that the reasons for leaving studies are very different – personal/private reasons, inability to combine with paid employment, health problems, slow pace of learning, etc., however, in most cases the outcome is one – academic failure. To motivate such students to complete their studies, an individual course completion plan is developed for each student, adapting it to the student’s life

rhythm and individual learning characteristics. In this way, effective and inclusive studies can be provided to a wider range of interested persons.

At the same time, it should be noted that this student-centric approach has no impact on the quality requirements and quality standards of studies. If students are unable to meet the minimum academic performance requirements, they are expelled. The total number of students receiving failing assessments does not exceed the 2% threshold in the overall assessment in the programme. More than 40% of students get an average assessment higher than 8, while the lowest share is among successful students who receive assessments below 7 during their studies. There is a tendency for the overall level of academic performance to increase.

Mobility of students under the ERASMUS+ programme is an essential part of the study programme. Students take this opportunity very actively and are eager to go to various foreign universities during the spring semester of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of studies. The range of selected universities and countries is very wide – ranging from Estonia and nearby Scandinavian countries to France, Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands and Spain. The exchange process is administratively carefully coordinated, students are selected in a competition (individual discussions with each candidate are organised to understand the motivation of the student, as well as language proficiency – especially in countries where the study process is in a language other than English), ensuring a high level of motivation and responsibility of students, which makes the exchange process qualitative and students return to RSU with good academic results and obtain the necessary amount of ECTS. ECTS credit points obtained are compared to those acquired in the respective semester in the programme “International Relations– European Studies” and no additional courses are required for graduation from the programme. This is also ensured by careful coordination of courses selected at the foreign university with the specific RSU programme, seeking to achieve maximum consistency between the content of the programmes and also the amount of credit points required.

Foreign students are as interested and active as students in our programme. The programme “International Relations – European Studies” offers a wide range of courses available in English that foreign students are happy to attend, thus contributing to the development of an international learning environment and mutual exchange of experience. The range countries from which students arrive is also very wide – from Turkey and Kazakhstan to France, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. Detailed statistical data on student mobility can be found in Annex 8.2.

Enclosed:

Annex 16. Statistical Data on Students.

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

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

### **3.2.1. Analysis of the content of the study programme. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning**

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

The content of the Bachelor's study programme has been created by carefully adapting it to the requirements of regulatory enactments, the objective and learning outcomes of the programme. In parallel, the content of the programme is aligned with the recommendations formulated by the sector (employers) and the latest trends in scientific development. At the start of each academic year, lecturers conduct an audit of course/module content and implement the necessary innovations and improvements. However, the director of the study programme group and the study process coordinator follow up and provide the necessary support and motivation for the implementation of this process. An additional incentive is also the expected assessment by students, which requires lecturers to mobilise to update the course concerned.

The content of the Bachelor's study programme is created based on the complementary chain principle, starting from the so-called basic or introductory courses in the first year of studies and moving towards more specialised and high-level courses in the following academic years. This whole process ends with the drafting of a Bachelor's thesis in the sixth semester, which is a certification of the student's ability to summarise and demonstrate all the knowledge gained during the previous five semesters.

In the first semester students are offered the following course package – Introduction to Studies and Specialty (the course is implemented simultaneously for all Faculty of Social Science students, designed as an introductory module for the acquisition of general basic knowledge related to the study process), Introduction to History and Politics of Latvia, Introduction to International Relations, Political History of Europe, Introduction to Foreign Policy and Diplomacy, Strategic Communication – from Vision to Tactics (free elective part course that students may substitute with any other elective course), English Language in Social Sciences, as well as two courses that must be included in the programme in accordance with the national legal framework – Civil Defence and Environmental Protection, as well as Latvian Language for Foreign Students.

Following the formation of this basic knowledge on the study process, political history and political science, as well as international relations, the purpose of the next study semester is to give students an idea of scientific research and guide them through the development stages of their first research, which ends with a simulation of a scientific conference in the course Development of Scientific Research and Methods of Research. The conference abstracts and presentations prepared during this course also serve as the final thesis or *Study Paper* in the first year of studies. In parallel, students are familiarised with basic political theories as an integral part of scientific research. Today's political reality is reflected in the course International Safety: Theories, Concepts and Issues, as well as the course Introduction to European Integration, while the study course Artificial Intelligence in the Social Sciences is relevant to the development of digital literacy. Students also continue to study Academic English in the Social Sciences and add another free elective course to their course load.

The third semester is a new step on the way to academic knowledge leading to courses of the next level of detail – Comparative Politics of European States, International Politics: Basic Theories and Conceptions, Foreign Policy Analysis, Foreign Policy of the European Union, Political and

International Economics, Political Marketing, German Language / French Language, Quantitative And Qualitative Tools for Innovative Policy Analysis. The range of Part B (restricted elective) courses has been expanded to include the interdisciplinary courses Design Thinking and Innovation and Feminism in Art and Culture, giving students more opportunities to choose their area of specialisation.

In the fourth semester (when part of the students go for the ERASMUS+ exchange programme), the emphasis is on learning the specifics of certain institutions, regions or countries – People’s Republic of China: Politics and Strategic Communication, International Relations of the Middle East, Institutions and Foreign Policy of the United States of America, International Institutions, Security and Defence Policy of the Baltic States, German Language / French Language. A range of interdisciplinary courses have also been added - Internal Communication, Stylistics and Editing, Drafting for Social Media, Digital Literacy. This range of courses gives students the opportunity to complete a spectrum of knowledge and skills most relevant to their future profession. As in other semesters, a free elective or Part C course is also available. At the end of the second year, students draft and defend their first scientific research performed independently (in consultation with the paper supervisor) – a course paper.

The fifth semester is the final semester of the active study process, which begins with the presentation of another major country in the course Russia in World Politics, as well as the course New Regions of Power in Global Politics, and then courses that help generalise, systematise and analyse previously acquired knowledge, as well as draw conclusions and improve the practical skills of a student as a professional before entering the labour market are offered. The following courses help to develop these competences: The Anthropology of Globalisation, Decision-Making in Foreign Policy, Diplomatic Protocol and Business Etiquette, Impact of Digital Technologies on Democracy, Media Training (free elective). Courses such as Change Management, Special Event Production, Project Management, Creativity and Innovation, Content Production for Multimedia Platforms, International Branding and Management, Web Design for Content Creators have also been added to the range of courses to develop the skills required by the labour market. In this way, the student has the opportunity to complement his/her theoretical knowledge in the field (political science) with practical skills necessary to meet the demands of the labour market.

In the last semester, students go for a four-week placement to a state, local government or private institution engaged in the establishment of political or international communication. Details of the placement can be found in section 3.2.4 of this document. At the end of the sixth semester, a Bachelor’s thesis on a topic of interest to the student and important in the political science sector is drafted and defended. To promote students’ creativity, the choice of the topic for a Bachelor’s thesis is not strictly regulated, the main prerequisite for acceptance of the topic is its inclusion into or clear interdisciplinary links with the political science sector. The Bachelor’s thesis is drafted under the supervision of a Bachelor’s thesis supervisor, but defended in front of the Bachelor’s Thesis Defence Commission, presenting the performance, listening to the reviewer’s assessment, as well as answering questions from the Commission and the reviewer. Particular care is taken to ensure that only papers that meet the requirements of the Bachelor’s thesis by quality are defended, so failure in the process of defence occurs in very rare exceptional situations.

Every semester, having listened to and successfully completed the study courses offered within the framework of the programme, students acquire not less than 30 ECTS, receiving 150 ECTS for the study course in total, receiving 6 ECTS for placement, and 24 ECTS for the drafting and defence of the Bachelor’s thesis, which together constitute the total number of credit points corresponding to the mastering of the Bachelor’s programme – 180 ECTS.

Greater involvement of students in scientific research should be mentioned as an essential

complement to the study process and a prerequisite for quality growth, first by improving the study course “Development of Scientific Research and Methods of Research”, in which the student is given basic knowledge in research, leading to participation in a conference simulation. Then comes the study course “Quantitative And Qualitative Tools for Innovative Policy Analysis”, where Toms Rātfelders, researcher of the U.S. University of Delaware, shares the latest and most up-to-date research technologies. In parallel, students are motivated to participate in the annual *RSU International Student Conference*, as well as are involved in academic, national and international scientific research, for example, by drafting a Bachelor’s thesis using the database obtained during a research project. Students are also motivated to apply for various research project competitions announced by state institutions and are supported in doing this. Currently, the newly established Science Centre of the Faculty of Social Sciences is also starting to coordinate the scientific activity of students centrally.

With the establishment of the new Faculty of Social Sciences, much more emphasis is being placed on the acquisition of interdisciplinary skills that are essential for the labour market, making students not only academically educated specialists, but also providing the necessary skills in working with modern technologies, as well as the skills to ensure an efficient work process. Interdisciplinary courses are taught in collaboration with students from other programme groups within the faculty and a team of lecturers.

Enclosed:

Annex 17.1. Compliance of the Study Programme with the National Educational Standard.

Annex 18.1. Mapping of the Study Courses for the Achievement of Learning Outcomes of the Study Programme.

Annex 19. Planning of the Study Programme (For Each Type and Form of the Implementation of the Study Programme).

Annex 20.1. Description of Study Courses.

**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.**

The main forms of studies in the study programme are lectures and practical classes or seminars, where, according to the objectives of the study programme and the plan for the implementation of the relevant course, educational material is outlined, discussions between students and lecturers are held, as well as students perform precisely defined amount of independent work. When choosing the methods for the implementation of study courses and student assessment methods, the first objective is to promote the achievement of the objectives of each course and the entire study programme, and the second is to take into account the principles of student-centric teaching and learning as a transversal accent.

The programme uses the following study methods: presentation of theoretical material in interactive presentation format, specification of the theoretical knowledge acquired in seminars, problem situation analysis, simulations, tests and development of individual projects.

Special attention is paid to students' independent work - the collection and analysis of information included in the development of individual research papers and summaries or essays. Lecturers of study courses act as coordinators, consultants and experts in the process of independent work of students, in accordance with the given work task and the needs of the particular student.

The aim of the study methods used is to improve students' ability to critically analyse political situations using theoretical knowledge, logically assessing the development of these situations in the future. The lecturer's task is to assist students with organising their independent work and provide tutorials and advice when necessary.

Regular tutorials with the lecturer are provided to students within the scope of each study course. To facilitate the availability of communication between lecturers and students, tutorials can be in a regular and remote form, in accordance with the model communication preferred by each student.

A detailed course description or "contract" between the lecturer and the student is developed for each study course, in which the student, upon commencing the course acquisition, may become acquainted with all the requirements of the lecturer, tasks to be performed, planning, etc., from the first to the last day of the course implementation. The teacher may not change the conditions laid down in the course description unless he/she agrees on this with all students. The course description provides information on the subjects of lectures and classes, course requirements, required readings, assessment criteria, etc. or all information describing course progress and outcomes.

The RSU Study Process Development Plan for Social Sciences and Health Studies, approved at the Senate meeting on 13 February and 12 March 2024, stipulates that, starting with the 2024 intake, study plans should reflect ECTS credits. The transition to the ECTS credit system in each study programme is the responsibility of the programme directors. According to Article 1(8) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (available in [Latvian](#), partially translated into [English](#)), one credit point corresponds to 25-30 hours of study work. Each lecturer assesses the amount of work within the course of study within the limits of the Law on Higher Education. For further information, see the recommendations in the study direction annexes (Annex 30 - available in Latvian only).

The student assessment process as a result of the study course takes place in accordance with the requirements specified by the particular lecturer and in conformity with the topic to be studied in the study course and the number of ECTS. The final assessment of students' knowledge and skills is expressed in a ten-point system - objective, accurate and understandable to the student. The lecturer also has the right to give intermediate assessments as pass/fail, informing students precisely about the assessment methodology.

When assessing written and practical works, students are always given feedback on the performance in written or oral form. Any written works (including visual presentations) should be

submitted by students to the e-learning system where they are assessed and checked for signs of plagiarism.

The overall assessment of the study course most often includes several parameters – participation of the student in lectures, involvement and quality of answers in seminars, as well as in practical classes, quality of drafting of the report, quality of essays and other written works (e.g. mini tests), examination result. However, the teacher specifies the exact assessment system to be used in each particular study course in the particular course description and the assessment criteria are presented to students at the beginning of each module. This type of system excludes the possibility for a student to obtain a successful assessment by learning only for an examination and therefore stimulates them to study systematically, throughout the module, making the knowledge acquired more lasting and durable.

The entry of artificial intelligence tools and resources is a new challenge and at the same time an opportunity in the study process. This has motivated to create new study courses and include them in the study plan to ensure the mastering of artificial intelligence and various digital technology tools. RSU has also developed and is already actively using in practice guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence in the higher education study and research process.

The development and implementation of the programme “International Relations – European Studies” respect high academic requirements and quality standards to prepare graduates who are able to successfully function in the international environment and achieve their learning outcomes. The cooperation of the RSU Faculty of Social Sciences with prestigious universities such as the University at Buffalo and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as well as emphasising interdisciplinary approaches in the study process and research, contributes to the competitiveness and relevance of the programme.

**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).**

Although placement is not a compulsory part of the academic programme, respecting the wishes of students and the recommendations of employers, it has been successfully included in the content of the programme for a long time. The course of placement is regulated by placement regulations, which stipulates that students of the Bachelor’s programme go on placement in the spring semester of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. The study placement lasts 160 working hours and closes with a test (6 ECTS).

The purpose of study placement is directly related to StP tasks and learning outcomes. Placement helps to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the practical application of the theoretical knowledge about political science and international relations. Placement assignments are also defined to achieve this objective – conformity of the selection of study placement sites with the study sector, the possibility to perform activities that are substantively meaningful and complementary to the student’s professional skills during placement, as well as to become

acquainted with the direction and specifics of the activities of the particular institution.

Study placement sites are organised and distribution among placement sites by the head of the study programme, upon agreement with the head of the relevant institution or organisation. At the same time, if a student wishes to go to a specific placement site, with which he/she agrees on cooperation, the head of the programme also accepts such solution, if the placement site corresponds to the study sector. Most often students go to various public administration institutions – the parliament, ministries, political parties, non-governmental organisations, lobby organisations, local governments, etc.

Rīga Stradiņš University enters into agreements with the relevant provider of the placement site – the body, institution or company from which a person, placement supervisor, is appointed who assumes responsibility for coordination of the course of the particular student's placement. Upon completion of study placement, students are required to submit a placement report and a Reference on student's placement by the body, company or organisation. The placement report is accepted and assessed by the head of the study programme. If a student did not have a study placement or failed in his/her work during the placement, then he/she shall not be allowed to draft a Bachelor's thesis. Students may be given the opportunity to repeat their study placement in parallel with their studies next semester.

Considering that in the future the study programme is planned to be implemented also in English and to attract foreign students, opportunities have been identified where students could go for internships if they have no knowledge of Latvian. Within the framework of the Bachelor's study programme "International Relations-European Studies" there are several ways to provide internships for foreign students who do not speak the national language, for example:

1. international organisations and companies operating in Latvia;
2. foreign embassies and consulates: by working in embassies and consulates, students have the opportunity to use and improve their English language skills;
3. international non-governmental organisations (NGOs): many NGOs are active in Latvia and their working language is English;
4. European Union institutions and projects: there are a number of EU-funded projects in Latvia where the working language of the staff is English;
5. online internships: virtual internships and remote working opportunities in international organisations allow students to do their internships in English, regardless of their location.

Through these opportunities, students of the BA International Relations-European Studies programme can find internships where the working language is English, thus gaining valuable practical experience.

The organisation of the internship is closely linked to the outcomes of the study programme "International Relations - European Studies", focusing on promoting the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, in line with the requirements of employers in the field. The primary focus is on the potential for the placement to provide additional knowledge in the field of politics or international relations. A further important aspect is the emphasis on the acquisition of quality practical skills through integration into real day-to-day work in international, national or regional political institutions or the diplomatic service; thirdly, the need to acquire skills in the use of IT technologies and digital content such as data analysis software, social media management or digital communication strategies, while emphasising the responsible and safe use of information. It is essential that students are prepared for today's digital age, where information technologies are integrated into all stages of policy-making and implementation, and are able to use these technologies in compliance with data protection and privacy guidelines.

Students tend to be very interested in having placement as it is seen as a real opportunity to have direct contact with a potential employer and have informal contacts in the labour market sector of interest. Comments of placement providers on actual preparedness of students are another source of information for improving study content, aligning it with labour market requirements.

Enclosed:

Annex 9. Description of the Organisation of Student Placement.

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

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

The topics of Bachelor's theses written in the programme "International Relations – European Studies" for the period 2013-2023 are summarised for the purposes of the report. This report provides an overview of the breadth of academic interest and the lines of research chosen by students in their final papers. The range of topics includes the role of the UN in conflict prevention, the formation of a European identity, the resolution of ethnic conflicts, the influence of national identity on foreign policy, as well as the analysis of regional dynamics in conflict contexts such as Jordan's role in the Syrian conflict and many other aspects of international relations.

The topics of Bachelor's theses selected over the period analysed reflect students' ability to respond to current global and regional challenges. For example, research into UN preventive diplomacy in conflict prevention and analysis of Jordan's role in the Syrian conflict demonstrate students' interest and ability to analyse complex aspects of international relations. Such topics are extremely important given the current international instability and the existence of highly violent conflicts in various regions of the world.

Studying the impact of ethnic conflict resolution and national identity on foreign policy reveals students' interest in cultural and identity issues, which are essential not only in academic context but also in practical action in shaping and implementing foreign policy and international relations. This type of research makes a significant contribution to understanding how cultural and identity aspects affect national relations and diplomacy.

On the other hand, an analysis of the impact of student exchange programmes, studying their links with the formation of a European identity, reflects students' interest in the social and cultural processes that shape the sense of belonging of individuals in the European context. This type of research is topical in the labour market, especially in European institutions, non-governmental organisations and international organisations dealing with cultural and identity issues.

The topics selected for the development of research papers conform to the objectives of the study programme and the learning outcomes, as well as the requirements of the academic standard. The diversity of topics and their relevance to topical global and regional challenges demonstrate

students' ability to analyse complex issues and draw reasoned conclusions. These skills are extremely valuable in the labour market, especially in international organisations, public administration, diplomatic service and the academic sector. It can thus be concluded that graduates are prepared for professional challenges in the international environment as a result of the Bachelor's study programme "International Relations – European Studies".

This conclusion is also supported by the analysis of the assessments obtained. During the period considered, the research carried out by students was mainly assessed very well (8 points). Furthermore, the assessments of papers have a tendency to increase over the decade, if initially the prevailing assessment was very good and alongside good (7 points) to a slightly smaller extent, then excellent (9 points) was convincingly alongside very good (8 points) in the last seven years. Similarly, the share of assessment with distinction (10 points) has increased over the last 3 years. 8-10% of students have received this assessment in recent years. This shows an increase in the level of motivation and interest of students, which also has a positive impact and increases the overall quality of the study process and also makes a contribution for other students.

Enclosed:

Annex 22. Topics and assessments of students' graduation papers.

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

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

The Bachelor's study programme "International Relations – European Studies" of the Faculty of Social Sciences of RSU has been created to provide students with comprehensive education in the field of political science and its sub-specialty – international relations. This programme offers students the opportunity to acquire extensive theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for successful professional activities at both national and global level. The study environment – both premises and material and technical provisions are essential both for the quality of the study process and for the mental well-being of students. This aspect has also been highlighted as important in the satisfaction assessment questionnaires of students of the programme, where, in addition to the opinion on the work of the lecturer and the content of the study course, there is also an opinion on classrooms – environment and technical provisions. It should be noted that over the last decade the study environment and material and technical provisions have improved significantly, but the level of student requirements is also growing.

A student-centred approach and a modern study environment is a setting that permeates the decisions made and working methods used by each lecturer of the programme, and in particular the director of the study programme, as well as support staff. Both the content and form of studies are chosen by balancing the priority of the quality of education with the opportunities of students. Each student group is approached individually, if necessary, anonymous questionnaires are conducted, as well as students are encouraged to report immediately if they experience any

difficulties both in terms of the content and form of the study process, such as being unhappy with classrooms, too cold/hot, having problems with the IT system or having any other problems. Individual approach and individual solutions have been identified as the most effective tool for reducing student drop-offs and motivating.

Studies are implemented both in a regular way and using remote communication forms – Zoom, Panopto, the MyRSU student portal, etc. At least 50% of classes take place in a regular way, the rest (respecting students' wishes) remotely. If necessary, not only study courses, but also tutorials and the process of developing Bachelor's thesis, as well as pre-defence and defence take place online, for example, when a student is in long-term justified absence (health problems, being out the country). Course lecturers have helped a student who was in hospital because of health problems but was keen to continue his studies even for several months using this form. Such an approach is possible because the situation created by Covid-19 has served as a catalyst for significant improvements in the digital literacy of lecturers and students by developing skills to use a variety of digital tools and programmes. The overall ability of RSU to work online (e.g., MyRSU student portal, the E-learning platform or the availability of library resources) is also considered excellent.

*Characteristics of the study base:* RSU provides a state-of-the-art study environment suitable for the implementation and mastering of theoretical materials – the development of auditoriums of different sizes and practical skills. The university has free access to comfortable lecture rooms and seminar rooms equipped with modern audiovisual technologies to provide a high-quality study process, as well as classes in hybrid mode or remote form (if the lecturer is abroad). In addition, all university buildings have access to group working spaces and individual study places where students can work on their academic research. Premises can be booked in the electronic system Booker, where each lecturer and study process planners can find the most suitable room for their needs. At students' request, the study process coordinator also makes room reservations for students' needs.

*Description of the information base:* The RSU Library provides access to a wide range of academic resources, including specialised databases, electronic journals and books that correspond to the specifics of the programme "International Relations – European Studies". E-journal databases: ProQuest platform Proquest Central databases – *Political Science Database, Social Science Database, Sociology Database*; EBSCO platform *Sociology Source Ultimate* database. Ebook databases: *Ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO)* and *Ebook Central (Proquest)*, which contain subscription ebooks and ebooks purchased specifically for the programme. The information provision for English language students is equivalent to that for Latvian language students. Latvian students have very few additional books in Latvian.

Students also have access to digital resources that provide access to the latest research and publications in the sector. 1<sup>st</sup> year students are trained on the possibilities provided by the library, as well as on the services and resources available. Library staff both provide advice on site and remotely and are ready to assist in the process of searching for the necessary information.

*Description of the material and technical base:* the university offers high-quality IT infrastructure that includes computer classes and wireless internet connectivity across the university and adjacent territories. Special equipment and software (e.g., for content analysis or statistical data processing) necessary for modern research activities and various practical classes as well as simulations are also available. Open access computers, printers and copiers are available on university premises, all communication with higher education institutions takes place via MyRSU portal, and written work is submitted to E-learning. The daily routine of lecturers and administrative staff has transformed from paper format to the RSU electronic environment.

*Description of the financial base:* the study programme “International Relations – European Studies” is a paid study programme financed from students’ own resources. The tuition fee is EUR 2530/year. Each year, 2 students can get an excellence scholarship – 100% tuition fee discount (the study place is financed from RSU funds). Apart from tuition fees, the faculty budget is also made up of various international projects and grants. This allows for a high-quality study process and promotes further development of the programme. Financial resources are invested in both developing academic staff and improving study and research infrastructure.

Enclosed:

Annex 23.1. Assessment of the informative and methodological provision regarding library resources for the implementation of the study direction “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” in accordance with the requirements of the guidelines.

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

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

The duration of the studies is 3 years. In the first academic year, 49 students are planned to be enrolled in the Latvian language flow, with 4 drop-outs in the second academic year and no drop-outs in the third academic year. This number of students is optimal to ensure the quality of the study process and to enable the study programme to cover the costs of implementation as well as development. The English language flow, on the other hand, is planned to enrol 45 students in the first academic year, with a drop-out of 2 students in the second academic year and no drop-out in the third academic year. The minimum number of students enrolled would be 27 for the Latvian language stream and 24 for the English language flow.

The funding is used for staff remuneration, attraction of visiting assistant professors, taxes, maintenance of IT infrastructure, purchase of equipment and devices, and study visit costs. In addition to the direct costs of implementation of lectures and classes, the StP must cover infrastructure maintenance costs (facilities, IT solutions) and other RSU common resources used in the StP (Student Services, Library, organisation of the study process, grant for the Student Union and other support and administrative functions).

StP was so far implemented by the Department of Political Science of the RSU Faculty of European Studies, the RSU Department of International Business and Economics, Department of Biology and Microbiology of RSU Faculty of Medicine and the Language Centre. After 6 February 2024, according

to the new RSU structural scheme, it will further be implemented by the Faculty of Social Sciences involving other departments, if necessary, in accordance with study course plans.

As a result of the structural consolidation process of RSU, an improvement in efficiency in the context of cost items is expected, which will ensure a balance of revenue and expenditure over the long term.

Table 2. **Costs of the study programme in the Latvian flow**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Result</b>
Average income per student, EUR	2530
Average cost per student, EUR	2528
Academic staff, %	72
Department resources, %	1
Scholarships, %	0
Other direct expenditure, %	4
Fixed costs, %	3
Eligible, incl. development costs, %	20

Table 3. **Costs of the study programme in the English flow**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Result</b>
Average income per student, EUR	3000
Average cost per student, EUR	1940
Academic staff, %	80
Department resources, %	1
Scholarships, %	0
Other direct expenditure, %	3
Fixed costs, %	2
Eligible, incl. development costs, %	14

### **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 academic staff involved in the implementation of the Bachelor's study programme "International Relations - European Studies" is highly qualified, including professors, associate professors, assistant professors and lecturers with specialisation in political science, law, philology and medicine. 39 lecturers in total are currently involved in the implementation of the programme. Most of the teaching staff have obtained a doctoral degree or are doctoral candidates to ensure they meet the highest academic standards and regulatory requirements.

The majority of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme have B2-C2 level English language skills (34 lecturers). Two out of five lecturers whose English level is lower than B2 are foreign language lecturers (German and French). Lecturers whose English proficiency level is lower than B2 continue to improve their knowledge in English language courses offered by RSU for lecturers or privately. In order to work with international students, lecturers must reach B2 level by passing a language proficiency test at RSU or by presenting proof of language proficiency.

This versatile professional expertise enables the programme to provide students with a complex understanding of political science and international relations, as well as the inclusion of various interdisciplinary issues on the sectoral agenda, which are essential and helpful in achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of the programme.

Combining the scientific and practical experience of lecturers with innovative information technology solutions provides an opportunity for students to acquire a wide range of qualitative academic knowledge in current political science and international relations matters, as well as to develop the skills to independently perform scientific analysis in conformity with the outcomes of the study programme.

Enclosed:

Annex 24.7. Analysis of the Composition of the Teaching Staff.

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

The stability of teaching staff is an essential factor in ensuring a high quality study process and contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the study programme "International Relations - European Studies". Changes in teaching staff have been minimal in this programme demonstrating stability and the interest of teaching staff in providing quality education for students.

The main identified reasons for change of lecturers were:

- professional development opportunities for lecturers and inability to combine the new position partly or fully with academic work – some lecturers have chosen to switch to other professional positions or join a research segment that provides an opportunity for professional development (Valters Ščerbinskis, Veiko Spolītis, Jānis Tomelis, Māris Cepurītis, Andris Sprūds).
- taking academic leave – teaching staff takes academic leaves to do research work, which is later integrated into the study process, thus enriching study content with the latest research and insights (Mārtiņš Vargulis, Māris Andžāns).
- retirement: some of the teaching staff reached the end of their careers and significantly reduced their workload or took a well-deserved rest (prof. Ilga Krietuse, doc. Daina Bleiere, prof. Tatjana Muravska), in such cases the management of the programme has created the opportunity to attract new teaching staff to ensure continuity in the study process (Elizabete Elīa Vizgunova-Vikmane, Aleksandra Palkova, Sintija Broka, Toms Rātfelders).

Attracting new teaching staff (for example, Toms Rātfelders, researcher of the U.S. University of Delaware, for example, shares the latest and most advanced research technologies) has brought new knowledge and research interest that has been successfully integrated into study courses, which in turn has contributed to keeping the study programme up-to-date and consistent with recent trends. This helps to maintain the competitiveness and attractiveness of the programme for potential students.

Although there are changes in teaching staff, the programme is designed to ensure continuity of the study process – students continue to receive high quality education despite changes in personnel.

In turn, the selection of new teaching staff takes place first by observing the activities of these individuals in various other institutes, such as the Institute of International Affairs or other higher education institutions. Similarly, young specialists are often former RSU graduates who graduated from political science programmes some time ago, gained experience in the labour market and then are ready to return to RSU as lecturers in a new quality. High academic qualifications, professional experience in the sector and the desire (zeal) to work with students and share their knowledge are the criteria for selecting new teaching staff.

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

**3.4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project**

**managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).**

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

Cooperation between teaching staff is crucial for ensuring a high quality study process and research work in the implementation of the programme “International Relations – European Studies”. To promote effective cooperation, we have put in place a number of mechanisms:

- Regular meetings of teaching staff: they facilitate the exchange of information on study methods, content of study courses and topics of interest in international relations and European studies.
- Joint research projects: we encourage the participation of teaching staff in joint research projects that help improve the content of study courses and offer students the opportunity to participate in current research.
- Professional development programmes for teaching staff: The RSU Centre for Educational Growth organises regular training and seminars for teaching staff on the latest study methods and an interdisciplinary approach to promote cooperation between specialists from different sectors.

To ensure the interconnection of study courses and modules, lecturers work in close cooperation in planning the content of courses and study materials. For example, the course “Quantitative and Qualitative Tools for Innovative Policy Analysis” is developed in close cooperation with lecturers of the course “Development of Scientific Research and Methods of Research”.

At the time of submission of the self-assessment report, the ratio of the number of students and the teaching staff within the programme is 4:1. This ratio allows for a high level of study quality, individual access to each student and promotes effective cooperation and communication between teaching staff and students.

# Annexes

III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme	24.1_Anx_Diploma_Diploma_Supplement_intl_Relations_European_Stud.pdf	24.1_piel_Diploms_diploma_pielikums_Eiropas_stud.pdf
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period	16_Anx_Stat_data_stud_European_studies_ENG.pdf	16_pielik_B_St.attiecibas-Eir.studijas_statistika_lv.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	17.1_Anx_compliance_nat_educ_stand_eng.pdf	17.1_pielik_Atblistiba_valsts_izglitiba_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	18.1_Anx_ST_course_outcome_mapping.pdf	18.1_pielik_ST_kursu_karteji_st_rezultatu_sasn.pdf
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	19_Anx_SIP_plan_ABSP_intl_Relations_European_Stud.pdf	19_pielik_SIP_planojums_ABSP_starpt_att_Eiropas_stud.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	20.1_course_descriptions_European_Stud.pdf	20.1_pielik_kursu_apraksti_Eiropas_stud.pdf
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)	09_Anx_Org_of_Placement.pdf	09_pielik_prakses_organizacija.pdf
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)	24.7.1_Anx_Cert_compliance_acad_prog.pdf	24.7.1_pielik_Apliecinajums_par_akademiska_bakalaura (pirma cikla) studiju programmas "Starptautiskās attiecības - Eiropas studijas" akadēmiskā personāla atbilstību Augstskolu likuma prasībām.edoc

# International System Transformation Studies (45312)

Study field	<i>Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>International System Transformation Studies</i>
Education classification code	<i>45312</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic master study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Lelde</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Metla-Rozentāle</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>lelde.rozentale@rsu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>mg.oec.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>Train international relations and diplomacy specialists specialising in Russia and related Eurasian matters.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Encourage students in broadening their knowledge of classical and up to date theories, methodologies and techniques of international relations.</i></li> <li><i>2. Encourage students in extending their knowledge of current issues in international relations in general, as well as those in Russia, Eastern European countries, Caucasus countries and Central Asian countries.</i></li> <li><i>3. Improve students' intercultural skills through the development of foreign language skills and constant interaction with people and processes of other cultures.</i></li> <li><i>4. Foster students' individual work skills with an emphasis on analytical skills, critical thinking, time management, self-learning and independent decision-making.</i></li> <li><i>5. Foster students' collaborative skills, with an emphasis on teamwork and working with cooperation partners.</i></li> <li><i>6. Foster students' interdisciplinary competences by integrating knowledge from different disciplines, in particular from history, economics, sociology and law.</i></li> <li><i>7. Promote students' creativity or the ability to seek new and alternative strategic and tactical solutions.</i></li> <li><i>8. Improve students' skills in using information technologies, learning by doing throughout the study process.</i></li> </ol>

Results of the study programme	<p><i>Knowledge:</i></p> <p>1. Has knowledge of the most important issues in international relations in the current and historical context.</p> <p>2. Understands the dynamics of domestic and foreign policy in Eastern European, South Caucasus and Central Asian countries, including interactions with Russia and other regional and global power centres.</p> <p><i>Skills:</i></p> <p>3. Able to carry out a large amount of analytical work independently by critically selecting and evaluating in order to arrive at an objective and neutral solution.</p> <p>4. Interpret and forecast internal processes in Russia and Russia's foreign policy, as well as Russia's interaction with other power centres in bilateral and multilateral cooperation formats.</p> <p>5. Knowledge of foreign languages related to the region of specialisation - Latvian and Russian, which will help to further analyse Russia and Eastern European countries, South Caucasus countries, Central Asian countries, in addition providing an immediate mechanism for understanding sources in their original language.</p> <p>6. Able to do a lot of individual work and make quality decisions under stress, when a number of tasks of varying importance and complexity have to be completed simultaneously. Skills acquired include work planning, task prioritisation and stress resilience skills.</p> <p><i>Competence:</i></p> <p>7. Model future scenarios and the development of empirical phenomena through individual research and scientific work, based on in-depth knowledge of the theoretical and methodological aspects of international relations and an understanding of empirical phenomena in the broader context of regularities and theoretical assumptions.</p> <p>8. Integrate methods and knowledge from different disciplines to develop new solutions, such as information technology solutions, in order to acquire new knowledge and solutions in other sectors.</p> <p>9. Develop innovative solutions for professional work in academic environment and public administration, non-governmental sector and the business environment.</p>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>Defence of Master's thesis</i>

## Study programme forms

### Full time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	120

Admission requirements (in English)	<i>First cycle higher education in the following social sciences or humanities: political science, economics and business, sociology and social work, law, social and economic geography, media and communication, military science, history and philosophy, ethics and religion</i> Entrance examination
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master's degree of Social Sciences in Political Science and International Relations.</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

### Full time studies - 2 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>First cycle higher education in the following social sciences or humanities: political science, economics and business, sociology and social work, law, social and economic geography, media and communication, military science, history and philosophy, ethics and religion</i> Entrance examination For studies in English, a minimum B2 level of proficiency in English is required
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master's degree of Social Sciences in Political Science and International Relations</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

### Part time studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>First cycle higher education in the following social sciences or humanities: political science, economics and business, sociology and social work, law, social and economic geography, media and communication, military science, history and philosophy, ethics and religion</i> Entrance examination

Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master's degree of Social Sciences in Political Science and International Relations</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

### Part time studies - 2 years, 6 months - english

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>2</i>
Duration in month	<i>6</i>
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>120</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>First cycle higher education in the following social sciences or humanities: political science, economics and business, sociology and social work, law, social and economic geography, media and communication, military science, history and philosophy, ethics and religion Entrance examination For studies in English, a minimum B2 level of proficiency in English is required</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master's degree of Social Sciences in Political Science and International Relations</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

## 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.**

Table 1. Changes in the StP Parameters

No.	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period	Planned changes within the assessment procedure
1.	Study direction	—	—
2.	Title of the StP	—	The title of the study programme was changed from “Russia and Eurasia Studies” to “International System Transformation Studies”, because it covers all the content of the programme.
3.	Code according to the Latvian Education Classification	—	—
4.	Head of the StP	Lelde Metla-Rozentāle	—
5.	Academic degree of the head of the StP	PhD cand.	—
6.	Objective of the StP	The objective of the StP has been updated by expanding the content base of the studies emphasising challenges, risks and opportunities of not only Russia, but also the wider challenging international system.	—

<b>No.</b>	<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period</b>	<b>Planned changes within the assessment procedure</b>
7.	Tasks of the StP	Without significant changes, supplementing the tasks only, which aims to foster students' knowledge of current issues in Russia, Eastern European countries, Caucasus countries and Central Asian countries with examples and discussions from other regions of the world. Emphasising and understanding regional peculiarities, dynamic development trends and possibilities.	—

No.	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period	Planned changes within the assessment procedure
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	<p>The study results have been specified in accordance with the study objective, tasks and descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to the 7<sup>th</sup> level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (which corresponds to the European Qualifications Framework) (hereinafter – LQF/EQF), as well as the AIKA guidelines on the number of outcomes. Thus, the competences, knowledge and skills learned in individual courses in a logical sequence contribute to the achievement of the defined study results.</p> <p>Mapping has allowed the programme management to better review the interaction between the competences, knowledge and skills to be acquired in individual courses and the compliance of the study programme outcomes with the objectives and tasks.</p>	—
9.	Final examination upon the completion of the StP	—	—
10.	Type and form of studies	—	Form of studies adjusted
11.	Duration of implementation	—	—

<b>No.</b>	<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period</b>	<b>Planned changes within the assessment procedure</b>
12.	Language of implementation	—	—
13.	Volume of the StP (ECTS)	Following the transition to ECTS, the CP mastered are expressed in ECTS, so the total volume of the study programme is 120 ECTS.	—
14.	Admission requirements	—	—
15.	Degree to be awarded	—	Adjusted to align with the StP objective, tasks and learning outcomes.
16.	Qualification to be awarded	—	—
17.	Place of implementation	—	—

Table 1 clearly shows that the changes in the programme are mainly related to the title and therefore to the implementation of a wider framework content. The programme title was adjusted for the significant geopolitical changes that made the existing title “Russia and Eurasia studies” politically and ethically ambiguous. After discussions with representatives of the sector, professors and students, as well as after a careful evaluation of the content of the programme, it was decided to adjust the programme title to “International System Transformation Studies”. The international system in political science means a network of countries, organisations and individuals interacting on a global scale. It is a framework of international relations that defines who interacts with, how they interact, and what the rules of inclusion and interaction are. The concept of an international system describes the overall development of international relations – systematically offers a way of interacting with different actors and identifies and analyses the relationship between the interactions. On the other hand, the analysis of transformation of an international system involves, first, the identification of a transformation of the system – what is transformation, the areas of the system it affects and, second, what, how much change is necessary to consider the change as transformation. The theoretical discussion covers the following areas: the nature and type of political change; the mechanisms and dynamics of changes; endogenous processes, including interdependence, dependency, co-dependency and integration of international actors; exogenous processes such as the emergence of new actors in the international system and technological development of weapons; the identification of historical breakpoints where changes in the structure of the system have coincided with significant changes in the rules of statehood and political order.

The programme will emphasise the following groups of matters: (1) the history of international relations and the transformation of systems, focusing on key transformations and transformation periods of the system, such as the creation of the Westphalian system, the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new global actors; (2) analysis of the global governance structure: how global governance structures and international organisations (such as the UN, NATO, EU) contribute to or hinder the transformation of international systems; (3) socio-economic and technological factors – how global economic trends, technological development and digital diplomacy affect the dynamics of international systems and create new forms of interaction; (4) conflict and peace-building – the causes, dynamics and impact of conflicts on the international system, as well as mechanisms for peace-building and conflict resolution; (5) the international legal system – the role of law and its impact on the transformation of international systems, including matters of sovereignty, human rights and the legal framework for international conflicts; (6) exploring regional dynamics and integration processes by identifying how regional organisations and integration processes (such as ASEAN, African Union, LATAM) affect the transformation of the international system; (7) developing future scenarios and policy making – developing practical skills in anticipating future trends and developing policy-making strategies in response to the challenges and opportunities of the international system.

Taking into account the recommendations of accreditation experts, as well as the expectations of students, the specificities of Russia and Eurasia are reflected in the broader dimension of regional comparisons, while maintaining the most important objective: to understand, analyse and look at the specificities of the transformation (transition) region in a wider discourse of international relations. Within the framework of the change procedure, the degree to be obtained has also been updated – the degree of a Master of Social Sciences in Political Science has been changed from the degree of a Master of Social Sciences in Political Science and International Relations to ensure that the degree to be obtained matches the objective, tasks and learning outcomes of the StP.

Changes in StP management are justified by internal consolidation of RSU and changes in the number of faculties and their management structure.

Within the assessment procedure, it is also planned to adjust the forms of implementation of StP, excluding the form of distance learning from the offer. StP was licensed during the Covid pandemic and, based on this, the implementation of distance learning studies was also planned. However, after evaluating the future possibilities, it was decided that it will not be relevant to implement the programme in distance learning, therefore this possibility is removed from the parameters of the study programme.

Due to the centralised switch from national to international (ECTS) credit system, the ECTS amount was adjusted for all courses for which the ECTS total was not a whole number. Contact hours were adjusted accordingly. Each lecturer has reviewed the content of his/her courses and adapted their delivery format and content to the new ECTS volume.

**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 StP logically fits into the group of education programmes in political science in the study direction “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” implemented by RSU; it currently has two study programmes, in addition to the programme being analysed:

- Academic Bachelor’s study programme “International Relations – European Studies” (code – 43312);
- Academic Master’s study programme “International Relations and Diplomacy” (code – 45312).

Upon completion of the study programme (code – 45312), it is planned that students acquire a degree of a Master of Social Sciences in Political Science and International Relations. Prior to the amendment of Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 240 "Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education", during the licensing period the degree was in “political science”. The first part of the code of the study programme, “45”, characterises the type of educational programme – academic education implemented after acquiring a Bachelor’s or professional Bachelor’s degree. The second part of the code, “312”, describes the group of educational programme group political sciences, which falls within the thematic area of social sciences. The conformity of the programme code and the degree to be awarded is considered and conforms to Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 322 “Regulations on the Latvian Education Classification”.

The study programme supplements the range of Master’s study programmes in political sciences implemented by RSU at the same time retaining a tight functional and administrative link to other political science programmes:

- The administrative support to the StP is provided by the administrative staff of the Faculty of Social Sciences;
- The Faculty of Social Sciences is led by a single management team that ensures strategic unity and efficient resource management;
- StP “International System Transformation Studies” and StP “International Relations and Diplomacy” have joint theoretical and methodological study courses, as well as the Master’s thesis writing process. Other study courses will also be shared;
- at least 50% of lecturers of StP “International System Transformation Studies” and StP “International Relations and Diplomacy” match making it possible to share resources;
- StP continues the course for internationalisation of social sciences at RSU;
- from wider international relations-related discussions in Bachelor studies, StP offers the next step analysing in depth transformation and systemic (security, economic, political) change studies.

When developing and implementing the course system of the study programme, both normative regulations, which include the Education Law, the Law on Higher Education Institutions, as well as regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers, have been taken into account. The StP enables students to acquire the comprehensive knowledge, skills and competences needed to understand today’s international system and transformations. When designing the programme, the courses are synchronised, mapped and adapted in such a way as to ensure a coherent and integrated approach to study content, which complements the knowledge acquired during the Bachelor studies and conforms to both the laws and regulations of Latvia, as well as standards and needs at European level.

The study programme is designed and offered in Latvian and English, offering both full-time and part-time study (duration of study is 2 years or 2 years and 6 months, respectively). The rationale

behind this offer is to be as open as possible to potential applicants, both in terms of language choice (including both local and international audiences) and study intensity - accommodating both those students who are able to spare time for full-time study and those whose work or other schedules do not allow them to study in such an intensive format. The modular learning system facilitates the possibility of combining both study formats, avoiding wasteful consumption of resources.

However, despite the openness in the variety of study formats, the selection process is rigorous. Entry criteria are designed to ensure that students are ready and qualified to pursue further studies in the field of political science or any other specialisation related to international systems. The admission requirements define the acceptable range of prior learning (first cycle higher education in the following social sciences or humanities: political science, economics and business, sociology and social work, law, social and economic geography, media and communication, military science, history and philosophy, ethics and religion) and interviews with the programme director and several other programme lecturers are a mandatory part of the admission procedure. The interviews are conducted to assess the student's motivation to study, to check prior knowledge in the field, and to test English or Latvian language skills (must meet at least B2 level) in order to ensure the applicant's ability to integrate into a study process in which students not only acquire theoretical knowledge, but also develop the skills and competences necessary to be successful in this dynamic and changing field of international relations.

Finally, the study programme is designed to ensure that students achieve the aims and objectives of the programme, in line with both local and international educational standards. The programme pays particular attention to ensuring that students are prepared and competent to pursue successful careers in diplomacy, international relations, science, research, etc., contributing to society at large.

Enclosed:

Annex 24.1. Diploma Sample and Supplement Thereto.

Annex 24.8. Study Contract Sample.

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

The potential class indicators of graduates of the study programme are high because, as confirmed by the visit to RSU of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia K. Kariņš in February 2024, there is a shortage of new employees in the sector (both at national and international level). Cooperation with a range of employer groups has been identified and maintained: international organisations and institutions (United Nations, institutions of the European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), etc.; public administrations - ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of defence, trade and economic development departments of ministries, as well as health and environmental protection departments dealing with international matters; non-governmental organisations dealing with global development, human rights, peacekeeping and conflict resolution, environmental protection and other international initiatives; research institutes and think tanks - analytical work, policy development and strategic advice to governments, international organisations and international corporations and consulting companies engaged in international market analysis, risk management, international law and global strategy development.

Surveys and interviews of potential employers identified the skills required for graduates, which can be classified into several categories – analytical skills (ability to analyse and interpret complex data, identify trends and draw reasoned conclusions); communication skills (ability to express thoughts clearly and convincingly in writing and orally, as well as effective presentation skills), critical thinking (ability to critically evaluate information from different sources and perspectives of opinion); strategic planning and policy development skills (ability to develop policy proposals, strategies and solutions in the face of global challenges; language skills; management and leadership skills (ability to lead teams, projects and organise work in an international environment); technology literacy.

Also centrally, at university level, in the period from December 2019 to March 2020, at the order of RSU within a project SIA “Dynamic University” (DyU) conducted a study summarising its results in the final report “Study of competitiveness of study programmes of Rīga Stradiņš University and RSU Red Cross Medical College and compliance with medium-term and long-term labour market and industry development trends”. Phase 1 and Phase 2 report looked at study programmes of StD “Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology”. According to the results of the DyU study, in the segment of social sciences, demand for specialists is expected to decrease and this will lead to labour surplus due to limited employment opportunities. However, not all students are planning to work in the given sector, so the role of the higher education institution is to help students develop not only sector-specific skills but also cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary skills.

The DyU assessment of labour market trends identified a number of skills the need for which increases: public dialogue, political administrative skills, emotional intelligence, creative thinking, experimentation, quick learning skills, interdisciplinary cooperation, as well as working with big data. The results of the DyU study also highlighted the need to incorporate technology literacy opportunities into StP content.

On the basis of the data obtained during the two research processes mentioned above, the content of the study programme “International System Transformation Studies” was carefully reassessed, if necessary by making adjustments that will allow graduates to not only to contribute substantively to the development of foreign and security policy of Latvia, the EU and third countries, but develop analytical, representative and representation skills that allow for graduates’ successful entering into the labour market.

#### **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.**

Ten students, including two foreign nationals, were admitted to the study programme in their first year of studies (one EU national and one outside the EU). One more has been admitted to the study programme but has not yet obtained a visa. Nine of the students study for state budget funds, and one for their private funds.

Although in general the results of the first year of studies achieved the aim set in the licensing, they are still behind those planned by the management of the study programme and planned by the responsible faculty and department, especially taking into account the ten state budget places allocated. Due to insufficiently good admission results, the opportunities to offer more elective study courses decreased and the remuneration of the lecturers for the work performed was also

lower (this also depends on the number of students).

Admission results in the past admission fell considerably behind what was expected in most of RSU's Master's study programmes in social sciences. One plausible explanation is the unclarity and uncertainty created by rapid inflation, and therefore the reflections and calculations of potential students on where to better invest their financial resources. As regards more specific admission results of the new study programme, we can mention the stigma, with which Russia is associated after it waged war against Ukraine. Similarly, the war may have reduced the willingness of international students to travel to Latvia, given the generalised perception of Latvia's proximity to Ukraine and Russia and the risks associated with this. In the course of the survey of potential student and students, another important reason was the requirement to submit an English language certificate demonstrating that the level of knowledge of the language corresponds to at least level B2. This is considered as a hard-to-enforce and financially-intensive measure.

The programme is licensed in both Latvian and English. Currently, studies are conducted only in English, however, the development of the programme does not exclude the implementation of some Latvian language flow for wider attraction of Latvian students. In order to make sure that the teaching staff implementing the study programme in English are proficient in a foreign language, RSU periodically organises a detailed assessment of the level of English language skills and, if necessary, additional training. The level of English language proficiency of the majority of study programme lecturers corresponds to C1-C2, while the level of one lecturer corresponds to B2. The English language proficiency of the lecturers is adequate for the implementation of the study programme in English.

Finally, students are actively encouraged to use mobility programmes as part of joint faculty cooperation memoranda with other world universities. Separately, cooperation with the University of Kyrgyzstan has been ensured as part of the programme. The process involves concluding cooperation with the University of Tbilisi. Such cooperation offers mobility opportunities for students as well as for lecturers.

Enclosed:  
Annex 16. Statistical Data on Students.

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

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

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

**the content of the study courses/ modules is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science.**

New unique 25 study courses were developed to achieve the objective of the study programme and thus the outcomes and tasks. They have been created in thematic blocks that intertwine through contextual study courses. First, Russia's domestic and foreign policies; second, subregions of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and their interactions; third, the theories, methodologies and methods of international relations and diplomacy; and fourth, foreign languages.

The first group includes study courses: "Russia's History From the Middle Ages Towards the 20th Century", "Russia's Political Culture in Transformation", "Russia's Domestic Politics – Factors and Actors", "Russia's Politics and Religions", "Russian Economics – Resources vs. Modernisation", "Russia's Political Economy Transformation", "Russia's Foreign Policy and Unconventional Approaches", "Russia's Defence Policy", "Russia and International Organisations", "Russia, the U.S. and the Baltics – Interaction in the Past and Present", "The Russia-China Partnership – Factors and Interests", "Russo-centric Institutional Governance Architecture – EEU, CSTO, CIS and Beyond", "Russian Communities in Europe". The study courses of the first group will provide up-to-date knowledge of Russia's domestic and foreign policies, while also placing significant emphasis on historical aspects and Russia's integration into the wider context of global and regional relations. They complement each other.

The second group of study courses includes courses: "Russia, East Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and Baltics – Domestic and Foreign Politics Between Past and Present", "Transitional Justice – Post-Post-Soviet Space and Beyond", "Gender and Sexuality in the Post-Post-Soviet Space", "Central Asia – Domestic Dynamics and Neighbourhood Conundrum", "Eastern European and South Caucasus Countries Between the EU's Eastern Partnership and Other (geo)Political Projects", "Ukraine – the State in Between", "Belarus between the East and the West", "Biopolitics and Biopower – Interdisciplinary Encounters in Eastern Europe and Eurasia at Large", "Frozen Conflicts in the Post-Post-Soviet Space – Developments, Challenges and Perspectives". The study courses of the second group will provide up-to-date knowledge of Central Asian, Caucasus and Eastern European countries – their internal dynamics, as well as interactions between regional and global factors. They complement each other.

The study courses of these two blocks are up to date – based on the latest scientific and general literature and recent events. Since most are compulsory elective courses, then students will have the possibility to choose part of these courses. Study courses will complement each other – not only within each block, but also between blocks. For example, as part of the first block, it is not possible to fully understand Russian domestic policy without knowledge of Russian history, and the economy – without knowledge of domestic policy. However, the processes in other Eurasian regions to be discussed in the second block cannot be fully understood without the matters related to Russia discussed in the first block.

The third group includes courses: "Theories and Methods in International Relations and Diplomacy", "Scientific Writing", "Academic Workshop". They basically provide the standard requirements of academic education specified in Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 240 of 13 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education", or research of theoretical knowledge in political sciences and international relations, and their approbation in the aspect of the current scientific problems. Together with the fundamentally empirically oriented courses included in the first and second groups, which also touch on theoretical and methodological

aspects, these study courses will ensure that the study programme fits into general academic practice and, in particular, into the generally accepted methodological frameworks of political sciences.

The last group includes study courses for the acquisition of foreign languages: “Latvian Language Course for Foreign Students” and “Russian Language” (for students who do not know or wish to improve their knowledge). The first implements the requirements laid down in Section 56(3)(1) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions in relation to the mastering of the official language. In addition, the requirements laid down in Section 42(2) of the Environmental Protection Law and Section 23(1) of the Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law are implemented by mastering the study course “Civil Defence and Environmental Protection”.

Each of the study courses intends to achieve learning outcomes of the study programme, thus implementing the objective of the study programme. Each task of the study programme is related study courses and their outcomes. The greatest emphasis has been placed on analytical skills, team work skills and individual work skills (in 26 to 28 study courses), as well as on current matters of international relations and knowledge about Russia (in 19 to 24 study courses). As to competences, the main focus is on cross-sectoral competences (in nine study courses). The mastering of all study courses, except the Latvian Language, Russian Language and Civil Defence and Environmental Protection courses, is offered at an advanced level.

Enclosed:

Annex 17.1. Compliance of the Study Programme with the National Educational Standard.

Annex 18.1. Mapping of the Study Courses for the Achievement of Learning Outcomes of the Study Programme.

Annex 19. Planning of the Study Programme (For Each Type and Form of the Implementation of the Study Programme).

Annex 20. Description of Study Courses.

**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).**

Obtaining of a Master’s degree is based on latest achievements and developments of political sciences. Study courses are created and updated in accordance with the latest theoretical, methodological and methodical achievements in the political science, as well as the development of empirical phenomena. In the day-to-day study process, solutions such as simulation games, war mocks, economic modelling, complemented by regular visiting lectures of recognisable Latvian and EU foreign and security policy makers are sought in parallel with traditional approaches (lectures and seminars).

In the Master’s study programme “International System Transformation Studies”, students are presented the achievements of science and creativity, learning the research methodology through several specific events and activities:

(1) visiting lectures read by well-known researchers are integrated into the study process for policymakers and practitioners, enabling students to learn directly about the latest research and practices. For example, a lecture on the latest developments in cyber security by representatives of the NATO Strategic Communication Centre of Excellence (J. Sārts) or a discussion on the impact of climate change on international relations presented by climate policy experts (V. Kleinberga);

(2) research seminars: students are offered intensive research seminars where aspects of different research methodologies are discussed in detail, including qualitative and quantitative research methods, data analysis and research design. These seminars provide the practical knowledge and skills necessary for a successful research project (prof. K. Bukovskis);

(3) participation in real research projects – students are involved in current research and analytical projects in cooperation with partner organisations of the university (e.g. Latvian Institute of International Affairs);

(4) particular attention is paid to the preparation of innovative and practically significant Master's theses, such as the Master's thesis on the latest strategies for shaping global health policy after the COVID-19 pandemic, or paper analysing the impact of technological developments on international sanctions and diplomacy;

(5) international conferences – students are offered opportunities to participate and present their research at international conferences (e.g. the RSU International Student Conference), which promote the visibility of their scientific papers and make it possible to establish professional contacts; exchange of practical experience – the programme promotes the participation of students in exchange programmes and summer schools, which not only promotes the expansion of knowledge, but also creates a new network of social contacts.

In parallel with the above, lecturers of the study programme independently prepare scientific and popular science publications, as well as lead and implement scientific projects. More information and records are available in the [RSU ZDiS Pure system](#).

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

The achievement of learning outcomes is organised within the scope of the functional process described in this section. Main study courses (Part A or compulsory courses) are implemented in each of the first three semesters. The study courses “Russia’s History From the Middle Ages Towards the 20th Century”, “Russia, the U.S. and the Baltics – Interaction in the Past and Present”, “Eastern European and South Caucasus Countries Between the EU’s Eastern Partnership and Other (geo)Political Projects” and “Central Asia – Domestic Dynamics and Neighbourhood Conundrum” analyse the history of Russia, Russia’s interactions with U.S. and Baltic countries, as well as current issues of Eastern European, South Caucasus and Central Asian countries. In the study course “Theories and Methods in International Relations and Diplomacy”, students obtain knowledge on

the most significant theories and concepts of international relations, as well as qualitative and quantitative analysis methods. It will become the foundation for students in writing their Master's thesis for the Master's degree in Social Sciences ("Development of Master's Thesis and Defence"). In this course, students devote about one third of their work to theoretical constructs. The Latvian language for foreign students ("Latvian Language Course for Foreign Students") takes place also in Part A, along with other study programmes.

Other study courses are implemented in Part B or compulsory elective part. An extensive part is devoted to studying Russia's domestic and foreign policy, which, apart from courses of Part A, will also include study courses "Russia's Political Culture in Transformation", "Russia's Domestic Politics – Factors and Actors", "Russia's Politics and Religions", "Russian Economics – Resources vs. Modernisation", "Russia's Political Economy Transformation", "Russia's Foreign Policy and Unconventional Approaches", "Russia's Defence Policy", "Russia and International Organisations", "The Russia-China Partnership – Factors and Interests", "Russo-centric Institutional Governance Architecture – EEU, CSTO, CIS and Beyond" and "Russian Communities in Europe". The possibilities to choose these courses are organised in such a way that students choose one of the relevant thematic courses, such as on the Russian economy or Russia's activities in international organisations.

Learning of knowledge on other target regions of the study programme and their mutual interactions is organised in a similar way – "Russia, East Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and Baltics – Domestic and Foreign Politics Between Past and Present", "Ukraine – the State in Between", "Belarus between the East and the West" and "Frozen Conflicts in the Post-Post-Soviet Space – Developments, Challenges and Perspectives".

The courses with related content are taught in interaction between lecturers of respective study courses, including they exchange visiting lectures within courses, for example, Russian economy, Russia in international organisations, as well as domestic policy and foreign policy matters of Eastern European and Caucasus countries. In case of insignificant interest, the content of some courses can be integrated into courses selected by students and to be implemented.

Study courses focusing on interdisciplinary knowledge "Biopolitics and Biopower – Interdisciplinary Encounters in Eastern Europe and Eurasia at Large", "Transitional Justice – Post-Post-Soviet Space and Beyond" and "Gender and Sexuality in the Post-Post-Soviet Space" are offered in the compulsory elective part or Part B. These are at the same time one of the most innovative study courses compared to those taught in similar programmes.

All the aforementioned courses for strengthening knowledge on Russia and related part of Eurasia are distributed by semesters so that students learn about Russia, Central Asia, Caucasus and Eastern Europe each semester. Such a distribution of study courses ensures that knowledge is up-to-date throughout the learning process and that knowledge acquired between courses can be combined and supplemented.

Finally, Part B offers the study courses "Scientific Writing" and "Academic Workshop" strengthening students' innovation skills and methodological knowledge. It is proposed to improve foreign language skills in the study course "Russian Language". The study course "Civil Defence and Environmental Protection" ensures the implementation of the mandatory requirements laid down in Latvian law.

The implementation volume of each course and the number of contact hours is harmonised with the corresponding ECTS credit points. Courses corresponding to 3 ECTS are planned as at least 22 contact hours, courses corresponding to 4 ECTS – 30 contact hours, courses corresponding to 5 ECTS – 38 contact hours, courses corresponding to 6 ECTS – 46 contact points and courses

corresponding to 7 ECTS – 52 contact hours. Part A study courses form 40% of the total amount of the study programme (excluding the process of developing and defending the Master's Thesis), Part B study courses form 56% of the total amount of the study programme, while Part C (free elective courses) represents 4% of the total amount of the programme. The volume is different in study courses Latvian Language, Russian Language and Civil Defence and Environmental Protection, because in accordance with the specifics and strategic objectives of courses, the volume of classes is bigger.

The RSU Study Process Development Plan for Social Sciences and Health Studies, approved at the Senate meeting on 13 February and 12 March 2024, stipulates that, starting with the 2024 intake, study plans should reflect ECTS credits. The transition to the ECTS credit system in each study programme is the responsibility of the programme directors. According to Article 1(8) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (available in [Latvian](#), partially translated into [English](#)), one credit point corresponds to 25-30 hours of study work. Each lecturer assesses the amount of work within the course of study within the limits of the Law on Higher Education. For further information, see the recommendations in the study direction annexes (Annex 30 – available in Latvian only).

Part of the contact hours consists of collective and individual tutorials available to every student. It is the duty of each lecturer to indicate in the course descriptions and at the department and provide tutorials at specified times, as well as to organise them upon student's request, including before and after classes. Student interest in tutorials varies – some participate in tutorials even two or more times a week.

During tutorials, students ask for advice on the subject of specific study courses, things that were and weren't told during classes; the content and form of the Master's thesis; the study process as a whole; on the possibilities for carrying out scientific activities; advice on looking for job and receiving recommendations etc.

Methods of assessment of student performance and achieved learning outcomes, as well as assessment criteria for study course completion, are defined in the description of each study course and are available to all students prior to starting the study course. The academic freedom of each lecturer is respected in the implementation of the study courses, including the development and implementation of study examinations, at the same time providing that the teaching and examination methods must be chosen according to the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study course.

Both summative and formative assessment are combined in the study process to enhance students' individual performance and assess the level of learning outcomes achieved. In the context of learning outcomes, both study course-specific and transversal knowledge, skills, and attitudes are important, therefore, students' active involvement and participation, initiative, and taking responsibility are additionally evaluated. Individual assessments of interim and final examinations of study courses are available to each student on their student profile in the RSU e-learning environment. Students can familiarise themselves with the criteria, conditions and binding procedures for the assessment of student performance in the RSU Academic Regulations I.

With regard to the student-focused approach RSU Quality Policy is based on the strategy and values of the university and includes three basic principles: student-focused approach, partnership, and quality. In 2016, RSU performed an international external assessment of the implementation of student-centred learning approach performed by the group of assessment experts of project "Peer Assessment of Student Centred Learning"[1] (PASCL). It was an EU-level project promoted by the European Students' Union in cooperation with other European higher education organisations, whereas the visit of experts in Riga was initiated by the RSU Student Union. The expert opinion described RSU as a student-centred higher education institution that actively involves students in

the improvement of the study process.

[1] Report of PASCL experts on the implementation of student-centred approach at RSU is available both in [English](#) and in [Latvian](#).

**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.**

As the programme is newly established and has no graduates yet, the first students to complete the programme will defend their Master's theses at the end of the spring semester in the academic year 2023/2024. At the moment, the Master's thesis process is nearing completion and no Master's theses have yet been submitted, but the potential range of topics is known.

Table 2. **Potential thesis topics and supervisors**

Impact of the transitional justice on the foreign policy of Latvia and Ukraine regarding Russia	Asoc.prof., Dr.sc.pol. Māris Andžāns, konsultants Dr.iur. Arta Snipe
The implications of China`s Rise for Russia`s Influence in the South Caucasus	Doc., Dr.sc.pol. Una Aleksandra Bērziņa- Čerenkova

European Union's Normative Power in Ukraine	Doc., Dr.sc.pol. Mārtiņš Daugulis; konsultants Mg.sc.pol. Elizabete Elīna Vizgunova-Vikmane
Russia's Role in Contemporary Geopolitics: A Comparative Analysis of Relations with the West and the East	Doc., Dr.sc.pol. Mārtiņš Daugulis; konsultants Mg.sc.pol. Elīna Vroblevska
Central Asia – a space for rivalry between Russia and China	Doc., Dr.sc.pol. Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova

The themes of the selected papers are in line with the objectives and content of the programme, analysing both the legal aspects of transition processes and the specificity of international relations of different countries in the Eurasian region, with a particular focus on the analysis of Russia's influence and the EU's role in addressing the region's challenges. With the increase in the number of students, it is planned to broaden the range of topics to be analysed in the future, both in terms of current issues in different policy areas (e.g. energy issues) and in terms of interactions between countries.

### 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.

When students begin studies, they have the opportunity to access several databases of scientific journals that help in their daily studies and in-depth analysis in writing the Master's thesis. Students also make full use of the joint university cooperation networks – the agenda and research of the RSU Social Sciences Research Group, thus starting their activities in science already during their Master studies. Finally, once a year, RSU organises an international student conference, and once every two years – an RSU scientific conference, which allows not only to supplement knowledge in matters of interest to students, but also to participate with personal presentations and projects, which is an important contribution of science to further research.

Specifically, resources provided to the study programme due to cooperation with the sector should be mentioned – students have full access to an updated library of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs, as well as full access to the event platforms organised by the Center for Geopolitical Studies Riga and the Latvian Institute of International Affairs. In study courses on developments in action policies, students have access to the research documents of the sector and the results thereof.

Cooperation with institutions – the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia and its deputies, the State Chancellery, the Cabinet of Ministers, sectoral ministries, the European Parliament – should be mentioned as significant with the emphasis that such cooperation is implemented on the basis of networking, ensuring regular access to institutions, according to the content of the study process.

The role of public visiting lecturers in the implementation of the study process – diplomats, senior officials and industry experts visit the university in the form of public visiting lectures according to the daily procedure of developments in the sector should also be emphasised. The visiting lecture of Israeli lecturer Dr. Sarai B. Aharoni, the visiting lecture of Ambassador-at-Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Baiba Braže, the visiting lecture of the Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Kariņš, the visiting lecture of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Taiwan Dr. Joseph Wu, the visiting lecture of the researcher of the U.S. Wilson Center Jason Steihauer, the lecture of the Officer of the National Guard Headquarters and Military Analyst Jānis Slaidiņš, the guest lecture of the President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga and other lectures can be mentioned as examples.

Enclosed:

Annex 23.2. Assessment of the informative and methodological provision regarding library resources for the implementation of the study direction “Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology” in accordance with the requirements of the guidelines

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

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

The full-time intramural StP in English is planned to be financed from state budget funds and the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee for EUR 3300 in academic year 2024/2025. The study programme has state funding for 10 budget funded places, where the funding per one study place with social security is EUR 3067 per year of studies. 18 students are expected to be enrolled in the first year of studies, 3 students are expected to drop out in the second year of studies. Such a number of students is optimal to ensure a high-quality study process and to make the study programme cover its implementation, as well as development costs. The part-time full-time English language StP is planned to be funded by private and legal entities, with a potential tuition fee of EUR 2 800. The plan is to enrol 15 students in the first year of study, with a drop-out of 4 students in the second year. Minimum enrolment 10 students.

The funding is used for staff remuneration, attraction of visiting assistant professors, taxes,

maintenance of IT infrastructure, purchase of equipment and devices, and study visit costs. In addition to the direct costs of implementation of lectures and classes, the StP must cover infrastructure maintenance costs (facilities, IT solutions) and other RSU common resources used in the StP (Student Services, Library, organisation of the study process, grant for the Student Union and other support and administrative functions).

StP was so far implemented by the Department of Political Science of the RSU Faculty of European Studies, the Department of Clinical Skills and Medical Technologies of the Faculty of Medicine and the Language Centre. After 6 February 2024, according to the new RSU structural scheme, it will further be implemented by the Faculty of Social Sciences involving other departments, if necessary, in accordance with study course plans.

As a result of the structural consolidation process of RSU, an improvement in efficiency in the context of cost items is expected, which will ensure a balance of revenue and expenditure over the long term.

Table 3. **Costs of the study programme in the full-time study English flow**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Result</b>
Average income per student, EUR	3158
Average cost per student, EUR	3091
Academic staff, %	57
Department resources, %	10
Scholarships, %	8
Other direct expenditure, %	1
Fixed costs, %	2
Eligible, incl. development costs, %	22

Table 4. **Costs of the study programme in the part-time study English flow**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Result</b>
Average income per student, EUR	2 333
Average cost per student, EUR	2 194
Academic staff, %	61
Department resources, %	12
Scholarships, %	0
Other direct expenditure, %	2

Fixed costs, %	2
Eligible, incl. development costs, %	23

### 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.**

During the process of staff selection, competences, professional skills and self-motivation level, knowledge of English, digital skills and critical thinking skills of the potential employee are evaluated. Applicants to RSU academic positions are set higher scientific, educational qualification requirements, organisational and professional competences than specified by the requirements of external laws and regulations. Qualification and competences of the academic staff are constantly improved by ensuring growth of educational skills, improvement of English, and professional training related to the particular field. 26 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the study programme. Of these, 13 lecturers have obtained a Master's degree and 13 have obtained a Doctoral degree. Among the lecturers who have obtained a Master's degree, there are seven lecturers who are doctoral students or have completed doctoral studies (PhD candidates).

The knowledge of official language of the Latvian academic staff fully complies with Cabinet Regulation No. 733 of 7 July 2008 "Regulations Regarding the Amount of the Knowledge of the Official Language and the Procedures for Examination of the Knowledge of the Official Language for the Performance of Professional Duties and Duties of Office, Receipt of the Permanent Residence Permit and Obtaining of the Status of a Long-term Resident of the European Union and the State Fee for Examination of the Fluency in the Official Language". RSU Human Resources Department checks the official language skills when selecting the staff, as well as while summarising documents during the preparation process of academic election.

Heads of structural units pay particular attention to succession issues and interaction between staff of different generations. In order to improve the content of the study programme, as well as to introduce innovative methods in study processes, RSU involves foreign visiting academic staff.

At the study programme level, the duty of the head of the study programme is to ensure compliance of the content of the study programme with internal and external laws and regulations, requirements of the labour market, sectoral development trends and needs of students, to analyse the data that might provide information on the factors affecting results and quality of the study programmes, and to implement necessary improvements to the study programmes. At the study programme level, quality indicators of the study programmes are measured that are directly linked to remuneration of the heads of the study programmes. This aspect promotes taking responsibility and motivates the heads of the study programmes to achieve higher defined quality standards.

At RSU level, the duty of the management is to set strategic and quality aims and quality policy, to make a decision on the quality approach, to manage resources, and determine the internal procedures. Supervision of the system introduced at RSU is performed by both the internal system and quality auditors and independent external experts. At the university level, one of the indicators of study quality is the public attitude and opinion, as well as the popularity of RSU. It is regularly established by participating in a reputation survey and evaluation of brands.

Enclosed:

Annex 24.7. Analysis of the Composition of the Teaching Staff

### **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.**

During the reporting period, the previous head and Assistant Professor of the programme *Dr. Māris Andžāns* became Associate Professor and is deeply involved also in the development of future levels of education. Lecturer *Mārtiņš Daugulis* obtained a doctoral degree in political science, then was elected Assistant Professor, as well as in the administratively academic context he was elected the head of the Department of Political Science. *Dr. Kārlis Bukovskis* became an associate researcher. Visiting lecturer *Gunda Reire* was elected Assistant Professor and became a full-fledged employee of the department, also increasing her presence and role in the development of the programme and ensuring coupling with further doctoral studies. As the Head of the Chancery of the President of Latvia *G. Reire* also ensures closer links with the sector.

These aspects are evaluated positively in a number of categories:

- More effective preparation of students in the programme for doctoral studies and scientific reproduction is ensured;
- The content of the programme includes a larger scientific component, with the capacity for scientific analysis alongside the content of practical policies and diplomacy;
- The link with the industry as potential and existing employers is increasing.

The changes coincide with the recommendations of accreditation experts for the long-term development of the programme (paragraphs 5 and 6 - to find an opportunity to involve more experienced RSU lecturers in the implementation of the study programme; to increase as broadly as possible the number of scientific publications of lecturers already employed by RSU in high class and indexed scientific journals).

There has been no change of lecturers during the programme period (taking into account the short period of the programme implementation), the composition of the teaching staff has been completed in line with the needs of the programme content implementation, is stable and has remained unchanged, while, as already mentioned, increasing the academic capacity of the teaching staff (acquiring new scientific degrees).

### **3.4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and**

**the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals or peer-reviewed monographs may be additionally specified. Information on the teaching staff included in the database of experts of the Latvian Council of Science in the relevant field of science (total number, name of the lecturer, field of science in which the teaching staff has the status of an expert and expiration date of the Latvian Council of Science expert) (if applicable).**

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

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

Cooperation between teaching staff is crucial for ensuring a high-quality study process and research work in the implementation of the programme. To promote effective cooperation, we have put in place a number of mechanisms to promote mutual cooperation of teaching staff:

- teaching staff meetings organised by the director of the study programme (from 6 February 2024 group of study programmes): they facilitate the exchange of information on study methods, content of study courses and topics of interest in international politics and international relations;
- Joint research projects involving different groups of teaching staff: help improve the content quality of study courses, mutual links/succession and offer students the opportunity to participate in current research;
- professional development programmes for teaching staff: the RSU Centre for Educational Growth organises regular training and seminars for teaching staff on the latest study methods and an interdisciplinary approach to promote cooperation between specialists from different sectors.

To ensure the interconnection of study courses and modules, lecturers work in close cooperation in planning the content of courses and study materials. For example, a team of several teachers interact in a course on research methods. The preparation of students for scientific conferences under the guidance of teaching staff teams is also important.

In the future, with the integration of the values of the new Faculty of Social Sciences into the study process, it is planned to pay additional attention to the following methods of teaching staff

cooperation: (1) development of joint, interdisciplinary study courses and learning materials – teaching staff cooperation in developing integrated training courses that combine perspectives of different disciplines, for example, by combining political sciences, economics and communication or law, to give students a broader view of the international system; (2) promoting teaching staff networking and international cooperation with foreign colleagues and institutions through joint visiting lectures, seminars and conferences that broaden the international dimension of the curriculum and offer students access to a wider range of experts.

At the time of submission of the self-assessment report, the ratio of the number of students and the teaching staff within the programme is 0,23:1. This ratio allows for a high level of study quality, individual access to each student and promotes effective cooperation and communication between teaching staff and students. At the same time, however, it is planned to increase the number of students by diversifying the range of Part B and C study courses, thus making the study programme more content-intensive and addressing a wider range of interested persons.

# 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	24.1_Anx_Diploma_Diploma_Supplement_Intl_System_Transform_Stud.pdf	24.1_pielik_Diploms_Dipl_pielikums_St_Sist_Transform_St_lv.pdf
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period	16_Anx_Stud_statistics_International_Syst_Transform_stud.pdf	16_pielik_Starptautiskas_sistemas_transformacijas_st_statistika_lv.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	17.1_Anx_compliance_nat_educ_stand_eng.pdf	17.1_pielik_Atb_valsts_izgl_stand_Starptautiskas_sistemas_transformacijas_stud_LV.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	18.1_Anx_St_course_outcome_mapping.pdf	18.1_pielik_St_kursu_kartej_st_rezultatu_sasn.pdf
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	19_Anx_SIP_Plan_Intl_System_Transform_Stud.pdf	19_pielik_SIP_planojums_Starpt_sist_transform_stud.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	20.1_Anx_course_descriptions_Transform_Stud.pdf	20.1_pielik_kursu_apraksti_Transform_stud.pdf
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)	24.7.1_Anx_Cert_compliance_acad_prog.pdf	24.7.1_pielik_Aplocinajums_par_akademiska_magistra (drā cīka) studiju programmas "Starptautiskās sistēmas transformācijas studijas" akadēmiskā personāla atbilstību Augstskolu likuma prasībām.edoc