APPLICATION

Study field "Social Welfare" for assessment

Study field	*Social Welfare*
Title of the higher education institution	*Rīgas Stradiņa universitāte*
Registration code	*3341702042*
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Self-evaluation report

Study field "Social Welfare"

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) is a state-established higher education and research institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia and has been closely integrated into the national healthcare system already since 1950. On 15 April 2002, RSU was registered with the Register of Higher Education Institutions, registration No. 3341702042. On 13 December 2001, RSU was accredited. RSU is the third largest university in Latvia with a pronounced international orientation - about 25% of all RSU students are international students. RSU registered office is 16 Dzirciema iela, Riga, but in addition RSU has places of implementation at other addresses. RSU has one branch at 24/26 Riņķu iela, Liepāja, which is fully suitable for the work of the university. Lecture auditoriums and rooms are equipped with modern equipment, ensuring high-quality study process, including online lectures

For three consecutive years, RSU has been acknowledged as the higher education institution of the highest quality with the best reputation in Latvia with the highest rating among nine largest higher education institutions in Latvia. Such a conclusion resulted from the research on reputation of higher education institutions in Latvia conducted by the research company *Kantar TNS* at the beginning of 2019.

The **vision** of RSU is to be a modern and prestigious university recognised in Europe and across the world, with human as the main value and which provides high-quality and exportable research-based higher education. The **mission** of RSU is to prepare specialists of high quality in the field of healthcare and social sciences for Europe and the world, so that the knowledge, skills, competence and attitude obtained during the studies correspond to the highest EU requirements and humanistic traditions and the studies create a stable basis for life-long education.

RSU implements 10 study directions (StD) (data as of 10 November 2021):

- “Healthcare” (31 study programmes (StP));
- “Life Sciences” (2 StP);
- “Information and Communication Science” (8 StP);
- “Education, Pedagogy and Sport” (2 StP);
- “Social Welfare” (3 StP);
- “Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology” (11 StP);
- “Law” (4 StP);
- “Management, Administration and Management of Real Estate” (7 StP);
- “Psychology” (3 StP)
- “Internal Security and Civil Protection” (1 StP).

From 2017 to 2019, the StP development and consolidation plan was developed at RSU (approved by RSU Presidium on 4 January, 2019, minutes No. 3-1/2/2019, approved by the Evaluation Commission for StP Development and Consolidation Plans established by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES), MES letter No. 4-6e/2018/3795), which has been implemented with the support of the project “Reducing Study Programme Fragmentation and Promoting Study Internationalisation at Rīga Stradiņš University” (information in Latvian, information in English). The project envisages consolidation of 19 existing study programmes by 30.11.2023, and development and launch 6 study programmes. StD “Social Welfare” is not included in the aforementioned plan, which means

that it is not currently planned to close or open any of the direction programmes under this plan. At the same time, the funding support within the Erasmus Mundus project for the StP "Social Work with Children and Youth" will be described further in the report.

The approach to StP management implemented by RSU has promoted the provision of StP offer that is of high quality and relevant to the sectors as shown by the growing number of applicants and students in the StDs implemented by RSU (see Table 1, Figure 1 and Figure 2), especially considering the circumstances of the demographic crisis and the decrease in the total number of applicants in Latvia. On 1 October 2021, the total number of RSU students was 10,137.

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

StD	**2015/ 2016**	**2016/ 2017**	**2017/ 2018**	**2018/ 2019**	**2019/ 2020**	**2020/ 2021**	**2021/ 2022**
Health Care	5 285	5 652	6 043	6 222	6 306	6 707	7 316
Law	1 139	1 105	1 084	993	847	704	778
Management, Administration and Real Estate Management	207	225	226	243	218	261	334
Education, Pedagogy and Sport	236	232	228	235	266	285	273
Sociology, Politics and Anthropology	234	227	230	252	285	311	338
Social Welfare	138	146	126	143	150	125	120
Information and Communication Sciences	428	396	369	397	365	425	420
Psychology	66	111	121	143	167	279	391
Life sciences	6	6	6	6	6	5	10
Internal Security and Civil Protection	0	0	45	82	101	146	157
Total	**7 739**	**8 100**	**8 478**	**8 716**	**8 711**	**9 248**	**10 137**

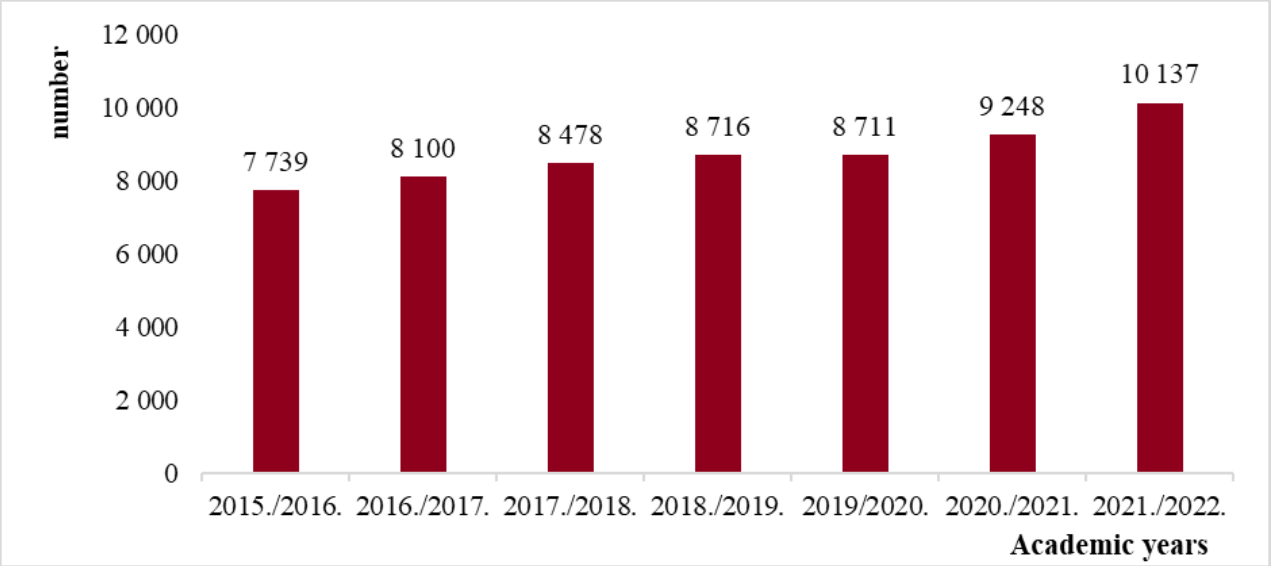


Figure 1. **Total number of students in the study directions implemented by RSU over the last seven academic years**

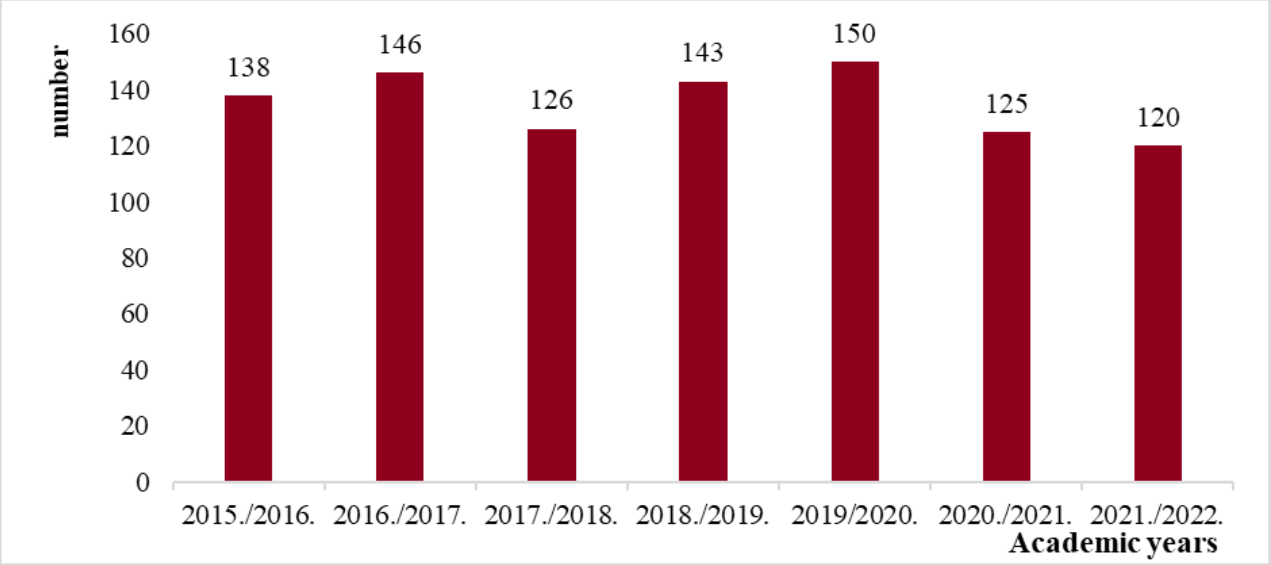


Figure 2. **Dynamics of the number of students in the StD "Social Welfare" over the last seven academic years.**

RSU Development Strategy 2017–2021 is available on RSU website in Latvian (here) and English (here). The main development goals of RSU are innovative studies in a modern environment and research into health, life and human sciences, 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 priority goals for sustainable development set by Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) and the contribution to their implementation are described on the website (in Latvian, in English).

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

The development of RSU StPs is based on the following basic 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 (HEIs);
- development of interdisciplinary cooperation of industries with professional organisations;
- compliance of StPs with the development of the national economy and industries;
- promotion of the export capability of higher education and science;
- cooperation between higher education institutions in the implementation of StP, combining resources for extending the study, research and innovation potential;
- monitoring of the quality of studies and activities for targeted improvement.

In the summer of 2021, the development of RSU Development Strategy for 2021-2027 was started, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021. The results of RSU Development Strategy for 2017-2021 are evaluated in the new RSU strategy and the new development goals and objectives are set, taking into consideration the tasks of RSU as a research university.

See Annex No. 13 for the awards obtained by RSU, cooperation with schools, and marketing activities.

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 Rīga 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 decision-making is ensured by the Constitutional Assembly, Senate, Rector and Academic Arbitration Court (information on RSU website in Latvian, in English).

The new RSU Senate was elected at the meeting of the Constitutional Assembly on 23 September 2021. The composition complies with the regulations of RSU Senate: The Senate consists of 31 senators, including the rector ex officio, and 30 elected senators, including 23 representatives of the academic staff (of which: 15 professors and associate professors and 8 representatives of other academic staff), 6 student representatives and one representative of RSU general staff. The first working session of the new composition was held on 12 October 2021.

Efficient management and supervision of operational tasks at RSU are carried out by four Vice-Rectors: Vice-Rector for Health Studies, Vice-Rector for Studies, Vice-Rector for Administration and Development, Vice-Rector for Science, and their subordinate structural units of studies, science, administration and management.

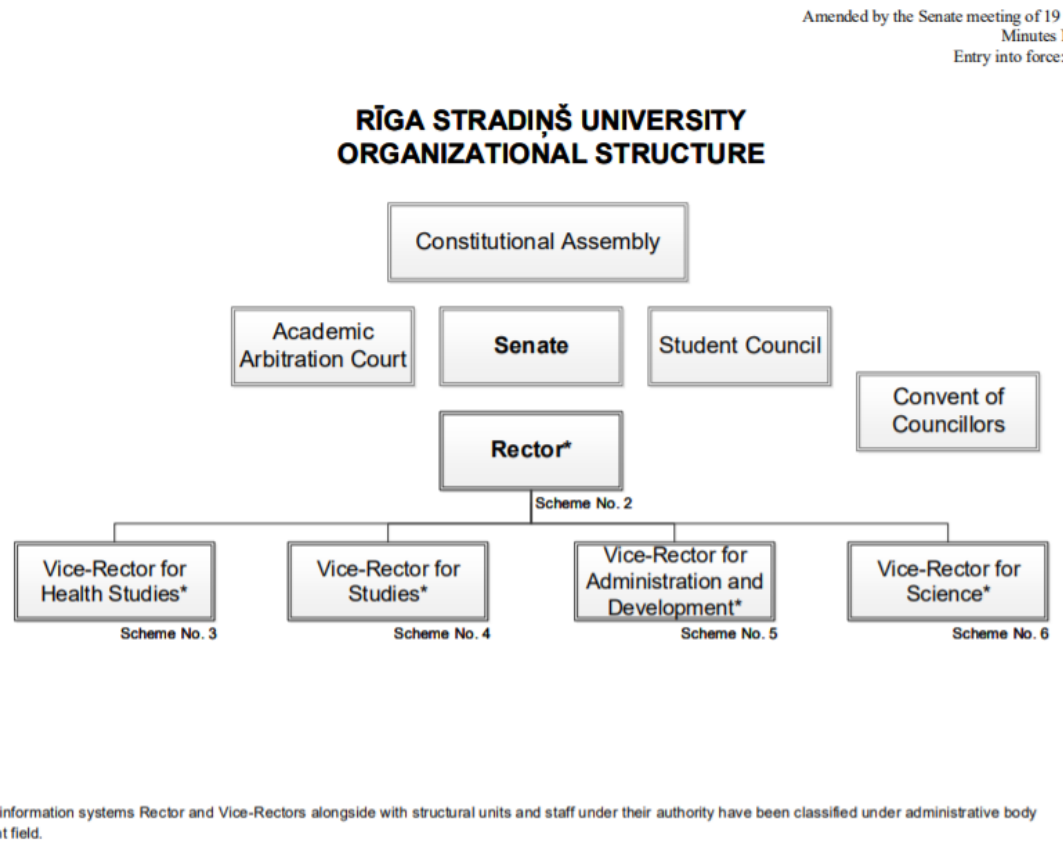


Figure 3. **The structure chart of The Subordination of Rīga Stradiņš University.**

Participation of external partners in decision-making

External partners participate in the meetings of RSU Convent of Councillors, Alumni Association, Study Quality Councils (SQC) and the meetings of faculties and departments.

Foreign and local specialists of various industries take part in 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 plans for the development and improvement of RSU social direction were considered during the meeting, emphasising the improvement of interdisciplinary studies and research. During the meeting, the views of faculty leaders on the research potential of study programmes were presented, as well as the views and recommendations of the participants of the Convent of Councillors on the improvement and adaptation of study programmes were discussed.

The SQC consist of both the management of the StD/StP, lecturers and student representatives, as well as representatives of employers. The Council evaluates the compliance of the content of the study programme with the requirements of the legislation of Latvia and the EU, public interests and the requirements of the labour market, as well as the long-term development of the respective study direction. For more information on the activities of the SQC, see the sub-section 1.4 below.

Employers are involved in Faculty Councils. The composition of the Faculty Council is approved by the Senate on the basis of the proposal from the Dean of the Faculty.

The Alumni Association (information in Latvian, in English) unites former graduates of various

generations of Riga Medical Institute, Medical Academy of Latvia and RSU. The Alumni Association is a contact point between graduates, students, academic staff and industry representatives. Mutual cooperation of the involved parties is essential for the improvement of study quality and research, development of the sector and purposeful guidance of students' professional activity. The Association promotes the involvement of RSU graduates in lifelong learning activities.

Participation of students in the management process

The Student Union (SU) (information in Latvian, in English) represents the interests of students in the Constitutional Assembly, Academic Arbitration Court, Senate, Faculty Councils, Ethics Committee, Loan Granting Committee, Scholarship Awarding Committee, Library Council, Museum Council, Rectorate, Dean's Council, Study Quality Councils and the Committee for Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved in Prior Learning or Professional Experience. Student representatives have the right of veto in Faculty Councils; the right of suspended veto in matters affecting students' interests in the Senate.

Interests of international students at RSU are represented by the International Students' Association (information in Latvian, in English).

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

RSU SU 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 government institutions; it represents the students of the higher education institution in Latvia and abroad and lays down the procedure for students to be elected in collegial institutions of the higher education institution.

The Student Union is financed from the University budget in the amount of not less than one two hundredth part of the annual budget of the University (in accordance with Section 53, Paragraph 4 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia (available in Latvian, in English). At the end of each calendar year, RSU SU presents the use of the budget of the current year and the budget estimate for the following calendar year to RSU management, and it is accepted by the Rector. See Annex No. 5 for more information on the content of the SU activity.

Participation of structural units in decision-making

Based on the developed medium-term strategy, the management of RSU annually approves the action plan and delegates specific aims to the structural units. In order to achieve these aims, each RSU structural unit has to plan its own resources during the annual budget planning session, requesting the funds needed to achieve the delegated aims. 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 being set up to implement new projects, processes, and innovations, thus maximizing the involvement of employees and immediate managers in decision-making.

See Annex No.1. List of internal laws and regulations in accordance with the primary activity processes of RSU.

See Annex No. 3. RSU organisational chart (available also on the website in the Latvian and English languages).

See Annex No. 23 "Compliance of the study programme with the 1st part of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)".

The management structure of the study direction and the corresponding study programmes is

geared towards development of the study direction (see Section 2.1. Management of the Study Field sub-section 4.1 Development plan for the study direction and the sub-section 4.2 Management structure of the study direction); the decision-making is efficient; the support provided by administrative and technical staff ensures that all the needs of the study programmes corresponding to the study direction are met.

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

In order to ensure academic activity and study quality, study support staff is employed by academic structural units who ensure servicing of students, circulation of documents, providing support to academic staff. Depending on the type of the structural unit and the study courses taught, the positions for the training support staff are planned by the Head of the structural unit, but the general principles at RSU are developed and maintained by the Human Resources Department. Responsibility areas of the support staff in accordance with the respective position are support to study process and methodological work, support to research and clinical work, support to the department office work etc., as needed.

The StD Social Welfare with the corresponding StP is implemented at the Department of Welfare and Social Work (LSDK). The staff of the Department consists of full-time lecturers, invited lecturers and support staff.

The department consists of 13 permanent staff (full-time and part-time), including 11 academic staff and 2 support staff.

Lecturers from other RSU departments, as well as lecturers - practitioners from the social work sector are involved in the implementation of the programme in accordance with the needs of the StP.

Head of the Department managed the LSDK. His/her task is to ensure involvement of qualified academic and research staff for the implementation of the study process. He/she promotes the growth and renewal of the academic and research staff. Ensures the functioning of the internal quality control system of the study process within the structural unit. Participates in the development of study programmes and study courses and quality assessment. Ensures the development and updating of study course descriptions, development of the necessary documentation, coordinating the cooperation and exchange of ideas between the Heads of study programmes belonging to the department and lecturers involved in the study programmes for the development of the study process, study programmes and content and ensuring continuous topicality. The Head of the Department also ensures the connection of the study direction and StP with higher-level RSU management and support structures.

There are 3 Heads of Study Programmes in the Department. Their task is to ensure the quality of the StP. In cooperation with the lecturers involved in the study programmes, the Head of the study programme develops the content of the study programme, study courses and other activities of the study process, following the development of the sector, for example, guest lectures on current topics, study visits to companies. Ensure the implementation of the quality indicators of the study programme. Attract visiting lecturers, participate in attracting and implementing international projects. Analyse assessment questionnaires completed by students and graduates, provide feedback, and implement changes in study programme plans. Prepare the description of study programmes for accreditation and annual reviews. Promote scientific research activities of students. Take part in semester examinations. Facilitate performance indicators in the study programme management. Contribute to the succession of study courses.

The Office Manager of the Department organises and ensures effective support for both the

work processes of the Department and the activities of inter-structural units. Updates information about students, their academic achievements, StP and lecturers in electronic systems and databases. Provides technical support to study audiences, prepares a variety of reports on the study process in the Department – preparation of a semester report (twice a year) about the workload plan of permanent lecturers and invited lecturers, preparation of a workload plan for permanent lecturers at the beginning of the academic year, and a monthly report on the performance of the workload by permanent and invited lecturers. Taking minutes of department meetings. Coordination of the work of the committees for defence of semester papers, Bachelor's theses and Master's theses, schedule planning and coordination of premises. Creating student lists for defence committees and informing students. Arranging student study plans in the SIS (Student Information System) once a semester for all Bachelor and Master's degree programmes of the Department. Manages the records of the Department, as well as performs other tasks of the immediate supervisor, including entering the lecturers' CVs in the Europass CV system and preparing an application for recruitment.

Study process organiser at LSDK ensures the implementation of the study plan – cooperates with the lecturers of the study courses in planning lectures and classes, informs lecturers and students about the location, time and topics of classes, lectures and other events. Coordinates the schedule of examination with the lecturers, controls the posting of assessment in e-grades, provides support to lecturers in ensuring the study process. Organises the conduct of the national examinations. Participates in the preparation of the StP licensing and accreditation documents.

The support provided by the administrative and technical staff of the University within the study direction is appropriate. The most advanced new generation IT facilities are technically available. From the first day of study, the student knows where to turn if questions arise.

Systems technical issues are addressed by the IT Department, the matters of the study process are supported by the Study Department and the Faculty Office, which also provide 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 Quality Policy is based on the strategy and values of the University and includes three basic principles: student-centred approach, partnership, and quality.

The Quality Policy is available on RSU website in Latvian and 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 3).

The duty of RSU senior management is to set strategic and quality goals and quality policy, to decide on quality approach, to manage resources, and determine the internal procedures. Supervision of the implemented quality system in RSU is carried out both by internal system and quality auditors, and independent external experts. One of the indicators of study quality at the University level is the public attitude and opinion, as well as the popularity of RSU. Evaluating the satisfaction level and engagement of RSU staff as well as the results of the university reputation survey, guidelines are set to improve the image of RSU.

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 data that might provide information about factors affecting learning outcomes and quality of the study programmes and to implement necessary improvements to the study programmes. Quality indicators of study programmes that are directly linked to the remuneration of the Heads of the study programmes are measured annually. This aspect promotes taking responsibility and motivates the Heads of the study programmes to achieve higher quality standards defined.

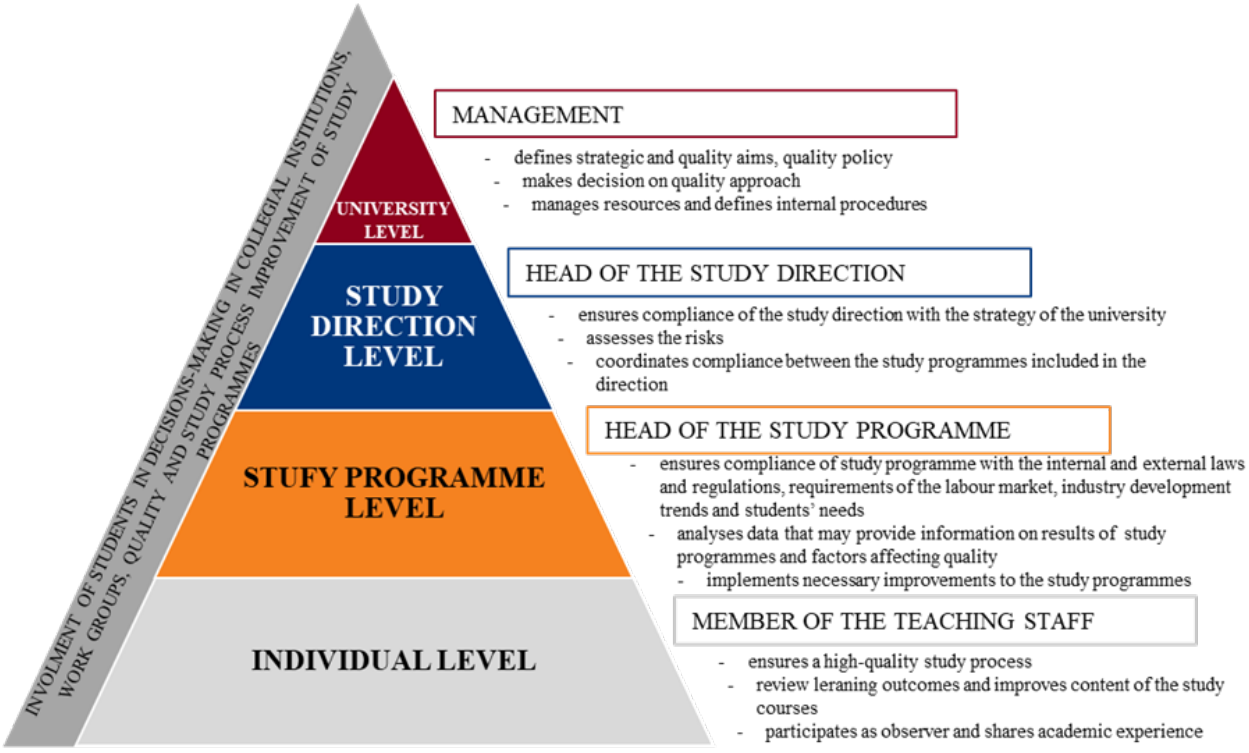


Figure 4. E**nsuring the quality of the RSU study process and results.**

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

External and internal laws and regulations governing student achievements and assessment of learning outcomes (available at https://www.rsu.lv/en/students/documents):

- Law on Higher Education Institutions;
- Education Law;
- Academic Regulations I – regulations for undergraduate and Master's studies (available in Latvian and English, (available in Latvian at https://www.rsu.lv/studentiem/dokumenti, and in English at https://www.rsu.lv/en/students/documents);
- Academic Regulations III – regulations for doctoral studies (available in Latvian at https://www.rsu.lv/studentiem/dokumenti, in English at https://www.rsu.lv/en/students/documents);
- Regulations on the development and presentation of the qualification paper, student's research paper, Bachelor's thesis and Master's thesis (available in Latvian at https://www.rsu.lv/studentiem/dokumenti, and in English at https://www.rsu.lv/en/students/documents);
- Process Description No. 6 "Assessment and Submission of Learning Outcomes" etc., see Annex No.1.
- Student academic performance is analysed twice per academic year after the end of the

study semester. As a result of monitoring academic success, risks to successful study process and reasons for exclusion are identified, on the basis of which it is possible to take preventive actions.

In 2016, an international external assessment of the implementation of student-centred learning approach at RSU was done by a group of assessment experts of the 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 English and in Latvian. 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 RSU Student Union. RSU is one of the few higher education institutions in Europe that took an institutional decision to get involved and was chosen within the framework of the *PASCL* project.

A condition of the project was to include some structural units of the higher education institution in the assessment. Prior to the visit, RSU prepared a self-assessment report describing the structure of the University, statistical data of operation, decision-making institutions and involved representatives, involvement of students in the implementation and improvement of the content and processes During the visit in Riga, experts met with the representatives of RSU management, administrative structural units, and Student Union, as well as with students, deans, and lecturers.

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 includes 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. Taking into consideration the recommendations of *PASCL* experts, RSU has:

- introduced quality monitoring processes and has taken into consideration its development activities, such as promotion of quantitative and qualitative student feedback, identification and evaluation of study programme quality indicators;
- improved functionality of the e-learning environment;
- updated assessment approach to learning outcomes, types of examinations and content thereof;
- promoted the efficiency of internal communication and strengthened cooperation with external partners, employers, etc.

Based on the positive assessment of RSU in the project, examples of good practice, and attitude aimed at cooperation, RSU was selected as a partner in the development of a successive project application.

The procedure for assessing the achievements of students and the learning outcomes is incorporated in the description of each study course. The course teacher is the one who decides on the assessment system in their course. The criteria for completing a course include attendance, participation in seminars, accomplishment of individual assignments, active participation in discussions, etc. The student is informed of all assessment parameters before starting the course. Operating in RSU e-learning environment, the office employees prepare assessment sheets for examinations that are presented to lecturers in the final part of the study course. After the examination, permanent lecturers personally, using access to e-studies, or invited lecturers with the help of the faculty office staff enter final assessments in the e-learning environment, which is linked to students' personal accounts. Each student sees information related to studies and their assessments in their personal account.

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.	RSU has an established policy and procedures for quality assurance of higher education, as defined by the internal regulatory documents described in Self Assessment Report Paragraph 1.3., 2.1.1., 2.2.1. and 2.2.2. and Annex 23 The compliance of the study programme with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education (ESG) Part 1) Paragraph 1.1, which define the quality mechanisms of the study process at RSU and which apply to all study programmes.
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.	RSU has a developed mechanism for the creation and internal approval of the study programmes of the higher education institution, as well as the supervision of their performance and periodic inspection thereof. The mechanism is described in Self Assessment Report Paragraph 2.2.1., 2.2.2. and 2.2.3 and in Annex 23 The compliance of the study programme with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education (ESG) Part 1) Paragraph 1.2., 1.7. and 1.9. and is applicable to completely all study programmes. It is supervised by the Centre for Educational Growth (PIC), and at the same time it also conducts improvements of the system, provides support to the Heads of the study programmes and directions in this process taking into consideration its experience within the framework of its competence. The example is the study programmes developed within the framework of SAM that are described in Latvian: https://www.rsu.lv/projekts/studiju-programmu-fragmentacijas-mazinasana-un-studiju-internacionalizacijas-veicinasana, and in English: https://www.rsu.lv/en/project/reduction-fragmentation-study-programmes-and-promotion-internationalisation-studies. Upgrading and development of the study programmes have been implemented upon drafting the development plan for the StD. The actual process is discussed at the meetings of the Study Direction Quality Council, meetings of the department that implements the programme and the meetings of the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare Council. The process of the development of study programmes has been constantly monitored by analysing students' academic performance, number of students, drop-out rate, technical facilities, assessment, work quality of the academic staff and other essential indicators.
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.	See Paragraph 2.1.5. and Annex 17.1. Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard (for each study programme) and Annex 23 The compliance of the study programme with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education (ESG) Part 1) Paragraph 1.3. for the criteria, conditions, and procedures for the assessment of students' academic performance, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.
4.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.	The internal procedures and mechanisms for ensuring the qualification and quality of the work of academic staff are described in Part II, point 3.5. Every year, conformity assessment is carried out, as well as 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.	See the information on student academic achievements in Paragraph 2.1.5. See the information on graduate employment in Paragraph 3.1.3 (for each study programme), Annex 10 Graduate Employment and Annex 12 Investigation of Compliance of Study Programmes with Medium and Long-term Development Trends of the Labour Market and Industry. For the information on the mechanisms for provision of the graduate feedback see Paragraph 1.2 and 2.2.4. For the information on student and graduate satisfaction with the study programme see Paragraph 2.2.3. and Annexes 21.1. Results of the Assessment Survey of the Study Programme and the Study Courses Thereof and 21.2. Results of Survey of Graduates (for each study programme) and Annex 23 The compliance of the study programme with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education (ESG) Part 1) Paragraph 1.7. and 1.9. For the information on the efficiency of the academic staff see Paragraph 2.3.7. and 2.4.4., Paragraph 3.4 (for each study programme) and Annexes 6.1 List of teaching staff involved in the implementation of study direction "Social Welfare", 6.2. Biographies of teaching staff members, 6.3. Summary of Statistical Data on Outgoing and Incoming Mobility of Teaching Staff in the Reporting Period, 6.4. List of publications of the academic staff within the reporting period and Annex 24.7. Analysis of the composition of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the Study programme (for each study programme). For the information on available study aids and their costs see Paragraph 2.3.1., 2.3.2., 2.3.3., 2.3.4. and 2.3.8. and Annex 23 The compliance of the study programme with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education (ESG) Part 1) Paragraph 1.6. and Annex 23.1. Assessment of the informative and methodological provision regarding library resources for the implementation of the study direction “Social Welfare” in accordance with the requirements of the guidelines and 23.2. Evaluation of the Informative and Methodological Base on IT Infrastructure and Resources Available. For the information on the essential indicators of the higher education institution’s activities see Paragraphs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 and RSU homepage in Latvian (https://www.rsu.lv/par-rsu/strategija-dokumenti) and English (https://www.rsu.lv/en/about-us/strategy).

6.	The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.	While implementing the quality assurance systems, the higher education institution guarantees continuous improvement, development and efficient performance of the study direction, as described in Paragraph 1.3., 2.1.1., 2.1.2., 2.1.3., 2.2.1., 2.2.2. and Annex 23 The compliance of the study programme with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education (ESG) Part 1) Paragraph 1.9. and 1.10. See Annex 4.1 for the Development Plan of the Study Direction, Annex 4.2 for the Organisational Management Chart of the Study Direction and Annex 11 Plan for Implementation of Recommendations.

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 strategic goal of the study direction “Social Welfare” is in accordance with the basic strategic goal of RSU: provide innovative knowledge, skills and competence-based education in the social work sector and social development workers. Provision of high-quality education for social workers and development of research will contribute to the implementation of social work policy and sustainable development of the sector in the country.

The study direction “Social Welfare implements the StP in the social work sector and pursues RSU strategy in one of its education and research areas - Social Welfare[1].

The study direction “Social Welfare” at RSU has been implementing study programmes at Bachelor and Master’s levels, responding to the to the demand of the labour market for social workers in both governmental and local government institutions and institutions of non-governmental sector that provide a wide range of social services to the public.

The study programmes in social work within the study direction “Social Welfare” have been taught at Rīga Stradiņš University that has obtained the international Quality Management System ISO-9001 standard certificate (See RSU Quality Policy (information in Latvian, information in English, certificate ISO 9001 in Latvian). The standard of RSU quality management system includes the ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) internal quality assurance standards for studies and guidelines for quality evaluation in the European Higher Education Area, as well as the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia. The quality management for the study programme is maintained in accordance with the Higher education institution management process defined by the ISO standard.

The following three study programmes have been implemented within the study direction Social Welfare at RSU:

1. Professional Bachelor's study programme "SOCIAL WORK" (code 42762);
2. Professional Master's study programme "SOCIAL WORK" (code 47762);
3. Joint academic Master's study programme "SOCIAL WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH", which has been developed as an international cooperation project between the higher education institutions of four countries: Rīga Stradiņš University, Mykolas Romeris University in Lithuania, Catholic University in Ruzomberok, Slovakia and University Institute of Lisbon in Portugal (code 45762).

Social justification for the establishment of the StP

Social Work study programmes are designed to respond to the needs and strategic challenges of the social work sector in the country. As of 1 January 2003, the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance of the Republic of Latvia entered into force, where Section 41 of Chapter VI "Purpose of Social Work and Requirements for Social Work Specialists" provides that: "Persons who have acquired a second level professional higher or academic education in social work or caritative social work have the right to perform social work." It was planned to introduce this rule by 2008, prescribing that a local government must have one social work specialist for every thousand inhabitants.

On 28 June 2005, the Cabinet of Ministers issued an order *"On the Programme for the Development of Professional Social Work for 2005-2011" (the Programme)*[2] as a new policy initiative.

Taking into consideration that at that time the number of social workers in the country was insufficient to comply with the rule of Section 41 of the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance of the Republic of Latvia, *the Programme* envisaged to provide 300 social workers (practitioners) with the opportunity to obtain appropriate education at the expense of the state budget, thus ensuring that in 2008, about 1/3 of all social work specialists will be social workers with appropriate education or those continuing their studies.

These were nationwide activities for the development of the occupation of social workers in the country and a guarantee that social workers will be required in the labour market in the next six years.

By the Decision No 526 of the StP Licensing Commission of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Latvia as of 22 October 2004, a licence was issued to Rīga Stradiņš University professional higher education study programme "Social Work" (code 42762) for obtaining a professional Bachelor's degree and the qualification of a social worker (License No. 04055 -8.). But for the Master's study programme "Social Work" (code 46762) for obtaining a professional Master's degree, the decision to issue a license was made on 16 December 2005 (Decision No. 774, Licence No 04055-16). The first students started their studies in the spring semester of the academic year 2005/2006.

The study programme "Social Work with Children and Youth" was established in 2014 as a cooperation project with Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania). The study programme was drawn up in accordance with the national documents *(Guidelines for the Development of Professional Social Work for 2014–2020**[3]**, The National Programme for the Improvement of the Conditions of the Child and Family in 2015**[4]**,The National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014–2020**[5]** and other documents*), labour market requirements and the interests of employers.

The study programme focused on the acquisition of skills to expand career opportunities for graduates – the ability to compete in the labour market of Latvia, Lithuania and Europe and work in different multicultural environments.

To ensure the quality growth of the StP and the study direction, the Department of Welfare and Social Work has been carrying out work in several directions (see Figure 5).

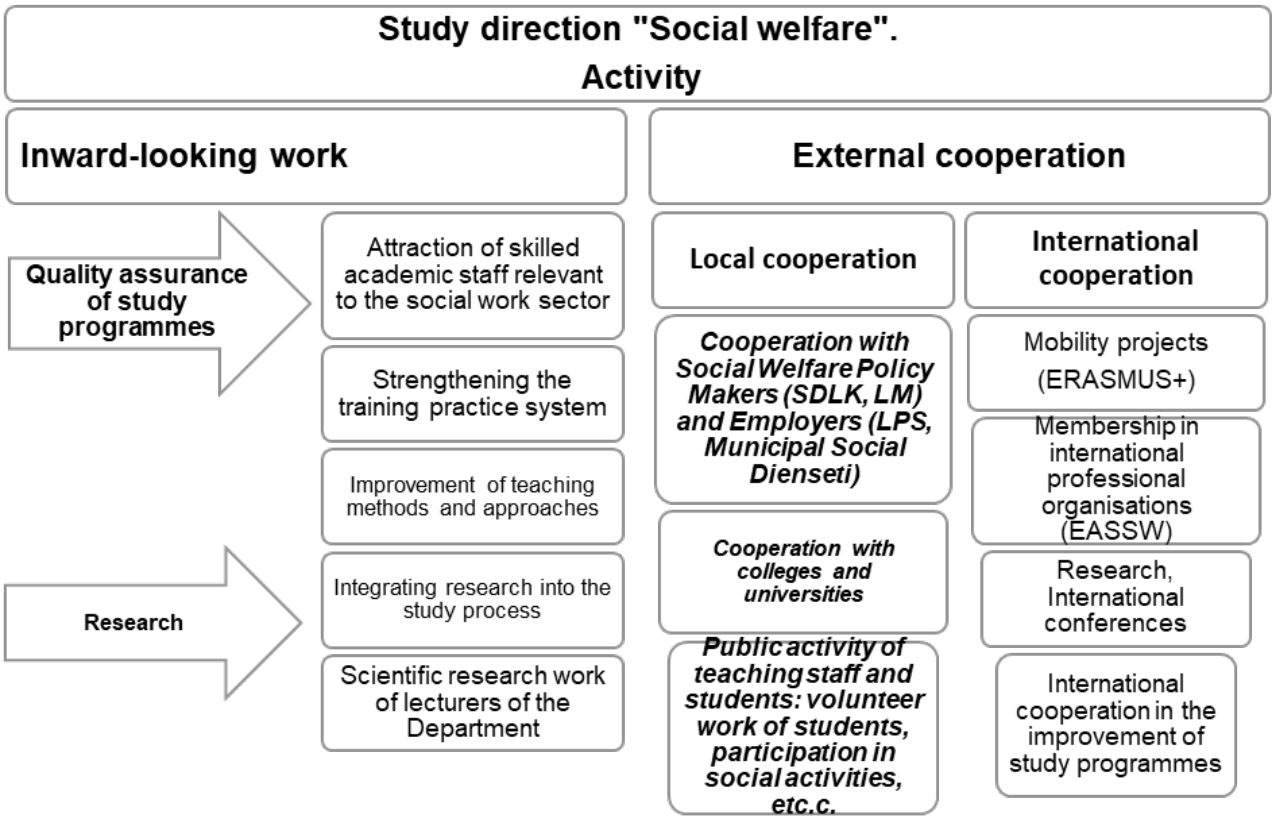


Figure 5. **Development trends of RSU Department of Welfare and Social Work and the study direction "Social Welfare".**

Through the development of diverse activities, RSU social work study programmes have gained positive recognition among employers, as well as stimulated interest in studies in RSU social work programmes. This is evidenced by the evaluations of both employers and students and graduates in the Ministry of Welfare research "On the evaluation of study programmes in the field of social work at higher education institutions of Latvia".[6] (See Annex 12 Research on the compliance of study programmes with the trends in the medium and long-term labour market and the sectoral development trends (summary of employers' surveys and studies).

It should be noted that social work in Latvia is a relatively new sector: thirty years of development. Promoting the prestige of the profession in the country, in society and among the branches of science, is a challenge for the social work sector. One of the strategic goals of the sectoral policy for 2021–2027 is [7] "strengthening the importance and role of social work among other related sectors and in society, including: *promoting the understanding of the social work profession and increasing its value in society".* Thus, the education of social workers and the development of the study programmes should be analysed in the context of the situation with the social work sector in the country as a whole.

Social work, according to the international definition, which is also recognised in Latvia, is a practice-based profession and academic discipline.[8] RSU Department of Welfare and Social Work is actively involved in the development of social work education policy, including strengthening the status of the sector. Thus, for example, in 2017, changes were initiated to the Latvian Classification of Sciences (available in Latvian, not available in English), which resulted in the classification of social work in Latvia as the sector *Sociology and Social Work* (paragraph 5.4), with the sub-sector *Social Policy and Organisation of Social Work*, as well as other *sub-sectors of Sociology and Social Work*[9]. Strengthening the status of social work as a branch of science plays an important role in positioning social issues among other sectors.

From 2019–2021 new professional standards in the social work sector were developed in Latvia: standards for the profession of *a social worker and lead social worker.* The lecturers of the Department of Welfare and Social Work also took part in the standard development working group established by the Ministry of Welfare.

New professional standards create a new demand also for social work education. They prescribe that there are separate standards for Bachelor and Master's professional study programmes: the content of a bachelor's, or level 6 programme according to the Latvian Qualification Framework (LQF) is based on the standard of *a social worker*, whereas a master's, or level 7 programme according to the LQF is based on the standard for the profession of *a lead social worker*.

In accordance with the requirements of the new professional standards, the content of the study programme has been updated in both the Bachelor and Master's study programmes.

The Department of Welfare and Social Work has set an important task for the alignment with the international processes of social work education. It should be noted that the Department represents RSU and is an active participant in the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW).

International cooperation has led to the establishment of a joint Study programme "Social Work with Children and Youth". This programme makes it possible for students to study in a multicultural and international environment; students and teaching staff share their experience, participate in *Erasmus* + programmes, and take advantage of the placement opportunities offered by the *Erasmus* + programme. In 2020, the programme was submitted to the *Erasmus Mundus* project competition organised by the European Commission and received a six-year European Commission project funding for its operation and development. It should be noted that this is the only *Erasmus Mundus* project in Latvia that has received funding from the European Commission.

The study programme "Social Work with Children and Youth" demonstrates the effort to achieve goals that are based on the experience of the EU and are compatible with the social work study programmes in higher education institutions of other countries. The above is a brief overview showing how the Department of Welfare and Social Work develops a multi-faceted network of cooperation and activities to ensure the sustainable development of the study direction "Social Welfare".

Assessment of the linkage between Study Programmes

The Bachelor and Master's study programmes included within the study direction provide higher education in accordance with the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF)[10]:

- Bachelor's studies comply with the level 6 of LQF,
- Master's studies comply with the level 7 of LQF.

From the point of view of LQF levels, the StPs are linked to such an extent that the StPs provide succession of knowledge and skills acquisition in Master's studies in relation to the Bachelor's StP.

Upon completion of the studies for a Master's degree, graduates have the opportunity to continue their education in doctoral study programmes in the field of sociology and social work science.

Significance of StP (uniqueness) compared to other similar StPs in Latvia and abroad

RSU social work StPs were created with a conceptually new perspective: to create the interdisciplinary content of the StP, so that students might acquire the knowledge and skills that ensure the competence to work interdisciplinary, including together with rehabilitation professionals, as well as to work in the field of healthcare services.

In educating social workers at RSU, the content of the StP was developed by interdisciplinary linking

the standard of social work education and practice with basic knowledge of medicine and rehabilitation.

When the StP was developed, it was taken into account that, compared to other higher education institutions of Latvia, where professional social workers are prepared, RSU has significantly wider opportunities to integrate the knowledge required by both the previous and current professional standards for social workers into the training of social workers, which relates more to the medical sector (mental health and mental health disorders, adult health, addictions, understanding of the International Classification of Diseases, understanding of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, understanding of psychotherapy, etc.).

Basic knowledge of medicine and rehabilitation ensures competitiveness in the labour market for graduates of the study direction "Social Welfare". It is also confirmed by the conclusions of the Dynamic University research "Study on the competitiveness and compliance of Rīga Stradiņš University and RSU Red Cross Medical College with the development trends of medium and long-term labour market and sectoral development trends" (2020) (Dynamic University study), where it was noted that the study courses related to health care, which were integrated into StPs of the study direction "Social Welfare", give competitive advantages[11].

Looking ahead, interdisciplinarity appears to be an essential resource for the development of innovation and future education. This is also emphasized in the Education Development Guidelines 2021 – 2027: Interdisciplinarity: the challenges of today's society, which are related to the environment, health, public processes, the economy and other spheres, are complex and require an interdisciplinary approach to fully understand and address them[12].

RSU study direction *Social Welfare* is being developed keeping up with the area of activity and directions of strategic development of the University[13], as well as with the needs and trends of society and economic development.

Employment of graduates in the field of social work characterise the compliance with the area of the activity of the University best of all. According to the data of RSU Student Information System, the total number of graduates is 317 students between spring 2010 and spring 2021. Following the employment of graduates, it can be seen that graduates work mainly in Social Services, NGO, Crisis Centres or Social Care Centres, both in the regions of the Republic and in Riga. For example, all 17 graduates of the Bachelor's study programme of 2017work in the field of social work: in the social services of Riga, Valmiera, Madona, Bauska, Gulbene and Sigulda, in the crisis centre "Dardedze", "Red Cross" and Riga SOS Family Support Centre.

Mainly those who already have experience and work in the field of social services enrol for Master's degree studies. Studies contribute to the opportunities for the students' professional career development. For example, graduates of RSU social work Master's programme are, or become, the heads of social services of local governments of the Republic, the heads of their departments or the newly established administrations of social affairs (following the Administrative-Territorial Reform), or work as social service developers in non-governmental organisations. Graduates of RSU social work study programmes are not only employees, but also employers.

Compliance with the needs of society and economic development

This report is being prepared at the end of the previous planning period (2014–2020), and there is a clear outline of the strategic challenges for social welfare in the coming period (2021 – 2027).

The development needs and development trends of the society and the national economy have been defined in several strategic documents of national interest, including:

- The National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021–2027 (hereinafter referred to as the NDP)

- Ministry of Welfare “Policy Guidelines for Social Protection and Labour Market for 2021–2027”;
- Education Development Guidelines for 2021–2027 “Future Skills for the Future Society”.

Paragraphs 118-119 of the NDP Action Direction “Social Inclusion” prescribe: Strengthening the professional competence and specialisation of social work professionals for the provision, improvement and accessibility of innovative, customer-based social services in the regions that meet the demographic trends and needs of the population[14]. Indicators:

1. The proportion of social services that meet the minimum number of social work professionals laid down in the legislation;
2. The proportion of social work professionals that work in social services and have appropriate education;
3. The number of social workers who have taken in-service training.

Whereas, the clauses 5–7 of the Policy Guidelines for Social Protection and Labour Market for 2021. – 2027 "Action direction: “Modern and Accessible System of Social Services...” provide[15]for a series of activities, including in the education of social workers, in order to fulfil the important task of the Latvian social work sector: increasing the importance and role of social work among other related sectors and in society.

Following the Education Development Guidelines for 2021–2027, studies promoting skills development in close cooperation with the professional social work sector, improvement of the content of the respective study programmes and alignment with the development needs of the sector will be important in the development of the study direction “Social Welfare”. Maintaining the quality of academic staff will also be important for this task[16].

The difficulties encountered in the implementation of RSU study direction are related to the insufficiency of state-funded study places, despite the fact that RSU is one of the leading universities with a rich provision of material, technical and intellectual resources and a modern learning environment for the development of high-quality study programmes. Study programmes included in the study direction “Social Welfare” at RSU, that is a higher education institution subordinate to the Ministry of Health, are in an unequal situation in comparison with the study programmes of the Social Welfare study direction in other higher education institutions of Latvia, such as the University of Latvia and Liepāja University.

Unlike the said universities, RSU has a limited number of state-funded study places. Every year there are only 8 state-funded study places for the 1st year students of the Bachelor's StP, whereas the Master's StP does not have any state-funded study places. The salary of those working in the sector is not sufficient to finance their own studies, whereas RSU cannot provide study programmes that are not financially viable, which in turn has a negative impact on the availability of studies. The unavailability of state funding poses risks for both attracting new students and for retaining the existing students. In order to solve this matter, every year during the reporting period, RSU has indicated for the need for additional study places to the Ministry of Health, and has repeatedly raised the issue regarding the need for state-funded study places to the Ministry of Education and Science and to the Ministry of Welfare; there have been periodic solutions with local government co-financing for studies, but this has not been a long-term solution. In addition, RSU is one of the few implementers of international study programmes, with the help of which it has managed to develop the Joint Master's Study Programme “Social Work with Children and Youth” by attracting ERASMUS MUNDUS funding. On 13 October 2021, RSU sent a letter (No. 60-6/380/2021) to the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Education and Science, inviting to jointly discuss the funding of study places from the state budget.

[1] Rīga Stradiņš University Development Strategy 2017 – 2021 https://www.rsu.lv/sites/default/files/imce/Dokumenti/general/rsu_strategija_2017-2021.pdf

[2] On the Programme for the Development of Professional Social Work 2005-2011. https://likumi.lv/ta/id/111596-on-professionala-social-work-attib-programme-2005-2011

[3] *Guidelines for the Development of Professional Social Work for 2014-2020, http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/tiesibu_aktu_projekti_2/iesibu_aktu_projekti_3/lmpamatn_140613_sd.pdf*

[4] *The National Programme for the Improvement of the Conditions of the Child and Family in 2015 (approved by the order No.6 of 10 January 2014 of the Minister of Welfare the Republic of Latvia), http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/berns_gimene/vp_2014.pdf*

[5] *http://www.lvif.gov.lv/uploaded_files/sadarbiba/seapplus/NAP2020_A.VITOLA.pdf*

[6] "On the evaluation of study programmes in field of social work at higher education institutions of Latvia. (2020) https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/petijums-Par-atvijas-augstskolu

[7] Policy guidelines for social security and labour market for 2021 - 2027. Cabinet of Ministers Order No.616, 2021. http://tap.mk.gov.lv/lv/mk/tap/?pid=40502106&mode=mk&date=2021-08-31

[8] Global Definition of the Social Work Profession. https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/

[9] Regulations regarding sectors and sub-sectors of science in Latvia. Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 49, 2018. https://www.vestnesis.lv/op/2018/18.9

[10] Education Law. https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=50759

[11]Dynamic University (2020) Research on the competitiveness of Rīga Stradiņš University and RSU Red Cross Medical College study programmes and their compliance with medium and long-term development trends in labour market and the sector.

[12] Education Development Guidelines for 2021-2027 "Future Skills for the Future Society".

[13]Rīga Stradiņš University Development Strategy for the Period of 2017-2021. https://www.rsu.lv/sites/default/files/imce/Dokumenti/RSU_strategija_15102019.pdf

[14] The National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021 - 2027. https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027_apstiprin%C4%81ts%20Saeim%C4%81_1.pdf

[15] "Policy Guidelines for Social Protection and Labour Market for 2021-2027". http://tap.mk.gov.lv/mk/tap/?pid=40502106

[16] Education Development Guidelines for 2021-2027. "Future Skills for the Future Society". http://tap.mk.gov.lv/lv/mk/tap/?pid=40492545).

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.

Internal factors	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**

· Recognition of the StP; · Well-provided intellectual, material and technical facilities and a modern learning environment for the quality of the programmes and for the promotion and evaluation of student achievements. · High-quality library resources - books and databases. · Potential students have shown an interest in social work study programmes at RSU. · RSU graduates are recognized, demanded and employed in the labour market in the social welfare/social services sector. · Lecturers are also employed in the social work sector and are involved in solution of the issues related to the development of social work sector. · The ability to adapt to the practical needs of the social work sector. · The work of placement supervisors in the full-time bachelor's study programme is paid. · Students are provided with paid 3-month placement in Riga municipality (Agreement between RSU and the Riga City Council Welfare Department). · An international cooperation network has been created to provide opportunities for participating in student and teaching staff mobility programmes as well as shared cooperation projects and to attract international lecturers to social work study courses. · The connection of research to practice takes place from the first year of study at the Bachelor's StP. · The use of simulations in the study process has been started in the acquisition of professional skills.	· Closer intersectoral link should be developed at the study programme and study course level. · Although students are involved in research projects and work together with lecturers, students' interest in research activities could be greater. · Part-time students are also most frequently employed in the social work sector. Due to insufficient capacity, students are not always able to successfully combine studies and work, so they often decide to suspend their studies by withdrawing or taking academic leave. The main reasons mentioned are family circumstances, social conditions and financial difficulties. · The high tuition fee for social work StP exceeds paying capacity. This has a negative impact on the availability of studies in RSU social work programmes. · In spite of the fact that full-time undergraduate students have state-funded study places, most students also work in addition to their studies. Fatigue syndrome is often observed. · The lack of time for students is often an obstacle to the quality of a Master's thesis. · Part-time students are students from different regions of the country. Travel from the place of residence to the university, as well as transport expenses in the city of Riga travelling between various RSU departments, increase the total cost of studies. · Insufficiently competitive remuneration for invited lecturers from the professional environment of social work limits the possibilities for attracting such lecturers. · Communication between students and the lecturers of the Department should be improved.
External Factors	
Opportunities	**Threats**

· Inviting highly qualified visiting lecturers.
· Taking advantage of ERASMUS opportunities.
· In-service training in a practical social work environment for the teaching staff of the higher education institution would contribute to closer links between the university and employers;
· Researching the "*social demand*" for the social worker profession would contribute to a better understanding of social work development issues in the context of modern social transformation processes. It would also encourage the updating of the new study trends, StP goals and learning outcomes in compliance with the demand for the profession of a social worker.
· Co-financing from Riga municipality and local governments of Latvia as employers to support students would facilitate the training of professional social workers.
· Cooperation with local governments for the development of student volunteer work.
· Promoting publicity for the achievements of students and teaching staff would raise the recognition of the need for higher education in social work, as well as the prestige of the profession.
· Update the need for co-operation between sectoral ministries and to achieve a common position of the Ministry of Welfare, ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health regarding funding for social work study programmes at RSU and their accessibility.
· Use the available ESF support measures for the recruitment and training of professional teaching staff in the field of social work, in accordance with the Ministry of Welfare Plan for the Improvement and Development of Social Services for 2021-2024.

· In recent years, the decline in the professional self-esteem of social work practitioners, the burnout of professionals and the drain of professionals from the profession have created a negative image of the social worker profession and have been affecting the interest of the young people, secondary school graduates in the occupation of a social worker.
· Low prestige of social work and a social worker in society.
· Decreasing interest in studying to become a social worker.
· The lack of teaching staff with the highest academic qualifications (PhD) in the social work sector in the country as a whole poses a threat to the authentic development of the social work sector.
· Since June 2016, social workers have ceased to be included in the Register of Medical Support Persons (Cabinet Regulations No. 192). This has an impact on the cross-sectoral links between the healthcare and social work sectors in the implementation of the content of study programmes;
· Increasing competition in higher education area of social work (a wide range of formal and non-formal education).
· Professional organisations in social work have a weak influence on the development issues of the profession.
· The unresolved issue of financing the StP at the level of the Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education and Science hinders the development of the Social Welfare study direction at RSU, which also affects the future development of the social work sector.

To maintain the stability of the strengths:

- Resources will be invested in improving the academic qualifications of the teaching staff, including the development of ICT technology skills;

- New forms and types of studies will be developed and introduced, using the advantages of digitization and the methodological support of the Centre for Educational Growth;
- International cooperation will be continued, including with the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW) to recruit highly qualified teaching staff for the study programmes of the study direction;
- Participation of the teaching staff and students in conferences and publishing opportunities in international peer-reviewed editions will be supported, thereby contributing to the publicity of academic achievements in the study direction.

To reduce weaknesses:

- Bilateral cooperation with professionals in the social work sector will be further developed, through in-service trainings for the teaching staff involved in the study programmes in sectoral institutions and organisations for diversification of competences in social work, and by continuing the involvement of professionals in the implementation of the StP thus contributing to the development of their academic and pedagogical expertise;
- The use of ICT technologies and the integration of the principles of distance learning in the study process will be improved in order to achieve a more efficient use of time resources and to promote the accessibility of RSU study programmes for part-time students from the regions of the country.

In order to take advantage of the opportunities in accordance with the Ministry of Welfare Plan for the Improvement and Development of Social Services for 2021-2024, to apply for ESF support for the recruitment and training of professional teaching staff in the field of social work and to promote inter-university cooperation in the development and implementation of teaching and methodological materials and training modules for social work with different target groups.

In order to reduce the impact of external threats, the positioning of social work education issues at the level of political decisions will become one of the most important challenges, so inter-university cooperation for targeted strategic activities in raising the prestige of the profession and developing the policy for social work education will continue; work in the Inter-professional Coordination Council at the Ministry of Welfare will continue and the opportunities for effective co-operation between RSU, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health, as well as with Riga municipality and local governments of Latvia in educating social workers at Rīga Stradiņš University will be sought.

The development plan of the Study Direction “Social Welfare” (see Annex 4.1) has been devised and annually approved in a joint working group with the members of the Study Quality Council, carrying out the annual StP quality assessment and preparing the report. During the pre-accreditation period, the annually approved and evaluated SWOT analysis and the development plan of the StD were reviewed and updated.

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.

Management (governance) structure of the study direction Social Welfare, its efficiency

The management of the study direction and the corresponding programmes are carried out in accordance with the Process Description No. 35 “Planning and administration of the study process” (Rector’s decree of 31.07.2020).

The management structure is composed of:

- The academic department – Department of Welfare and Social Work,
- The Study quality Council - the Quality Council of the study direction “Social Welfare”, which includes representatives of students and employers,
- Head of the study direction - Associate Professor Lolita Vilka
- Heads of the study programmes:
    - Heads of the study programmes:
    - Marika Lotko, the Head of the Bachelor’s study programme “Social Work”;
    - Acting Associate Professor Lolita Vilka, the Head of the Master’s study programme “Social Work”
    - Anna Broka, the Head of the international Master’s study programme “Social Work with Children and Youth”.
        - Lecturers of study courses.

It should be noted that the study direction “Social Welfare” is implemented by the Department of Welfare and Social Work. The effectiveness of the management structure can be determined in the context of RSU Quality Policy[1], against certain quality criteria[2] and the achievement of the goals of the study direction and the corresponding study programmes.

RSU quality indicators include the institutional level, content level, individual level (learners, lecturers) and employers' perspective, a total of 14 criteria.

Student satisfaction with studies, indicators of the academic achievement, student participation in the development of the StP, as well as the employment of graduates in the sector and employers' feedback on student work during placements or the competence of graduates testify to the effectiveness of the organisational structure and process in achieving the goals set.

Role of the Head of the study direction and Heads of study programmes

The Head of the StP is both the programme developer and the organiser and coordinator of the study process and the support provider to the lecturers of study courses involved in the implementation of the StP, and the encourager to the students.

The Head of the StP is responsible for developing/updating of the StP content, planning the acquisition of the StP and preparing a plan for approval by the Dean’s Council. The Head of the StP is responsible for ensuring the examination of knowledge, skills and competences and their relevance to the learning outcomes; is responsible for the organisation of placement; cooperates with students and lecturers of study courses; cooperates with employers to find out the employers' satisfaction with the competences of graduates.

The Head of the StP cooperates also with the Heads of other RSU Study programmes and departments, as other RSU departments are involved in the implementation of the study courses of the social work study programme: Department of Public Health and Epidemiology (information in English), Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy (information in English), Department of Biology and Microbiology (information in English), Department of Clinical Skills and Medical Technologies (information in English), Department of Psychiatry and Narcology (information in English), Department of International Business and Economics (information in English), Faculty of

Communication (information in English) and Statistics Unit (information in English).

As the social work StP is interdisciplinary, the cooperation of the Heads of the programme with the departments involved in the implementation of the programme is essential for achieving a common understanding of the place of the relevant study courses in the overall content of the social work StP.

The Head of the study direction in close cooperation with the Heads of the study programmes collects and analyses the learning outcomes of the social work StP, prepares overviews and reports, draws up a development plan for the study direction, organises the work of the Quality Council for the study direction, cooperates with external partners in the field of social work education.

The management structure and process of the study direction and the corresponding study programmes defined in the process description ensure regular and coordinated work of the Social Welfare study direction within the overall process of RSU.

See Annex 4.2 for the management structure of the study direction.

[1] Rīga Stradiņš University Quality Policy
https://www.rsu.lv/sites/default/files/documents/rsu_quality_policy_2016_ENG.pdf

[2]Quality indicators for RSU study programmes. Approved by the Rector's Decree 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.

Admission to RSU takes place based on the admission requirements for the respective study level approved by RSU Senate as defined for the particular academic year. RSU has admission regulations for each level of studies. The admission regulations are available on RSU website in Latvian and English, as well as in Annex No.1. See paragraph 1.4 of the Annex No.23. Student matriculation, progress of studies, recognition and certification of qualifications.

In describing the recognition of professional experience, previously acquired formal and non-formal education within the StD "Social Welfare", it should be noted that students who have already completed a StP at a college or university apply to start studies both in the Bachelor and Master's study programmes at a later stage of study.

In such cases, the content and extent of the study courses acquired in previous education are compared with the content and extent of the study courses within the social work StP, and a decision on the approval (or disapproval) of the relevant study courses and additional study courses to be completed is taken in accordance with the aforementioned Cabinet Regulations No.932.

People with already completed education in a college in one of the social work specialist study programmes, such as social carer, social assistance organiser or social rehabilitation, most frequently start studies in the Bachelor's StP in later stages of study.

The majority of Master's StP students are employees in state or local government social service

institutions, as well as in the NGO sector. People with an obtained Master's degree in another sector quite often enrol for the StP. Previously completed study courses are approved (or not approved) in accordance with the provisions of the aforementioned Cabinet Regulations No. 932.

Whereas, the knowledge, skills and competences acquired within professional experience while working in the field of social services are recognised in accordance with the provisions of the Cabinet Regulations No. 505 and in accordance with RSU Regulations on Validation of Competences Acquired outside Formal Education or in Professional Experience and Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved in Prior Learning.

The possibility of recognising the learning outcomes achieved in previous education contributes to the interest in obtaining social work education also for those who have already completed one higher education and want to pursue a career in another field.

Social work is an interdisciplinary profession which is related to the areas such as psychology, pedagogy, law, as well as certain rehabilitation specialties, such as occupational therapy. Professionals of the aforementioned sectors who have started their work in social service institutions choose their Master's studies in the field of social work.

Assessing the professional experience, the previously acquired opportunities for the recognition of formal and non-formal education within the study direction, it can be concluded:

Firstly, RSU has established procedures for the application of Cabinet Regulations No. 932 and 505. Opportunities for recognition of previously acquired professional experience and educational results are provided in the study direction "Social Welfare".

Thus, for example, in the academic year 2018/2019, 14 students had submitted documents for the evaluation and recognition of previous professional experience and educational outcomes, while in the academic year 2020/2021, ten students submitted their documents for the abovementioned procedure. Those students who had submitted documents for the recognition of previously acquired knowledge and skills have been recognised. For example, a student with a professional qualification of an ergotherapist who worked in an institution providing social services and performed the functions of a social professional had his/her previously acquired knowledge and skills recognised. In another case, the knowledge and skills acquired in practice/previous experience were recognised for a student with a teacher's diploma who had worked in a municipal social service and provided the services of a family assistant, but later worked as a social pedagogue. Similarly, the knowledge and skills acquired in practice/previous experience were recognised for a student with a bachelor's degree in social sciences (in management sciences). The student was later working as a manager at Family Support Centre and a social worker. In several cases, the knowledge and skills acquired through previous experience are being recognised for students with a diploma in law and working in the Orphans' Court or social services.

Thirdly, previously acquired professional experience or education in a related field enriches the profession of a leading social worker for students pursuing a professional career in social work. Thus, for example, a leading social worker with previous education in the field of law is able to effectively integrate legal knowledge into social work practice, implementing the principles of human rights and social justice, which in turn are core values of social work.

Appended:

Annex No. 23.2 A document confirming that the higher education institution will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution (a contract with another accredited higher education institution

or college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

Annex 24.3 A document confirming that the higher education institution guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

Annex 24.8 Sample of the study agreement.

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 may familiarise themselves with the criteria, conditions and binding procedures for the assessment of student performance in the Academic Regulations I (documents are available in section "Studies" in Latvian and in English). Requirements for defining and evaluating learning outcomes – knowledge, skills and competence, are included in the Process Description No. 6 "Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes" (See Annex 1).

Methods of assessment of student performance and achieved learning outcomes, as well as assessment criteria for completion of study courses, are defined in the description of each study course and are available to all students prior to the start of the study course. The academic freedom of each lecturer is respected in the implementation of the study courses, including the development and implementation of examinations, at the same time providing that the teaching and examination methods are chosen in accordance with the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study course. In order to ensure that the assessment methods of student performance, procedures and principles are consistent with the attainment of the aims of the study programme and the needs of students; regular monitoring of the quality of study courses is carried out within the StD, involving both the teaching staff and the Heads of StP and RSU study process support departments, such as the quality experts of RSU Centre for Educational Growth who examine and approve study course descriptions, as well as representatives of employers and students, including in the Study Quality Council. Within the framework of this cooperation and information exchange, both the observation of teaching and the experience-sharing workshops for the teaching staff and Heads of StP are organised and the mapping of study programmes is done during which particular attention is paid to close links between the learning outcomes of study courses and the learning outcomes of the StP. The assessment methods used in study courses are discussed between the teaching staff and students, evaluating the relevance of the methods to the aims of the StP. During the annual updating of study courses, best practices are taken over and used further. At the same time, the assessment methods used in the study courses are reviewed taking into consideration the results of the course evaluation questionnaires, in which a special section is devoted to assessment 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 assessment of interim and final examinations of study courses are available to each student on their student profile in RSU e-learning environment.

Creative, research, practical and self-reflective works are assessed in accordance with the aims of each study course and the evaluation criteria of the course that are introduced to the students at the beginning of the course by the course lecturer. The criteria for research work are available in the methodological guidelines for research papers, which were improved and updated in 2020 for both Bachelor and Master's degree students (Documents are available in section "Scientific Thesis" in Latvian, and in 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 developed RSU Code of Ethics and established the Ethics Committee that considers violations and cases of disputes on the basis of applications. RSU has developed and approved the document "Methodological Guidelines for Citing References and Compiling Bibliography" (available at only in Latvian), 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 introduced and uses the Unified Computerised Plagiarism Control System of Latvian higher education institutions to check the originality of the content of final theses; and RSU has purchased a license for the plagiarism checking tool "Turnitin" for wider use. For easier use, the tool is integrated into RSU e-learning website. Example of application: all the coursework envisaged, as well as all final papers and individual course reports must be submitted in e-studies at the relevant study course where it is requested to upload papers to Turnitin. After the papers are uploaded, the results on the plagiarism (matching) of the papers are available on e-studies, which show both the overall percentage of similarity and visually demonstrate matching places in the paper itself, identifying also the sources used that match some part of the text. Supervisors of coursework assess the results of similarity, taking into consideration also the Turnitin User Guide (the document is available only in Latvian) for academic staff developed by RSU, which sets out the principles for the interpretation of the results (instructions on page 7). Taking into consideration these results, the supervisor of the respective work evaluates whether the work submitted complies with the principles of academic integrity and makes an assessment accordingly or informs the student if the work needs to be corrected. The evaluation of Turnitin results takes into account that a relatively high (above 20%) similarity with other sources may not mean that the submitted work shows signs of plagiarism, but indicate a lack of contribution from the author, namely the author has used other sources of information and correctly referred to them, but the work lacks the author's analysis, argumentation and interpretation, which the supervisor also points out to the student when giving the assessment or returning the work for correction.

In order to improve the lecturers' knowledge of the possibilities of this tool and to develop the skills for using it, RSU Centre for Educational Growth regularly organises practical training 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 qualification and diploma papers at the end of the study programme. Lectures and seminars on the principles of academic integrity and mechanisms for their observation and checking are also provided to students during the study process.

Introduction of academic integrity in the programmes of the social welfare study direction:

- students at all levels learn basic principles of academic integrity, for example, in the study courses “Introduction to Studies”, “Information Literacy”, “Professional Activity and Ethics”, “Semester Paper”, “Bachelor's Thesis”, “Master's Thesis”, “Research Ethics”;
- it is the responsibility of the Heads of the study programmes to inform about the principles of academic integrity and the prevention procedures at RSU (consideration of plagiarism cases in department meetings, maintenance of a plagiarism register, recording each case; risk of exclusion in cases of repeated plagiarism);
- all final papers (semester papers, Bachelor's theses, Master's theses) are uploaded to the e-studies site and checked with the help of the Turnitin tool;
- most of the coursework of the study courses are also checked with the help of the mentioned tool;
- regular consultations with RSU Student Union on issues of academic integrity take place.

There have been no cases of plagiarism since the introduction of electronic checking of the papers and regular education on academic integrity. If plagiarism is detected, it is initially considered at the department meeting, giving the student the opportunity to explain the situation and the causes of plagiarism. If, after consideration, plagiarism is recognised as having been committed, the student signs in the plagiarism register that he/she has been informed that, in the case of repeated plagiarism, exclusion will follow. In the case of plagiarism in a Bachelor's or Master's thesis, the student is not allowed to defend the thesis and is excluded.

All in all, the principles of academic integrity are successfully adhered to in the study process and violations of academic integrity are primarily considered in a decentralised way at the level of faculties, study programmes, and study courses. In order to promote the implementation of a uniform approach to definition, detection, consideration of violations of academic integrity and application of punishment throughout the university, RSU has developed a plan for the development and implementation of the framework for adhering to the culture of academic integrity and its principles. This initiative is included in the draft project application of the Ministry of Education and Science Specific Support Objective 8.2.3. “To ensure better governance in higher education institutions”. Within the framework of the development of a support system, the main planned activities are:

- promoting prevention. Preventive promotion of compliance with principles of ethics and academic integrity is envisaged by developing online study courses in e-studies, regular on-site training and discussions at the university, educational self-learning materials and self-assessment tests. Three main target groups have been specified for the activity of the action: students, academic staff, and research staff; in addition, promotion of competence of the administration on principles of ethics and academic integrity is envisaged;
- improvement of the internal system. It is intended to develop and improve internal laws and regulations of RSU that will allow aligning the definition and implementation of unified principles of ethics and the management of academic integrity for students, academic staff, and research staff. Internal regulations shall define types of violations, develop processes and procedure for consideration of violations, as well as determine the applicable sanctions in accordance with the type of violation and the situation, thus promoting transparency and consistency in decision-making. Plans have been made to establish a new centralised committee that would participate in the alignment of the internal system by developing and approving procedures and regulatory framework so that it is adapted for consideration of violations of academic integrity by all students of the university and the unified committee is able to make a decision appropriate for each situation according to the unified approach and system for students of all faculties, thus ensuring proportionality of decisions, compliance thereof with the internal regulatory framework and consistency. Involvement of a change

agent has been envisaged for the implementation and application of this activity.

Involvement of a competent and experienced external expert for the implementation of a high-quality system of ethics and academic integrity has been planned in order to consult regarding defining of unified principles and alignment of regulatory framework, as well as the implementation of prevention mechanisms.

In order to promote alignment of basic principles of ethics and academic integrity and compliance with these principles in Latvia, cooperation with several Latvian HEIs has been intended within the framework of this direction, providing for intellectual cooperation in the establishment of principles and development of materials, sharing of the developed resources with other HEIs (e-study courses, training materials), as well as further cooperation to promote ethics and academic integrity and to solve problematic issues at the national level. So far, RSU has signed a declaration of strategic partnership with Red Cross Medical College of Rīga Stradiņš University, University of Latvia, and Riga Technical University, and other higher education institutions have agreed to cooperate to harmonise ethical and academic integrity principles; to develop teaching materials on the sharing of the academic integrity module; to exchange experience to introduce best practices in ensuring academic integrity; and raise the issue of academic integrity at national level.

Additional information about RSU involvement in matters related to academic integrity:

1. The article of 05.03.20219 “Honesty is an integral part of academia” (available in Latvian and English),
2. the article of 15.11.2019 “The seminar on “Academic Integrity and Ethics in Higher Education” was hold” (available only in Latvian)
3. Academic Integrity Policy (available only 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 5).

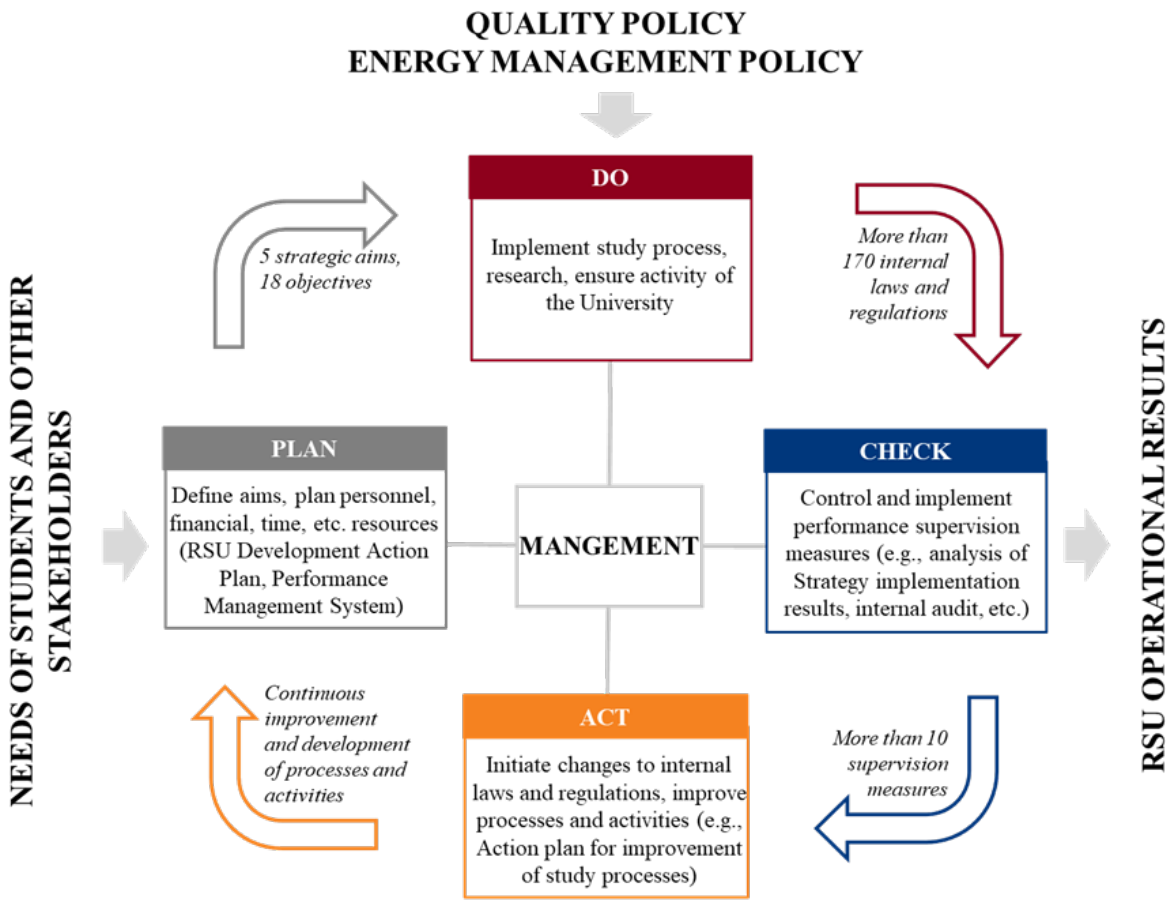


Figure 5 **Implementation and application scheme of the internal quality system**

In general, supervision of RSU activities is ensured by many activities that are integrated in everyday activities, for example, approval, validation, evaluation of work quality, distribution of duties and responsibilities, etc. At the same time, targeted control measures have been implemented that are used in various periods throughout the year.

Requirements for planning, supervision and quality control of the study process at RSU are determined by the process description No. 35 “Planning and Administration of the Study Process”. Requirements for defining and evaluating learning outcomes – knowledge, skills and competence, are included in the Process Description No. 6 “Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes”.

In order to ensure the supervision of the quality of studies, once a year an evaluation of study directions is made, a study programme review and a development plan for the study direction are drawn up. The review should include an analysis of the StP quality indicators (approved in 2016) (see Annex No. 1). Heads of the study programmes summarise and assess the quality indicators of study programmes each year in accordance with the “Procedure for Assessment of Quality Indicators of Study Programmes”. The results are included in the StP descriptions. Data analysis related to studies, including analysis of the academic performance, analysis of the results of study course surveys, analysis of class observation results, and other measures are also done.

In order to ensure supervision of processes taking place at the university, analysis of the fulfilment of quality criteria for the processes is made once a year. For example, one of the criteria in the Process Description No. 6 “Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes” is: “The entry of assessment for interim examinations and end-of-course examinations in e-studies is ensured in the following time periods:

- within one working day for oral examinations;
- not later than within six working days (or until the beginning of the examination period, if the

period before the examination period is shorter - in the study system of regular classes) for written interim examinations;
- not later than within six working days for written end-of-course examinations".

Results are reported at the management meeting – Rectorate, where decisions are made regarding future activities.

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

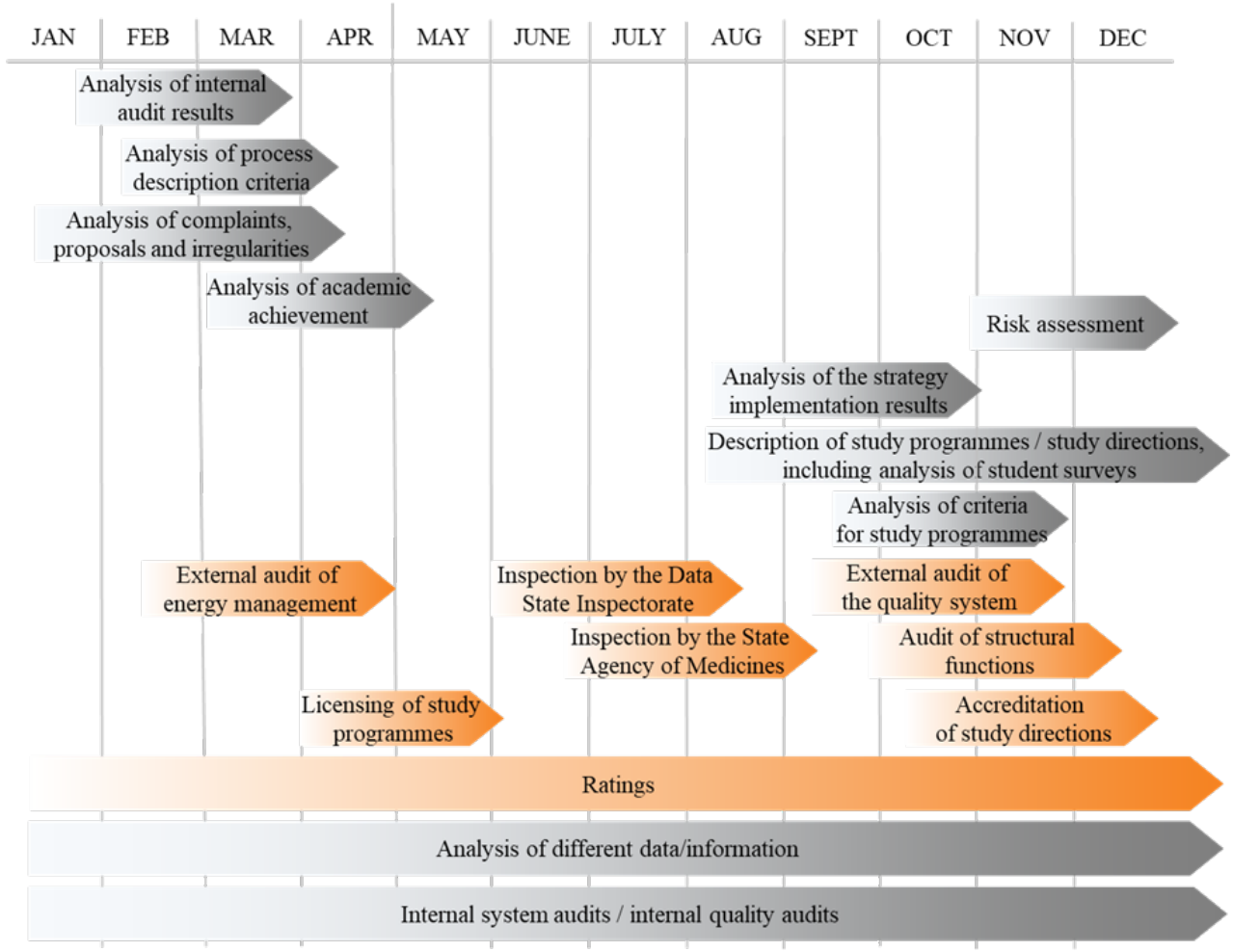


Figure 6. **Measures of internal quality control.**

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

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).

Standards given in Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) described in Annex No. 23 are followed in the implementation of studies at RSU.

RSU has established the procedure for development and internal approval of study programmes, supervision of their operation and periodical inspection. These requirements are defined in the Regulations for Development and Approval of New Study Programmes at Rīga Stradiņš University and in detail - in the Process Description No. 34 “Updating and Development of Study Courses, Study Programmes, Study Directions” (see Annex No. 1) in accordance with the requirements of external laws and regulations. Necessity, usefulness, and compliance of a new study programme with the set aims are evaluated by the Centre for Educational Growth and the Vice-Rector for Studies, whereas the licensing documents of the developed study programme, as well as accreditation documents and documents for implementation of changes are coordinated by several RSU departments and collegial institutions, including the Study Quality Council, Faculty Council, Dean’s Council, Rectorate, and Senate. Supervision over the implementation of a study programme and its quality is ensured by the Head of the study programme 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 Centre for Educational Growth (information in Latvian, in English), Study Department (information in Latvian, in English), Human Resources Department (information in Latvian, in English), Quality Assurance and Internal Audit Department (information in Latvian, in English).

Development and approval of StP prior to submission to the Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA) include certain consecutive activities, carried out by the developer of the StP (usually also the Head of the StP) in cooperation with the Study Programme Development Project Manager and Coordinator of the Centre for Educational Growth who carry out informative, monitoring, coordinating and organisational functions, provide the necessary support during the development of the programme, as well as the functions for creation of the content and provision of expertise that are given in detail in the Annex No. 23 The compliance of the study programme with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education (ESG) Part 1) Paragraph 1.2: Development and approval of programmes

Annual revision process of study programmes and study directions is regulated by the Rector’s decree or the instructions by the Board of Studies, and its goal is to prepare a summary of the annual study process quality monitoring. See Paragraph 1.9 of the Annex No. 23 Monitoring and regular review of programmes.

The annual report of the study direction “Social Welfare” is drawn up in accordance with the aforementioned procedure for the annual review process of the StP and the study directions. The Heads of programmes and the members of the Quality Council of the direction participate in the preparation of the study direction report. The report includes an analysis of the significant development indicators of the StP and the learning outcomes to be achieved, as well as the development plan for the study direction.

Taking into consideration the recommendations of experts and changes in the regulation on the State Standard for Professional Higher Education, in connection with the “Guidelines for the Development of Professional Social Work for 2014–2020” a number of particularly important tasks were set to strengthen the recognition and competitiveness of RSU social work StP in Latvia, as well as to expand partnerships with foreign universities.

For example, in the academic year 2014/2015, RSU set a strategic task for the development of the Social welfare direction: "A mechanism for regular cooperation with local government leaders in

providing education for various specialists has been introduced." To achieve this goal, meetings were organized with the executive directors of local governments and the largest local governments of Latvia to discuss matters regarding the types of cooperation between RSU and local governments in the field of social work, including the education of social workers and the support of local governments.

During this period, a tripartite Agreement between RSU, the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LPS) and the Ministry of Welfare (LM) was drawn up and signed in June 2015.

Whereas, in the field of international cooperation, the project of the joint Master's degree StP "Social Work with Children and Youth" was launched in cooperation with Mykolas Romeris University of Lithuania. In 2020, the programme was submitted to the *Erasmus Mundus* project competition organised by the European Commission and received six-year European Commission project funding for its operation and development. Starting with the academic year 2021/2022, the study programme is implemented by a consortium of four partner universities: Rīga Stradiņš University (Latvia), Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), Catholic University in Ružomberok (Slovakia) and the University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal).

It should be noted that in 2015, during the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW) conference "Social Work Education in Europe: towards 2025" (Milan, Italy, 29 June to 2 July) Marika Lotko, the lecturer of Rīga Stradiņš University Department of Welfare and Social Work, was elected a member of the executive committee of the said association from Latvia, and was re-elected in 2019.

In the academic year 2016/2017, the analysis of the compliance of the learning outcomes to be achieved during the study courses (knowledge, skills and competences) with the learning outcomes of the StP, as well as the compliance of the learning outcomes to be achieved during the StP with the professional standard of social workers was carried out. This was done by mapping. Based on the findings of the mapping, adjustments were made to both the Bachelor's and Master's StPs "Social Work".

- Compensatory study courses for the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills in social work were introduced for those students enrolled in the Master's StP after having obtained the academic Bachelor's degree, so that they could obtain professional qualification;
- The study course "*Social Work in the Rural Community*" was introduced in the Master's StP "Social Work";
- The study course *"Cultural and Social Anthropology"* of the Bachelor's StP was updated and its title was changed to "*Sociocultural Competence in Social Work*";
- The 10-point grading system was introduced for the assessment of semester papers instead of the assessment 'pass/fail'.

The annual report of the academic year 2019 /2020 focused on the implementation of remote studies due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the research and recommendations of Dynamic university, as well as their implementation were analysed therein.

In the academic year 2020/ 2021, the review of the content of the StP and the learning outcomes to be achieved was repeatedly done in connection with the fact that in September 2020 a new professional standard for the social worker entered into force in Latvia for obtaining the 5th qualification level and the 6th level of education as described in the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) in Bachelor's StPs. Whereas, while preparing for the accreditation, the content of the Master's programme was reviewed and aligned with the new professional standard "Lead Social Worker", approved in August 2021 for obtaining the 5th qualification level and the 7th level of

education of LQF in Master's StPs.

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.

Students of social welfare study programmes express their proposals mainly in surveys or by meeting with the head of the department or head of the study programme. The students' objections were mainly related to the planning of the classes. For example, there are students from different regions of the country in part-time study programmes. The distance from the place of residence to the university, as well as within Riga city, to make trips to several RSU study units, increases the total cost of studies for part-time students (the situation has changed significantly over the past two years, as the study process is being carried out remotely due to the circumstances caused by Covid-19 pandemic).

During the reporting period, there were 2 appeals in the study programmes of the Social Welfare direction (both in master's study programmes). In the academic year 2016/2017, an application was received in which the evaluation of the final thesis was contested and a request was made to re-defend the master's thesis). The second application was received in 2018/2019 in relation to the exclusion of a student from the university due to poor academic performance.

Both appeals were examined in accordance with the reviewing process. In the first case, the student's appeal was found to be justified and the re-defence of the master's thesis was organised. In the second case, the student's exclusion from the university was found to be reasonable.

Heads of study programmes meet with students to exchange information and hear students' views on a regular basis. Students' opinions and recommendations are analysed in the meetings of the teaching staff of the department. Regular communication between heads of the study programmes and head of the department with students provides an opportunity to identify the needs and proposals of students in a timely manner, as well as to provide feedback in response to the needs of the students. This largely explains the fact that there are very few formal complaints in the study programmes of the study direction "Social Welfare".

The procedure for submitting and reviewing students' complaints and proposals is specified in the Process Description No. 31 "Management of Complaints, Appeals, Irregularities and Proposals"; the requirements for submitting and reviewing appeals are additionally set out in the "Academic Regulations I". According to the internal procedure, students may submit complaints to the Student Services, the Student Union and the Quality Assurance and Internal Audit Department. These departments ensure that complaints and proposals are registered and referred to the responsible department. After the complaint / proposal is considered and corrective actions are taken, the complainant is informed in writing of the outcome of the review and the action taken. Once a year, the information about all the received complaints / proposals is collected and the results are included in the "Quality Management System Report", and the information is considered when carrying out RSU risk assessment. Students have access to the information about the possibilities of submitting complaints or proposals on RSU website in Latvian and English and on the Student

Portal. See Paragraph 1.3 of the Annex 23 for more information. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment.

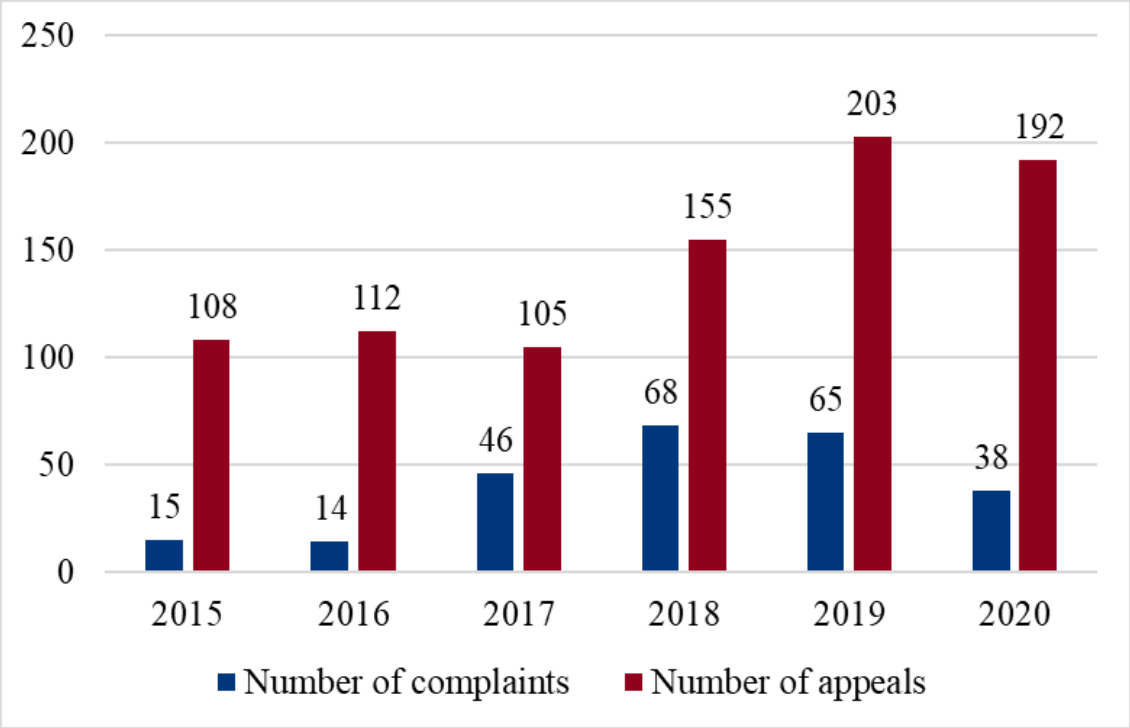


Figure 7. **Total number of registered complaints and appeals at RSU from 2015 to 2020.**

In 2020, 38 complaints and 192 appeals were registered in departments. The total number of registered complaints decreased by 27 compared to the previous year. When assessing the content of complaints, it was found that most complaints were related to implementation of the study process/quality (9 complaints), attitude of the teaching staff (5 complaints) and communication on various issues related to study process (5 complaints). No complaints were registered about the Department of Welfare and Social Work during the reporting period.

In 2020, the number of appeals compared to 2019 decreased by 11 appeals. In the reporting year, there were changing trends compared to 2019 in the departments where appeals were registered. The Department of Human Physiology and Biochemistry and the International Student Department received the largest number of appeals – 53 and 37 appeals respectively. There are a number of departments where no appeals were lodged in 2020. During the reporting period, there were only two appeals regarding the Department of Welfare and Social Work.

Student representatives take an active part in the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare Council, where student proposals are always considered. Students address the Heads of StPs, so there is an opportunity to solve problems before the formal complaint is submitted.

In order to improve cooperation with students in the study direction, the following mechanisms have been introduced:

- each Head of the study programme is required to meet students several times every semester;
- students may ask their questions and do so directly to the lecturer (contacts are available in the course description on e-learning environment), the Head of the StP, the Head of the study process, the Heads of departments and to the Dean of the faculty.
- upon starting a study course, each lecturer not only defines the course objectives, but also informs about the possibilities for dealing with issues, proposals and complaints;
- it is possible to apply for individual tutorial with each lecturer, during which individual issues

can be addressed;
- student proposals with their participation are being discussed and often introduced during the semester.

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 has developed a system for centralised collection and analysis of key data related to the study process. 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 department 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. 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. There is also an in-depth analysis of key indicators.

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-funded studies, studies for tuition fee). Information about the reasons for student exclusion is collected, compiled, and analysed, which is used to identify necessary improvements in the study programme.

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

The obtained statistical data are used to improve the StD, for example, in the following ways:

- The number of applications for studies, including by programmes, is used to assess the awareness of the StD and its StPs. The possible causes are analysed for a reduced number of applications and changes to the study programmes are made accordingly, and/or publicity activities for the StP are stimulated.
- Statistics on the priorities for study applications are used to identify interdisciplinary opportunities in the offer of the study programmes.
- Study applications by regions and secondary schools are used to improve publicity activities in certain regions and secondary schools in the next period.
- Statistics on the number of study contracts concluded/students enrolled are used both for a more objective assessment of the number of applications in the future periods and, of course, for the analysis of student dynamics, which affect many other indicators (drop-outs, the number of graduates, the number of state-funded places, publicity activities).
- Statistics on academic achievement are used to analyse both the dynamics of the level of skills of students and the relevance of study courses to the needs of students, as well as to identify possible changes to the study course assessment system and the structure of content and learning outcomes, and possibly to teaching the course in general.
- Dropout statistics are analysed especially in the 1st year of study as well as during the

programme period. Dropout statistics together with the reasons for dropping out are used to identify possible differences in the demand and supply of higher education, to analyse the gap in students' expectations and to facilitate the communication of the teaching staff, Heads of the study programmes and support departments with students about the reasons for dropping out (for example, various options for paying tuition fees, possibilities of having individual tutorials during studies, etc.). The dropout statistics are also analysed during the overall programme period along with the graduate statistics, which are used both in the publicity activities of the programme and in the overall assessment of the complexity and relevance of the programme.

- Statistics on the number of graduates are analysed together with the statistics on dropouts of the overall period of the programme and are used in the publicity activities of the programme and in the assessment of the overall quality and relevance of the programme.
- Statistics on the types of tuition fee payment (loans, sponsorships, grants, own finances) are considered to a large extent together with the analysis of dropout and its causes, as well as used in communication with students to reduce dropout risks and in publicity activities of programmes, and used in cooperation with support departments in the administration of the programme management, for example by setting payment schedules, possible discounts, tuition fees, etc.
- Results of study course evaluation questionnaires are used for the review of study courses and for evaluation and updating of the management of study courses every semester.
- Statistics on the causes of leaving studies are analysed together with dropout statistics to minimise the dropout risks, eliminating the reasons for leaving studies as much as possible. For example, the most common risks occurring in the course of the study process are academic and related to the study plan (motivation, combining with work, content complex, etc.), as well as financial, related to the difficulties of paying tuition fees.
- Statistics on the number and qualification of the teaching staff are used to assess the compliance of programmes with regulatory requirements, publicity activities, identification of the quality of programmes and strengthening of lecturers' qualifications, financial estimates of the study process, etc.

However, in order to ensure the profitability of StPs, the tuition fee was significantly increased by 850 EUR in the academic year 2021/2022. Unfortunately, as a result of this, it was not possible to complete part-time groups in the professional Bachelor and the professional Master's study programmes in the academic year 2021/2022.

Students participated in 2 centralised RSU surveys and a graduate survey in October this year. Using the questions developed by RSU on the website *Surveymonkey*, the graduates were addressed personally.

Compared to the previous academic year, graduates have given a more positive assessment of the flow of information and the planning of lectures and classes, but they noted that longer intervals should be envisaged when planning classes, in situations when it is necessary to transfer from one department to another.

Learning about the graduate workplaces continues from the academic year 2012/2013, and the "Visiting graduates: experience of the good practice" is going on. For example, an outreach seminar was held in Rauna, Gatart nursing home.

Graduates who work in the field of social work are involved in working with students - teaching study courses and supervising placements/

Mechanism of obtaining and providing feedback in work with students and graduates

Students, graduates, academic and general staff are involved in the feedback organisation at both the departmental and university levels. The Process Description No. 22 (“Surveys”) describes the procedure for finding out the opinion of students and lecturers about the study process, satisfaction with the learning environment at RSU, the use of survey results to improve the study process, as well as the procedure for conducting any other type of surveys in RSU departments to implement the compliance of the internal quality assurance system of studies with the requirements.

Student surveys at the university are organised centrally twice an academic year. They provide information about the strengths and weaknesses of the study process. The survey includes questions about the content of study courses, library resources, the work of teaching staff, the learning environment, including IT provision, and the planning of the study process. The survey results are available to the lecturers about the study courses they conduct on the lecturers' portal.

The information obtained in the surveys is analysed and discussed with lecturers at the Department of Welfare and Social Work, as well as in the Quality Council of the study direction.

Lecturers are obliged to get acquainted with the results of the survey on the evaluation of their study courses and to provide feedback related to it.

The results of the surveys and the daily proposals of students are discussed in groups of students, meeting with the Head of the programme and the department, as well as with the support staff of the department. When evaluating the information obtained, changes to the content of studies or improvements in the organisation of the study process are made.

Mechanism of obtaining and providing feedback from / to employers

Obtaining and providing feedback results from cooperation. Cooperation with employers in the study direction “Social Welfare” can be described at two levels:

1. *At the level of the sectoral policy,* coordinated cooperation between institutions (employers, higher education institutions, etc.) and professionals involved in the development of social work policy in the country is ensured by the Cooperation Council of Social Work Specialists (established by the Ministry of Welfare Order No. 128 of 28 August 2006). RSU Department of Welfare and Social Work is also represented in the Council. Cooperation with the sectoral policy makers and employers in social service institutions provides an opportunity to influence and shape sectoral policy, to find out and understand sectoral development trends and demand for specialists, as well as to find out employers' assessment of the content of study courses included in the StP.
2. *At the level of the organisation of the study process at RSU*, cooperation with employers in the study direction “Social Welfare” takes place in several aspects:

- Within the acquisition of study courses;
- Within the placement;
- Representatives of employers participate in the Study Quality Council;
- Employers participate in National Examination Boards.

Within the acquisition of study courses:

Learning within the work environment by visiting institutions and agencies of social service providers has been introduced and is being developed in the acquisition of study courses. Employers participate in the acquisition of a specific study course.

Within the placement

Employers’ assessment of students' knowledge and skills during the placement is identified with the help of a questionnaire developed by the Department of Welfare and Social Work, where the

student / trainee's ability to complete the profession-related tasks is assessed according to a 10-point grading scale. In the placement institution, the assessment is provided in three main areas:

1. Ability to apply professional skills;
2. Ability to join in and cooperate with the staff and specialists of the institution;
3. Learning during the placement at the employers' institution.

Employers get to know RSU social work students in several stages:

During the 1st year of study, observation placement is conducted in a social work organisation in the local government system. During this placement, a group of students in a particular local government learn about the field of social work in general.

The survey identifies employers' views (assessment) about the understanding of RSU students / trainees of the mission, goals and tasks of the social worker profession; about the learning of students / trainees during the placement at the institution; about the development of personality and professional qualities needed to work in the profession of a social worker.

Students of the ***third and fourth year of study*** practise in different institutions with different clients of social work target groups. Employers evaluate the student/trainee's achievements during the placement by assessing the students' ability to demonstrate their professional skills in a number of areas:

- communication skills with the client (setting goals for the conversation, listening, asking questions),
- defining and assessing a social problem in the context of a social case,
- cooperation with other specialists,
- demonstration of moral ethical attitude in the professional work environment.

Representatives of employers in the Study Quality Council:

At the Quality Council, employers receive information about the study process and the learning outcomes achieved within the study direction and study programmes. As members of the Quality Council, they actually participate not only in the assessment of the learning outcomes achieved in the study process, but also in the improvement of the content of the StP.

Thus, for example, the placement system was improved at the proposal of employers - the transition to the introduction of 3-month qualification placement for full-time students took place in the academic year 2019/2020. (Agreement between Riga City Council Welfare Department and RSU regarding paid placement in Riga).

Employers participate in National Examination Boards:

The aim of the National Degree Examination is to evaluate the learning outcomes achieved in accordance with the aims and content of the study programme.

According to the Paragraph 54 of the Cabinet Regulations No. 512 the Chairperson of the National Examination Board and at least half of the members of the Board are representatives of professional organisations of the sector or employers.[1].

In the academic years 2018/2019 to 2020/ 2018/2021 the Head and the Chairperson of the National Examination Board for the study programmes of the study direction Social Welfare was Dr.sc.soc. ***Vladislav Volkovs*** (a lead researcher of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia, an expert of the Latvian Council of Science in Sociology and Social Work sector). Employers were represented by Mg.SW ***Ina Balgalve*** (Director of Tukums Local Government Agency "Tukums Regional Territory Social Service); Mg. iur., Mg.hist. ***Andris Bērziņš*** (Director of the Samaritan

Association of Latvia); Mg.SW ***Jana Pūķe*** (a senior social worker of Riga Social Service T/C "Āgenskalns").

In the academic years 2016/2017 to 2017/2018, the Chairperson of the National Examination Board was Dr.sc. pol. ***Feliciana Rajevska*** (the associate professor at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences); employers were represented by ***Aldis Dūdiņš*** (a senior expert of the Social Services Department of the Ministry of Welfare of the Republic of Latvia). Mg.HSc ***Rita Rindža*** (Head of the Short-term Chronic Patient Care Department at Riga Hospital No.1, a social worker); Mg.SW ***Ina Balgalve*** (Tukums Local Government Agency "Tukums Regional Territory Social Service).

In the academic year 2016/2017, employers were represented by Mg.SW ***Ilze Rudzīte*** (a councillor of the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments in health and social issues); Mg.SW ***Ainārs Judeiks*** (Director of Riga Social Care Centre "Mežciems"); Mg.SW ***Ints Leitarts*** (Director of Kandava Local Government Agency "Kandava Regional Social Service).

Cooperation with employers promotes a deeper understanding of the knowledge and skills required in a practical social work environment, and accordingly improves the work with students at the university. Regular cooperation with employers promotes the employment of graduates in the sector.

[1]Regulations regarding the State Standard for Second-Level Professional Higher Education. https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761-noteikumi-par-otra-limena-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitibas-valsts-standartu

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 2. **The websites, on which the information about the study direction and the relevant study programmes is published.**

Study programme / StD	**Study programme/StD[1], on which the information about the study direction and the relevant study programmes is published:**
Professional Master's study programme "Social Work"	· Information about the programme in Latvian: https://www.rsu.lv/studiju-programma/socialais-darbs · Information about the programme in English: https://www.rsu.lv/en/study-programme/social-work-0 (Responsible: StP Manager)

Study programme / StD	Study programme/StD[1], on which the information about the study direction and the relevant study programmes is published:
Professional Master's study programme "Social Work"	· Information about the programme in Latvian: https://www.rsu.lv/studiju-programma/socialais-darbs-magistrantura-1 and https://www.rsu.lv/studiju-programma/socialais-darbs-magistrantura-3 ; · Information about the program in English (minimal translation from latvian https://www.rsu.lv/en/studiju-programma/SDMp and https://www.rsu.lv/en/studiju-programma/SDM (Responsible: Head of StP);
Joint Master's study programme "Social work with children and young people"	· Information about the programme in Latvian: https://www.rsu.lv/studiju-programma/socialais-darbs-ar-berniem-un-jauniesiem; · Information about the program in English: https://www.rsu.lv/en/study-programme/social-work-children-and-youth-0 (Responsible: Head of StP);
STD	· Information about LSDK in Latvian: https://www.rsu.lv/labklajibas-un-sociala-darba-katedra, in English: https://www.rsu.lv/en/department-welfare-and-social-work (Responsible: Head of Study Direction, StP Leaders); · Information about the SVSLF, which oversees the implementation of stp in Latvian: https://www.rsu.lv/sabiedribas-veselibas-un-socialas-labklajibas-fakultate, in English: https://www.rsu.lv/en/faculty-public-health-and-social-welfare (Responsible: Dean of the Faculty and Head of The Office).

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. The study programme brochure is complemented by the augmented reality application *Overly.* Digital media dominate in advertising campaigns, 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, by developing RSU messenger programme, possibility to attend programme lectures they are interested in, organising open days, tours etc.

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

The information published on the website of the university regarding the study programmes 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 study programme.

[1] RSU website is maintained by the Communication Department in Latvian https://www.rsu.lv/komunikacijas-departaments, and in English https://www.rsu.lv/en/communications-department

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

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

The revenue of study programmes of the study field is used for staff remuneration, taxes, maintenance of IT infrastructure, purchase of facilities and equipment and placement costs. In addition to the direct costs of delivering lectures and conducting classes, the study programme has to cover infrastructure maintenance costs (premises, IT solutions) and costs of other RSU common resources used in the study programmes (Student Services, Library, organisation of the study process, grant for the Student Union and other support and administrative functions).

Extensive RSU facilities are available for teaching of the study courses, allowing for the booking of study rooms and computer classes in the common system.

RSU has three research platforms, one of which is the Social Sciences Platform (SZP). It aims to use purposefully RSU resources to ensure research excellence, provide internationally recognised expertise and research advice to stakeholders at national and international level.

The research activities of the SZP are organised in four directions:

- International relations and comparative politics;
- International business and economic development;
- International and national legal systems and law;
- Strategic communication and social anthropology.

The sources of RSU research funding are basic funding, research projects (national budget funding, EU Structural Fund funding, EU Framework Programme funding and others), infrastructure and institution development projects, as well as private funding.

Investments in research and development of the quality of the study process have been made from the RSU basic budget and other funding sources mentioned above, such as:

- Improvement of lecturers' qualification (e. g improvement of English language knowledge and skills; improvement of ICT skills; CEG methodological support, etc.);
- Business trips' expenses for lecturers to participate in conferences and international organisations. For example, RSU is a member of European Association of Schools of Social Work. RSU ensures membership fees, as well as active participation in the Executive Committee of the Association, RSU and Latvia are represented by RSU lecturer M. Lotko);
- The international interdisciplinary conference "Society. Health. Welfare" is being financed;
- Collections of articles are being published, for example, "Proceedings", "Social Work: Education. Research. Practice.";
- An international study programme "Social Work with Children and Youth" is being developed within the study direction. RSU provides both staff and other support for the successful development of this study programme.

Artistic creative activities (dance group and choir) are funded from:

- RSU own funds;
- Riga City Council co-financing.

In order to promote research and help researchers at the initial stage of their careers, RSU has established incentive schemes and practices:

- RSU internal grant system (approximately 400 thousand euro per year);
- joint RSU and Riga Technical University (RTU) grant programme for multidisciplinary research;
- grants for post-doctoral students and researchers at the initial stage of their careers (European Social Fund);
- grants for doctoral students;
- co-financing for 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.

Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) currently provides students and academic staff with well-developed IT infrastructure and material and technical provision that is continuously developed considering raising demand towards IT services from students and staff.

E-studies environment

One of the main websites used by RSU students and lecturers is the E-studies environment which provides access to all study courses implemented in all curricula. E-studies is used for placement of interactive content (H5P, OpenSlide), it gives access to the databases, to which RSU is subscribed, student knowledge is assessed, attendance registered, tests organised, consultations managed,

and anti-plagiarism checked in E-studies environment. Lecturers have access to the Course Dashboard, which provides several useful features that help to manage information on the e-studies courses they are responsible for. The e-studies environment also makes it possible to apply for various trainings and career development courses organised by the RSU Centre for Educational Growth. E-studies environment is integrated with RSU Student Information System (SIS).

Student portal MyRSU

RSU students have access to the student portal *MyRSU*, which combines the possibility to view the necessary information about studies and to use the e-services necessary for the study process in one place. *MyRSU* is available as a mobile app, which enables to get faster and more convenient access to all the necessary university information, for example, e-studies and final assessments in study courses, the schedule of lectures and classes, invoices, application for Part B 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.

Remote study process

Lecturers and students of RSU are provided with various modern IT solutions for implementing remote learning and examinations, for example, RSU provides students with the possibility to submit graduation papers in the video format using the *Panopto* service. The possibility to have online tests in a safe environment using the LockDown Browser has been provided. The LockDown Browser is integrated with e-studies (Moodle) and has been created to increase safety during online tests. Remote lectures and classes are mostly implemented using *Zoom*, video recordings are available using the *Panopto* service.

Not only study courses, but also the process of development, pre-defence and defence of Master's theses can take place fully online. RSU academic staff can make video recordings of lectures and presentations using the *Panopto* service. Each lecturer can use Recording Room in which high quality audio or video content can be created for lecture recordings and online events.

Anti-plagiarism system

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 into RSU e-studies environment and provides full service of submitting, correcting, verifying the plagiarism and return of the submitted papers.

The Academic Portal

The Academic Portal contains information about lecturers, academic structural units, register of study courses and study programmes, survey system and student feedback. The Academic Portal is a user interface of the Student Information System through which RSU academic staff, heads of study programmes, heads of departments and other personnel involved in the education process have access to certain datasets deployed for Student Information Systems. The Academic Portal created by RSU 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, student feedback, etc.

Other daily services

To improve the qualifications of teaching staff, the Information Technology Department organises weekly thematic trainings on IT tools.

RSU offers the students an opportunity to use *Office365*, providing an option to use a full *Microsoft Office*, *OneDrive* file storage without additional fee.

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.

The SPSS program is available to the RSU employees – it covers extensive statistical data processing capabilities, starting with data downloads and ending with complex analytical charts.

Technical provision

RSU employees and students have the possibility to use the *eduroam* WiFi network free of charge. RSU students may also use public access computers with provided access to the student IT systems and internet resources. Multimedia projectors are available in training rooms for use of audiovisual materials for studies; most of these are high-resolution interactive projectors that are connected to a sound system. Computer rooms 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.

The physical IT infrastructure of RSU consists of the following:

1. RSU computer network located in ten buildings, connections thereof.
2. RSU uses the infrastructure and resources of the data centre of the Latvian Academic Network.
3. IT equipment and systems monitoring system *Nagios, HP IMC, MS SCCM*.
4. *Skype for business* – phone infrastructure.
5. Communication platforms – *Teams* and *Zoom* are available to all employees and students.
6. *Panopto* – a video lecture recording system, which contains more than 25 000 video recordings and an average of 30 new video study materials are added every day.
7. E-mail systems for employees – *Exchange*, ensuring management of calendar and contacts; cloud service *Office 365* is provided for students.
8. *MS Active directory* based maintenance of electronic identity management infrastructure (one username and password for all IT systems maintained in a centralised way).
9. Maintenance of the file server.
10. Servicing of computerised workplaces and computer classrooms.
11. Maintenance of equipment in classrooms – part of the classrooms are equipped for implementation of hybrid classes.
12. Self-service photocopying/ printing/ scanning system.

The infrastructure and material and technical support developed 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 “Assessment of the informative and methodological basis regarding IT infrastructure and available resources”.

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.

General information about RSU Library

Total area of the library premises is 2,044 m^2, including service areas for readers of 1,318 m^2. Library users have access to 290 reader places, 81 computer workstations and wireless Internet. Well-equipped premises are available of the Library in the Open Access Loan, which provide the possibility to get all loan books for home use, using self-service equipment. Open Access Loan also includes reading rooms for group work and individual work. In order to provide access to RSU premises for students and other visitors with reduced mobility, a lift operates in the central building of the University Library. The Library is located in the main RSU building (16 Dzirciema iela, Riga), and it has three branches:

- two in Riga - at RSU Red Cross Medical College Information Centre for Latvian Healthcare Specialists (5 J.Asara iela) and in the Medical Education Technology Centre (METC) (26a Anniņmuižas bulvāris);
- one in Liepāja - RSU Liepāja branch library (24/26 Riņķu iela).

Most of the book collection in the field of social work is located in the METC branch of the Library.

Services offered by the Library: RSU Library offers a wide range of printed and electronic information resources, consultations and training in information literacy as well as search of information according to thematic requests. Library specialists conduct information literacy classes, which are included in the study programmes and offer support to researchers.

Students are provided with an opportunity to communicate with the Library on various issues remotely – not only by phone, but also with the help of a special system **help.rsu.lv**. Information resources (required books or journal articles) that are not available in the RSU library collection or subscribed databases can be ordered from other libraries using the **Interlibrary Loan (IL)** or the **International Interlibrary Loan (IIL)**.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the procedures for the provision of library services follow the guidelines set by the Ministry of Culture. Currently, library visits take place in the “green mode”.

Students can receive and hand over books without any restrictions – books taken from the library can be returned using modern self-service equipment. In addition, students can return the books using book drops, which are available 24 hours a day. In order to avoid crowding, library users are invited to register their visit to the RSU Library using the **Calendly** tool.

Information resources

Overall Library collection consists of around 566 800 physical units, including approximately 258 600 books. About **464,700 units of subscribed electronic resources** (about 90% of e-books) are available in the subscribed databases.

Funding for the purchase of resources is increasing. In 2021, funding per library user was approximately 31 EUR. Approximately 89% of the collection budget is spent to subscribe electronic resources and purchase e-books.

The Department of Welfare and Social Work regularly includes EUR 2,000 in their budget each year to supplement the Library's collection, in addition to which the Library's total budget for the purchase of books / e-books is also available.

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Allocated funding (EUR)	**346 100**	**350 400**	**442 360**	**475 460**	**503 480**	**508 400**
including databases	260 300	274 000	301 870	317 532	337 500	339 360
including learning platform			53 542	76 230	81 675	87 428

Available databases

A total of 30 online resources are available. RSU students and lecturers can access the Library's subscribed databases remotely using the username and password assigned by RSU.

Four e-book databases and eleven full-text journal multi-sectoral databases are available within e-resource provision **in the field of social work**. E-books in social work field are available in the subscribed databases *ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO), Ebook Central (Proquest), AccessMedicine and ClinicalKey (Books).* For example, the database *ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO)* offers 5657 e-books according to keywords “Social work, but "*Ebook Central (Proquest)* - 23806 e-books.

The full texts of scientific articles in social work field are available in the subscribed databases: *SAGE Premier 2022, Health Research Premium Collection (Proquest), MEDLINE Complete (EBSCO), Communication Source (EBSCO), Sociology Source Ultimate (EBSCO), PsycARTICLES (APA), BMJ Journals, Wiley Online Journals, Science Direct, Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), ClinicalKey (Journals)*. 6918 journal titles appear in the single search engine Primo under the sub-sector “Health Sciences", 3128 titles under the sub-sector “Social Sciences”, whereas, when searching according to keywords “Social work”, 36 journal titles appear, but searching according to the keyword “Welfare” – 20 journal titles.

It is recommended that reports in the field of social work are also searched in the evidence-based practice databases *The Cochrane Library (Wiley), DynaMed (EBSCO).*

On the Library website, there is a section List of recommended e-textbooks, which contains the e-books mentioned in the study programmes including the sections “Social Welfare” and “Social Work”.

In general, statistics of database use is high. It is evaluated once half a year. Statistics indicators of use tend to increase.

In 2022 a new resource has been subscribed to – Writefull tool, which provides recommendations for improving scientific texts.

Procedure for supplementation of the Library collection and procedure for subscription of databases

RSU has introduced and the Library has implemented the support process determining how to provide RSU study programmes and scientific research activity with the necessary sources of

information and services at the Library. The Process Description defines the following: 1) planning of purchase of information sources, evaluation and supplementation of provisions, and 2) identification of the level of user satisfaction.

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

In order to improve the compliance of the library collection to the needs of students; work is carried out with the course bibliography as well as cooperation with the academic staff in order to inform them on the situation with the provision of course literature. Academic staff and students can electronically send suggestions for supplementation of the collection at 'help.rsu.lv'.

Library data availability in the digital environment of the University

The single search tool *Primo* is used for e-resource management that provides fast and rational search of e-resources. Information on the subscribed databases is available also from RSU Student portal *MyRSU*.

Students have the opportunity to access students' final papers and other RSU publications **in the Institutional Repository.**

From 2020 publications of RSU academic and research staff are input into the new **Research Information System (ZDIS Pure).** ZDIS *Pure* is a unique tool for searching research conducted by RSU in different areas.

You can follow the news and current events of the Library on Library homepage and the *Facebook* profile "Rīga Stradiņš University Library".

RSU library has been accredited several times as a library of national significance. The current accreditation was received in November 2021. The Library's resources and services are rated as very good and meet the demand of students and teaching staff to ensure successful completion of the respective study course. Simple procedures have been introduced to recommend replenishment of the library collection or contact the Library on services. Both student and teaching staff surveys confirm a good and very good assessment in the area of information resources. Like other universities in the world today, RSU Library buys e-resources as a priority.

Detailed information on infrastructure and methodological provision is available at 23.1. in the appendix "Assessment of the informative and methodological provision regarding library resources for the implementation of the study direction "Social Welfare" 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.

Regularly updated e-learning environment *Moodle*, which is closely integrated with RSU study management systems, is used not only for the development and distribution of study materials, but also for communication, cooperation, study support, administration of regular work, knowledge testing, including ensuring the registration of student attendance, the recording of activities and the storage of assessments in the database. Absolutely all study courses, which are taught

according to all study plans, are available in RSU e-learning environment.

The use of the e-learning environment gives the stakeholders a number of significant benefits in improving the efficiency of the study process.

Lecturers are able to:

- organize the study process in accordance with the chosen teaching approach;
- flexibly adapt materials and study support according to the required form of teaching and learning, on-site, remote, hybrid or distance learning;
- prepare and publish information that is essential to students;
- develop and supplement e-learning materials at a time and place convenient for them;
- develop interactive H5P multimedia teaching and learning materials that promote student involvement, including interactive videos, multimedia presentations, branching scenarios;
- record lectures and online workshops using *Panopto* and *Zoom* tools that are integrated in the Moodle environment;
- include the study materials from RSU repository or other electronic resources and interactive learning/teaching tools in the study course;
- use specially designed synchronous and asynchronous information communication technology tools combined in an easy-to-use interface;
- carry out a knowledge test using question banks and tests, and provide rapid, complete or semi-automated feedback;
- carry out an automatic verification of the originality of the works submitted by students, thanks to the integration of Turnitin into the e-e-learning environment;
- organise the submission, registration, assessment of home assignments and ensure the availability of feedback;
- organise cooperation within the group, as well as manage peer evaluation of students' work;
- organise secure remote final examinations using the *Respondus Monitor* and *Zoom* integration;
- obtain reports on the study activity of students and the learning outcomes achieved;
- survey students and evaluate the study process.

Students are able to:

- access the study material published in the e-learning environment at any time, using the technological solution available at that time;
- Access the recordings of lectures and online seminars in the *Panopto* system by following the instructions in the course;
- use the digital environment for cooperation, fulfilment of the group tasks, and storage of the common information;
- use the environment for submitting individual work and receiving feedback;
- keep track of the progress of their studies, view the results of the examinations;
- contact the lecturer and other participants of the study process using e-mail and other communication tools available in the e-learning environment, as well as participate in discussions.

The administration is able to:

- obtain reports on the study activity of students and the learning outcomes achieved;
- obtain reports on the quality of materials placed in the e-learning environment and the activities taking place in the course;
- obtain the compiled data of student surveys.

RSU PIC regularly organises continuing education courses regarding both face-to-face and remote

teaching and learning, as well as advises lecturers on the application of appropriate pedagogical methods and optimal selection of e-learning support tools. Whereas, the IT service centre ensures continuous monitoring of the ICT technology infrastructure and timely resolution of user support issues. Information is available in the Annex No. 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 study programme, academic and research staff is attracted in compliance with the provisions of Section 55, Paragraph 1, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and the Law on Scientific Activity. Highly qualified academic and pedagogical staff with relevant competence and good reputation are involved in the implementation of the study direction and achievement of the learning outcomes.

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

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 data that might provide information about factors affecting learning outcomes and quality of the study programmes and to implement necessary improvements to the study programmes. Quality indicators of study programmes that are directly linked to the remuneration of the Heads of the study programmes are measured annually. This aspect promotes taking responsibility and motivates the Heads of the study programmes to achieve higher quality standards defined.

At RSU level, the duty of the management is to set strategic and quality aims and quality policy, to decide regarding quality approach, to manage resources, and to set internal procedures. Supervision of the system introduced at RSU is provided by both the internal system and quality auditors and independent external experts. One of the indicators of the study quality at the University level is the public attitude and opinion, as well as the popularity of RSU. It is regularly cleared up by participating in a reputation survey and brand evaluation.

(More information on recruitment and / or employment processes is available in Annex 1, Section 1.16. Regulations on Academic Elections and 1.17. Process Description No. 29 “Elections of Academic Staff” and Annex 23. The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education (ESG) Part 1), Section 1.10.)

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 study plan for each academic year and study semester. Study courses can be organised in modules and the workload 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 in 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 includes sectoral experts and teaching staff elected in other higher education institutions, etc.

Annex No. 6.2 provides biographies of the teaching staff attached electronically (*Curriculum Vitae in Europass* format). Annex No. 6.1 (in *Excel* format) provides basic information about the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction, specifying their degree/qualification, election status at the higher education institution, study programmes and study courses, in the implementation of which they participate, and certification of knowledge of the official language and foreign language (if applicable).

In order to ensure the fulfilment of functions in support of the teaching and learning process, record keeping and quality management, human resources and financial management, solution of legal issues, RSU employs general and administrative staff that constitute one fourth of the number of employees. Whereas, the maintenance staff ensure the management of buildings and territory, infrastructure development and are responsible for the operation of road vehicles.

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

- RSU Regulations on Academic Positions;
- RSU Procedure “Academic Staff Elections”;
- Regulations on the Procedure for inviting visiting lecturers to Rīga Stradiņš University.

Qualifications for an academic position are determined according to the requirements set for the job in the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the tasks of the academic positions defined in RSU Constitution and the election procedure of RSU on the basis of the individual’s:

- education,
- experience,
- competences,
- potential,
- achievements,
- research contribution,
- teaching skills,
- length of service,
- recommendations of experts and sectoral representatives.

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

RSU Centre for Educational Growth (CEG) (information in Latvian and English) was established in 2014 to increase the quality of studies, modernise the study process and improve the competence

of lecturers. Within the scope of its operations, the Centre provides support in the improvement of the quality of studies by analysing the study process, providing support and advising lecturers regarding the study programme and updating of the course, and by organising continuing education activities for the pedagogical growth of the academic staff according to current needs.

The education activities offered by the Centre are based according to the following thematic blocks:

- pedagogy (university didactics and education management),
- technology-enhanced learning and teaching (information and communication technologies, digitisation),
- transversal competence (skills to communicate, collaborate, innovate, improvise, work interdisciplinary, research and data-based competence, etc.)

Until now, the Centre has developed more than 40 different content training, the format of which is adapted to the goal to be achieved, including interactive workshops, seminars, conferences, think tanks, thematic cycles, guest lectures, simulation-based scenarios, etc. Since March 2020, training has taken place in a remote format, maintaining an equal level of engagement of participants as in face-to-face training activities, but allowing a wider range of participants to join the training activities. Each semester, the Centre offers the teaching staff more than ten different thematic cycles for the total of 140 academic hours on average. Interest in offered activities continues to increase. For example, the number of the academic staff members who participated in continuing training activities in the spring of 2021 compared to the autumn of 2020 grew by 29%. The Centre attracts the interest of the teaching staff by organising training of different content, for example, in the spring semester of 2021, training on academic integrity, presentations and evaluation was very popular.

At the beginning of the Centre’s activity, thematic activities focused mostly on defining learning outcomes, assessment of the learning outcomes and development of the pedagogical design of the study course, focusing on basic pedagogical regularities. Over time, these topics have been supplemented by a wide range of training activities for the improvement of pedagogical and digital skills of the teaching staff. The great work invested in upgrading of digital skills showed its efficiency during the pandemic with the onset of remote work. The Centre, in active cooperation with RSU Information Technology Department, carried out a huge number of training activities regarding the use of the communication platforms Zoom and Teams, the use of the e-learning environment Moodle, the organisation of remote group work in the Miro tool, the development of interactive digital scenarios in the Twine environment, the creation of self-check tasks on H5P platform and the use of many other digital tools in the study process.

The counselling activity is a major part of CEG day-to-day activities, which has provided substantial support for the improvement of pedagogical and digital skills of the teaching staff and for the meaningful implementation of the technology-enriched study process, especially during the period of remote and hybrid teaching and learning.

The most frequent thematic groups identified include:

- **assessment in the digital environment:** definition of the learning outcomes to be achieved, design of activities, adaptation of the type of examination to full summative, formative and cumulative assessment;
- **organisation of group work and independent work in the digital environment:** promotion of student involvement, cooperation in a team, adequate assessment of individual contribution;
- **high-quality combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities:** creating a study course design for combined, remote and hybrid process;

- **increasing interactivity of teaching and learning activities:** the student as an active participant in the process and not a passive consumer.

The lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programmes included in the study direction “Social Welfare” have access to the entire content of continuing training offered by PIC, which is updated every semester. Contribution to the quality of the study process is provided by the fact that thematic studies are attended not only by the teaching staff, but also by the support staff involved in the organisation of the study process in order to promote pedagogical understanding of the study process and to strengthen effective cooperation with the students. Each semester of the academic year, relevant content in various forms corresponding to the needs of lecturers is offered.

In the academic year 2020/2021, 39 lecturers from the study direction “Social Welfare” took an active part in the continuing education activities offered by CEG and the IT Department, attending a total of 48 different training activities. The lecturers of the study direction “Social Welfare” have devoted a total of 502 academic hours to the acquisition of continuing education activities. A total of 16 lecturers attended more than 5 activities during the academic year 2020/2021. Lecturers participated in CEG activities such as Content visualisation in presentations, Assessment approaches and test types in remote studies, Video making: in a simple and brief way about complicated, Creating engaging and interactive online course design and delivery, Ethics in academic work and research, Remote work with Miro by student groups, Potential of immersive technologies for effective learning strategies, etc. Teaching staff of the study direction (incl. invited lecturers) are satisfied with this opportunity and recognise it as useful.

The efficiency of competence development activities is seen in the improvements in the implementation of study quality indicators, as well as in RSU External Reputation Assessment, where RSU has been recognised as the university with the best reputation in Latvia for several times in in a row. RSU attracts *Kantar* to conduct research also on the employee satisfaction. The assessment of the English language training project was included in the questions of RSU Employee Satisfaction and Engagement Survey in 2019, confirming that 85% of the employees who participated in the survey (a total of 731 employees) considered the English language proficiency testing and the training project as an opportunity for improvement of their qualifications. Whereas, with regard to ensuring of the development of lecturers’ competences, most of the 367 lecturers (86%) answered affirmatively to the statement “I receive sufficient support for the improvement of my pedagogical competence”.

In general, it can be concluded that systematic, regular activities are carried out to strengthen the capacity of the teaching staff, which is also appreciated by them. See Paragraph 1.5. Annex 23 for more information.

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.

Appended:

Annex No. 6.1. (in *Excel* format) Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction.

Annex No. 6.2. Europass Curriculum Vitae of the teaching staff.

Annex No. 6.4. List of publications of the teaching staff during the reporting period (compiled information on scientific activity of the teaching staff).

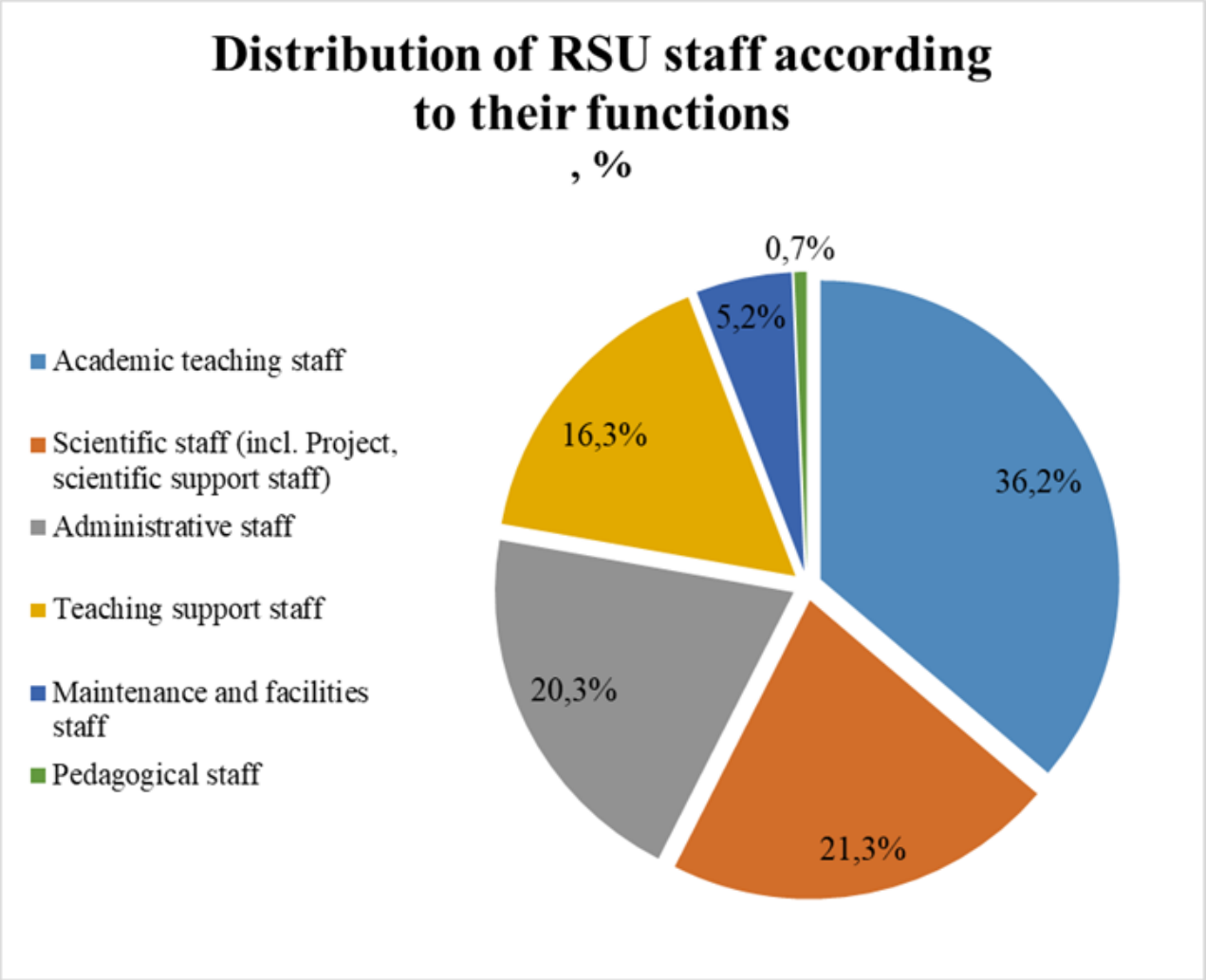
24.4. A statement that the knowledge of the official language of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes corresponding to the study direction complies with the regulations regarding the extent of knowledge of the official language and the testing procedure of the official language proficiency for the performance of professional duties.

24.5. A statement of the relevant foreign language skills of the teaching staff to be involved in the implementation of the , at least at level BStP2, according to the European Language Proficiency Assessment levels.

The teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Study Direction and study programmes plan their pedagogical workload according to the study programme plan for each semester and academic year. Individual study courses are organised in modules and the workload is reviewed in accordance with the need and provisions of laws and regulations. RSU contributes to a balanced workload and rest for teaching staff and promotes a healthy lifestyle to reduce and eliminate the risk of burnout of the 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 on 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 includes sectoral experts and the teaching staff elected in other higher education institutions.

In order to ensure the fulfilment of functions in support of the training and study process, record keeping and quality management, human resources and financial management, solution of legal issues, RSU employs general and administrative staff, that constitute one fourth of the number of employees. Whereas, the maintenance staff ensure the management of buildings and territory, infrastructure development and are responsible for the operation of road vehicles.



Data as of 31.12.2020.

Figure 9. **RSU positions by function.**

The implementation of the study direction involves highly qualified lecturers who are sectoral experts and specialise in the respective study course topics. Lecturers, whose high-level qualifications and abilities have been appreciated over a long period of cooperation, are involved in the implementation of the study direction and study programmes, therefore, changes in the staff composition are not essential.

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 regarding scientific and research activities is prescribed depending on the type of the academic position.

The division of responsibilities within a department may be changed by the Head of the Department in agreement with the employee, according to the planning of the pedagogical work and the projects to be implemented.

Results of the research activity of the academic staff are summarised once a year and included in the research activity report. For some groups of the staff, they are related to the principles of remuneration and motivation. Lecturer achievements are included in their CVs.

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 will encourage new specialists to engage in sectoral research, and contribute to the overall development of science at national and

international level.

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 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 study programme, when enrolling in the higher education institution, and in the study process (study materials, taking examinations, etc.) and creating appropriate social and physical environment (see information in Latvian on the availability of the METC environment, and in English). The aim of the support measure 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 (see Annex No. 1.).

Since 2012, all RSU students have access to psycho-emotional support. The service was introduced with the aim of helping students to overcome adaptation problems when starting their studies, reducing the emotional manifestations of stress, stress-related health disorders, psychosomatic disorders or illnesses, overcoming relationship-building difficulties and crisis situations. A human being is a single entity, and only an emotionally stable and balanced student rarely gets sick and achieves more. The need for 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 helped to increase the efficiency of study work by reducing students' stress and adaptive disorders

RSU has a Career Centre. 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 EC 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 and 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 in demand. 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 job vacancies on RSU website (also in English). 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 the author Arta Citko - a workbook for young people to discover their potential career, business or study choices and other

adventures.

Since 2019, excellent cooperation has been maintained with the National Library of Latvia - “Come with the classmates on an excursion to the National Library of Latvia and participate in a class of 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 Psychosomatics Clinic.

There is continuous cooperation with employers on several levels. In order to promote cooperation with employers’ organisations, their involvement in the education of future specialists, as well as to increase RSU students’ competitiveness on the labour market, meetings, guest lectures and excursions 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 graduates the current vacancies, as well as give practical advice on how to succeed in the labour market.

The International Department (ID) provides informational support to the international students who have confirmed their desire to commence studies to ensure their successful and swift integration in RSU and Latvia. The new international students electronically receive an invitation to RSU Orientation Week, informative edition of *Survival Guide*, internal rules and regulations of the higher education institution, as well as other regulatory study documents and a sample study contract in Latvian and in English, also information on various accommodation options in Riga, etc. RSU website in English offers wide information on RSU and life in Riga. To make the life of the students easier, the university offers several housing options, including RSU Halls of Residence at 5 Dārza iela, Riga, which was built at the end of 2017 and opened by the Minister for Health. The ID provides support to third-country nationals in handling immigration procedures.

One week before the beginning of each semester, the ID organises the Orientation Week during which international students are informed about the University, studies, assessment system, students' rights and duties, students' e-systems, immigration and residence aspects, the Latvian culture and language. During the Orientation Week, international students learn of various RSU structural units (for example, the Student Services, IT Department, Library, Faculties) and their responsibilities. RSU student organisations - RSU Student Union and International Students’ Association, are also involved in the events of the Week. In cooperation with the ID, they provide a cultural programme for the new international students.

A Mentor programme is maintained with the aim of helping the new international students to adapt to the higher education institution. Even before the new students arrive in Latvia, they may contact previously trained mentors, senior local and international RSU students. Before the beginning of each semester, the ID organise the informative exhibition, providing the opportunity for the new international students to obtain information about various RSU student organisations, amateur groups, sports club, health centre and clinic of psychosomatic medicine, etc.

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).

In research, RSU acts in accordance with the approved strategies; the current strategy was developed in 2015: RSU Development Strategy of the Research Institution for the Period of 2015–2020 (also in English). The Strategy is based on all three key directions of the University activities: internationally competitive education, excellent research, and technology transfer to strengthen innovation as the foundation for RSU sustainable development.

As a research institution, RSU aims to train highly qualified research staff, support excellent science and efficient technology transfer to foster innovation and increase RSU global competitiveness. The medium-term objective is to offer and implement extensive academic and professional university education, as well as research opportunities in the following basic fields – medicine, health and social care, teaching, social sciences and natural sciences. (Article 2.2 of RSU Constitution).

In the strategy development process, based on RSU research resources, RSU research was prioritised into three main blocks:

- leading areas of research,
- supporting areas of research,
- new growth areas of research.

The relevant research blocks are based on the availability of resources and the potential for sustainable development, the accumulated experience, the presence of strategic leadership and the importance of the research sector for the overall development of RSU.

The priorities have been selected in the medium term. RSU supports research in all directions of social sciences, which have relevant capacity in the University, and all such research is a priority to strengthen the role of social sciences at the University. The direction has a great untapped potential, especially in close collaboration with leading research and development sectors, providing a critical assessment and alternative views, making a significant contribution to addressing societal challenges. Synergy with health sciences focused on the promotion of public health. Social innovation is a significant field of synergy, which supports healthy lifestyle, family health, active and healthy ageing

The lecturers involved in the StD are actively involved in research in accordance with their scientific interests (see Annex No. 6.4).

Table 8: **priorities set out in the 2015-2020 strategy.**

Pillars	**Clinical medicine**	**Biomedicine**	**Rehabilitation**	**Public health**
Basis for research	**Molecular medicine**	**Structural biology**	**Research methodologies**	**Social/cultural/environmental/citizen health**
Leading research sectors	Oncology			
	Infectious diseases and immunology			
	Occupational diseases		Occupational and environmental health	
	Regenerative medicine, tissue bioengineering			

Growth sectors	Pharmaceutical form technologies (pharmacy)		
		Rehabilitation and an ageing population	
		Chronic diseases and therapy algorithms	
	Neuroscience/Research into Human Brain Diseases		
	Maternal and child health		
	Nuclear medicine, radiology and modern visualization methods		
		Social sciences and humanities	
Transversal industries	Anatomy, embryology, histology, pathology, structuralbiology		
	Anaesthesiology and Reanimatology		
	Emergency and military medicine		
		Healthcare Science	
		Public health	
			Social policy

Organisation of research at the University is regulated by the Law on Scientific Activity. The highest collegial body in research is the Research Council. It takes strategic decisions related to research, as well as elects the scientific staff by secret ballot. The research activities on the level of operational administration are supervised by the Research Board that is chaired by RSU Vice-Rector for Science.

Annual monitoring in research is ensured by summarising results of research activities of the structural units in January of the following year, when each academic and research structural unit completes a special report form. Data is collected and reported in the annual scientific conference held in March or April, and provided in printed format as Report on RSU Scientific activities drawn up by the end of May for the previous year.

As to RSU internal grants – each year in November, information on the use of grants is submitted; it is evaluated by the evaluation committee, and a decision is made regarding continuation in the following year and regarding recommendations for the involved people.

Monitoring of the research activities at the level of departments is carried out by the Heads of the departments. Supervision of scientific research activities is included in the job description of the Heads of all the research and academic departments.

External funds are attracted for research, as well as RSU internal programmes are used, that are funded from RSU resources. The funding for internal research projects is allocated during the planning of RSU annual budget. Several internal funding programmes exist: grants for doctoral students, RSU internal grants, inter-university cooperation grants, aid to certain projects from RSU Alumni Association in cooperation with the Boris and Inara Teterev Foundation. For example, total RSU funding for these internal research projects in 2016 was 512 860 EUR (284 000 EUR were allocated for internal grants, 100 000 EUR for RTU and RSU grants, 128 860 EUR for grants to doctoral students).

Research activities of the academic staff are partly compensated within their basic salary (a particular amount of work is prescribed as research work depending on the type of the position). In

accordance with financial possibilities of RSU and topicality of the research direction, RSU supports participation of the academic staff in scientific conferences by assigning a paid period of absence or creative leave. Such a system of research organisation exists throughout the university.

Research strategy for social sciences is based on the comprehensive RSU Development Strategy of the Research Institution for the Period of 2015–2020 (also in English) (A video in English on RSU social sciences research platform is available). Research within this platform is mainly carried out in the horizontal directions defined by RSU, which have a great potential for expansion and scalability in other RSU research areas and platforms. The main task of the platform as a coordination unit of RSU is to provide excellent research in compliance with the strategy, as well as to promote new development opportunities for specific and promising research areas, such as medical law (in cooperation with RSU Public Health platform), on the impact of digitisation in different sectors, etc. One of the main research directions of RSU Social Sciences platform is international and national legal systems and law: international law and EU law, national and cybersecurity, medical law, which are growing areas of research.

The activities of the social sciences platform are coordinated with the national-level guidelines aimed at the development of science and economy, including envisaging involvement in the national reform programmes, the basic and applied research programmes of the Latvian Council of Science, and support for doctoral students. Lead researchers are advisers to public policy makers. Any research carried out within the platform must meet the highest ethical standards and requirements coordinated by RSU.

The social sciences platform also provides training for RSU doctoral and post-doctoral students, as well as provides support in the training of qualified academic and research staff. To support scientific activity, the academic and research staff of the platform teach study courses related to research methodology and organisation, including the ethical aspects of scientific work. All the activities related to doctoral and post-doctoral education, resources and grants for individual doctoral research, as well as the entire study programme are coordinated by RSU Department of Doctoral Studies.

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 link of scientific research and the study process in the study direction “Social Welfare” takes place by involving students in research in several ways:

1. within the framework of individual study courses, students acquire research skills by carrying out independent research tasks: research analysis, analysis of statistical data, data acquisition (e.g. “Research mini” for the purposes of finding out opinions);
2. development of Semester Papers;
3. development of Final theses.

The aim of research work is to acquire practical skills in drawing up a scientific research paper based on theoretical knowledge, data acquisition, analysis and systematisation.

During the study process, students complete several research papers until writing the Final thesis. The main goal of research papers is to acquire research skills.

During the Bachelor's study programme, students draw up three research papers: two semester papers (1st and 3rd years of study) and one research project (2nd year of study).

The semester paper is a theoretical and empirical research described in writing by the student. In the semester paper, the student independently describes the knowledge acquired when studying documents, scientific literature and analysing statistical data and other sources. The aim of the semester paper is to develop students' independent research paper writing skills (selection of scientific literature, systematisation of knowledge, analysis of the obtained information and making conclusions).

The research project is an important stage for students in studying both theory and practice and in acquiring independent and cooperation skills. The research project may be drawn up by a group of students or on an individual basis. The research project includes a review of scientific literature and research in the placement institution.

The teaching staff of the Department of Welfare and Social Work develop thematic areas for research as proposals for research topics to be chosen for semester papers and final papers. The topics are updated annually and approved by the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare Council. They are available to students on the website of the Faculty/Department.

Research activities of students are closely linked to the challenges of social policy, welfare and social work, which correspond to the specific nature of the study programmes and the study direction.

The scientific research work follows several thematic directions:

1. Social policy, development of social services and quality management;
2. Issues related to the development of the social worker’s profession: the interaction between education, research and practice;
3. Social work with different target groups of social work;
4. Social work in the healthcare environment;
5. Methodological problems in social work research.

The Ministry of Welfare has formulated the current research directions in the field of welfare (the letter of the Ministry of Welfare No. 30-1-04/1426 of 30 August 2017), including:

1. The scope of social services – challenges and solutions;
2. Social security – interfering factors, development opportunities;
3. Building up social capital in communities;
4. Providing independent living opportunities for persons with disabilities;
5. The scope of social work professional capital for promoting public welfare;
6. Building human capital;
7. Reducing social inequality and promoting the inclusion of marginalized groups, etc.

Use of student research outcomes in the study process

Students' attitudes towards research are somewhat ambivalent. Students do not always engage in research with great interest and enthusiasm because they consider research to be a complex and difficult task. On the other hand, they want to study serious topics.

For example:

1. Social consequences of maintenance debts (1 st year of study, 2020);
2. Quality of life for families with a maintenance debt (2nd year of study, 2021);
3. Services available to pregnant minors and mothers in Riga (3rd year of study, 2019);
4. Special features of supervision in social work (3rd year of study, 2019);

5. Social entrepreneurship as a solution for the provision of social services in local governments (2nd year of study, 2018);
6. Creating responsibility for children in the performance of household duties in the family (1st year of study, 2018);
7. Evidence-based social work practice: theoretical and practical aspects (3rd year of study, 2015);
8. The role of a socially inclusive environment in the rehabilitation of drug addicts (2nd year of study, 2014) and other topics.

The outcomes of students' research and research activities are an additional for the acquisition of specific study courses, as well as for the acquisition of the study programme in general.

Firstly, students' research work is related to the field of social work. Research deepens students' understanding and stimulates interest in the diversity of social work, social problems and their connection with wider socio-economic and other processes.

Secondly, research works develop the skills necessary to conduct research: to obtain data, to analyse, and to draw conclusions.

Thirdly, the results of research activities often serve as a subject for discussion in classes. In this way students acquire and strengthen knowledge in a particular topic, thus developing critical thinking.

Fourthly, research activities encourage students to find their area of interest during their studies in order to prepare for work as purposefully as possible.

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.

Involvement of the teaching staff and students of the study direction “Social Welfare” in international scientific research projects:

- COST Action CA16206 Empowering the next generation of social enterprise scholars (EMPOWER-SE, (2017–2022);
- European Association of Schools of Social Work. Project for the publication: FACES OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN EUROPE (2018–2021.);
- NORDPLUS project “Age is not an Obstacle” (2020-2022);
- NORDPLUS project “Age is not an Obstacle” (2017-2018);
- European Commission 7th Framework programme for research INNOVAGE No. 306058 (2014 – 2015);
- ESF – OPVK 2. 3. “Development and support of the multidisciplinary research team at the University of Hradec Králové concerned with contemporary family” (2012-2015).

Department of Welfare and Social Work has been an initiator and organiser of the international interdisciplinary conference “Society. Health. Welfare” since 2007. Since 2021 this conference has been included in RSU International Research Week programme. (see https://rw2021.rsu.lv/conferences/society-health-welfare (only in English).

The conference is established as a regular event of international research at RSU. Partners from a number of European countries, such as Lithuania, Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Poland and Finland have been involved in the preparation and holding of this conference:

The results of the conference are reflected in the Proceedings (see https://www.shs-conferences.org/shw (only in English), which is indexed to the Web of Science database.

The conference has become an internationally recognised forum in which public, health and well-being issues reach the intersection of discussions between scientists, researchers, experts, teaching staff and practitioners of various sectors.

Looking ahead, a Letter of Intent has been signed on the continuation of the NORDPLUS project "Age is not an obstacle" (07.2022–11.2022), an international conference "Society. Health. Welfare," will be organised in 2023; 2025).

The research is carried out in the framework of the implementation of the international joint master's study programme "Social Work with Children and Youth" in cooperation with 4 countries (*Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Portugal*), 2022–2027.

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.

Appended:

Annex No. 6.4. List of publications of the teaching staff during the reporting period (Compiled information on research activities of the teaching staff).

The staff lecturers of the Department involved in the implementation of the StP carry out scientific research work at both national and international level. During the reporting period, the following research projects are particularly important:

- The National Research Programme (NRP) "Life with COVID-19" WP2 (2020);
- COST Action CA16206 Empowering the next generation of social enterprise scholars (EMPOWER-SE, (2017–2022);
- European Association of Schools of Social Work. Project for the publication: FACES OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN EUROPE (2018–2021.);
- NORDPLUS project "Age is not an Obstacle"(2017-2018);
- National Research Programme EKOSOC-LV Project No. 5.2.6. "Social and political transformation trajectories in Latvia in the post-crisis period" (2016-2018);
- ESF Project "BE ABLE and DO" (2014-2020);
- European Commission 7th Framework programme for research INNOVAGE No. 306058 (2014 – 2015).

Social work is an interdisciplinary profession and an academic discipline. Therefore, research in which lecturers participate is able to make a positive contribution to the improvement of the content of StP and study courses from different points of view.

The contribution of the academic staff involved in research projects to the development of StP can be described by a number of aspects:

- ***First,*** lecturers gain and broaden their experience of working in *a team of researchers*, including cooperating with partners from other countries;
- ***Second,*** by working in research projects, the teaching staff develop their competence in the particular subject matter. The obtained information and research outcomes are used in the improvement of the StP and individual study courses.

For example, while participating in the COST Action CA16206 *Empowering, the next generation of social enterprise scholars*, a group of researchers (4 from RSU and 1 from Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU)) had a challenge to cooperate not only at the national level, but also to join in the international research as a team of researchers from Latvia. The result of this collaboration is the publication (Henrijs Kaļķis, Lolita Vilka, Lāsma Līcīte-Ķurbe, Ilze Trapenciere, Marta Urbāne (2021) *Challenges for Social Enterprise in Latvia, Social Enterprise in Central and Eastern Europe, Routledge*).

The benefit is the improvement of the Master's study course *Social Entrepreneurship Models in Social Work Practice.* The book Social Enterprise in Central and Eastern Europe is a valuable literature resource that enables students to become familiar with the development of social entrepreneurship in Latvia as part of the other Eastern European countries.

A similar example is the European Association of Schools of Social Work project for the publication: Faces of. Social Work in Europe (2018-2021) project resulted in the book "*Social Work Education in Europe*: *Traditions and Transformations* (2021). The article Social Work Education in Latvia: Post-crisis Impact and Development Perspectives (L. Vilka. M. Lotko,) gives students the opportunity to analyse the field of social work in Latvia in a broader context and to understand the relationship between the current problems of social work development and the development of social work in other European countries.

- ***Third,*** participation in research projects promotes students' interest in scientific research and increases students' involvement in research. For example, students have drawn up their Masters' theses by participating in the National Research Programme ECOSOC - LV (2016-2018) and "Life with COVID-19" (2021).

Students, in cooperation with the teaching staff, participate in conferences, by preparing a report on their research results, as well as publish articles. For example, within the ECOSOC-LV, research was carried out by students and the teaching staff and the results were summed up in the chapter *Employability aspects of young people and women after their maternity leave* of the monograph "Transformation Circles of Social Policy" (2018).

Another example, two students for the Master's degree presented the results of their research carried out within the NRP "Life with COVID-19" (2020) during the 8th international conference "*Society. Health. Welfare 2021" during RSU Research Week*

See Annex 14 for the information on projects, in which RSU is involved.

See Annex 6.4 "List of Scientific Publications by the Teaching Staff Related to the Study Programme for the Last Six Years".

The strategy for the development of the research staff of RSU social sciences platform is aimed at ensuring excellent research in the social sciences and providing a sustainable and supportive research ecosystem for students and RSU academic and research staff.

The aim of the strategy for the development of the research staff is to identify areas of activity that

can have a significant impact on the development and attraction of scientific talent, to analyse the conditions required for the intended activities to achieve their goal, as well as to make the necessary changes. These actions also serve as a tool for the sustainable and responsible strategic development of human resources, in accordance with the principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Planned development of research staff in 2013–2018 has yielded the following results:

- new employment opportunities for the new doctoral students and support during initial stages of a researcher's career to promote growth;
- five post-doctoral research support projects have been attracted;
- visiting lecturers have received competitive salaries; flexible working hours have been ensured, transport and subsistence costs have been covered (the Human Resources Department also uses "Euraxess" to select lecturers);
- groups of scientists, the aim of who is to attract new, international or re-emigrating Latvian scientists, the result of which is three new projects and additional research capacity;
- student involvement in a number of grants and projects is now mandatory.

The strategic goal was to attract more scientific talent to vacant positions in the reporting period for 2013 - 2018:

- succession plans for academic staff were prepared;
- training on research topics was provided;
- the Statistics Unit provides analytical support and advice on research methodologies, etc.;
- support and advice for project application preparation and project management;
- English language proficiency testing and English language training;
- financial support for publications *Web of Science / Scopus, Open Access*.

Increasing the support for the strategic goal for the research activity of RSU staff; results of the measures to reduce remuneration imbalances in the reporting period for 2013–2018:

- a significant increase in the remuneration for research staff and technical support staff to research staff;
- a performance-based monthly bonus system, also considering staff involvement in research projects;
- electronic working time accounting (working time compliance tracking) applications have been introduced;
- The results of the annual staff performance evaluation carried out in 2017 showed that the researcher affiliation rate is still insufficient - RSU dealt with this problem by introducing an internal grant and motivation system.

Activities related to the strategic goal award for outstanding management of research staff from 2018 in order to promote RSU participation in the award presenting:

- increased administrative support for project implementation;
- increasing remuneration for research staff;
- new positions for lead researchers (for example, three lead researchers in social sciences);
- an annual performance-based bonus for members of the academic and research staff involved in research projects related to publications, registered patents, defended doctoral theses, based on the amount of funding attracted (contract amount).

Social sciences platform promotes the modernisation of the learning environment and content by involving academic staff in research projects, thus improving their knowledge of modern technologies and sectoral trends. The lead researchers of the platform work closely with public

organisations and politicians, thus gaining an opportunity to participate in policy-making and prepare proposals for amending regulatory enactments, strengthening collaboration with industry players to promote innovation and commercialisation. Research results and innovations are constantly integrated into the study process and study programmes.

Summary of scientific research activities of teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction during the reporting period is listed in Annex 6.5: Summary of the publications by the teaching staff, experience within the sector and participation in projects. See Paragraph 1.5. of the Annex 23 for more information.

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.

Participation of students in scientific research at RSU take place considering the level of knowledge, skills, competence and experience of students.

In general, RSU students may participate in research activities in the following ways:

- by participating in student research interest groups in various areas. Currently, 26 research interest groups have been formed and work actively (more information on the website);
- by applying for receipt of financial aid from the Student Union for participation in conferences or seminars in the country or abroad (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 to assist in the development of a research paper;
- participating in RSU SU Academy of Researchers;
- by participating in RSU scientific conference;
- by participating with their own research in RSU International Student Conference (ISC). RSU ISC is an annual project hosted by the SU that became international in 2015, and each year it attracts more and more students from various countries. In 2018, the conference reached new peaks, being organised for two days and involving more than 270 students with research work both in healthcare and social sciences. More information about the conference of this year and previous year can be found on RSU ISC website (available in English).

Various departments and people are involved in organising RSU International Student Conference: RSU departments and student research interest groups are involved in creation of workshops; RSU professors are involved in evaluation of research papers; and the management and departments are involved in various organisational matters.

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. Each year, more papers are submitted in health sciences, but it is difficult to involve students of social sciences in the conference. Experience shows that mostly it is related to motivation of medical students to collect points for residency. Students of social sciences are more difficult to motivate; therefore, ideas are sought on added value obtained by a student who would receive an award, for example, adding a grade to the

final paper or granting tuition fee discounts. In 2019 and 2020, it was particular success in advertising the conference both via the conference website and radio interviews, as well as distribution of tangible materials in RSU and buildings of other universities. Challenge of the next year's conference is to involve even more students with their research work both in the healthcare and social sciences block in order to increase the number of sessions and interested participants.

Starting from the first year of study, students prepare research papers, where they acquire the methodology for drawing up research work that allows students to acquire basic research skills already in the first year. In the third and fourth year of study, students draw up their Bachelor's theses in accordance with the content of the study programme and the research directions related to the study programme.

From April 2019, the annual Research Week has been organised, within the framework of which an international scientific conference of researchers and students is held. It promotes the development of wider international cooperation, involvement in research networks and associations, allows to attract international partners to joint projects, research and publications.

In accordance with the valid Law on Scientific Activity of the Republic of Latvia (2005), persons with a doctoral or a master's degree may be elected to the position of a researcher. (Section 26, Paragraph 3). Therefore, the involvement of students in research is envisaged in the content of study programmes, since the acquisition of research skills is one of the outcomes of study programmes to be achieved: *to find out and conduct research using research methods*.

Master's students dedicate their research work to the research of current problems in the field of social work. For example, *Social anxiety of drug users and its characteristics in social work practice in Riga municipality (2021); Logistics for the provision of social services for families with children (2021); Provision of social services to Dundaga residents under the conditions of administrative-territorial reform (2021); Evaluation of the services of the day-care centre for persons with mental disabilities (2021); Factors influencing the prestige of the social worker's profession. (2018) etc.*

Students have developed their master's theses by participating in the National Research Programme EKOSOC-LV (2016–2018) and "Life with COVID-19" (2021).

Students in cooperation with lecturers speak at conferences with reports on the results of their research, as well as publish articles. For example, within the framework of EKOSOC-LV, students and lecturers conducted a joint study and prepared a summary on *employment aspects of youth and women after parental leave* that was included in the monograph "The twists and turns of social policy transformation" (2018).

Another example is the presentation of a research and its results conducted by two master's students within the NRP project "Life with COVID-19" (2020) at the 8th International Conference "Society. Health. Welfare" that took place within the framework of the RSU Research Week 2021.

The results of master's students' research are also reflected in the collections of articles of the Department of Welfare and Social Work: "Social Work: Education. Research. Practice." (2021, 2017, available only in Latvian: *https://www.rsu.lv/sites/default/files/book_download/socialais-darbs-2021_ipd-359.pdf*).

The above-mentioned opportunities for students to participate in research activities are quite wide. However, master's students are not always ready to use the offered opportunities. Not all master's students have sufficient research experience, as their daily work is most often not related to research. But in other cases, there is also a lack of confidence that discourages participation in seminars, conferences and the publication of the results of one's research.

The involvement of students in scientific research is also included in the content of the bachelor's

study programme. The study papers/course papers envisaged in the programme are designed in the form of a research work, beginning from the first year of studies. Students have the opportunity to take part in the above-mentioned events, as well as to publish the results of their research in the edition of the department “Social Work: Education. Research. Practice.”.

Students do not actively use these opportunities. This can be explained by the fact that students feel a lack of time and stress, because they also work alongside their studies.

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.

Mapping

In 2017-2018, a new type of study programme mapping was carried out at RSU, and it is a part of the study programme management process and promotes the possibility to implement a student-centred approach. When mapping study programmes, analysis of the programme content, mostly of the learning outcomes of the programme, is carried out. Results of the mapping process of a study programme – the maps obtained and the observations made are intended for the analysis and quality assessment of study programmes and for the improvement of the study programme.

Mapping is performed by using *MS Excel* Mapping tool developed by Study Programme Administration Unit of the Centre for Educational Growth of RSU, which extracts data from study course descriptions of the respective study programme in RSU register of study courses. See mapping results in Annexes No. 17.1; 18.1 and 18.2. The *MS Excel* Mapping tool is being improved every year. Preparing for the submission of the accreditation documents for the study direction “Social Welfare”, new approaches, described in the Annexes 17.1 and 18.2 to the Bachelor’s programme, were used for demonstrating more obvious analysis of the mapping results.

Specification for the mapping information system was developed within the framework of the ESF SAM project “Improvement of Management Process and Modernisation of Study Programme Content at Rīga Stradiņš University” in 2019, and the system is currently being developed, and the first delivery is expected in March of 2022. The planned mapping system will be integrated into RSU IT systems and will ensure the mapping of the learning outcomes of the study programmes and study courses and the monitoring of the coherence of the learning outcomes.

BITF

In 2014, target-specific scholarships of Boris and Inara Teterev Foundation (BITF) for RSU teaching staff were created: “Integration of International Experience”, “Modernisation of the Study Programme Content”, and “Increasing International Citation Index of the Teaching Staff”.

Activities of the target-specific scholarship should be implemented in two ways: for the young or experienced teaching staff individually or for the young lecturer in cooperation with a mentor. Support financing is received both by the young lecturer and the experienced lecturer- mentor, and they develop materials necessary for the study course in close cooperation. Both participants of the activity are equally responsible for both the process and quality of the work result.

RSU Development Strategy 2017-2021 defined the concept for the development of RSU IT infrastructure, which supports the improvement of the existing information systems and

development of new e-solutions in order to improve the quality of studies and promote administrative efficacy.

RSU students and lecturers already have a well-developed IT infrastructure and virtual learning environment, however, the existing IT systems need to be improved and new e-solutions should be developed and introduced to ensure closer integration of systems, development of new e-services and a friendlier interface for students and lecturers.

Since February 2019, students have had access to a new and upgraded portal and mobile application *MyRSU,* which is flexible for conversion and upgrading, considering student interests. Mobile applications and portal versions are designed to make the student's everyday life easier by offering the existing functionality, adding new services such as a map with all RSU training facilities, online e-service availability (application and statement requests, e-mail personalisation, e-ticket extension, scholarship applications). See Annex 23.3 for more information.

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

1) to develop the mapping system of study programmes that will ensure the possibility to see the importance of the particular study course in the study programme, and how the student can acquire knowledge, skills, and competences required for the particular profession by completing certain study courses. E-solution for study programme mapping will strengthen the shared use of resources, promote development of joint study programmes, and decrease duplication of the content of study programmes.

2) to supplement the existing RSU Register of Study Programmes for a more efficient management of study programmes that will ensure definition of learning outcomes of study programmes and the joint plan, preparation of accreditation reports, analysis and benchmarking of performance indicators of the study programmes;

3) 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 study programme in support of succession of the 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;

4) to establish a link between the thematic planning of the course description and the corresponding course in the e-learning environment, 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;

5) to use audio-visual study materials of RSU Library, including descriptions of various study objects, for example, clinical case descriptions, dissection cases, simulation scenarios, interactive training videos, etc., ensuring systematisation and collection of study objects, as well as the possibility to share study objects with other higher education institutions; and for the students to be able to find the necessary simulation cases, clinical cases, and other study objects easily.

6) to develop a new system that would make it much easier for students to register for the available elective study courses at times convenient to them. Establishing a system would facilitate the work of the administrative staff, allowing students to be added to elective courses more easily and quickly;

7) to improve the Electronic Admission System by reducing the administrative workload, automating manual actions, improving the user interface, supplementing functionality, etc.

In order to ensure an advanced internal information exchange system for solution of 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:

1) transition to electronic storage of the student file – in accordance with the Cabinet Regulations No. 203, applications, requests of the students and decrees on the movement of students and study process may be stored only electronically. It will decrease the time for processing of documents, increase the efficiency of administrative work and data quality, decrease the use of natural resources;

2) purchase of additional HOP modules to provide availability of new e-services: expanding HOP functionality by implementing new e-services for the staff, for example, record keeping of business trips, e-instructions, etc.

3) Change of the Performance Management System - RSU has the Performance Management System that ensures management of the assessment of achievement of aims and management of work performance. Change of the Performance Management System portal is necessary in order to improve usability and help in work of the Heads of the departments, ensure integration with other RSU information systems;

4) purchase of invoice digitalisation tool – in accordance with the EU directive, pursuant to which all invoices between companies and state authorities must be in electronic format as of 27 November 2018, a possibility to digitalise printed invoices and create meta-invoices from these must be ensured.

5) to develop a quality and process management system – RSU Quality Assurance and Internal Audit Department already uses a process management tool *QPR Enterprise Architect* 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.* Employees will have access to the *QPR web* portal, which will allow each RSU employee to view the processes created, customize the content of the site to their own needs, and keep track of changes made and monitor the activities under their responsibility.

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

2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

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

Cooperation with various Latvian institutions

Cooperation and partnership should be assessed as an important factor in achieving the outcomes of the study programmes implemented in the study direction. Cooperation with Latvian institutions can be described in several aspects:

1. cooperation at the level of social work policy;
2. cooperation with higher education institutions;
3. cooperation with employers' institutions;
4. cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Cooperation at the level of sectoral policy ensures coordinated cooperation between institutions of different levels. The Cooperation Council of Social Work Specialists (CCSWS; established by the Order No. 128 of the Ministry of Welfare of 28 August 2006; see https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/sociala-darba-specialistu-sadarbibas-padome) is a consultative institution. It consists of representatives of state institutions, higher education institutions, local governments and non-governmental organisations. The RSU Department of Welfare and Social Work is also represented in the Council. Participation in the CCSWS envisages involvement in the formulation and development of social work sector policy. For example, the department contributed to the development of the *Guidelines for the Development of Professional Social Work 2014–2020*. Another contribution is the submission of proposals during the development of the *Guidelines for Social Security and Labour Market Policy 2021–2027*. The lecturers of the department participated in the working group for the development of the *Code of Professional Ethics for the Social Worker*, as well as in the development of *the Professional standards for the Social Worker and the Leading Social Worker*. The meeting of the Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education and Science, initiated by the RSU should be particularly highlighted. The meeting was organised in order to jointly address the issue of financing social work study programmes at RSU. As a result of these negotiations, an inter-sectoral agreement was reached on the allocation of 10 state-funded study place to the bachelor's study programme “Social Work” from the higher education funding administered by MES (letter from the Ministry of Education and Science 4-6e/21/4042).

Cooperation with higher education institutions takes place mainly in the implementation of joint projects. Thus, for example, the Department of Welfare and Social Work worked together with colleagues from Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences within the National Research Programme (NRP) EKOSOC–LV (project No. 5.2.6 Trajectories of Social and Political Transformations in Latvia in the Post-Crisis Period). In turn, NRP project “Life with COVID-19” was implemented in cooperation with researchers from the University of Latvia (UL) and Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences. It should be noted that the development of the above-mentioned professional standard for a leading social worker was a joint work of social work educators from RSU, UL and Liepāja University. Currently, the lecturers of the department are involved in the preparation of the Dictionary of Social Work Terminology in cooperation with the project implementer – Advanced Social and Political Research Institute of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Latvia. (2018-2022) ESF project No. 9.2.1.1/15/I/001 “Development of professional social work in municipalities”).

Cooperation with employers takes place in several aspects:

- Within the framework of study courses;
- within the framework of study placement;
- representatives of employers participate in the Study Quality Council;

Employers participate in National Examination Committees; (see self-assessment reports the of bachelor’s and master’s programmes).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an important role in the development of social

services in the country. NGOs often offer innovative practices in providing services to different target groups. NGOs are the main resource where students volunteer. It promotes the development of professional skills in the study process. The Department of Welfare and Social Work regularly cooperates with the Centre “Dardzedze”, SOS Children's Villages, and the Samaritan Association of Latvia.

When choosing cooperation partners, the main criterion is: how can cooperation partners promote the achievement of the outcomes of the study programmes? However, this is not a one-sided choice – a cooperation that is directed towards the interests of the Department of Welfare and Social Work. A good partnership is formed if all parties benefit from the cooperation. For example, the Department of Welfare and Social Work organised a training of placement supervisors (2020) for specialists of the Riga Social Service, who later became placement supervisors for students. The training was very much appreciated.

When implementing study programmes, it is very important to ensure a linkage between the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and skills at the university and their transfer in practice. Thus, for example, when choosing cooperation institutions, the diversity of the offered services, experience and qualification of specialists is taken into account.

In order to promote the linkage between education, practice and learning in the work environment, the acquisition of study courses includes attendance of social service providers and agencies, where specialists are invited to teach separate study courses or guest lectures in addition to the above-mentioned forms of cooperation.

Networking and maintaining both formal and informal relationships are important in attracting partners. An important resource are the graduates of RSU social work study programmes who work in social service institutions. The graduates can contribute to students, for example, by supervising a placement in the institution.

An agreement is concluded between RSU and the cooperation partner on a specific subject of cooperation.

RSU International Department (ID) has established an extensive network of partner higher education institutions in Europe. Partner higher education institutions are regularly informed on *Erasmus* exchange possibilities at RSU, including the exchange of visiting teaching staff. In addition to electronic communication, every year RSU ID 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, draws up the plan of activities, assists in the process of the visit, etc.).

Current development of cooperation and internationalisation is in line with the aims of the directions and the plan and is generally considered as sufficient.

The Social Sciences Platform has established successful cooperation with key stakeholders in the

sector in order to achieve its strategic goals, continuous research topicality, increase the potential for commercialisation of research results and their coherence with the development of the sector.

Cooperation agreements with other institutions for the implementation of study programmes have been concluded.

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 covers all study programmes as well as all levels of higher education, including doctoral studies. (information is available in Latvian on RSU website, in English).

There is continuous cooperation with employers on several levels. In order to facilitate cooperation with employers' organisations, their participation in educating prospective professionals, as well as to increase the competitiveness of RSU students on the labour market, a Career Week is organised in the university each year. During this week presentations of employers' organisations are made with representatives of employers telling about career opportunities in the represented organisation and offering current vacancies to RSU graduates and students, as well as giving practical advice on how to succeed in the labour market.

National Examination Boards and Committees for defence of Master and Bachelor's theses comprise at least 50% of employers: it is established by the Cabinet Regulations No. 481 of the Republic of Latvia, and the compliance with these Regulations is strictly controlled at RSU.

The *Erasmus* + programme mobility activity has been implemented among the countries of the programme. 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. The partner universities are selected on the basis of information available on equivalent study programmes and the language of instruction. One of the main conditions is the coordination of study courses during the student exchange programme in order to be able to validate the study courses and to add them to the Diploma Supplement of the corresponding study programme of RSU. As a result, a full study process is provided, complemented by experience from abroad. The *Erasmus* + programme mobility activity at RSU has been implemented among the countries of the programme.

RSU has been positively evaluated in the international environment. International university ranking *QS World University Rankings 2019* included RSU among the 1,000 best-performing universities in the world, especially appreciating the ability of the university to attract international students. Similarly, RSU regularly receives the highest rating "A" in various categories in the *U-Multirank* rating of European Union universities (information about ratings in Latvian, in English).

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

The extensive network of *Erasmus* partner higher education institutions also proves the international recognition of RSU. In 2017, RSU received recognition from the National Education and Development Agency for the successful implementation of the European Commission's *Erasmus* programme.

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.

The international cooperation has developed gradually. The initial cooperation was established with Lithuanian colleagues from Mykolas Romeris University, and later with higher education institutions from other countries. The RSU Department of Welfare and Social Work has been a member of the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW) since 2011. In 2015, Marika Lotko, a lecturer at the RSU Department of Welfare and Social Work, was elected a member of the Executive Committee of the European Association of Social Work Schools. EASSW promotes the creation and development of an international network.

The experience of joint cooperation was the basis for the development of a long-term cooperation project – study programme "Social Work with Children and Youth" in a consortium of four partner universities: Rīga Stradiņš University (Latvia), Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), Catholic University in Ružomberok (Slovakia) and University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal).

In addition to the above, the lecturers and students of the department are also involved in Nordplus cooperation projects. Assessing the benefits of international cooperations in achieving the outcomes of the study direction, it should be noted that:

Firstly, cooperation with partners from other countries expands cultural experience of both lecturers and students.

Secondly, lecturers can expand their pedagogical competence by getting to know how the partners organise and manage the study process in their universities, how they build cooperation with students and what teaching methods, tools and technologies they use.

Thirdly, international cooperation promotes the recognition of RSU and study programmes of the study direction "Social Welfare".

See Annex 7 "Information on cooperation agreements concluded 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.

Assessment of the outgoing mobility of the teaching staff during the reporting period.

The outgoing mobility of RSU teaching staff of RSU is implemented within the framework of *Erasmus+* programme, bilateral cooperation and a number of EU-funded projects. Cooperation

agreements have been concluded with other higher education institutions of the European Union, in which equal study programmes are implemented in order to ensure full cooperation. Before leaving for a teaching visit, the teaching staff contact the receiving higher education institution in order to develop the lecture plan of relevant content. The main condition for a teaching visit within *Erasmus+ is that* the lecturer must provide at least eight academic hours that can be both lectures and seminars. Guest lectures must be given in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Students also use the possibilities of *Erasmus* mobility. Students are regularly informed on ERASMUS+ possibilities to facilitate their mobility. Interesting opportunities for students broaden their outlook and promote study motivation and the motivation to learn the profession. Valuable experience was acquired when the Department of Welfare and Social Work organised a joint workshop for incoming ERASMUS students and RSU Social Work students.

Assessment of the incoming mobility of the teaching staff during the reporting period.

Incoming mobility of the teaching staff is implemented at RSU mostly within the project activities of *ERASMUS+* programme. Conditions of bilateral cooperation agreements provide for exchange of teaching staff between higher education institutions of the European Union implementing study programmes of relevant content. Prior to receiving the visiting teaching staff, content of lectures is validated, as well as the study cycle of students (Bachelor's, Master's, or doctoral studies) in order to ensure full attendance of lectures and added value to the current study course. See Annex No. 6.3. Compilation of statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of teaching staff during the reporting period.

Lecturer D. Markovičs (Slovakia) has been regularly teaching social work study courses of the study direction for the last five years.

Annex 8.1. Statistical data about international students and teaching staff

Annex 8.2. Statistics on mobility of students (indicating the study programmes)

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

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

The previous accreditation of the study direction took place in 2012–2013, and the Commission decided on the term of accreditation for 6 years, referring to the expert opinion. The assessment of the impact of the recommendations provided in the previous accreditation on the quality of studies and improvement of processes in the study direction and the corresponding study programmes is provided in Annex 11, as well as taken into account in the development plan of the study direction (Annex 4.1).

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).

Changes to study programmes were made during the reporting period. Changes to the Professional Master's StP were introduced by the change procedure in 2015 (Decision No.374 of 3 June 2015 of the Study Accreditation Commission) in order to develop and align the StP with the Cabinet Regulation No. 512 of 26 August 2014 “Regulations on the State Standard of Second Level Professional Higher Education” https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761 (MK 512). The Master's StP extended the requirements for those students without a social worker qualification at the bachelor's level. Due to these changes, an 80 CP plan was introduced in addition to the 60 CP plan and a qualification examination was included in the national degree examination. As the recommendations are not separately distinguished, no implementation plan is attached.

Whereas, a joint StP was changed from a professional Master's StP to an academic Master's study programme during the accreditation period. The team of the study programme implementers was increased from two partners to four. This was done through new licensing in the period from 20.07.2021 to 10.11.2021. See the description of the study programme for more information. A plan for the implementation of the recommendations provided by licensing experts has been drawn up and is partially implemented, see Annex 11.

APPROVED

at Rīga Stradiņš University Senate meeting

of 26 October 2021, minutes No. 2-1/9/2021

Annexes

I - Information on the Higher Education Institution/ College		
Information on the implementation of the study field in the branches of the higher education institution/ college (if applicable)		
List of the governing regulatory enactments and regulations of the higher education institution/ college	Annex_1_University_internal_regulations.pdf	1_pielik_Augstskolas_ieksejie_normativie_akti_un_regulejumi.pdf
The management structure of the higher education institution/ college	Annex_3_RSU_organisational_structure.pdf	3_pielik_RSU_paklautibu_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)	Annex_4.1_Development_plan_for_the_study_direction.pdf	4.1_pielik_Studiju_virziena_attistibas_plans.pdf
The management structure of the study field	Annex_4.2_Management_structure_of_Study_direction.pdf	4.2_pielik_StV_parvaldibas_shema.pdf
A document certifying that the higher education institution or college will provide students with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution/ college (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college) if the implementation of the study programme is terminated.	Annex_24.2_Agreement_on_continuing_the_acquisition_of_education.pdf	Vienošanās par izglītības ieguves turpināšanu.edoc
A document certifying that the higher education institution or college guarantees compensation for losses to students if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme license is revoked due to actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.	Annex_24.3_Certification_of_compensation_of_losses_to_the_students.pdf	24.3_pielik_Apliecinajuma_vestule_par_zaudejumu_kompensaciju.pdf
Standard sample of study agreement	Annex_24.8_Sample_study_contract.pdf	24.8._pielik_Studiju_liguma_tipveida_paraugs.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System		
Analysis of the results of surveys of students, graduates and employers	Analysis_of_survey_results.pdf	StV_aptauju_rezultatu_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	Annex_6.1_List_of_Teaching_Staff_Involved_in_the_Implementation_of_Study_Direction.xlsx	6.1_pielik_Pamatinformacija_parStV_istenosana_iesaistitajiem_macibspekiem_PAPILDINFORMACIJAI.xlsx
Biographies of the teaching staff members (Curriculum Vitae in Europass format)	Annex_6.2_Biographies_of_Teaching_Staff.pdf	6.2_pielik_Macibspeku_biografijas (3).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.	Annex_24.4_Certification_regarding_Latvian_language_of_academic_staff.pdf	24.4_pielik_Apliecinajums_par_macibspeku_valsts_valodas_atbilstibu.pdf
A statement of the higher education institution/ college on the respective foreign language skills of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme at least at B2 level according to the European Language Proficiency Assessment levels (level distribution is available on the website www.europass.lv, if the study programme or part thereof is implemented)	Annex_24.5_Certification_regarding_the_English_language_knowledge.pdf	24.5_pielik_Apliecinajums_par_macibspeku_anglu_valodu.pdf
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._pielik_Publikaciju_saraksts_Annex_6.4_Summary_of_Publications.pdf	6.4._pielik_Publikaciju_saraksts_Annex_6.4_Summary_of_Publications.pdf
List of the publications, patents, and artistic creations of the teaching staff over the reporting period.	Annex_6.4_List_of_publications_of_the_academic_staff.pdf	6.4._pielik_Macibspeku_publikaciju_saraksts_par_parskata_periodu.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation		
List of cooperation agreements, including the agreements for providing internship	Annex_7_and_9.2_List_of_Cooperation_Agreements_with_Other_Institutions.pdf	7_un 9.2_pielik_Sadarbibas_ligumu_saraksts_ar_citam_institucijam.pdf
Statistical data on the teaching staff and the students from abroad	Annex_8.1_Statistics_regarding_the_involvement_of_international_lecturers_and_students.pdf	8.1_pielik_Statistikas_dati_par_arvalstu_studejosajiem_un_macibspekiem.pdf
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of students (by specifying the study programmes)	Annex_8.2_Statistics_on_mobility_of_students.pdf	8.2_pielik_Statistikas_dati_par_studejoso_mobilitati.pdf
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff	Annex_6.3_Statistical Data on Outgoing and Incoming Mobility of Teaching Staff.pdf	6.3_pielik_Statistikas_datu_apkopojums_par_macibspeku_ienakoso_un_izejoso_mobilitati .pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures		
Report on the implementation of the recommendations received both in the previous accreditation and in the licensing and/ or change assessment procedures and/ or the procedures for the inclusion of the study programme on the accreditation form of the study field.	Annex_11_Execution_of_the_Implementation_of_Recommendations_Provided_by_Previous_Experts.pdf	11_pielik_Iepriekšejo_ekspertu_sniegto_rekomendaciju_ieviesanas_izpilde.pdf
An application for the evaluation of the study field signed with a secure electronic signature	RSU_StV_Sociala_labklājiba_lesniegums_Novertesanai_lv_tiks_precizets.pdf	Iesniegums studiju virziena "Sociālā labklājība" 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)		24.9_pielik_Augstakas_izglitibas_padomes_atzinums.pdf
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	Annex_18.1_Mapping_of_the_Study_Courses_for_the_Achievement_of_the_Learning_Outcomes.pdf	18.1_pielik_Studiju_kursu_kartejums_StPr_studiju_rezultatu_sasniegsanai.pdf
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)		
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Annex_20.1_Study_course_descriptions.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_pielik_Docetaju_sastava_analize.pdf

Other annexes

Name of document	Document
4.3. pielikums Fakultātes domes un Studiju kvalitātes padomes sastāvs	4.3_pielik_Fakultates_domes_un_Kvalitātes_padomes_sastavs.pdf
Annex 4.3. Composition of Faculy and Quality Council	Annex_4.3_Composition_of_faculty_and_quality_council.pdf
5. pielikums Studentu pašpārvaldes darbība	5_pielik_Studejoso_pasparvaldes_darbiba.pdf
Annex 5. Activities of Student union	Annex_5_Activities_of_Student_union.pdf
12_pielik_Izpete_par_StPr_atbilstibu_darba_tirgus_un_nozares_attistibas_tendencem.pdf	12_pielik_Izpete_par_StPr_atbilstibu_darba_tirgus_un_nozares_attistibas_tendencem.pdf
13.1_pielik_RSU_integretas_marketinga_un_sabiedrisko_attiecibu_komunikacijas_aktivitates.pdf	13.1_pielik_RSU_integretas_marketinga_un_sabiedrisko_attiecibu_komunikacijas_aktivitates.pdf
Annex_13.1_Integrated_marketing_and_public_relations_communication_activities.pdf	Annex_13.1_Integrated_marketing_and_public_relations_communication_activities.pdf
13.2_pielik_RSU_istenotie_projekti.pdf	13.2_pielik_RSU_istenotie_projekti.pdf
Annex_13.2_Projects_implemented_by_RSU.pdf	Annex_13.2_Projects_implemented_by_RSU.pdf
20.2_pielik_Brivas_izveles_studiju_kursu_piedavajums_RSU.pdf	20.2_pielik_Brivas_izveles_studiju_kursu_piedavajums_RSU.pdf
Annex_20.2_Offer_of_the_elective_study_courses_at_RSU.pdf	Annex_20.2_Offer_of_the_elective_study_courses_at_RSU.pdf
21.3_pielik_absolventu_aptaujas_anketas_LV.pdf	21.3_pielik_absolventu_aptaujas_anketas_LV.pdf
Annex_21.3_RSU_Graduate_Survey_regarding_studies.pdf	Annex_21.3_RSU_Graduate_Survey_regarding_studies.pdf
Annex_12_Summary_of_employer_surveys_and_studies.pdf	Annex_12_Summary_of_employer_surveys_and_studies.pdf
23.1_pielik_Informativas_un_metodiskas_bazes_novertejums_par_bibliotekas_resursiem.pdf	23.1_pielik_Informativas_un_metodiskas_bazes_novertejums_par_bibliotekas_resursiem.pdf
Annex_23.1_Assessment_of_the_informative_and_methodological_provision_regarding_library_resources.pdf	Annex_23.1_Assessment_of_the_informative_and_methodological_provision_regarding_library_resources.pdf
23.2_pielik_Informativas_un_metodiskas_bazes_novertejums_par_IT_resursiem.pdf	23.2_pielik_Informativas_un_metodiskas_bazes_novertejums_par_IT_resursiem.pdf
23.2_pielik_Informativas_un_metodiskas_bazes_novertejums_par_IT_resursiem.pdf	23.2_pielik_Informativas_un_metodiskas_bazes_novertejums_par_IT_resursiem.pdf
25_pielik_RSU-Senata_izraksts_StV_lv.pdf	25_pielik_RSU-Senata_izraksts_StV_lv.pdf
Annex_25_Exctract_from_Senate.pdf	Annex_25_Exctract_from_Senate.pdf
9.2_pielik_Informacija_par_prakses_ligumiem_apkopojums	9.2_pielik_Prakses_lig_apkopojums_lv.pdf
Annex_9.2_Agreements_of_students_placement.pdf	Annex_9.2_Agreements_of_students_placement.pdf
23_pielik_ESG_standarta_istenosana_22-11-2021_lv.pdf	23_pielik_ESG_standarta_istenosana_22-11-2021_lv.pdf
Annex_23.2_Evaluation_of_Informative_and_Methodological_Base_on_IT.pdf	Annex_23.2_Evaluation_of_Informative_and_Methodological_Base_on_IT.pdf
23_pielik_RSU_studiju_programmu_atbilstiba_ESG_PAPILDINFORMACIJAI.pdf	23_pielik_RSU_studiju_programmu_atbilstība_ESG_PAPILDINFORMACIJAI.pdf
Annex_23_Compliance_of_RSU_Study_Programmes_with_ESG_PAPILDINFORMACIJAI.pdf	Annex_23_Compliance_of_RSU_Study_Programmes_with_ESG_PAPILDINFORMACIJAI.pdf
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Annex_23.2_Evaluation_of_Informative_and_Methodological_Base_on_IT_PAPILDINFORMACIJAI.pdf	Annex_23.2_Evaluation_of_Informative_and_Methodological_Base_on_IT_PAPILDINFORMACIJAI.pdf
23.1_Bibliotekas_resursu_informativas_un_metodiskas_bazes_novertejums_PAPILDINFORMACIJAI.pdf	23.1_Bibliotekas_resursu_informativas_un_metodiskas_bazes_novertejums_PAPILDINFORMACIJAI.pdf
Annex_23.1_Assessment_of_the_Informative_and_Methodological_Provision_regarding_Library_Resources_PAPILDINFORMACIJAI.pdf	Annex_23.1_Assessment_of_the_Informative_and_Methodological_Provision_regarding_Library_Resources_PAPILDINFORMACIJAI.pdf
01_StV_SL_pielikumu_uzskaitijums_lv.pdf	01_StV_SL_pielikumu_uzskaitijums_lv.pdf
01_List of Annexes of the Study Direction.pdf	01_List of Annexes of the Study Direction.pdf
10_pielik_Absolventu_nodarbinātība_2022_lv.pdf	10_pielik_Absolventu_nodarbinātība_2022_lv.pdf
Annex_10_Employment of graduates.pdf	Annex_10_Employment of graduates.pdf
19.1_pielik_Skaidrojums par ierobezotas izveles un (brivas) izveles dalu.pdf	19.1_pielik_Skaidrojums par ierobezotas izveles un (brivas) izveles dalu.pdf
Annex_19.1_Explanation of the limited elective and (free) elective study part.pdf	Annex_19.1_Explanation of the limited elective and (free) elective study part.pdf

Social Work (47762)

Study field	*Social Welfare*
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	*Social Work*
Education classification code	*47762*
Type of the study programme	*Professional master study programme*
Name of the study programme director	*Lolita*
Surname of the study programme director	*Vilka*
E-mail of the study programme director	*Lolita.Vilka@rsu.lv*
Title of the study programme director	*Dr. phil.*
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	*To prepare high-level professional specialists, who are able to implement social change initiatives by actively involving in the research of the causes of social problems that are important to society and be leaders in their resolution, are competent in the provision of efficient services, are able to integrate interdisciplinary knowledge, theory and values of social work into practice in response to and satisfying the needs of the population.*
Tasks of the study programme	*1. To prepare students for professional work in diverse public or local government authorities, non-governmental and private sector organisations in the provision and development of social services;* *2. To improve and deepen students' knowledge and skills in addressing diverse social problems across different target groups in social work in micro and macro practice;* *3. To develop critical analytical judgement and reasoning by evaluating social policies and programmes for the provision of human-centred resources and services;* *4. To deepen competence in respecting of human rights and social justice and in the implementation of defence practices;* *5. To use complex knowledge and skills to implement effective, ethical and professionally competent interventions;* *6. To develop planning, organisation and management skills, initiative and leadership in the improvement of an efficient social services system;* *7. To promote the mastering of the latest achievements in the social work sector by developing innovation and skills in research, socio-educational and pedagogical activities;* *8. To develop tolerant and culturally competent attitudes in professional communication, respecting the diversity of people;* *9. To deepen the competence for human and environmental reciprocity and its impact on the quality and development of human life and life of society.*

Results of the study programme	*1. Is able to analyse and critically evaluate the conformity of social policy and programmes to the principles of human rights and social justice; will be able to set and justify priorities in the attraction of resources through constructive cooperation with representatives of the public and non-governmental, volunteer sector.* *2. Is able to explore and identify the needs, to plan and administer social services, programmes and projects to address social problems at individual and community level.* *3. Is able to manage the human resources of social work by creating professional jointly creative teams, to take decisions and to coordinate social work independently in exceptional circumstances and in crisis situations to achieve social objectives within the community.* *4. Is able to take the initiative of engaging in, offering and supporting individual and collective activities in order to achieve significant results in building a sense of environmental justice within the community.* *5. Is able to develop ethical and culture-sensitive communication in professional work; to independently integrate knowledge and skills to perform social work with an individual, family and group in a targeted and responsible way.* *6. Is able to carry out research using the methodologies and methods of social and sociological research.* *7. Is able to perform socio-educational and pedagogical activities, participate in the training of social work specialists.* *8. Is able to integrate latest theoretical considerations in the social work sector and to introduce good practice achievements and innovation, including use modern digital solutions in a social service organisation and improve access to services in social work practices.*
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	*Master's Thesis and State Examination.*

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 1 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	*Full time studies*
Duration in full years	*1*
Duration in month	*6*
Language	*latvian*
Amount (CP)	*60*
Admission requirements (in English)	*Professional Bachelor's degree in Social Work and the qualification of a social worker*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional Master's degree in Social Work*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*The leading social worker*

Places of implementation

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

Part time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	*Part time studies*
Duration in full years	*2*
Duration in month	*0*
Language	*latvian*
Amount (CP)	*60*
Admission requirements (in English)	*Professional Bachelor's degree in Social Work and the qualification of a social worker*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional Master's degree in Social Work*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*The leading social worker*

Places of implementation

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

Full time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	*Full time studies*
Duration in full years	*2*
Duration in month	*0*
Language	*latvian*
Amount (CP)	*80*
Admission requirements (in English)	*Higher education – professional Bachelor's degree or equivalent, or professional higher education with qualification in the following thematic fields of education: Healthcare, Social and Behavioural Sciences, Education, Humanities, Law. Preference is given to applicants working in the field of social work.*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional Master's degree in Social Work*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*The leading social worker*

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	*Part time studies*
Duration in full years	*2*
Duration in month	*6*
Language	*latvian*
Amount (CP)	*80*

Admission requirements (in English)	*Higher education – professional Bachelor's degree or equivalent, or professional higher education with qualification in the following thematic fields of education: Healthcare, Social and Behavioural Sciences, Education, Humanities, Law. Preference is given to applicants working in the field of social work.*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional Master's degree in Social Work*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*The leading social worker*

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 StP parameters**

No	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study programme during the accreditation period (until 22.11.2021.)	Planned changes within the assessment procedure (after accreditation)
1.	Study direction	—	—
2.	Title of the study programme	—	—
3.	Code according to the Latvian Education Classification	—	—
4.	Head of the study programme	—	—
5.	Scientific degree of the head of the study programme	—	—

No	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study programme during the accreditation period (until 22.11.2021.)	Planned changes within the assessment procedure (after accreditation)
6.	Aim of the study programme	—	Basically, the aim of the study programme has not changed, but has been updated using the current European and Latvian education policy documents, as well as based on the results of surveys of employers and graduates and the professional standard of the leading social worker (hereinafter – the professional standard) approved by the Tripartite Sub-Council for Cooperation in Vocational Education and Employment on August 11, 2021, Protocol No. 5, https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/media/13082/download.
7.	Objectives of the study programme	—	The tasks of the study programme are specified in accordance with the professional standard.
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 goal, 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 AIKA guidelines on the number of learning outcomes[1][2] (information available in Latvian). 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 learned in individual courses and the outcome of the study programme, their relevance to the aims and objectives.

No	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study programme during the accreditation period (until 22.11.2021.)	Planned changes within the assessment procedure (after accreditation)
9.	Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	In the academic year 2014/2015, the State examination was introduced, which consists of two parts: 1. State examination – an exam 2. Development and defence of Master's thesis. Previously, the state examination included only the defence of Master’s thesis.	—
10.	Type and form of studies	—	—

No	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study programme during the accreditation period (until 22.11.2021.)	Planned changes within the assessment procedure (after accreditation)
11.	Duration of implementation	In the academic year 2015/2016, in addition to the 60 CP plan (duration 1 year and 6 months), an 80 CP plan (duration 2 years) was introduced for students without a previously acquired professional qualification as a social worker.	—
12.	Language of implementation	—	The study programme is implemented in the Latvian language. In order to expand the possibilities of the programme implementation, the study programme includes a mobility module in the amount of 20 CP (30 ECTS), offering 9 study courses in English, which are offered to Erasmus mobility students (see Appendix 19 The StP plan). Until now, the offered courses have been implemented in the study programme in the Latvian language.

No	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study programme during the accreditation period (until 22.11.2021.)	Planned changes within the assessment procedure (after accreditation)
13.	Amount of the study programme (CP)	In the academic year 2015/2016, in addition to the 60 CP plan, an 80 CP plan was introduced for students without a previously acquired professional qualification as a social worker.	—
14.	Admission requirements	—	—
15.	Degree to be awarded	—	—
16.	Qualification to be awarded	—	According to the professional standard, the qualification is changed to the qualification of a leading social worker.
17.	Place of implementation	—	—

[1] Ieteikumi raksturojuma/pašnovērtējuma ziņojuma sagatavošanai. – AIKA, 2.11.2021. Pieejams: https://www.aika.lv/ieteikumi-raksturojuma-pasnovertejuma-zinojuma-sagatavosanai/

[2] Augstākās izglītības kvalitātes aģentūras mājaslapā publicētā praktiskā rokasgrāmata "Studiju rezultātu formulēšana un izmantošana": 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

Changes in the study direction were made in 2015 (Study Accreditation Commission decision No. 374 from 3.06.2015) in order to harmonise the development of study programmes (StP) with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 512 “Regulations on the State Standard of the Second Level Professional Higher Education” https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761 (hereinafter – MK 512). The requirements for students entering without a social worker qualification at the Bachelor's level were expanded in the Master's Study Programme. Due to these changes, in addition to the 60 CP plan, an 80 CP plan was introduced and a qualification exam was included in the State examination.

The Table 1 clearly shows that the changes in the programme have not been extensive, although significant enough at certain points. In preparation for accreditation, changes have been made in the programme related to the professional standard, compliance with which has been assessed in the appendix 18.1, mapping it against the content of the StP and making adjustments to the names and content of the individual study courses (course descriptions in appendix 20).

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 mission of the Professional Master's StP is to promote the development and sustainability of the social work sector in Latvia. The title of the StP “Social Work” derives from the general understanding of social work as a profession and academic discipline, described in the professional standard and in accordance with the international definition of social work: "Social work is a profession and an *academic discipline* that promotes social change and development, social cohesion and the creation of opportunities for the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life problems and challenges and enhance well-being” (IFSW, 2014).

Historically, the StP “Social Work” was developed and then implemented on the basis of the requirements of the Social Worker Profession Standard of the Republic of Latvia (2010), regulatory framework in the social work sector and higher education. International experience in social work practice and education has also been taken into account during the implementation of the StP. The Social Worker Profession Standard approved in the Republic of Latvia in 2010 was valid until 1 June 2017 and the Master's programme was implemented in accordance with this standard. A new profession standard for professional Bachelor's level education came into force in October 2020, but on 11 August 2021 a profession standard for a leading social worker came into force, in the development of which the head of the study direction and the study programme was involved. The profession standard determines the content of the Master's StP for obtaining a professional Master's degree with the qualification of a leading social worker. Reviewing the content of the StP according to the new profession standard, specifications were made in the programme, as well as it was concluded that the study courses implemented so far also provided management skills, entrepreneurial skills, pedagogical skills and leadership skills that correspond to the qualification of a leading social worker.

Changes in the profession standards of a social worker correlate to changes in the professional knowledge, skills and competences that employers place on social workers. These changes are also reflected in the content of the Master's programme in Social Work. It is important to note that the implementation of the StP content respects the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training, https://www.ifsw.org/global-standards-for-social-work-education-and-training/), which serve as guidelines for the development of educational programs at the national level, and these guidelines are specified in the profession standard.

The study direction “Social Welfare” has already proven itself with three StPs corresponding to the direction. The programme code 47762 describes the professional Master's programme in Social Work, where the first part of the code "47" refers to the second level of professional higher education - professional Master's degree and the fifth level professional qualification, to be implemented after obtaining either a Bachelor's, professional Bachelor's degree or the fifth level professional qualification. The second part of the code “762” refers to the educational programme group: Social services and educational programme package: Social Work. The compliance is obvious.

Admission requirements, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, clearly define and separate opportunities to study: applicants without a social worker qualification at the Bachelor's level have the opportunity to apply for the 80 CP StP, whereas applicants with a social worker qualification at the Bachelor's level, for the 60 CP StP.

For example, if students with a Bachelor's or Master's degree in Law want to get a Master's degree and a leading social worker qualification, this choice is fully justified because social work is a regulated profession the core values of which are social justice and human rights. Alternatively, applicants with a Bachelor's or Master's degree in pedagogy or psychology enter the StP. Their advantage is the previously acquired knowledge and skills to work with an individual or groups of people. This knowledge and skills in social work are important when dealing with a social case at the micro level.

Since the academic year 2015/ 2016, students who enter the StP with a previously obtained professional Bachelor's degree and the qualification of a social worker, acquire the Master's StP “Social Work” in the amount of 60 CP (90 ECTS).

On the other hand, those students who enter the StP with an academic Bachelor's degree or a qualification in another field and apply to obtain a professional qualification of a social worker, acquire the Master's StP in the amount of 80 CP (120 ECTS). (Accreditation sheet No. 360 of the study direction “Social Welfare”, signed on September 29, 2015)

The duration and scope of the implementation of the StP in both variants of the StP implementation is appropriate to implement the requirements specified in the regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia (MK 512, the Profession standard of a leading social worker) for obtaining this type of education. This approach to the duration and scope of the implementation of the StP expands the opportunities to acquire a profession, incl. adult people with other prior education, and this promotes the competence of professionals, as social work is an interdisciplinary field of activity and the versatility of competence contributes to the achievement of professional goals and the implementation of interdisciplinary cooperation.

The aim, tasks and study results of the StP result from the profession standard and the 7th level LQF/EQF formulations. Compliance was re-assessed and specified after the new profession standard has entered into force, their coherence, incl. with admission requirements is appropriate.

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

All social work StPs are designed in response to the needs and strategic challenges of the social work sector in the country. As of January 1, 2003, the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance of the Republic of Latvia (hereinafter - the SPSP Law) entered into force, where Chapter VI “Purpose of Social Work and Requirements for Social Work Specialists” provides that: “Persons that have obtained second level professional higher or academic education in social work or charitable social work have the right to perform social work.” The introduction of this norm was planned until 2008, which also provided for the local government to have one social work specialist for every thousand inhabitants.

On June 28, 2005, the Cabinet of Ministers issued the order “On the Professional Social Work Development Programme for 2005–2011” (the Program)[1] as a new policy initiative.

Taking into account that at the time the number of social workers in the country was insufficient to fulfil the norm of Paragraph 41 of the SPSP Law, the Programme intended to provide 300 social workers (practitioners) with the opportunity to obtain appropriate education at the expense of the state budget; thus, in 2008, about 1/3 of all social work specialists will be social workers with appropriate education or continuing their studies.

These were nationwide measures for the development of the profession of social workers in the country and a guarantee that social workers will be in demand in the labour market in the next six years.

The decision to issue a license for obtaining a professional Master's degree in the Master's StP “Social Work” (code 4676201) was made on December 16, 2005 (Decision No. 774, License No. 04055-16.) The first students started their studies in the spring semester of the academic year 2005/2006.

StP graduates with a Master's degree and a qualification in social work are able to work in various social service institutions and establishments: in social services, non-governmental organizations, rehabilitation service sector, Orphan’s Courts, etc.

During the existence of the programme, 205 graduates have completed the Master’s StP. Master students, when starting their studies, most often work in the field of social services: in social service providing organizations, non-governmental organizations, crisis centres, day care centres, rehabilitation centres, as well as in the field of care services, probation system or Orphan’s Courts. Following the working experience of graduates, it can be concluded that ~ 20% of all graduates have left the social work sector.

In the last five years, 65 Masters have graduated from the StP. Of these, it is known that only 5 graduates do not work in the social work sector.

Data of the study commissioned by the Ministry of Welfare, *The Evaluation of the Quality of Social Work Study Programmes and Proposals for Improving the Content of Social Work Study Programmes* (2020)[2] show that graduates of the Master's StP highly appreciate employment opportunities after graduating from the StP. In the index: *the acquired knowledge and skills are wide enough to find a job outside the acquired profession, if necessary* – from 5 points the graduates have evaluated with 4.13. In their turn, the students gave an assessment of 4.50[3].

Figure 1. Data of the mentioned research regarding the assessment of the competences of the Master's degree graduates from the point of view of employers and graduates[4]. (only in latvian)

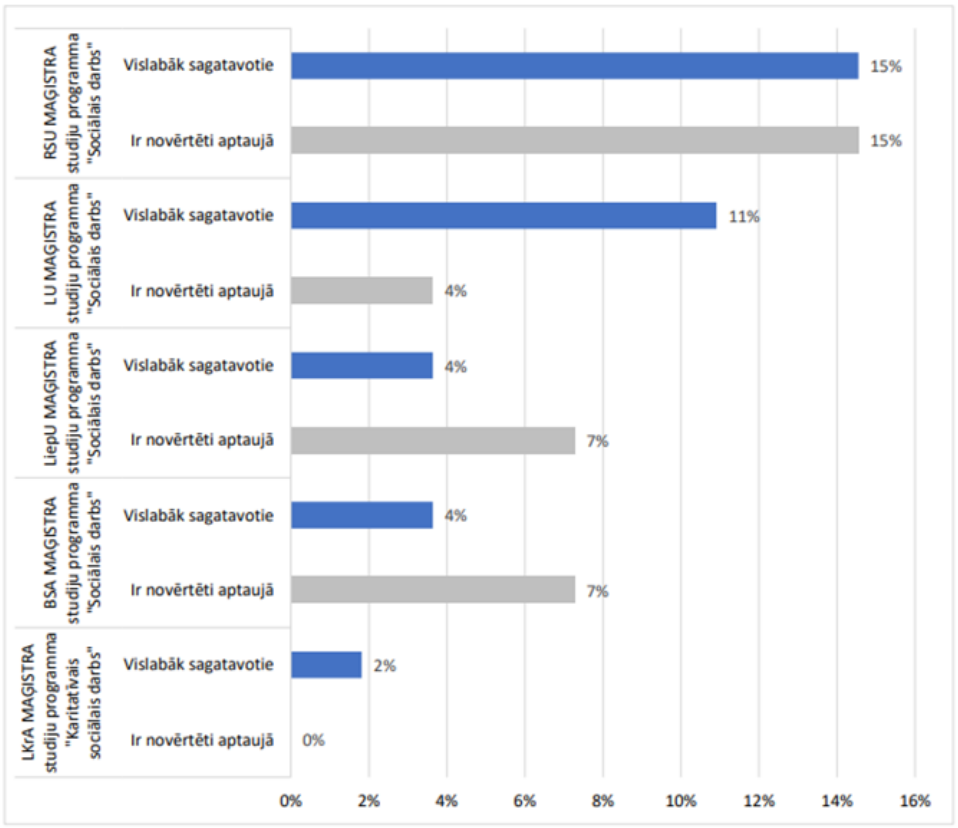

Table 2. **Summary of competence assessment of the RSU professional Master's study programme "Social Work" (assessment scale from 1 to 5).**

Criterion	Employer rating Points	Graduate evaluation Points
General competences	4.74	4.57
Competences in observing the norms of professional ethics of a social worker	4.71	4.42
Competences in maintaining and improving professional competence	4.67	4.29
Competences in the development of the theoretical and regulatory base of social work	4.55	4.22
Competences in social work in the community	4.5	4.09
Competences in social work with individuals and families	4.49	4.08

Competences in the development and implementation of social policy	3.85	3.54

[1]About the Professional social work development programme for 2005-2011. https://likumi.lv/ta/id/111596-par-profesionala-sociala-darba-attistibas-programmu-2005-2011-gadam

[2] The study “The Evaluation of the Quality of Social Work Study Programmes and Proposals for Improving the Content of Social Work Study Programmes” (information available only in Latvian) FINAL REPORT (information available only in Latvian) ”was developed with the financial support of the European Social Fund for the project No. 9.2.1.1/15/I/001 implemented by the Ministry of Welfare “Development of professional social work in local governments” within the framework of activity No.10 “The Evaluation of higher education programs in the field of social work and development of basic requirements for their content” (procurement No. LRLM2019/28-3-03/02ESF).

[3]The Evaluation of the quality of study programmes in the field of social work and proposals for the improvement of the content of study programmes in the field of social work. Final Report (2020), page 273 https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/media/14131/download

[4]The Evaluation of the quality of study programmes in the field of social work and proposals for the improvement of the content of study programmes in the field of social work. Final Report (2020), page 212 https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/media/14131/download

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.

As mentioned before (see Table 1. Changes in StP parameters), the volume of the professional Master's study programme is 60 credit points (CP), which corresponds to 80 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System). The duration of master’s studies is 2 years, if the professional bachelor’s degree and the qualification of a social worker has been obtained before.

In case student has previously obtained academic bachelor’s degree or has not obtained the qualification of a social worker, the volume of the study programme is 80 CP (120 ECTS) and the duration of studies is 2.5 years.

Differences in the duration of studies are related to the Cabinet Regulation No 512 of 14.08.2015 “On the State Standard for Second-Level Professional Higher Education”. The requirement of the Paragraph 23.3 of the CR No 512 provides for the: “*placement in the amount of at least 26 credit points, if the placement is intended for graduates of the academic bachelor's study programme, or in the amount of at least six credit points, if the placement is intended for graduates of the bachelor's study programme*”.

In order to ensure the compliance of the existing professional Master's study programme “Social Work” with the Cabinet Regulation No 512, several changes have been approved (Decision No 374 of the Study Accreditation Committee (3 June 2015)).

Based on the information mentioned above, a placement in the amount of 20 CP was

introduced into the professional master's study programme, for those students who enter the study programme after obtaining an academic bachelor's degree or with a qualification in another field.

The study programme in the amount of 80 CP includes Qualification Placement (20 CP) and an elective compensating study course “Social Work with a Case” (2 CP), if it has not been acquired in the bachelor's study programme. Both those students who acquire the study programme in the amount of 60 CP and those who acquire the programme in the amount of 80 CP have the same content of the study programme. The difference is in terms of placement (20 CP). Qualification placement and state examination are planned as an additional semester for those students who have been admitted to the study programme after obtaining academic bachelor's degree or a qualification in another field.

Table 3. **Statistical data on the students of the respective study programme**

Master students (statistics for the last 5 years)		
Study year	Year 1	2nd course
Started the studies in the 2015/2016 academic year	23	19
Completed the studies in the 2015/2016 academic year	21	12
Started the studies in the 2016/2017 academic year	18	21
Completed the studies in the 2016/2017 academic year	18	21
Started the studies in the 2017/2018 academic year	15	18
Completed the studies in the 2017/2018 academic year	14	13
Started the studies in the 2018/2019 academic year	19	16
Completed the studies in the 2018/2019 academic year	19	14
Started the studies in the 2019/2020 academic year	22	16
Completed the studies in the 2019/2020 academic year	16	16
Started the studies in the 2020/2021 academic year	14	20

Completed the studies in the 2020/2021 academic year	10	12
Started the studies in the 2021/2022 academic year	0	10

The opportunity to obtain a professional qualification of a social worker during Master's studies has promoted a generally persistent interest in studies in this Master's programme. The qualification of a social worker is sought mainly by those who work in state or municipal social service provider establishments, as well as in the non-governmental institution sector. In the social work Master's program, RSU students most often have a Bachelor's degree in one of the social work border sectors: sociology, law, psychology, pedagogy, rehabilitation. It’s not uncommon for the applicants to the StP to have an already obtained Master's degree in another field.

A relatively smaller number of graduates continue their studies in Master's programme after acquiring a professional Bachelor's degree and obtaining a qualification in social work. To a large extent, this can be explained by the desire of young people to start working independently and postpone their Master's studies.

The number of students in the Master's StP has been stable over the 5-year period.

The drop-out rate of students during Master's studies has been low. The reason for expulsion “due to academic failure” is not common. However, all students do not complete the StP within 2 years. To complete their studies successfully, students often exercise the right to take an academic break for a variety of reasons. Family situation, social condition, as well as financial difficulties are mentioned as the main reasons. In the academic year 2020/2021, 10 Master students were granted an academic break. The reason was the Covid-19-imposed difficulties in combining studies with an intensive work or family workload.

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).

Not 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 StP consists of study courses, research work placement outside the university (qualification placement for students with an academic Bachelor's degree without a qualification of a social worker) and academic placement in social work specialist training, state examination, which includes an examination and Master's thesis development and defence.

The connection between the aim of the StP and the learning outcomes to be achieved with the study courses is achieved by integrating the learning outcomes of the StP into the learning outcomes of the study courses and by specifically defining the knowledge, skills and competencies to be acquired. The study courses envisage the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and skills in the form of contact-classes, as well as student's independent work. The assessment forms used in the study courses provide a basis for ascertaining the achieved learning outcomes at the level of individual courses, as well as the state examination is the basis for assessing the learning outcomes achieved of each individual student.

Thus, the study courses and placement included in the StP ensure the achievement of the goals set by the StP and the results of the LQF/EQF level 7, as well as the professional knowledge, skills and competence required in the profession standard of a leading social worker (Appendix 18.2).

As already mentioned, the professional Master's degree in the amount of 60 CP (80 ECTS) is implemented if the Master's studies are started after the acquisition of the professional Bachelor's degree with a qualification of a social worker, but if the studies are started with the 6th level LQF/EQF education without a qualification of a social worker the amount is 80 CP (120 ECTS). After completing the StP and passing the state examination, students obtain a professional Master's degree and a qualification of a leading social worker, which corresponds to the 5th qualification level.

60 CP of the StP include a compulsory part in the amount of 46 CP (69 ECTS) and compulsory elective modules. Elective modules are implemented in the amount of 14 CP (21 ECTS), but the compulsory part of the 80 CP StP is 66 CP (99 ECTS) and it gives students the opportunity to specialize in micro-level or macro-level social work.

In total, the programme has 3 compulsory elective modules (14 CP/21 ECTS):

- Mediation and psychosocial work
- Quality management of organisations and social services
- A mixed module that includes courses with the aim to align the courses previously acquired by the students.

In addition, the StP includes a mobility module in English in the amount of 20 CP (30 ECTS), which is planned to promote the exchange of ERASMUS + students, as well as to promote the acquisition of joint courses by Latvian students and mobility students (sharing) in order to broaden the horizons of all participants.

The development of elective modules also makes it possible to respond flexibly to changes in demand in the labour market. All students acquire skills in research, management, as well as in the disciplines of pedagogy and psychology. In turn, the placement module includes research work placement and academic placement in educational institutions in order to promote students' competence in training of social work specialists. But for those students who have started their studies with an academic Bachelor's degree without a qualification of a social worker and are applying to obtain the qualification, the placement is scheduled in institutions providing social services and health care institutions.

The aim of the StP is to prepare high-level professional specialists in the field of social work. Employers of social workers are state and municipal social service providing establishments and organizations, as well as private and non-governmental social service providers.

The needs of the labour market can be characterized in two main aspects:

first, the demand for specialists, which can be expressed in quantitative terms;

second, the demand for specialists whose knowledge, skills and competences meet the needs of the sector, which, in turn, can be characterized by qualitative indicators.

The demand for social workers in the labour market results from the requirements of the regulatory framework, as well as from the medium-term and long-term labour force forecasts in the country. Article 10, Paragraph 1 of the current Law on Social Services and Social Assistance stipulates that *in order to ensure professional assessment of the needs of the population and provision of quality social services and social assistance, each municipality must have at least one social work specialist per thousand inhabitants* (1:1000)[1].

The results of an ex-ante study evaluating the effectiveness of the activities of municipal social services and social work specialists and the analysis thereof (2017) found that '... 45% and 52%, respectively, rated the number of employees as insufficient to perform the service functions and to meet the actual needs of the municipal population. .... in the towns of the republic there is a more noticeable shortage of employees (only 32% – 41% rating "completely" and "rather sufficient")'[2]. The study emphasizes that the number of social workers is insufficient namely for the provision of social services – conducting surveys, consultations, direct contact and work with clients[3].

The medium-term labour market forecasts of the Ministry of Economics (MoE) for the period up to 2027 and the long-term labour market forecasts until 2040 show that, in general, the availability of labour force with higher education will continue to increase in both medium and long term (by 2040, the availability of labour force with higher education could exceed 45% of the total labour force in the market)[4].

Table 4. **Forecasts of labour demand and availability by educational thematic groups. Maintaining the current labour force training structure**

		2027			**2040**	
	demand thousand	offer thousand	correspondence percent	demand thousand	offer thousand	correspondence percent
Higher education, including:	374.8	382.8	98	414.8	430.9	96
Education	44.6	46.5	96	38.4	39.2	98
Humanities and arts	18.0	22.5	80	17.4	28.4	61
Social sciences, business and law	154.9	167.3	93	171.4	199.2	86
Natural sciences, mathematics and information technology	29.1	23.7	123	39.3	24.8	159

Engineering, manufacturing and construction	64.2	55.9	115	72.6	55.6	131
Agriculture	7.8	7.1	111	8.0	7.5	107
Health care and social welfare	30.7	32.0	96	40.9	44.5	92

The figure shows that labour force demand and availability will also increase in the area of health and social welfare. Social work is one of the spheres of social welfare. It should be noted that in Latvia, in the thematic group of health care and social welfare, which also includes the Master's StP "Social Work", the shortage due to the ageing of the labour force is also increasing[5].

According to Cedefop's (Skedefop, Skills forecasts) forecast, the service sector will employ around half of the labour force by 2030, '.....growth is also expected in the area of public services, where the number of employees will increase most rapidly *in the field of health and social work*'[6].

The correspondence of knowledge, skills and competences to the needs of the social work sector can also be judged by the employment rates of the graduates and the feedback from employers (see Section 3.1.3).

Updating the content of study courses and modules is essential for students to acquire the knowledge and skills that are relevant in the field. The implementation of the StP at RSU is ensured by the Department of Welfare and Social Work (DWSW) and the cooperation of the department with sectoral policy makers and employers in social service institutions provides opportunities to influence and develop sectoral policy, learn and understand sector development trends and demand not only for specialists but also the assessment of the content of the study courses included in the StP.

At the level of sectoral policy, coordinated cooperation between institutions (employers, higher education institutions, etc.) and professionals involved in the development of social work policy in the country is ensured by the Social Work Specialists Cooperation Council (established by MoW Order No. 128 of 28 August 2006). RSU DWSW is also represented in the Council.

In 2013, the medium-term development planning document *Guidelines for the Development of Professional Social Work for 2014-2020*[7] was approved (Cabinet of Ministers Order No. 652, 2013). (Hereinafter referred to as *the Guidelines*). The guidelines set out a number of directions, including:

- from assistance to services;
- interprofessional and interorganizational cooperation;
- linking education to practice;
- cooperation between educational institutions that implement social work study programmes, employers, ministries and other stakeholders.

The formulated directions are applicable both to the content of the StP and to the organization of the study process. Thus, for example, in order to promote the connection of education with practice and learning in the working environment, the acquisition of study courses includes visits to institutions and agencies of social service providers, where classes are conducted by specialists in the field.

Organizing daily study work, cooperation with employers is implemented in several ways:

- in acquisition of the content of study courses;

- in study placements;
- in the study quality council, which includes representatives of employers;
- in examination commissions;
- providing RSU feedback on students' study placement at the employer institution.

At the end of the academic year, the results of study work are analysed annually at DWSW, the academic performance and the results of state examinations are evaluated. The need to improve the results and content of the courses is discussed with the lecturers of the study courses. The report is discussed in the study direction quality council, in which employers are also represented. The council decides on the updating of the content of the StP or individual study courses in accordance with the current needs in the field, as well as on modernization and innovative solutions in the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills. Thus, for example, as a result of the revision of the content of the Master's StP, the study course *Social Work in the Rural Community* has been introduced *(academic year 2016/2017)*. A compulsory elective study course *Social Work with a Case (academic year 2017/2018)* has been introduced for students who have started their studies after obtaining an academic Bachelor's degree or with a qualification in another field.

In turn, in the academic year 2018/2019, a new study course *Management of Integrated Health and Social Services* was introduced in the Master's StP "Social Work", but in several practical knowledge acquisition study courses *(Social Work with a Case; Mediation; Civil and Environmental Protection, First Aid)* simulation approach is actively used and improved:

- involvement of a simulated client in the acquisition of the study course;
- skills training in the 'student-student' form;
- solving social cases close to practice;
- use of medical technologies.

Evaluating the development trends of social work as a branch of science, it is important to note that the development of social work in the world is a path from a practice-based understanding of the profession to the modern international definition, which for the first time in the history of social work clearly defines social work as an academic discipline.

"Social work is a profession and an *academic discipline* that promotes social change and development, social cohesion and the creation of opportunities for the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life problems and challenges and enhance well-being" (IFSW, 2014)[8]

"*An academic discipline* is an institutionalized representation of a combination of accumulated knowledge and teaching. An academic discipline is often formalized by education and research policies to develop and maintain a domain of knowledge, skills and teaching."[9]

Social work in Latvia is a relatively new profession. From the point of view of science, the profession and the education system of social work are new and in 20 years a strong tradition of social work as a branch of science has not yet developed in Latvia. Social work is mainly associated with practical rather than scientific activities. This situation is influenced by the traditions of social sciences in Latvia, the science classifier, the lack of academic staff and the lack of doctoral students.[10]

The guidelines emphasize that Latvian state policy in the field of professional social work must be developed both in accordance with the new challenges of the 21st century – the economic crisis and post-crisis needs, as well as continue the development of social work started in the 1990s in several directions simultaneously – in legal regulation, professional practice, as an academic discipline and a branch of science[11]. The guidelines also set out a commitment to support the

development of the science and research base in social work.

Since 2018, in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations “Regulations on Sectors and Sub-sectors of Science in Latvia” (KM 49), social work has been classified as *Sociology and Social Work* with a sub-sector of Social Policy and Organization of Social Work, as well as *Other Sociology and Social Work Sub-sectors.*

In accordance with the current Latvian Law on Scientific Activity (2005), persons with a doctoral or master's degree may be elected to the position of a researcher (Article 26, Paragraph 3). It obliges the students of the Master's StP to develop skills and competences in research.

Specific study courses of 4 CP are provided for the acquisition of the research skills of the StP, where students acquire scientific research methodology, qualitative and quantitative social research methods and skills to apply the SPSS programme in statistical data processing. Within the framework of specific study courses, students develop skills to analyse research in the field.

In order to achieve more effective acquisition of relevant skills in scientific research, the content of the placement has been conceptually reviewed. A new concept for Master students' placements has been developed for a deeper understanding of the field in practice based on research. (Regulations approved by the Public Health and Social Welfare Council, 16.09.2020, see Annex 9). This approach was launched in the academic year 2020/2021, involving 2nd year Master students in the State research programme “Life with COVID-19”.

Students' research works are a valuable contribution to the research of current problems in the field of social work. Based on the research topics relevant in the field of welfare formulated by the MoW (MoW letter of 30.08.2017. No. 30-1-04 / 1426) the DWSW lecturers develop thematic research sectors as proposals for the selection of research topics for Master students.

Students are also involved in national research projects. Thus, for example, three Master students participated in the National Research Programme EKOSOC-LV Project No. 5.2. “Trajectories of Social and Political Transformations in Latvia in the Post-Crisis Period” (2014-2018) and developed Master's theses. In turn, during the academic year 2020/2021 two Master's students developed Master's theses in the State research programme "Life with Covid-19".

[1]Law on Social Services and Social Assistance (2002). https://likumi.lv/ta/id/68488-socialo-pakalpojumu-un-socialas-palidzibas-likums

[2]Results of the evaluation of the efficiency of the activities of municipal social services and social work specialists and the analysis thereof.

Final Report (page 109)https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/media/3466/download

[3]Results of the evaluation of the efficiency of the activities of municipal social services and social work specialists and the analysis thereof.

Final Report (page 77)https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/media/3466/download

[4]Information report. Medium-term and long-term labour market forecasts (2020). Page 62 https://www.em.gov.lv/lv/media/598/download.

[5]Information report. Medium-term and long-term labour market forecasts (2020). 73.lpp. https://www.em.gov.lv/lv/media/598/download.

[6]Information report. Medium-term and long-term labour market forecasts (2020). 73.lpp. https://www.em.gov.lv/lv/media/598/download.

[7] Guidelines for the Development of Professional Social Work for 2014-2020.

[8] Global Definition of the Social Work Profession

https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/

[9] Soydan. Haluk Soydan Understanding Social Work in the History of Ideas. Research on Social Work Practice 22(5) 468-480. Page 472 http://rsw.sagepub.com

[10]Guidelines for the Development of Professional Social Work for 2014-2020.

[11] Guidelines for the Development of Professional Social Work for 2014-2020

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).

In Latvia, social work according to the classification of sciences[1] is a branch of the *Sociology and Social Work* science (5.4.) with the sub-branch *Social Policy and Organization of Social Work*, or - *Other Sub-branches of Sociology and Social Work*. Master's degree in social work is awarded to the Master's degree candidate after defending the final thesis. The final thesis of the Master's study is an independent research work of a student for obtaining the Master's degree.

The final thesis confirms the Master's student's ability to conduct research, the ability to independently formulate and critically analyse complex scientific and professional problems in the field of social policy and social work, the ability to integrate knowledge from different fields and contribute to new knowledge, research or professional development, show understanding and ethical responsibility on the possible impact of scientific results or professional activities on the environment and society.

Master's degree provides the basis for an academic career, also in research. In accordance with the Law on Scientific Activity[2] in Latvia, persons with a doctor's or master's degree may be elected to the position of a researcher (Article 26, (3)).

[1] Regulations on Sectors and Sub-sectors of Science in Latvia. Cabinet of Ministers Regulations 49, 2018

[2]Scientific Activity Law. (2005.) https://likumi.lv/ta/id/107337-zinatniskas-darbibas-likums

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 content of the Master's StP “Social Work” after accreditation (2012) was updated in 2015 by undergoing the procedure for introducing changes into an accredited study direction and obtaining a re-accreditation certificate (28.09.2015) due to the entry into force of a new regulation on state standards of professional higher education. (Cabinet of Ministers Regulations 512) The content of the study programme was updated in accordance with the 2010 Profession standard, which was valid at the time.

The expected results in social work studies – knowledge, skills, competence – are formulated at the StP level and within the framework of specific study courses. The mutual compliance of the study courses and the StP results to be achieved was also assessed in the academic year 2016/2017 during the mapping of the programme.

Based on the mapping results, the objectives, tasks and results of the StP have been specified. Using the mapping tool, the evaluation of the results of the study courses (knowledge, skills, competences), the results of the StP, as well as the compliance of the StP with the content of the profession of a social worker in general was continued.

Another revaluation of the objectives and achievable results of the Master's StP, analysis of the mutual compliance between the StP and the results of the study courses included in it (mapping) has been performed in the academic year 2021/2022 due to the entry into force of the new profession standard for a leading social worker. The study courses have been reviewed, the names of individual courses have been specified in order to promote the compliance of the StP with the profession standard.

The study work includes students' independent work and contact hours. In auditorium, during the contact hours, different study forms and methods are used: lectures and seminars, group work, discussions, role-plays, cooperative learning, study research, etc.

Different study methods are being applied in order to promote the acquisition of research and cognitive skills, skills of abstract and analytical thinking, as well as knowledge and skills used in professional activities. An important role in the acquisition of the StP is played by the problem-oriented approach i. e. problem-based learning (PBL). PBL has historically become one of the leading approaches in social work education in Latvia. PBL is based on following important principles: collaborative learning, self-directed learning, contextual learning, constructive learning. PBL can also be effectively combined with other approaches, including the use of multimedia technologies, by developing simulation-based education in the field of social work, and creating new forms of PBL. The advantages of the PBL approach can be particularly highlighted in the relation to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in the study course “Social Work with a Case”, students analyse problem situations that are close to real life situations and find alternative solutions. This course also involves a so-called “simulated client” with whom students “play out” a social case and find out a solution. Similarly, in the study course “Mediation in Social Work”, students model solutions for conflict situations by practically “playing out” the mediation scenario. During debriefings, mistakes and possible solutions are discussed and analysed. In this way, students self-assess their knowledge and skills. These examples describe the connection with the formulated learning outcome: to create ethical and culturally sensitive communication in professional work, to independently integrate knowledge and skills in order to purposefully and responsibly perform social work with an individual, family and group.

Another example is collaborative learning. In the study course “Social Work in Rural Community”, a

group of students (3–4 students) ‘map’ the capital of community X (based on capital theory) and analyse the relationship between capital and social problems in community X. In this case, collaborative learning is related to the learning outcome which includes the ability to find out and determine needs for solving social problems both at the individual and community level.

The aim of the application of various study methods in Master's studies is to maximally promote the acquisition of research and cognitive skills, abilities of abstract thinking and analytical thinking, as well as knowledge and skills applied in professional activities. Problem-oriented approach and system approach that correspond to the nature of the social work profession play an important role in the acquisition of StP.

Studies include students' independent work and contact classes. Different forms and methods are used during contact classes in the lecture room: lectures and seminars, group work, discussions, role play, cooperative learning, study research, etc.

Demonstrativeness in the acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge is ensured by the use of modern technical means. Workshops, which are based on the analysis of typical situations and events close to real life and modelling of problem solutions, as well as study tours, play a significant role in practical classes.

The application of different types of simulations in the study process facilitates the connection of the knowledge acquired in the study courses with the acquisition of professional skills. Several forms of simulation are used to achieve study results – in the acquisition of professional skills:

- involvement of a simulated client in the acquisition of the study course,
- skills training in the 'student-student’ form,
- solving social cases close to practice.

Responding to the employer indications on the need to strengthen study placements and develop work environment-based forms of study implementation (also to the point of view expressed in the students' survey on the need to provide a more substantial link between theoretical knowledge and practice), in the Master's StP, in accordance with the requirements of EQF level 7, the content of study courses and placements includes tasks for critical research and analysis of complex professional problems in the field on the base of specific service providers' institutions / organizations.

The methods used in the implementation of different implementation forms of the study programmes (full-time, part-time studies) do not differ, however, it can be mentioned that the share of independent work in part-time studies is higher.

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).

The StP “Social Work” placement is organized in two ways, taking into account that students with

different basic education at the Bachelor's level enter the study programme (see Appendix 9).

According to MK 512 a Master's StP placement must be in the amount of at least 26 credit points, if it is planned for the graduates of an academic Bachelor's study programme or at least six credit points, if it is planned for the graduates of a professional Bachelor's study programme. In accordance with Paragraph 28 of these Regulations, *the content of the placement according to the degree to be obtained shall be determined in accordance with the profession standard (avalaible only in Latvian)**[1]*.

Until the academic year 2018 /2019, the placement for students who entered the StP with a professional Bachelor's degree and a qualification of a social worker was in the amount of 8 CP: 6 CP professional placement and 2 CP academic placement. On the other hand, those students who entered the StP with an academic Bachelor's degree or a qualification in another field and applied to obtain a professional qualification of a social worker, the placement previously was in the amount of 28 CP: 6 CP professional placement, 2 CP academic placement and 20 CP qualification placement.

Currently, the scope and content of the placement have been adjusted, incl. in connection with the necessity of other study courses in the study programme, which determined the transition to the total placement amount of 26 CP, reducing 6 CP placement to 4 CP, simultaneously implementing the improvement of competences specified in the profession standard of a leading social worker during placement.

In the academic year 2019 /2020, the concept and organization of the placement of the Master's StP was reviewed. Hereafter, the Social work research placement (4 CP) is introduced. In this way, an opportunity is provided to deepen professional competence based on the "good practice" study in the field of social work practice.

The goal of the placement is to develop and deepen professional competence and research skills, based on the research of social issues and solutions in social work practice. To demonstrate the ability to carry out research activities in the field of social welfare, contributing to the development of professional knowledge and practice in the field.

The change in the placement concept is based on three considerations:

First, the requirement to improve research skills in the profession standard of a leading social worker for obtaining a Master's degree has significantly increased. Focusing on research eliminates the risk that students with an already obtained professional Bachelor's degree and a social worker qualification will repeat the tasks of the Bachelor's level placement at the Master's level;

Second, the need to increase the research performance capacity of Master students, which is achieved by practising research. Social work research practice is connected with the following study courses: *Scientific research methodology and social research methods* (2 CP) and *Analysis of social research data* (2 CP).

Third, during the placement in social work research, Master students not only improve their research work skills, but as a result of the placement are able to position relevant issues of social work, thus contributing to the field of social work.

Students can choose social work research placement (4 CP) according to the specializations offered in the study programme. The *Mediation and psychosocial work* specialization implements the goals and tasks of the StP, which promote the development of knowledge, skills and competence in social work micro practice working with the client. In turn, the focus of the *Organization and quality management of social services* specialization is on the development of knowledge, skills and competences in mezzo and macro practice.

During the placement, students are guided by the placement regulations developed by the DWSW, which have been approved at the meeting of the Department of Welfare and Social Work. The Regulations (see Annex 9) set out the aims, objectives and expected activities of the placement.

RSU DWSW has established an extensive network of cooperation institutions to provide placements for social work students. The contractual basis on which cooperation with the main employers in the field of social work is formed is the tripartite agreement between RSU, the Latvian Association of Local Governments (LALG) and the MoW, signed by the Minister of the MoW U. Augulis, Rector of RSU prof. J. Gardovskis un LALG chairman A. Jaunsleinis.

Taking into consideration the fact that social workers work with different groups of clients, students have the opportunity to practice in different institutions: Municipal social services, State social care centres, crisis centres, health care institutions, the Latvian Red Cross, as well as non-governmental organizations.

RSU has also concluded a long-term cooperation agreement with the Riga City Council, which provides for placement opportunities in the institutions of the Welfare Department. These include Riga Social Service territorial centres, shelters, day centres, hospitals.

Placement manager is a person appointed by the DWSW, who is responsible for placement organization and coordination, supervision and evaluation, improvement, conducting placement seminars, cooperation and concluding agreements with placement institutions, cooperation with placement supervisors of the institution.

In turn, in the placement institution – a contact person appointed by the relevant placement institution, who has the right to provide the necessary information to ensure the course of the research placement in the institution.

During research placement, lecturers - researchers of the department advise students on the performance of research tasks.

The results of the placement are discussed at the placement conference and are marked as pass / fail. Representatives of placement institutions are invited to the placement conference.

The results of the research placement are evaluated during the defence of the placement. The fulfilment of the research placement tasks is confirmed by the submitted research materials:

- interview transcripts;
- summary and evaluation of the research results, conclusions;
- Assessment by the placement consultant.

Professional research placement is assessed with a mark on a 10-point scale.

The organization and results of the placement are analysed by RSU DWSW. Taking into account the strengths and weaknesses observed during the placement, as well as the students' recommendations, if necessary, adjustments are made to the placement regulations and the organization of the process.

Academic Placement in the Preparation of Social Work Specialists (2 CP)

The aim of the academic placement is to acquire the skills of academic work for working with students of a lower level social work StP. Students acquire the theoretical basis of academic placement in the study course “University Pedagogy”. Starting with the academic year 2022/ 2023, this course is changed to the study course “Management of Learning and Teaching Activities for Professional Development” and is focused on the acquisition of innovative and interactive teaching methods.

Qualification placement (20 CP)

The aim of the qualification placement is to acquire practical knowledge, skills and competence at the 5th qualification level in accordance with the profession standard of a social worker.

Qualification placement can be organized in two ways:

1. According to the study schedule, the student is in field practice in the social work sector during the 4th - 5th semester.
2. According to Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 505 the “Regulations for Recognition of Competences Acquired by Non-Formal Education or Professional Experience and Learning Outcomes Achieved in Previous Education” (avalaible only in Latvian)[2] and the procedure established in accordance with these Regulations at RSU. Recognition of knowledge, skills and competencies acquired in professional experience at RSU is governed by the “Regulations on Recognition of Competences Acquired Outside Formal Education or Acquired in Professional Experience and Study Results Achieved in Previous Education at RSU” (approved by the RSU Senate on 21.05.2019) (see Study Direction description for more information).

According to Articles 12.5 and 12.5.1 of the MK 505, the knowledge, skills and competences acquired through professional experience may be recognized only: in the part of the study programme that is formed by placement.

The majority of the Master StP students are those working in the field of social work in institutions and organizations of social service providers, including health care institutions. This gives these students the opportunity to apply for the recognition of competences acquired through professional experience and to equate them with placement.

Students who cannot apply for the recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired through professional experience within the scope of Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 505 undergo placement in accordance with the StP plan, during the 4th - 5th semester.

When assessing the linking of study placement tasks included in the study programme to the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study programme, it can be concluded that the placement is an integral part of the professional master's study programme and pursues the objectives and tasks of the study programme. The learning outcomes of the master's study programme can be generally described with following keywords: *to find out, critically evaluate, analyse, substantiate, take the initiative, integrate the latest theoretical findings, educate*. Placement is an important criterion in assessing the outcomes to be achieved. The tasks envisaged for the placement include the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study programme and meet the requirements of the LQF. The placement provides a basis for assessing students' ability to demonstrate in-depth or expanded knowledge and understanding in the field of social work (7-Z-001); the ability to take responsibility for the results of the work of the staff groups and their analysis (7-P-004); the ability to independently formulate and critically analyse complex scientific and professional problems, justify decisions and, if necessary, perform additional analysis (7-K-002).

[1] Regulations on the State Standard of the Second Level Professional Higher Education (2014) https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761-noteikumi-par-otra-limena-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitibas-valsts-standartu

[2]Regulations for Recognition of Competences Acquired by Non-Formal Education or Professional Experience and Learning Outcomes Achieved in Previous Education (2018) https://likumi.lv/ta/id/301013-arpus-formalas-izglitibas-apguto-vai-profesionalaja-pieredze-ieguto-kompetencu-un-iepriekseja-izglitiba-sasniegtu-studiju-rezultatu-atzisanas-noteikumi

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).

Not 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 evaluation 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 (approved by the Senate on 10.11. 2020) In accordance with the requirements of the above-mentioned regulations, Methodological instructions on the development and defence of students' final theses at RSU DWSW of the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare have been developed (Approved at the Public Health and Social Welfare Council meeting on 15.06.2020)

Work on the Master's research begins with the first semester. A certain amount of independent work is allocated within the StP, when Master students develop the substantiation of their research topic and the research programme. Master students readily choose research topics from those offered. However, Master students can also choose a topic that suits their research interests independently. The topic of the Master's thesis and the scientific supervisor are approved by the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare Council 6 months before the defence of the thesis.

The achievements of Master's studies are reflected in Master's research. They provide a basis for assessing the research skills and abilities of Master students, confirm the ability to use adequate research methods, skills to process, analyse and interpret the obtained data, as well as the ability to offer innovative solutions to problems in social work.

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, who represents the branch of Sociology and Social Work Science from an institution independent of RSU. According to the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 512, at least half of the commission members are representatives of professional organizations or employers in the field, as well as lecturers of the DWSW.

The relevance of Master's theses topics in the field is best characterized by the research topic, the chosen type of research and the research questions raised.

According to the specifics and development interests of the StP, the scientific research field of the RSU DWSW is social policy, welfare and social work.

The scientific research work is oriented in several thematic directions:

I. Social policy, development of social services and quality management;
II. Issues of the social worker professional development: the interaction of education, research

and practice;
III. Social work with various social work target groups;
IV. Social work in the health care environment;
V. The methodological problems of social work research

As mentioned above, the MoW has formulated relevant research directions in the field of welfare (MoW letter of 30.08.2017. No. 30-1-04 / 1426), including:

- Scope of social services – problems and solutions;
- Social security – interfering factors, development opportunities;
- Community social capital building;
- Providing independent living opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- The scope of professional capital in social work for the promotion of public welfare;
- Human capital formation;
- Reducing social inequalities and promoting the inclusion of marginalized groups, etc.

The DWSW lecturers develop thematic research sectors as proposals for the selection of research topics for Master students. They are updated and approved by the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare Council every year. Master students can get acquainted with them on the website of the DWSW of the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare.

The topics are developed taking into account current issues in the field of social work. Thus, for example, with the implementation of the ambitious Administrative and Regional Reform in the country, the issues of access to social services for the population have become topical in the field of social work. Respectively, in the academic year 2019/2020, the following topics were proposed as topical: *Provision of social services in the conditions of municipal reform (comparison of X municipalities)* and *Quality assessment of services in ensuring quality procurement in the municipality.*

In the context of COVID-19, several master's students studied the provision of services to families with children, for example*: Provision and availability of social services during the Covid-19 pandemic in high-risk families; Logistics for the provision of social services for families with children; Work-life balance as a social problem: a social work perspective*.

Research on the social situation of vulnerable social groups is still relevant in social work. Following papers were dedicated to the research of the above-mentioned issue: *Employment of people with disabilities: a social work perspective; Stereotypes and attitudes towards otherness: a social work perspective; Social work in a women's / men's shelter.*

It should be noted that institutions in the field of social work are interested in getting acquainted with the research results of master's students. For example, a master's student developed a master's thesis on the topic *Analysis of the effectiveness of support measures of out-of-family care*. This study has helped to address the issue of out-of-family care at the level of the Ministry of Welfare by stimulating discussion on the care and adoption of children left without parental care.

Another example is the study: *Ethics of a social worker in a context of limited staff resources in a social service.* The Riga Social Service was interested in conducting this study. The research raised the issue of formalisation tendencies in professional activity.

The results of these studies are published in the collection – "*Izglītība. Pētniecība. Prakse"* ("Social Work: Education. Research. Practice"), (available only in Latvian): https://www.rsu.lv/sites/default/files/book_download/socialais-darbs-2021_ipd-359.pdf

These examples show the connection between the topics of the master's theses and the needs of the industry, as well as the importance of research results to contribute to addressing current

challenges.

The topics given below were derived from the list of proposed topics. However, the given topics are of a general nature, the conducted research is more specific.

Using H. J. Göppner and J. Hämäläinen's[1] classification of social work research models, Master students choose to study the causes of social problems (explanatory research), practice-oriented research focusing on the results and significance of social work interventions (evaluative research), and research on practice effectiveness.

Examples of research questions:

1. What is the experience of social work professionals with the social anxiety of drug users and its symptoms in social work practice? Hypotheses: 1. There is a higher level of social anxiety among drug users compared to the control group. 2. There are correlations between the socio-demographic characteristics of drug users and social anxiety. (Study *Social Anxiety of Drug Users and Its Signs in Social Work Practice in Riga Municipality.* 2021)
2. How is service planning, coordination and control implemented in the logistics chain? How did the COVID-19 crisis affect the logistics of social services? (Study *Logistics for Providing Social Services to Families with Children.* 2021)
3. Is inter-institutional cooperation and awareness effective and operative enough to respond to the needs of residents in times of crisis? How were social services and social assistance provided during the Covid-19 pandemic? (Study *Vertical and horizontal inter-institutional cooperation in the provision of social support services in crisis management conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic.* 2021)
4. Currently, how effective is the out-of-home care support system in providing support measures for host families? Is the set of support measures provided by the Support Centres sufficient to enable the host families to ensure the well-being of children left without parental care? (Study *Analysis of the effectiveness of out-of-home care support measures.* 2020)
5. Do behaviour correction programs contribute to a positive change in personal behaviour among adolescent girls from disadvantaged families? (Study *“Evaluation of social behaviour correction programme cooperation in working with adolescents from disadvantaged families.* 2020)
6. To what extent can social entrepreneurship serve as a resource for deinstitutionalisation? (Study *Social entrepreneurship as a support service in the deinstitutionalisation process in municipalities.* 2017)
7. What conditions and services are necessary to promote the employability of women with children after parental leave? (Study *Woman after parental leave in the labour market.* 2016)

Average grade of Master's theses evaluations:

- In the spring session of the academic year 2016/2016 – 7.6
- In the winter session of the academic year 2016/2017 – 8.4
- In the spring session of the academic year 2016/2017 – 7.1
- In the spring session of the academic year 2017/2018 – 7.2
- In the spring session of the academic year 2019/2020 – 7.5
- In the spring session of the academic year 2020/2021 – 8.6

In the spring semester of 2017, the DWSW conducted a pilot study in the social work StP in order to find out typical research models used in Bachelor's and Master's social work research at RSU and to find out the relevance of methodological issues during the development of final theses. 9 lecturers, who supervised the final theses participated in the research and 18 students – Master students and Bachelors, who developed final theses in the academic year 2016/2017 (Maschi’s, T. (2010)

Research competence survey and graph instrument was used in the study).

Master students marked the main problems in the development of the final theses as follows:

- The choice of the research topic and whether the research topic will be innovative enough;
- Formulation of the research topic, issues and goal;
- Understanding of structure, understanding of data processing and analysis;
- Development of theoretical basis.

The opinions of Master students were largely similar to the opinions of lecturers. But one of the conclusions was that the students experienced increased and very high stress regarding performance and successful development of the study.

All Master students do not have sufficient research experience, as their daily work is most often not related to research. In order to improve the skills and competences required in research, the lecturers of the StP were asked to include relevant research analysis in the content of their courses, as well as to schedule tasks that develop analytical skills within the framework of students' independent work. Subsequently, as described above, the placement scheduled in the StP (4 CP) was conceptually changed, based on research.

[1] H.J. Göppner un J. Hämäläinen (2007.) Developing a Science of Social Work. Journal of Social Work. Sage Publications. P.279.

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 common RSU infrastructure and also the study base formed for the study direction is used for providing the study programme – library resources, study rooms, technical supplies, computers, cameras, internet connection, etc. Specific learning resources are almost entirely provided in e-studies, including descriptions of study courses, information on the development of independent works, tasks and tests, if any, as well as required readings. Educational literature is mostly provided through e-books and e-journals or by scanning key pieces of text and by placing in e-studies, or using internet sources – with a view to provide students with the possibility to read on e-devices (although in some cases lecturers specifically ask students to work in the library).

The library provides lecturers and students with access to Latvian and international electronic resources, including in the social work sector. For information on the RSU Library resources and services see Paragraph 3.3 of Part II and Annex 23.1 of the Description of the study direction “Social Welfare”.

The library has SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) programme installed on computers. It should be noted that the Statistical Unit, by promoting the scientific activities of RSU students and lecturers, offers consultations on research methodologies, data input, the use of data

processing programmes, methods of statistical processing of data, analysis, interpretation and graphic presentation of results.

At the beginning of the implementation of each study course, the lecturer, together with the DWSW assistant re-organises the e-studies website, updating tasks and lists of readings. 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 and popularise e-resources, while users have the possibility to fill an electronic questionnaire for supplementing the library collection. The lecturer continues to work on the website during the implementation of the study course, using it also for communication with students, notices and answers to questions. In order to ensure deeper integration of the e-environment in the study process, there are plans to develop the diversity of tools offered by the *moodle* environment – to diversify tasks and forms of communication.

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).

Not 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).

Funding for all study programmes is used for staff remuneration, attraction of visiting lecturers, taxes, maintenance of IT infrastructure, purchase of equipment and devices, licenses. In addition to the direct costs of the implementation of lectures and classes, the study programme must cover the infrastructure maintenance costs (facilities, 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).

A wide range of RSU material and technical facilities is available for the implementation of the study courses, which allows to book study rooms and computer rooms in the common system.

The overhead costs for full-time study programmes are proportionally higher than for part-time programmes due to more intensive use of the RSU infrastructure.

In the autumn of 2021, a study programme estimate, developed by the RSU Finance Department and approved at the RSU Rector’s Office, has been updated. The following information summarizes the estimates made.

Professional Master study programme “Social Work” 2.0 and 1.5 years, full-time on-site, Latvian.

Due to the unavailability of State budget places, the study programme is not being implemented currently, but negotiations are underway with the Ministry of Welfare and the Riga City Council on the financing of potential additional study places. To start admission to the study programme, it would be necessary to reach the average number of students in the whole programme of at least 20, including at least 13 budget places.

Table 5.1. **Professional Master study programme "Social Work" 2.0 and 1.5 years, full-time on-site, Latvian. Information on planned student costs**

RSU cost distribution in the study programme:	**Value**
Academic staff, %	53%
Department resources, %	3%
Other direct expenditure, %	3%
Fixed costs, %	4%
Overheads, %	37%
Costs per student in the study programme, EUR	5003

Professional Master study programme "Social Work" 2.0 years, part-time on-site, Latvian. It is planned to finance the study programme from the resources of private and legal persons, setting the tuition fee with an excellence discount of 2,200 EUR per year. The average number of students in the programme of 20 ensures profitability.

Table 5.2. **Master study programme "Social Work" 2.0 years, part-time on-site, Latvian: Information on student costs**

Professional Master study programme "Social Work" 2.5 years, part-time on-site, Latvian. It is planned to finance the study programme from the resources of private and legal persons, setting the tuition fee with an excellence discount of 2,200 EUR per year. The average number of students in the programme of 33 ensures profitability.

RSU cost distribution in the study programme:	**Value**
Academic staff, %	69%
Department resources, %	3%
Other direct expenditure, %	1%
Fixed costs, %	2%
Overheads, %	25%
Costs per student in the study programme, EUR	1920

Table 5.3. **Professional Master study programme "Social Work" 2.5 years, part-time on-site, Latvian Information on student costs**

RSU cost distribution in the study programme:	Value
Academic staff, %	67%
Department resources, %	4%
Other direct expenditure, %	2%
Fixed costs, %	3%
Overheads, %	25%
Costs per student in the study programme, EUR	1939

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.

34 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the Master's study programme, 20 of whom are employed full-time (elected, acting or adjunct lecturer). There are 12 invited lecturers who are practicing in the field of social services, as well as 2 guest lecturers (one representative from the Catholic University in Ružomberok, Slovakia, and the other is from the University of Tallinn, Estonia).

The DWSW staff lecturers involved in the implementation of the StP carry out research work both at the national and international level. During the reporting period, the following research projects are of particular importance:

- National Research Programme (NRP) “Life with COVID-19” WP2 (2020);
- COST Action CA16206 Empowering the next generation of social enterprise scholars (EMPOWER-SE, (2017.-2022);
- European Association of Schools of Social Work Project for the publication: FACES OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN EUROPE (2018.-2021);
- NORDPLUS project “Vecums nav šķērslis” (“Age is not an obstacle”)” (2017-2018);
- In the National Research Programme EKOSOC-LV Project no. 5.2.6. “The trajectories of social and political transformations in Latvia in the post-crisis period” (2016 - 2018);
- Faculty of European Studies Project "BE ABLE and DO!" (2014-2020);
- In the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme project INNOVAGE No. 306058 (2014-2015).

Social work is an interdisciplinary profession and an academic discipline. Therefore, research in which lecturers participate makes a positive contribution to the improvement of the content of the StP and study courses from different points of view.

The contribution of the academic staff involvement in research projects to the development of the StP can be characterized in several aspects:

First, lecturers acquire and improve their experience of working in a 'team of researchers', including collaboration with partners from other countries;

Second, by working on research projects, lecturers deepen their competence in the particular topic. The obtained information and research results are used in the development of the StP and individual study courses.

Thus, for example, participating in the project COST Action CA16206 Empowering the next generation of social enterprise scholars, it was a challenge for the group of researchers (4 from RSU and 1 from LULST) to cooperate not only at the national level, but also to join the international research team. The result of this cooperation is the publication (H. Kalkis, L. Vilka, L. Līcīte-Ķurbe, I. Trapenciere, M. Urbāne (2021) Challenges for Social Enterprise in Latvia, Social Enterprise in Central and Eastern Europe, Routledge). The benefit is the improvement of the Master's study course *Social business models in social work practice.* Because the book Social Enterprise in Central and Eastern Europe is a valuable literary resource that gives students the opportunity to get acquainted with the development of social entrepreneurship in Latvia together with other Eastern European countries.

A similar example is the European Association of Schools of Social Work project for the publication:

Faces of Social Work in Europe (2018-2021). The project has resulted in the book *Social Work Education in Europe*: *Traditions and Transformations* (2021). Article Social Work Education in Latvia: Post-crisis Impact and Development Perspectives (L. Vilka. M. Lotko,) gives students the opportunity to analyse the field of social work in Latvia in a broader context and to understand the connections between the current problems of social work development and the development of social work in other European countries.

Third, participation in research projects is an opportunity to stimulate students' interest in scientific research by involving students into research activities. For example, students have developed their Master's theses by participating in the National Research Programme EKOSOC-LV (2016-2018) and "Life with COVID-19" (2021).

Students in cooperation with lecturers speak at conferences on the results of their research, as well as publish articles. For example, within the framework of EKOSOC-LV, a joint study of students and lecturers was conducted and the results were summarized in chapter *The employment aspects of youth and women after parental leave* of the monograph "Social policy transformation – twists and turns" (2018).

As another example, two Master students presented the results of research conducted within the framework of the NRP "Life with COVID-19" (2020) project at the 8th International Conference "Society. Health. Welfare 2021".

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.

Highly qualified academic staff and experienced practitioners participate in the implementation of the Professional Master's StP "Social Work". A total of 34 employees are involved in the StP – RSU staff lecturers, visiting lecturers from the field of social work or social service providers and support staff. Including the DWSW staff

Study courses are also provided by other structural units of RSU:

- Department of Public Health and Epidemiology (information in English),
- Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy ((information in English)),
- Department of Biology and Microbiology (information in English),
- Department of Clinical Skills and Medical Technology (information in English),
- Department of Psychiatry and Narcology (information in English),
- Department of International Business and Economics ((information in English)),
- Faculty of Communication (information in English) and
- Statistical Unit (information in English).

The teaching staff in the StP is stable. Lecturers have both academic work experience and practical work experience in the field of social work. During the reporting period, there have also been changes in the academic staff among both full-time lecturers and visiting lecturers. The changes are related to ensuring succession and intergenerational interaction. Improving the content of the StP, as well as in order to introduce innovative methods in the acquisition of study courses, foreign visiting lecturers are also involved in the programme. During the reporting period, a visiting lecturer from Slovakia (in the study course “Rural Social Work”) and from Estonia (in the study course “Family Mediation”) took part in teaching the study courses.

The correlation between the teaching staff and the quality of studies must be analysed, taking into account the quality indicators, which include the content level and the individual level (students, lecturers) and are based on the principle of a student-centred approach. (see also Section 3.2.3)

The academic performance of the students, as well as the positive evaluation of the lecturers' work in the student surveys gives a basis for assessing the quality of studies.

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

Not 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).

Not 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).

The cooperation of the teaching staff of the StP is implemented at the meetings of the DWSW, the Study Quality Council, which are convened regularly. Mutual feedback seminars on current topics are organised for mutual cooperation of lecturers. Several members of teaching staff cooperate by jointly creating study courses, supervising students' work, as well as performing scientific activities.

In line with the university's strategy and internal procedures, regular observation work is also performed. The cooperation of the teaching staff is manifested, for example, in mutual visits to the lectures and classes, which allow the lecturers to gain mutual feedback, discuss relevant issues of the academic work and share the experience.

The number of the students and teaching staff in the study programme in 2021./2022. academic year is 10 students and 34 teaching staff. Proportion of the ratios of students and teaching staff in the study programme is 0,29.

Annexes

III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme	Annex_24.1_sample_Diploma_and_Diploma_Supplement.pdf	24.1_pielik_PMSP_diploms_diploma_pielikums_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	Annex_16_Statistical_Data_about_the_Students.pdf	16_pielik_Statistikas_dati_par_studejosajiem.pdf
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard	Annex_17.1_Compliance_with_the_National_Educational_Standard.pdf	17.1_pielik_StPr_atbilstiba_valsts_izglitibas_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)	Annex_18.2_Relevance_of_Obtainable_Qualification_to_Professional_Standard.pdf	18.2_pielik_StPr_iegustamas_kvalifikacijas_atbilstiba_profesijas_standartam.pdf
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	Annex_18.1_Mapping_of_the_Study_Courses_for_the_Achievement_of_the_Learning_Outcomes.pdf	18.1_pielik_Studiju_kursu_kartejums_StPr_studiju_rezultatu_sasniegsanai_PAPILDINFORMACIJAI.pdf
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	Annex_19_Plan_for_full_time_and_part_time_studies_80CP_and_60CP.pdf	19_pielik_StPr_plans_PL_NL_80KP_un_PL_NL_60KP.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Annex_20.1_Study_course_descriptions.pdf	20.1_pielik_Studiju_kursu_apraksti.pdf
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)	Annex_9_Organisation_of_Placement.pdf	9_pielik_StPr_prakses_organizacijas_apraksts.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)		

Social Work (42762)

Study field	*Social Welfare*
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	*Social Work*
Education classification code	*42762*
Type of the study programme	*Professional bachelor study programme*
Name of the study programme director	*Marika*
Surname of the study programme director	*Lotko*
E-mail of the study programme director	*Marika.Lotko@rsu.lv*
Title of the study programme director	*Mg.SD.*
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	*To prepare qualified social workers, whose knowledge, skills, professional competence, values and attitudes are in line with the needs of modern society, promoting and implementing social change and development, social justice and human rights. The used knowledge and understanding of the human's bio–psycho–social development, the link between the social and cultural environment with human's physical and mental health, social functioning and social problems, social and human rights, social services, social assistance and social support systems and resource management, intervention approaches, theories and methods in social work ensure that the social workers who have mastered the study programmes will be prepared for practical work with different customer groups at three levels of practice.*
Tasks of the study programme	*• To ensure cross-disciplinary learning of social, humanities and medical knowledge and skills for the development of professional competence.* *• To develop a student's understanding of the place, role and tasks of social work in national social policy and resolution of social problems.* *• To develop professional competence to use effective prevention and intervention strategies in the resolution of social problems at micro, meso and macro level.* *• To promote innovative, creative and critical thinking in students.* *• To develop scientific research work skills.* *• To promote the transfer of knowledge and modern, high-quality and labour market-oriented skills highly valued in professional activity.* *• To develop the moral and ethical position of students in addressing social problems by positioning and promoting the values of the social work profession.*

Results of the study programme	*1. Is able to demonstrate basic and specialised knowledge characteristic to the field and profession of Social Work and critical understanding of the knowledge and of the most important notions of micro, meso, and macro level in social work; moreover, part of the knowledge corresponds to the highest level of achievements in the social work profession.* *2. Is able to make decisions and find creative solutions in changing or uncertain circumstances, identify and analyse social problems and social needs, assess the client's social functioning in the social environment, plan and implement intervention on micro, meso, and macro level, is able to demonstrate scientific approach to problem solving, conduct research using social work and social policy methods, and apply scientific research methodology.* *3. Is able to perform work duties responsibly, take responsibility and initiative, work in an interprofessional team, demonstrate cooperation skills, and lead the work of other people, is able to structure one's learning independently and take care of the improvement of one's professional qualification and competence. Continuously improves digital, communication, collaboration, problem solving, and other relevant transversal skills.* *4. Is able to formulate and analytically describe information, problems and solutions in the social worker profession using the theoretical foundations and skills acquired, explain the said things and discuss them with arguments, is able to demonstrate the necessary communication skills.* *5. Is able to assess the impact of one's professional activity on people, society and the environment, is able to provide first aid, to act adequately and promptly in crisis and life-threatening situations.* *6. Is able to perform professional activities in accordance with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments as well as to implement professional ethics in practice, observe confidentiality and act professionally in case of ethical dilemmas, perform professional activities, respecting clients' interests and self-determination, implement non-discriminatory professional practice demonstrating cultural competence.* *7. Is able to participate in the development of the relevant professional field, evaluate the availability, quality, and efficiency of social services, and promote the development and suitability of social services for different client groups, develop person-centred innovative approaches and projects for the implementation of social policy.*
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	*National degree examination, Bachelor's thesis*

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 4 years - latvian

Study type and form	*Full time studies*
Duration in full years	*4*
Duration in month	*0*
Language	*latvian*

Amount (CP)	*160*
Admission requirements (in English)	*Secondary education*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional Bachelor’s degree in Social Work*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*Social worker*

Places of implementation

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

Part time studies - 4 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	*Part time studies*
Duration in full years	*4*
Duration in month	*6*
Language	*latvian*
Amount (CP)	*160*
Admission requirements (in English)	*Secondary education*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional Bachelor’s degree in Social Work*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*Social worker*

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
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 StP parameters**

No	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period (until 22.11.2021)	Planned changes within the assessment procedure (after accreditation)
1.	Study direction	—	—
2.	Title of the study programme	—	—
3.	Code according to the Latvian Education Classification	—	—
4.	Head of the study programme	Head of StP Marika Lotko (since 2019). Before that the programme was headed by Mg. SD Ilvija Razgale and later Master of Public Management Dagnija Staķe (2016–2019).	—
5.	Scientific degree of the head of StP	Mg SD	The new head of the programme is a 3rd student of a doctoral study programme, is planning to defend doctoral degree in sociology and social work in about two-three years.

No	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period (until 22.11.2021)	Planned changes within the assessment procedure (after accreditation)
6.	Aim of StP	The aim of StP has been clarified, has become more detailed and transparent emphasising graduate's professional competences.	—
7.	Objectives of StP	The objectives of StP have been clarified in accordance with the updated professional standard for a social worker in 2020.	—

No	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period (until 22.11.2021)	Planned changes within the assessment procedure (after accreditation)
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	Objectives of StP have been clarified in accordance with the updated profession standard of social worker. The aim, objectives and learning outcomes of StP have been reviewed in the Quality Council. The information regarding the analysis of the learning outcomes performed during the mapping process are reflected in Annex 18.1. The leaning outcomes have been clarified according to the aim, objectives and wording of LQF/EQF. The learning outcomes of study courses have also been updated to help them achieve StP learning outcomes.	Learning outcomes have been specified in accordance with AIKA instructions. The leaning outcomes have been clarified according to the aim, objectives and wording of LQF/EQF. The learning outcomes of study courses have also been updated to help them achieve StP learning outcomes.

No	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period (until 22.11.2021)	Planned changes within the assessment procedure (after accreditation)
9.	Final examination upon completion of StP	Previously, the Bachelor's thesis was implemented as a separate type of final examination, but currently it is developed within the national degree examination (see course description "National Degree Examination" and "Bachelor's Thesis").	—
10.	Type and form of studies	—	—
11.	Duration of implementation	—	—
12.	Language of implementation	—	—
13.	Volume of StP (CP)	—	—
14.	Admission requirements	Updated in accordance with Latvian regulatory enactments.	—
15.	Degree to be awarded	—	—
16.	Qualification to be awarded	—	—

No	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in StP parameters during the accreditation period (until 22.11.2021)	Planned changes within the assessment procedure (after accreditation)
17.	Place of implementation	—	—

Table 1. clearly shows that changes in the programme were not extensive, but some items were changed. When preparing for accreditation of the programme, changes have been made in relation to the approved the professional standard for a social worker, compliance with which is evaluated in Annex 18.1, mapping it against the content of the programme and updating titles and content of study courses for individual study courses (course descriptions in Annex 20).

The amount of study results has been reduced, without changing the content, but by combining the results to be achieved by StP itself.

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 professional Bachelor StP “Social Work” reflects the profession learned by the student, when he/she studies at RSU. In accordance with the definition of the International Federation of Social Workers, social work is: “a profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.”

The code of the study programme (StP) corresponds to the classification of Education and Training Sectors defined in Annex 2 to Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 322 “Regulations on the Latvian Education Classification” (available in Latvian, not available in English). Social work belongs to the thematic field of education “Health and Social Welfare”, the thematic field of education “Social Welfare”, group of education programmes “Social Services”, therefore the final numbers of the StP code are: 762. Therefore, a conclusion can be made that StP corresponds to the study direction.

The Professional Bachelor’s study programme (PBSP) “Social Work” is being implemented as full-

time regular studies (duration: 4 years) and part-time regular studies (duration: 4.5 years). The different forms of implementation of the study programme are justified by the need to provide an opportunity for employed students to combine studies with work. Lectures and classes in full-time regular studies and part-time regular studies are planned differently. Students acquiring the programme in full-time regular studies study on weekdays, while part-time regular students study every other week on Fridays and Saturdays, thus providing opportunities to combine studies with work. Not only students who already work in the social work sector choose to study within the part-time regular study programme, but also those who want to change their profession and get an education in the field of social work.

The Professional Bachelor's study programme (PBSP) "Social Work" has been developed in accordance with the requirements of the profession standard of the social worker, the regulation binding on social work as a profession and the regulation and guidelines updating higher education standards, for example, the standards defined by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) applying to education institutions, which ensure training of social workers, respecting individual signs and requirements of each national state.

Similarly, the aim, objectives and learning outcomes of StP are coordinated with the professional standard for a social worker. The "Professional standard for a social worker" approved in the Republic of Latvia in 2010 was in force until 1 June 2017. The professional standard for professional Bachelor level education was updated in October 2020. Changes to professional standards for a social worker are related to changes in the field of professional knowledge, skills and competences that employers set for social workers. It should be noted that with the updating of the professional standard StP's objectives and learning outcomes are also updated. The aim and objectives of the PBSP "Social Work" were updated in line with the improved professional standard for a social worker, where the latest updates and changes were made on 14 October 2020. The standard has been approved by the Tripartite Cooperation Subcommittee on Vocational Education and Employment meeting of 14 October 2020, minutes No. 7.

The interrelation between learning outcomes of study courses and study programmes (StP) was assessed in depth in academic year 2016/2017 and reviewed when preparing for the accreditation. On the basis of the mapping results, the aims, objectives and learning outcomes of StP were updated. Using the mapping instrument, the evaluation of compliance of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, competences) of study courses, the results of StP, and compliance of the content of StP to the content of the social workers' profession continued (see Annexes 18.1 and 18.2).

The results of the study courses included in the study programme are generally related to the results of StP. By analysing the mapping results, evaluating trends in the requirements set by employers to increase the professionalism of social workers, and taking into account students' proposals, the results of national degree examinations, proposals of graduates working in the sector and recommendations of the study quality council, the changes initiated during the reporting period were introduced in the study programme.

StP corresponds to level 6 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) for obtaining a professional Bachelor's degree and for obtaining a level 5 professional qualification of a social worker.

Admission requirements regulated by Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 846 "Regulations Regarding Requirements, Criteria and Procedure for Admission to Study Programmes". Section 46(3) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education provides that: "For full-time and part-time bachelor and vocational study programmes the admission requirements of which is a previously acquired secondary education, students shall be admitted in an open and equal competition based on the results of the centralised examinations, except for the persons who have acquired secondary

education up to 2004, as well as persons who have acquired secondary education abroad or persons with special needs."

To start studying in PBSP "Social Work", the student should have secondary education, as well as should submit CE certificates in Latvian language, mathematics and foreign language. Enrolled students, in a competition, receive relevant results composed of CE in mathematics (10%), CE in Latvian language (45%), CE or an international testing institution's examination assessment in a foreign language (45%). In case of equal assessments, the average grade in the secondary education diploma will affect the competition. Additional points can be scored for awards in olympiads and scientific research works of pupils.

The professional Bachelor's study programme "Social Work" enrols also applicants, who obtained a first-level professional higher education diploma.

If we summarise the above-mentioned information, it can be concluded that the StP title, qualification to be obtained, aims, objectives, admission requirements and learning outcomes of StP are interrelated, which is a contribution to the student's possibility to obtain education of a social worker meeting the requirements of employers, standards regulating education in Latvia and development in international education and community.

Enclosed:
Annex 24.1. Model diploma and supplement thereto.

Annex 24.8. Sample study contract.

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

In the period from 30 June 2019 to 31 March 2020, at the order of RSU within a project[1] (information in abridged format in English), 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". In accordance with the DyU study, the demand for social workers is already high and might grow in the future. It is already difficult to find qualified workers and fill the vacancies of social workers (especially in regions). The labour demand is expected to be closely related to the amount of funding of the state and European Structural Funds (ESF), which will be available in the sector.

Experience in work with students, discussions with employers and this study provide that social workers with proper education are in demand in the labour market. Graduates of RSU social work StP are employed in the sector of welfare and social services. When selecting employees, employers appreciate, if the social worker obtained education at RSU.

It is important to mention the study conducted from July 2020 to February 2021 (information about the study in Latvian is available on the website of the Ministry of Welfare (MoW)), which, based on the order of MoW, was implemented by the "Qualitas" association[2], the result of which is reflected in the final report "Quality assessment of the social work field StP and proposals for improvement of content of the social work field StP"[3]: employers (See Annex 12) believe that RSU graduates are best prepared for the mastered profession compared to all other study programmes preparing social field specialists. Such a high assessment was provided by the employers, who

employ and who do not employ graduates of RSU PBSP “Social Work”.

Table 3.2 shows an interesting trend: those students who studied during the implementation of the study, have indicated that it is not so important for them to work in the profession after the completion of StP (2.88). On the other hand, when graduating the study programme, the importance for students to work exactly in the profession is high (4.06). From this, it could be concluded that the student’s willingness to work in the profession could increase as his/her graduation from StP approaches. This could also be related to the fact that those who study believe that the knowledge and skills acquired are sufficient to work outside the mastered profession (4.75), while those who have already graduated StP evaluate them lower (3.69). Students are also more optimistic about future expectations in terms of remuneration (4.38) compared to those who have already graduated StP. In general, a conclusion can be made that those who are currently studying (at the time of implementation of the study) are more optimistic than graduates who are already working in the field of social work.

Table 2. **Evaluation of employment opportunities of StP graduates working in the profession and students across StP**[4]

		After I graduate(d) StP it was (is) important for me to work exactly in the mastered profession		**Mastered knowledge and skills are sufficiently extensive to find a job outside the mastered profession, if necessary**		**The level of remuneration largely determined (determines) where I chose (choose) to work**	
		Average	**n**	**Average**	**n**	**Average**	**n**
RSU PBSP “Social Work”	Graduates	4.06	16	3.69	16	2.44	16
	Students	2.88	8	4.75	8	4.38	8

In order to promote cooperation between employers and the higher education institution, the Department of Welfare and Social Work (DWSW) proactively seeks to explore the needs of employers in order to prepare students as successfully as possible for the dynamic requirements of the labour market and in line with the professional standard for a social worker. Such exploration is implemented through the meetings of the Quality Council, in which employers’ representatives participate, as well as department meetings, at which the employers, who are also employed at DWSW, are represented, as well as the department is actively following the discussion initiated by MoW in 2017 “Improvement of the social work education process: solutions?” (information in Latvian only), which discusses the gap between education and practice.

In view of the high demand for social workers in the labour market, employers want to appeal to young professionals already during studies, and they do this in a variety of ways: welcome students

in the institution as trainees, offer opportunities for volunteer work, welcome students in field trips. Social workers who have developed active cooperation with DWSW are employed as lecturers of classes in the department. Interest in academic cooperation, interaction with future social workers and scientific research activities of students in placement institutions strengthen and develop cooperation between education and placement institutions.

DWSW conducts monitoring of graduates from time to time. This means that the department continues cooperation with graduates (more information in Annex 21.2) during visits to institutions, when a graduate welcomes a group of students at his/her workplace to introduce them to daily professional work, and by meeting at various events and inviting graduates to participate in different conferences. Activities and employment of graduates can be followed, when the department receives job offers in the field of social work, which are then transferred to students. Graduates of both full-time (FT) and part-time (PT) groups work in different institutions throughout Latvia, PT students are especially oriented to search for a job in regions, because they often want to find a job in their place of origin. The second trend observed by the employees of the department is that students often receive a job offer when leaving placement, this particularly applies to structural units of the Welfare Department of Riga City Council, for example, the Riga Social Service. Local government social services can be mentioned as one of the most frequent graduates' jobs, which has been a constant trend since 2013. Social Service may be considered to be one of the most widely available jobs for social workers, because in accordance with Section 10(2) of the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance[5]: "In order to ensure the provision of social services and social assistance and the administration of services, each local government shall establish a local government institution – a social service office." This means that local governments show high demand for social workers exactly in social services. When looking retrospectively on employment of graduates, over time part of graduates wish to move from a social service to other job, which can be, for instance, NGO (there are cases when graduates leave a social service to work at Dardedze centre (information in Latvian, English), the Association of people with disabilities and their friends "Apeirons" (information available only in Latvian), the Association "Latvian Red Cross" (information in Latvian, English), the "Latvian Samaritan Association" (information available only in Latvian) and other NGOs).

The trend observed among students in FT and PT group is that, first, students are often employed in field-related positions (e.g. social assistance organiser) during studies; second, after graduating StP, PT students usually stay to work in regions, from which they come from, while FT students often move to Riga during their studies, where they often stay to work.

[1] The study was performed within the project "Improvement of the management process and study content modernisation at Rīga Stradiņš University" of SO 8.2.3 "To ensure better governance at higher education institutions" of the ESF Operational Programme "Growth and Employment". Project implementation time: 01.12.2018–30.11.2023. Information in Latvian, information in English (SO 8.2.3).

[2] The study "Quality assessment of the social work field StP and proposals for improvement of content of the social work field StP" (information is available in Latvian only) (FINAL REPORT (information is available in Latvian only)" has been developed within activity No. 10 "Evaluation of social work field higher education programmes and development of main requirements for their content" of Project No. 9.2.1.1/15/I/001 "Development of professional social work in local governments" implemented by the Ministry of Welfare (MoW) with financial support from ESF (procurement No. LRLM2019/28-3-03/02ESF) (MoW study).

[3] Ibid – MoW study

[4] Ibid – MoW study

[5] Law on Social Services and Social Assistance

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.

Information on statistical data on students is summarised in Annex 16. In addition, Table 3.3 shows enrolment results in the reporting period.

Table 3. ***Enrolment results***

Academic year	FT				PT / studies based on an individual plan				
	Students in the year of studies				Students in the year of studies				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Started studies in 2021/2022 **	14	10	11	5	-	1	9	12	7
Started studies in 2020/2021	16	14	7	6	2	13	13	7	11
Completed studies in 2020/2021 *	10	11	6	6	-	10	12	7	11
Started studies in 2019/2020	20	7	7	7	17	16	7	11	5
Completed studies in 2019/2020 *	14	3	7	6	10	15	6	11	5
Started studies in 2018/2019	13	10	7	8	24	9	12	4	9
Completed studies in 2018/2019 *	8	6	5	8	19	8	11	4	9
Started studies in 2017/2018 ***	15	10	8	0	17	13	5	10	2
Competed academic studies in 2017/2018*	9	7	8	0	8	11	4	10	1
Started studies in 2016/2017 ***	17	9	1	12	23	5	8	4	5
Completed studies in 2016/2017*	13	8	1	12	11	4	7	4	4
Started studies in 2015/2016 ***	13	1	14	12	9	9	5	8	7
Completed studies in 2015/2016*	9	0	13	11	3	5	5	7	3

* The figures come from those, who started the year of studies, less those who were expelled in the specific academic year or went on academic leave. “Completed” marks a successfully completed academic year, which gives the right to be promoted to the next year of studies or is followed by exmatriculation with a diploma.

** data from RSU Student Information System (SIS) as at 08.09.2021. These data are not comparable to the data of the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB), as the CSB report for the period is prepared as at 1 October (also in Annex 16).

*** data taken only from CSB reports. Except for enrolment, it is not possible to compare data with SIS (SIS is a dynamic database).

In the 1st year of studies, there is a clear trend: a third / quarter of the total number of students in the group stop studies for a variety of reasons. This trend is observed in both FT and PT study programmes. Numerically the largest drop-out is observed in the 1st year of studies, after which, in the following years of studies, drop-outs are minimal.

Main reasons for exmatriculation:

- insufficiently considered whether the choice of profession matches expectations;
- family conditions;
- difficulty to combine studies with work, which caused poor academic achievements.

It should be noted that there are often cases where a student has stopped studies for some reason or has been exmatriculated for reasons of poor academic achievements, but after some time has been re-enrolled in the study programme. There were two such cases in academic years 2018/2019 and 2021/2022.

New trends for student drop-outs appeared in academic year 2019/2020, when the main causes of exmatriculation among students in the 1st year of studies in the FT and PT study programmes differed significantly. The predominant reason for exmatriculation in the FT study programme were poor academic achievements, while 3 students of the PT study programme took academic leave due to the conditions created by Covid-19, which affected the material situation of the students.

When evaluating student drop-outs, it should be taken into account that part of the student uses the possibility of taking academic leave. In individual cases, when the individual situation of the student changes, the student migrates from the PT group to the FT group.

It should be noted that a strong trend appears that the FT programme is chosen by students after secondary school, while the PT group is chosen by those, who already work in some sector, including employees of different ages working in the social field. A trend is observed is that PT students already have a family, are employed, combine work with studies, which can affect their time, finances and other resources to fulfil academic requirements.

In order to minimise the possibility for a student to be exmatriculated, the Study Department and the Student Service inform DWSW as soon as the student’s application for the cessation of studies is received or the student has verbally expressed his/her intention to interrupt studies. At the end of academic year 2018/2019, DWSW established a successful cooperation with the Dean’s office of the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare (FPHSW) in the exchange of information on students who have submitted an application for the cessation of studies, which allows the Head of StP to contact the student individually and to learn the reasons for wanting to interrupt studies, as well as the possibility of discussing with the student alternative scenarios for continuation of studies or taking of academic leave. Experience shows that the student has not always been informed of the

possibility of interrupting studies at their different stages, the requirements for taking academic leave, the possibility of dividing the tuition fee repayment schedule in case of material difficulties, etc.

It can be concluded from the collected information that there are circumstances where both the higher education institution as a whole and the Head of StP can support and encourage the student, together seek solutions for overcoming difficulties, such as financial difficulties, difficulties in combining employment with studies, while there are reasons for exmatriculation and conditions, which the student should overcome at an individual level, such as family conditions.

In academic year 2020/2021, PBSP "Social Work", along with other study programmes, acquired the status of a particularly supported StP, which means that targeted professional promotion measures as well as marketing activities were taken during the academic year. Two examples are that two stories of graduates about their experience of working as social workers were prepared for the RSU website. The stories are available (in Latvian only) here: Social worker – assistant, supporter and defender in difficult real-life situations (rsu.lv) and When you master the profession of a social worker, you become people's assistant (rsu.lv).

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).

Not 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 aim and the learning outcomes of the StP are interrelated, as well as the outcomes of the study courses are oriented towards the achievement of the aim and learning outcomes of the StP. The aim and the learning outcomes are planned by the head of the study programme. In turn, the outcomes of the study courses are subordinated to the defined aim and learning outcomes, and are planned and implemented by the lecturers of the study courses. In order to ensure the compliance of the aim and learning outcomes of the StP with the requirements of the labour market, they are also interrelated with the professional standard of a social worker, which can be reflected through the mapping tool (Annex 18.2).

Global topicalities are also taken into account when planning and defining the content of the StP: 1) Global standards for social work education and training[1]; 2) Standards in social work practice, respecting human rights[2].

StP content has been developed in full compliance with CM Regulations No. 512[3], a detailed compliance assessment is provided in Annex 17.1, the compliance of StP with the profession standard is evaluated in Annex 18.2. Learning outcomes – knowledge, skills, competence – are formulated at StP level and in study courses. The interrelation between learning outcomes of study courses and StP was assessed in academic year 2016/2017 and before the accreditation period and Annex 18.1 was prepared.

In accordance with RSU's internal procedure, when starting an academic year, all lecturers should update their study course descriptions. Aims, tasks of the study course, knowledge, skills and competence to be learned, as well as the content of the study course in general should be updated, if necessary.

At the department meeting when starting academic year 2021/2022 the need to prepare study course descriptions in a timely manner, the need to clearly state assessment criteria was re-emphasised. When completing study course descriptions, RSU lecturers are urged in a centralised way to clearly formulate their assessment criteria.

Once a semester, RSU conducts a centralised survey of students on the study courses learned during that semester, and then the lecturer can provide feedback to the opinions about and evaluations of the study course expressed by students. These survey results are taken into account by DWSW, the opinions, proposals, evaluations obtained are summarised and the necessary changes to study courses are planned based on them.

There have been discussions about ways of better linking healthcare courses with social work studies, to indicate how acquired knowledge could be applied in social work. During placement, students in a clinical environment have the opportunity to interrelate the knowledge mastered about different sectors. In order to promote better learning, teachers are encouraged to include video materials in their study courses.

When evaluating the proposed recommendations, it should be added that, already in academic year 2018/2019, targeted work was started on the development of a placement module focusing on knowledge and skills learning in the work environment, in order to promote both the ability to integrate theoretical knowledge into practice and the ability to work with the client: from the creation of a social work intervention plan to its implementation.

The study programme introduces a new study course named "Placement: Training of Professional Skills" to respond to employers' indications about the gap between education and practice, as well as to promote students' competence in working with people with mental disorders, to improve the skills to manage counselling, promote knowledge about the peculiarities of communication in working with different target groups. A new placement module amounting to 12 CP has also been introduced for FT students in the 3rd year of studies to promote the acquisition of skills in the work environment.

The study programme has been designed in such a way to ensure the continuity of study courses.

Taking into account global trends and the skills needed for the profession, it is important to emphasise that the World Economic Forum study "Future of Jobs Report 2020" identified the top 15 required skills for 2025:[4]

1. Analytical thinking and innovation
2. Active learning and learning strategies

3. Complex problem-solving
4. Critical thinking and analysis
5. Creativity, originality and initiative
6. Leadership and social influence
7. Technology use, monitoring and control
8. Technology design and programming
9. Resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility
10. Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation
11. Emotional intelligence
12. Troubleshooting and user experience
13. Service orientation
14. Systems analysis and evaluation
15. Persuasion and negotiation

The listed skills reflect developments in social work as a sector and in the StP content. The listed skills focus on tackling multi-layered client's social problems at different levels of practice, reflecting the qualities required by a social worker (e.g. creativity). The study programme includes several study courses focusing on the listed skills, such as "Emotional Literacy in Social Work" (emotional intelligence), "Social Work at Microlevel and in Community" (leadership, critical thinking), "Digital Technologies in Social Work" (technology use, monitoring, technology design; study course is particularly necessary to future social workers for work in Covid-19 conditions or remote working conditions), "Economics and Management of Social Services" (service orientation, service user experience).

It follows from the above that the aim, objectives of StP, aims of study courses, competences to be learned are interrelated and consistent with global trends

Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course / module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science.

The Bachelor's study programme "Social Work" includes courses that enable students to learn courses related to the sector, as well as courses related the fields that are related to social work: sociology, psychology, politics, economics, psychiatry, etc.

Study courses and their content are in line with the sector developments, labour market needs and trends in science. In order to ensure the relevance of the content of study courses to different needs, it is reviewed annually and discussed at meetings of the Study Quality Council (SQC). SQC discusses recommendations, annual progress of work of the state commission, discusses the performance of graduate students, as well as feedback from student placement. Study courses also include studying of different research to promote students' understanding and awareness of trends in science, data analysis and use.

To respond to trends in the labour market, development trends in science, DWSW in cooperation with representatives of 12 countries prepared a collection of social cases (Social Work Case Analysis. Global Perspective. Rīga Stradiņš University, 2018), which summarises countless social cases with descriptions of intervention enabling students to see what intervention strategies are used in different countries to solve social problems, which are pressing also in other counties.

The lecturers, who are practising social workers, as well as those, who are employed in social work related sectors (e.g. Work in the State Inspectorate for Protection of Children's Rights), know the needs of the labour market, are able to provide examples of pressing social cases in the study process. For example, lecturer Jana Pūķe (reads the study course "Social Work with a Family") is a senior social worker of Riga Social Service with long-term experience in work with families with

children. Lecturer Iveta Dūma (reads the study course “Placement: Training of Professional Skills a Family”) has professional work experience both in a social services and in NGOs, where she worked with families with children. Lecturer Daina Vanaga (reads several study courses) is an acknowledged supervisor and practitioner in social work.

The lecturer of DWSW Marika Lotko has been elected to the Executive Committee of the European Association of Schools for Social Work (EASSW), and gets an insight into development trends of the profession and social work education in Europe and the world. Associate professor Lolita Vilka participated in several projects helping her to monitor and participate in the development of science.

The involvement of several lecturers of DWSW (associate professor Liāna Deklava, associate professor Lolita Vilka, lecturers Anna Broka and Marika Lotko) in the national research programme contributed to the acquisition of evidence-based data for provision of social services in Covid-19 conditions.

In 2020, after the professional standard for a social worker was updated, the study programme was supplemented with a new study course “Digital Technologies in Social Work” read by visiting lecturer Daniel Markovič. Such innovation was necessary, because the profession standard was supplemented with a new skill for social workers: technology literacy.

Cooperation coordinated at sectoral policy level between institutions (employers, higher education institutions, etc.) and professionals involved in the development of social work policy in the country is ensured by the Social Work Specialists Cooperation Council (established by MoW Order No. 128 of 28 August 2006). RSU DWSW is also represented in the Council.

Since 2018, Social Work has been classified as a field Sociology and Social Work (CM Reg. No. 49, 2018) with sub-field Social Policy and Organization of Social Work, as well as Other Sociology and Social Work sub-fields.

[1] https://www.ifsw.org/global-standards-for-social-work-education-and-training/#4corecurricula

[2] Standarts in Social Work Practice meeting Human Rights, http://cdn.ifsw.org/assets/ifsw_92406-7.pdf

[3] Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No.512: Regulations Regarding the Standard of Second Level Professional Higher Education (CM 512)

[4] http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2020.pdf

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).

Not 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 purpose of applying different study methods in the Bachelor's study programme is to master research, cognition, critical, abstract and analytical thinking skills, as well as the acquisition of knowledge and skills used in the professional environment.

A study course consists of regular contact hours according to the number of credit points and student's independent work. During regular contact hours, students master the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values defined in the study course using different learning approaches and pedagogical methods.

When reflecting on teaching approaches, the following approaches can be distinguished: teacher-centred, student-centred, high-tech and low-tech approach.[1]

Teacher-centred approach to learning – teachers serve as authority figures who deliver knowledge to their students through lectures and direct instruction, and aim to measure the results through testing and assessment. In the flipped classrooms (High Tech) approach students can do some portion of their assignment at home and complete it in class focusing on problem-solving.

Kinaesthetic learning focuses on the students' ability to perform hands-on physical activities rather than listening to lectures or watching demonstrations. The study course "Self-Defence Methods in Social Work" can be mentioned as an example, where the possibility to observe and practice are combined.

Student-centred approach to learning – teachers still serve as an authority figure, but may function more as a facilitator or "guide on the side". Students assume an active role in the learning process. In this method, students learn from and are continually assessed on such activities as group projects, student portfolios and class participation. In personalized learning, teachers encourage students to follow freely selected learning pace. Teachers offer some instruction as well as online material, give assignments, while also continually reviewing student progress and meeting with students to make any needed changes to their learning plans. Such an approach would be relevant to the development of course papers in the 1st and 2nd year of studies, when the student does research activities individually, in cooperation with the scientific supervisor.

High-tech approach to learning – using laptops and tablets connected to internet students obtain information from around the world, technology plays an ever-greater role in the learning experience. In the teaching process, teachers utilize different technology. This approach has been clearly integrated since semester 2 of academic year 2019/2020, when studies were remote due to Covid-19. However, it should be noted that even before that RSU actively used the *Moodle* environment in the learning process.

Low-tech approach to learning – teachers adapt technology integration into the teaching process based on students' abilities and needs. This becomes particularly important, taking into account everyone's digital competences. In transition to the remote study process, it is important to

evaluate the capacity and skills of students in the successful use of technology for the organisation of the study process.

Blended learning is another strategy for teachers looking to learn the needs of each student.

Each teacher chooses the most appropriate methods within his/her study course, according to the knowledge and skills to be learned. The study programme is implemented using lectures, lessons, classes, independent work. Lectures, presentations by visiting lecturers, discussions, oral presentations, role plays can be used during lectures and classes, and methods such as essays, reports, check-yourself tests, summaries and / or notes from books, reports, research projects, student portfolio, additional reading tasks, reflection on a video/film, making posters, brochure preparation are used in the implementation of independent work. Students are given the opportunity to prepare, in a transparent, and concise manner, information they might provide to clients in different situations. In the study course "Theories and Methods of Social Work", students learn a number of different methods, which they will be able to use in work with clients, and diary is one of them. For example students can record behaviour observations in the diary.

The range of methods used in class is also very broad:

- teams and / or building activities, observations; "brainstorms" – students have the opportunity to share different ideas;
- case study;
- group work – to achieve the joint goal, students master cooperation skills while working on a team. This is one of the most widely used methods throughout the study programme. The ability to work in a group in a professional environment will be useful for promoting cooperation on a cross-professional team, leading meetings, distributing work assignments, etc.;
- interviewing – one of important work aspect in social work is the ability to communicate with the client, to explore his/her situation, to obtain information. Interviewing is a method that can be used by both the lecturer in cooperation with the student and the student, for example, in a role play ("Professional Communication in Social Work");
- laboratory experiments (medicine-related study courses);
- group work management – in the study course "Social Work at Microlevel and in Community", students have the opportunity to manage group work, to feel as a teacher, to give feedback on group work. Such activities provide students with the possibility to use leadership, manage and plan group work, get feedback, teach to involve everyone;
- problem solving activities;
- video content analysis – when the study process switches to remote mode, for example, in the study course "Placement: Training of Professional Skills" students watch different videos, such as "Degpunkts", etc., and have a specific assignment. It enabled students to see their potential clients, their social problems, the environment in which they live. Feedback from informal conversations with students showed that such videos were very valuable as they improved awareness of the social-demographic portrait of the client in 2nd year students;
- world cafe – this method is particularly effective, when students have an opportunity to work on an international team, enabling them to become acquainted, for example, with the peculiarities of solving social cases in different countries around the world;
- elevator pitch;
- simulations give the opportunity to play out a variety of situations where a student play the role of both a client and a social worker. During the simulations in the study course "Social Work on a Case" a person who plays different images of clients is invited, and the student's task is to conduct a conversation with the client, to explore his/her situation. In such simulations, the student has the opportunity to meet aggressive, offensive, taciturn, overly

reserved clients, etc. Representatives of DWSW are involved in the ESF project “Improvement of the management process and study content modernisation at Rīga Stradiņš University” (No. 8.2.3.0/18/A/011), activity 5 “Creation of a repository of study materials – a methodological support tool for the implementation of interdisciplinarity and simulation principles based study process”, which aims to prepare digital simulation scenarios;
- peer review;
- design of services – in the study course “Social Work on Streets” the task of students is to design a new social service for the target group of street work;
- mapping – in the study course “Social Work on Streets” students, on the basis of observations, carry out mapping recording the movement of the target group in a specific area, formal and non-formal resources and other information. In such a way, students also get an idea of what information to record, what to focus on, what to observe;
- conducting discussions to develop leadership skills.

When describing the methods used, as mentioned in several examples, they can be used in several study courses, evaluating their necessity and contribution to achieving the aims of the study course. The above-mentioned examples give an insight into how the aim and the learning outcomes of the StP are achieved. The methods used are aimed at promoting the achievement of the aim of the study course through practical tasks. For example, interviewing is used as a method in several study courses (“Social Work with a Case”, “Professional Communication in Social Work”, “Social Work with Families and Children”), the aims of which are related to the acquisition of knowledge and skills in work with a social case. It is similar with simulation method, which aims to achieve the main goal set for the study course “Social Work with a Case” – *promote the acquisition of basic knowledge about social work with the case*. Mapping as a method in the study course “Social Street Work” is used to achieve the following goal: to develop students' knowledge and understanding of the development of social street work in Latvia and the world, the aim, tasks and necessary knowledge of social street work, work with various target groups, development of social street work programmes. Mapping as a method allows the student to develop the ability to design a social programme for the selected target group.

By implementing various methods, the aim of the StP is achieved – *to train qualified social workers whose knowledge, skills, professional competence, values and attitudes meet the needs of modern society, promoting and implementing social change and development, social justice and human rights*. *Applicable knowledge and understanding of human bio- psycho-social development, the connection between the social and cultural environment and human physical and mental health, social functioning and social problems, social and human rights, social services, social assistance and support systems, and resource management, intervention approaches, theories and methods in social work ensure that social workers who have mastered the study programme will be prepared for practical work with different groups of clients at three levels of practice.*

In addition, the study process includes visits to institutions – in different study courses visits have different objectives, for example, “Introduction to Social Work and Professional Ethics” focuses on obtaining an idea of the institution, understanding the work of the institution and its professionals. The study course “Economics and Management of Social Services” focuses on familiarising with social services provided by different institutions.

When selecting the set of methods to be used, it is necessary to evaluate what knowledge and skills are planned to be learned, which, in turn, will affect the choice of method. Different methods can be broken down into groups on the basis of their usage purpose, for example, testing and examination methods are focused on the assessment of the aim achieved, process, the assessment of strengths and weaknesses, and the outcome. In addition, methods relevant to the sector such as solving casus in law, collecting medical history, etc., can be used to develop different industry-oriented

study courses. It should be noted that the range of methods and tools used has also been influenced by remote teaching and learning. Various online communication tools were used during remote studies: *Zoom* and *MsTeams*, *Jamboard*, etc., and feedback tools such as *Mentimeter*.

In order to foster students' understanding of the management of social cases, acknowledged practitioners in the field ensure social case study, mentioning different practical examples and modelling the most appropriate solutions for them.

Different test forms are used in the assessment of study courses. Depending on the specifics of the study course, test forms include test work, reports, tests, presentation of independent works and practical training, group work assessments and individual work assessment, tests, examinations.

When summarising the above information, it can be concluded that the range of methods used is diverse, the methods are used in line with the aim to be achieved, the choice of methods focuses on achieving the learning outcomes, helps to promote the implementation of the principles of student-centred education and contributes to the achievement of the aims and objectives of StP.

Principles of student-centred education

The nature of a student-centred approach is to involve a student in the study process by giving the student the powers and opportunities to get involved in the study process at its different stages. Thus, the student is also given the opportunity to provide feedback on the study process.

In the context of RSU's student-centred approach, the student's independent learning is promoted by clearly formulating the learning outcomes, the student is given the opportunity to familiarise with the learning outcomes of study courses, which can contribute to their self-assessment of their learning outcomes. Emphasis is placed on making the learning outcomes of study courses linked to the results of StP studies. The formulation of learning outcomes and their accessibility to students (in e-studies under the course description) ensure that the student and the lecturer have a common understanding of what requirements the student needs to meet, what knowledge and skills should be learned so that the student can follow his/her the progress and monitor his/her learning experience independently.

Students are given the opportunity to choose which courses to learn in Part C (elective courses), based on the formulated learning outcomes. The student has the possibility to navigate through the selection of Part C courses to choose the most appropriate study courses for the development of professional competence in the selected profession.

The informative report "Student-centred education approach in higher education institutions / colleges in Latvia"[2] published in 2017 brings out 8 thematic groups of student-centred education:

1. Involvement of students in the study process and in the improvement of content
2. Learning outcomes
3. Mobility (see Description of the study direction)
4. Social dimension
5. Teaching and learning methods
6. Learning environment
7. Development of competences of academic staff (see Description of the study direction)
8. Extracurricular activities of students

When evaluating the involvement of students in the study process and in the improvement of content, students have different possibilities to be involved in the achievement this goal. One of the most accessible possibilities for involvement is provision of feedback about study courses, which means that at the end of each semester the student has the opportunity to participate in the survey on each study course.

Although the involvement of students of Bachelor StP every year is different, an increase is also observed in involvement. For example, the activity of students of FT and PT programmes increased significantly in 2019/2020 compared to 2018/2019.

Apart from surveys, students also have the possibility to participate in the activities of the Student Union, to apply as a candidate to the Student Union, which makes it possible to influence the study process at RSU. Until now, the social work students have been actively involved in the work of the Student Union. Until academic year 2020/2021, two students were actively involved in the Student Union and also participated in the monthly meeting of FPHSW Council, which directly influenced the study process in various aspects.

The quality council includes one student representative and one graduate. Until now, student representatives and graduates have actively participated in the Quality Council meeting, where there was an opportunity to participate in the improvement of the study process and content. The communication of the student representative with students is important in order to convey information on the decisions taken at the meetings of the Quality Council. There is also an opportunity to discuss the content of study courses expressed in a specific number of credit points, which study courses would have to be extended, what pros and cons are.

When commencing a new study course, the course lecturer has a duty to inform students about the learning outcomes to be achieved – the knowledge and skills to be learned. It should also be noted that the student's proactive action in research of learning outcomes, regular monitoring of the knowledge and skills acquired, have an impact on the student's assessment of how well information on the learning outcomes will be provided. In surveys, students also have the opportunity to express their opinions on the content of study courses in a free form. It should be taken into account that the formulation of learning outcomes is also influenced by the professional standard for a social worker, which clearly sets out the knowledge and skills of social workers, for example, it was concluded in surveys and group discussions with the lecturer and students, that both sides would like more credit points in the study course "Social Work with a Family" (3 CP), but when analysing the content of the study course, the relationship with other study courses, thematic coverage, it was concluded that thematic coverage is successfully shared with other related study courses, and therefore the amount of credit points is sufficient.

Lecturers of study courses are asked to focus more on study forms and methods that contribute to the mastering of practical skills and abilities. In study courses in the 1st and 2nd years of studies students visit social institutions with a view to obtaining an idea of the profession of a social worker, the necessary knowledge, skills and competence.

Students used group email, as well as created groups in *WhatsApp* for mutual communication and information exchange.

In academic year 2019/2020 RSU conducted a survey about studies in Covid-19 conditions. This survey should be particularly noted, because it was a way to snap the situation, when both students and lecturers faced an emergency, when studies were held remotely, for the first time.

The social dimension was evaluated, when the RSU environment is inclusive for all students, including students with special needs. The Bachelor's study programme had several students with impaired hearing, who successfully graduated StP, and there is one student with impaired hearing in the Bachelor's study programme in academic year 2021/2022. To ensure and promote the accessibility of environment at RSU, on 29.03.2021 an RSU rector's order "Guidelines for Study and Environment Accessibility at Rīga Stradiņš University" (order No. 5-1/166/2021) and on 29.03.2021 order "Support Policy for Students of Rīga Stradiņš University with functional disabilities" (No. 5-1/166/2021) were approved.[3]

Although until now (at the moment of preparation of this report) the Bachelor's study programme has not had students in a wheelchair, the physical study environment is suitable for such students, as there are elevators, ramps, etc. The values of social work as a profession are human rights and respect for the different, and these values are also highly valued at RSU by providing the necessary infrastructure.

Another aspect of the social dimension is the possibility to combine work with family life and studies. The majority of students work (in particularly PT students), which is an additional challenge in the organisation of the study process. PT students have the opportunity to study every other week on Fridays and Saturdays so that they can combine their studies with employment. It should be noted that, despite the planning of PT lectures, students face difficulties in combining work, studies and family life. This was particularly pronounced in the Covid-19 conditions, but with the support from RSU and with the commitment of students various difficulties have been managed.

Another difficulty in combining work and studies is the responsiveness of the employer. Students in the PT group use different mechanisms to attend lectures on Fridays, if the employer is not responsive – take leaves (at their own expense or divide their annual leave into days), redistribute the time spent in the education institution on working days to a later working time on other working days. Meanwhile, the students of the FT group are trying to find a job with a flexible timetable allowing them to combine work with studies.

The following example can be mentioned to demonstrate the flexibility of DWSW. In academic year 2021/2022, there were not enough applicants to open both FT and PT student groups, so the applicants of the PT programme were given the opportunity to join the FT group, maintaining the amount of the PT group's tuition fees and creating a special plan of lectures to study on Fridays and Saturdays. The forthcoming attitude of RSU, the flexibility of DWSW, the responsiveness of lecturers encouraged PT students to join the FT group.

In order to promote a student-centred approach, it is important to improve the competence of academic staff, for example, lecturers may apply for Boris Teterev targeted scholarship for modernisation RSU StPs[4], as well as for Erasmus+ lecturer mobility programmes.

The innovations enriching the study process are mostly related to the extension of experience of lecturers and to the involvement of students in different academic activities.

International cooperation is implemented in several aspects:

- RSU is represented at EASSW;
- involvement of visiting lecturers in study courses;
- involvement in international cooperation projects;
- mobility of lecturers and students (Erasmus+, participation in conferences).

Students have a number of opportunities to get involved in different activities outside the study process: Student Union, possibility to participate in hackathons and business incubators, possibility to participate in Scientists' breakfasts, different seminars, conferences organised by RSU on a regular basis. It is also possible to participate in RSU's amateur bands: the dance band or the choir. Graduates can get involved in the Alumni Association.

[1] The Complete List of Teaching Methods (sandiego.edu)

[2] Informativs-analitisks-zinojums_Studentcentretas-izglitibas-pieeja-augstskolas-koledzas-Latvija_2017.pdf (aika.lv)

[3] Accessibility at RSU | RSU

[4] Targeted scholarship from philanthropist Boris Teterev for modernisation of RSU study

programmes

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).

The MoW project "Development of professional social work in local governments"[1] included discussions with employers, representatives and graduates of higher education institutions to discuss how social work education and practices can be combined in the most successful way. Discussions, studies and activities were implemented also on a global scale coordinated by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW).

DWSW actively monitored this conversation, participated in different discussions (assoc. prof. Lolita Vilka), listened to the needs of employers in different institutions, as well as identified opinions and ideas of graduates. In response to employers' needs, as well as the need to link education more closely to practice, to strengthen students' skills based on employers' recommendations, objectives were included in the Bachelor's study programme, in line with the requirements of EQF level 6, the content of study courses and placement to promote the learning of knowledge based on the practice environment, strengthening capacity in the management of social cases, preparation of intervention plans and for other needs.

The amount of placement in the study programme is 24 CP, the information is available in Annex 9. During placement students are guided by the placement regulations and other placement documents, which have also been approved at the meeting of the Faculty Council. The regulations set out the aims, objectives and expected activities for the placement. In the placement diary, the trainee describes the duties and tasks performed during the placement. It reflects the activities planned in accordance with the aim and objectives of placement. The placement diary is not only an important document in the process of assessing placement, but also a useful source of information that can be used for learning social work study courses. The diary also includes a student self-assessment questionnaire and an assessment questionnaire by the placement supervisor at the institution aimed at assessing the progress in the professional skills and competences of the student / trainee during the placement, as well as receiving feedback from the employer.

To provide placement, DWSW has developed a broad institutional network to provide placement places for both FT and PT students, taking into account students come from different regions of Latvia. RSU has concluded a trilateral cooperation agreement with main employers in the field of social work: the agreement between RSU, the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LALRG) and MoW, which was signed by that time Minister of MoW U. Augulis, the RSU rector J. Gardovskis and the Chairman of LALRG A. Jaunsleinis. RSU also concluded a cooperation agreement with the Welfare Department of Riga City Council enabling students to have placement in its structural united, (territorial centres, shelter homes, day centres, crisis centres of the Riga

Social Service, etc.), VSIA “Paula Stradiņa Klīniskā universitātes slimnīca”, VSIA “Bērnu klīniskā universitātes slimnīca” and Riga 1st Hospital.

In view of the fact that social workers work with different groups of clients, students also have the possibility to practice in different institutions: local government social services, state social care centres, crisis centres, health care institutions, the Latvian Red Cross, as well as non-governmental organisations. Students can choose their placement site according to their approach fulfilling the requirements of placement.

The placement supervisor is the person designated DWSW, who is responsible for organising and coordinating, monitoring and assessing, developing study placement, cooperation and conclusion of contracts with placement sites, cooperation with placement supervisors in the institution. Seminars on placement or placement supervision at the department are provided by the placement supervisor in the higher education institution.

On the other hand, in the placement institution it is ensured by a person designated by the relevant placement institution or supervisor who is responsible for the conduct of placement in the institution. The supervisor together with the student, plans and organises the intended placement activity, promotes professional growth of the student, contacts with the placement supervisor in the higher education institution, if necessary.

For the assessment of students’ knowledge and skills in study placement, assessment criteria have been developed, based on which both the student / trainee and the placement supervisor assess the improvement of professional competence during placement.

The results of placement are discussed in the defence of placement and are assessed with a grade. The assessment takes into account:

- assessment by the students and placement supervisor at the institution of the performance during placement: the fulfilment of the aim and objective of the placement;
- assessment of the analysis of placement results;
- assessment of the presentation of placement results.

The organisation and results of placement are analysed at the RSU DWSW meeting. Taking into account the strengths and weaknesses observed during placement, as well as students’ recommendations, corrections are made to the study placement Regulations and process organisation, if necessary.

Employers get to know social work students of RSU at several stages:

In the 1st year of studies, when there is observation placement: social work organisation in the local government system. During this placement, a group of students study the social work sector as a whole in a specific local government.

The survey identifies employers’ opinions (assessment) of the understanding by RSU students / trainees on the mission, objectives and tasks of the social worker’s profession; of the learning of students / trainees during placement in the institution; of the personal and professional qualities to be developed in order to work in a social work profession.

In the 1st and 3rd year of studies, students have placement in different institutions, working with different target social work groups or clients. Employers assess achievements of students/trainees during study practice, assessing the ability of students to demonstrate their professional skills in a number of areas:

- communication skills with the client (defining the objectives of the conversation, listening, asking questions);

- knowledge of the supply of social services and social assistance in the local government;
- defining and evaluating the social problem in the context of a social case;
- case management skills: case evaluation, definition of the social problem, creation of an intervention plan;
- work on a cross-professional team;
- to certify a moral ethical position in a professional work environment.

During placement, students have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the possibilities of different databases used in social services and other institutions, to participate in meetings of the cross-professional team, to familiarise themselves with a certain basket of local government social services and social assistance, to participate in the preparation and implementation of the intervention plan, etc. During remote studies students had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the digital tools used by the institutions in working with clients.

In order to promote learning of skills by students, a new study course on "Placement: Training of Professional Skills" was introduced and implemented in academic year 2019/2020.

In academic year 2019/2020, a new placement model was implemented for the FT group of 3rd year students of the Bachelor's study programme in collaboration with the Welfare Department of Riga City Council, where placement in the work environment of 12 CP was planned for one semester to respond to employers' guidance on the gap between education and practice. Placement close to the work environment conditions, and both students / trainees and placement supervisors in the institution receive remuneration for the work carried out. Before placement DWSW trained the placement supervisor at the institution, making it possible to align the expectations of the higher education institution and the placement site, deepened understanding of the placement supervisor at the institution of the aim and objectives of the placement, as well as encouraged systematic reflection between the student / trainee and the placement supervisor at the institution in order to promote learning and learning experience in all stakeholders through this process. Following the end of placement, placement supervisors were also encouraged to participate in the defence of the placement.

It follows that, during placement, students implement significant StP outcomes both by getting acquainted with social services and the social assistance system, the creation of social policies in local government institutions, and by acquiring skills to manage a social case.
During the placement, students apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the study courses, apply the most important concepts in micro, meso and macro level of social work. During the placement, students acquire important skills of a social worker related to the identification of a social problem, assessment of social needs and social functioning, as well as plan and implement intervention. Another study outcome to be achieved during the placement is the ability to use the acquired theoretical foundations and skills, to argue and discuss the decisions made, demonstrating the necessary communication skills. In addition, during the placement, the student implements his / her professional activity in accordance with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments, observes professional ethics, confidentiality, and, if necessary, participates in solving ethical dilemmas.
These skills are also described in the professional standard for a social worker, and their learning is therefore of paramount importance for obtaining the professional qualification of a social worker.

See Annex 9.1 "Description of the student placement organisation".

See Annex 9.2 with information on contracts and other confirmations about the provision of student placements in companies.

[1] Project No. 9.2.1.1/15/I/001 "Development of professional social work in local governments"

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).

Not 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 development of a Bachelor's thesis is a part of the national degree examination. The requirements to Bachelor's thesis and its assessment at RSU are laid down in the Regulations on writing and defence of qualification paper, student's research paper, bachelor's thesis and master's thesis (approved by Senate on 21.04.2020). In accordance with the requirements of these regulations, Methodological guidance on the development and defence of students' graduation papers at RSU FPHSW DWSW were developed (approved at the FPHSW Council meeting on 15 June 2020).

Topics and scientific supervisors of Bachelor's theses are approved at the faculty council meeting 6 months before the expected defence of the paper.

In order to promote the development of research skills of students, from the 1st year of studies students start research activities first by learning the study courses "Applied Sociology: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods", "Foundations of Statistics", "Research Methodology and Logic", and then by preparing a course paper.

The Bachelor's thesis is defended under the supervision of a state commission. The commission is composed of the head of the commission representing the sociology and social work science sector from an independent RSU body. According to the regulation (CM Regulations 512, 26.08.2014), at least half of commission members should be representatives of sectoral professional organisations and employers, as well as DWSW lecturers.

In order to promote students' understanding of the research methodology, make them familiarise with different studies, StP lecturers were urged to include the analysis of relevant research in the content of their courses, as well as to provide assignments developing analytical skills as part in independent work.

The scientific research interests of students are defined in accordance with the developments in the social work profession, social policy guidelines and the individual professional interests of students. The following thematic areas of research match the specifics of StP: social work, social policy, social welfare, human rights, social justice.

In its letter "On the topical research topics in the field of welfare" dated 30 August 2017 (No. 30-1-04/1426), MoW informed that it had sent to the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) sent as a list of proposals for the research topics in the field of welfare for 2018-2021 for approval to the Cabinet of Ministers. The letter was prepared and addressed to 12 higher education institutions. Some of the listed challenges, resolution of which required the involvement of Latvian scientists, are:

- active ageing challenges for longer and better working life in Latvia;
- enabling persons with disabilities live independently;
- scope of social work professional capital for promoting public welfare;
- social sustainability of community and environment;
- demography and welfare, sustainability of social systems;
- multidimensionality of social innovation for human resource development.

For each of the challenges MoW also listed research problems, as well as industry policy planning documents related to the defined challenge.

For MoW letter on the topical research topics in the field of welfare of 30 August 2017.

Another way for students to get to the definition of the topics of their graduation paper is that DWSW lecturers develop thematic fields of research as proposals in the choice of topics of the Bachelor's topic. They are updated and approved annually in PHSW faculty council. Students of the Bachelor's programme may become acquainted with them on the website of the department.

Using the classification of models of social work studies by H. J. Göppner and J. Hämäläinen[1], students choose to study the causes of social problems (explanatory studies), practice-oriented studies, focusing on the results of social work interventions and their importance (evaluating studies), and also choose practice effectiveness studies.

When evaluating the defined topics of Bachelor's theses, several thematic blocks or trends can be identified:

- social rehabilitation services for different target groups;
- evaluation of social services: accessibility and quality;
- team work / cross-professional cooperation;
- issues related to supervision;
- social support and social work with different target groups;
- focus on social problems: addiction, violence, social exclusion, long-term unemployment, trafficking in human beings, integration of people with special needs into the labour market, etc.

Innovative and only once studies topics of graduation papers relate to the following aspects: self-defence of a social worker, support measures for young social workers (those who start a professional career), first emotional help moms, work with people with savings problems, social work in general education institutions, etc.

The topics of graduation papers chosen by students reflect the development in the sector. For example, the Bachelor's thesis "Social work in general education institutions: opportunities and solutions" (academic year 2020/2021) was developed in the context of the discussion launched by MoW and MoES on the possibilities of employing social workers in general education institutions, the possibility of distributing the workload between social workers and social educators. In the Bachelor's thesis (academic year 2020/2021), "Preparation and preparedness of adults with mental disabilities for independent life outside the state social care centre" analyses the measures implemented in the process of deinstitutionalisation aimed at integrating people with special needs into society by providing community-based services. The Bachelor's thesis "First emotional help mom as a support person for families with a newborn" (academic year 2019/2020) studied an innovative service for families with children.

The topics of Bachelor's theses are selected according to current events in the labour market. For example, in order to study the administrative-territorial reform that was implemented in Latvia, the Bachelor's thesis "Expected Provision of Social Services and Social Assistance in Skrīveri District

after Administrative-territorial Reform" was developed.
In order to study various issues related to the provision of social services for persons with mental disorders, which is a particularly topical matter in the context of deinstitutionalisation in Latvia, several papers had been developed, for example:
"Inclusion of persons with mental disabilities in the labour market", "Training and Readiness of Adults with Mental Disorders for Independent Living Outside a Social Care Institution". Since 2020, the Bachelor's theses have also been devoted to the impact of COVID-19 on social work and various social services: "Social Problems among the Elderly During Covid-19 Virus Pandemic", "The Specific Nature of Social Work Under the Conditions Created by Covid-19".

A number of research topics highlight topics of importance for the labour market: accessibility and quality of social services, how to improve social work with different target groups. To emphasise this topic, MoW, within the project "Development of professional social work in local governments", stimulated the development of various methodological materials for work with different target groups (e.g. social work with people with mental disabilities, victims of violence and offenders, etc.) and fostered training in the use of these materials.[2]

Topics of the graduation papers of students are summarised in Annex 22.

Assessments of Bachelor's theses are displayed in Annex 29. In the reporting period, the assessments of the theses have been satisfying enough (varying from 4 to 10). In general, the assessments of Bachelor's theses for both FT and PT students are high – the most common assessment ranges between 7 and 10. Comparing the final assessments among FT and PT students, no significant tendencies are observed, meaning that both FT and PT students successfully acquire research skills during the study process and are able to apply them in the development of Bachelor's thesis. Furthermore, no unsatisfactory assessments have been obtained for Bachelor's theses during the reporting period.

[1] H.J. Göppner and J. Hämäläinen (2007.) Developing a Science of Social Work. Journal of Social Work. Sage Publications. P.279.

[2] Methodological materials | MoW (lm.gov.lv)

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 premises ensuring the study process (mainly at Anniņmuižas bulvāris 26a) are modern, well-equipped (each room as has a computer with internet connection, a projector, an interactive board). The premises have good lighting and are warm in the cold months of the year. Students have the option to download *MsOffice* for free to do their study work on personal computers, the possibility to use the *SPSS* (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. Free internet, as well as publicly available computers with internet connection (located in different places in the

building of the education institution), are available to students in premises of the higher education institution. Common use premises have recreational areas, as well as microwave ovens, a café and various vending machines are available to students.

The study base formed for the study direction is used for providing the StP – library, classroom, technical supplies, computers, cameras, internet connection, etc. Specific learning resources are almost entirely provided in e-studies, including descriptions of study courses, tasks and tests, if any, as well as required readings. Educational literature is mostly provided through e-books and e-journals or by scanning key pieces of text and by placing in e-studies, or using internet sources – with a view to provide students with the possibility to read on e-devices (although in some cases teachers specifically ask students to work in the library).

The library provides lecturers and students with access to Latvian and international electronic resources, including information in the fields of social welfare, social policy. For information on the RSU Library resources and services see Paragraph 3.3 of Part II of the Description of the study direction “Social Welfare”.

The *SPSS* software is available on computers in the library. It should be noted that the Statistical Unit, by promoting the scientific activities of RSU students and lecturers, offers consultations on research methodologies, data input, the use of data processing programmes, methods of statistical processing of data, analysis, interpretation and graphic presentation of results.

The annual budget of the Department of Welfare and Social Work grants funding for the purchase of scientific literature every calendar year. It should be noted that the funding specified below is for all study programmes provided by DWSW: Bachelor’s and Master’s study programmes, however, this does not limit the use and added value of scientific literature for students of different StP.

Table 4. **Funding granted by DWSW for purchasing of scientific literature**

CALENDAR YEAR	ASSIGNED FINANCING (EUR)
2015	400
2016	450
2017	2000
2018	1200
2019	2000
2020	2000
2021	2000

Lecturers of the Department of Welfare and Social Work have the opportunity to propose some literature they consider necessary by filling out the RSU form BK-1(5). Twice a calendar year, lists of scientific literature are drawn up and submitted to the RSU Library, followed by the purchase of the scientific literature. If budget funds are sufficient, additional funding may be granted to books, apart from that already granted to the department. Such activities provide access to the latest scientific literature in the sector in printed form. However, it is also important to note that RSU is subscribed to a number of databases which also provide industry-relevant literature (e.g. *Scopus*,

Ebrary, etc.). For information see Annex 23.2.

Despite the fact that the number of printed scientific literature is regularly updated, students would like to have more copies so that books can be taken home. In this case, the department prefers the diversity of scientific literature rather than the quantity of a single edition.

At the beginning of the implementation of each study course, the lecturer, together with the department assistant re-organises the e-studies website, updating tasks and lists of readings. In order to improve the compliance of the library collection with the needs of students lists of study course readings are revised, there is cooperation with university lecturers to inform about the situation with supplies of study course literature and popularise e-resources, while users have the possibility to fill an electronic questionnaire for supplementing the library collection. The lecturer continues to work on the website during the implementation of the study course, using it also for communication with students, notices and answers to questions. In order to ensure deeper integration of the e-environment in the study process, there are plans to develop the diversity of tools offered by the *Moodle* environment – to diversify tasks and forms of communication.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, in March 2020 the RSU Library at Dzirciema iela 16 was available to students and lecturers 24/7. Currently (in academic year 2021/2022), to visit the library it is necessary to apply for a visit by filling out the form on the RSU website, where it is necessary to specify the student's e-mail and the time of the visit. These regulations are related to the epidemiological safety measures relating to Covid-19.

Due to the announced Covid-19 pandemic, from 11.03.2020 restrictions have been set in the organisation of the study process by a rector's order: regular lectures have stopped. The study process continued using the e-studies environment and IT tools. It should be noted that RSU quickly responded to the changed reality and provided all lecturers with regular IT training on the use of different platforms and tools. The RSU Information Technology Department continued training lecturers also in academic year 2021/2022. Lecturers had the possibility to apply for individual consultations with IT specialists without restrictions. Informative meetings were organised for students by the management and the department to explain what was going on and to talk about potential future development scenarios. This was particularly important for the students graduating in academic year 2020/2021.

The Student Union provided an opportunity to apply for those 1st year students, who did not have computer equipment, as well as allowed them to stay in RSU premises to participate in remote lectures and classes, if they did not have such an opportunity at home. Lecturers were also supported with computer equipment and cameras. Those lecturers, who did not have the equipment, could receive it from RSU, as well as read lectures and classes from RSU premises.

Different RSU departments and structural unit (CEG, Doctoral School, Information Technology Department) offer different continuing education improvement opportunities on different topics, for example, mastering of digital tools, mastering of interactive methods, preparation of scientific articles, information in different databases, platforms for use of references, opportunities provided by different platforms, etc. For example, in academic year 2021/2022, to respond to the rapidly changing study environment, CEG organises training on hybrid studies helping lecturers to understand the combined study process, when lectures and classes should be read to those, who are in the auditorium, and to those, who study remotely.

RSU also organises the Scientists' breakfast inviting lecturers, students and other interested persons to participate and covering different topics. For example, to present the performance of RSU in the national research programme "Life with Covid-19", research data were actively presented at several Scientists' breakfasts in academic year 2020/2021.

Taking care of mental and physical health of employees, RSU offers to attend the gym, as well as organised sports classes for lecturers at the Faculty of Continuing Education. Covid-19 affected the possibilities to attend sports classes, but the welfare of RSU employees is still a priority.

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).

Not 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).

FT StP students can study in state-funded budget study places. In academic year 2021/2022 students could apply for 8 budget-funded places, as well as RSU provided 3 more budget-funded study places.

The tuition fee for students in the PT study programme is covered from the funds of natural or legal persons.

It can be mentioned as a positive fact that those students who work in parallel in the Riga Social Service can apply for local government financial aid to cover tuition fees.

The students who study in FT intramural studies and cover the tuition fee from personal funds can be rotated to get to a budget-funded place. RSU Regulation “Procedure determining the distribution of state budget funded study places at Rīga Stradiņš University and the transfer of students studying for funds of natural or legal persons to state budget funded study places (18.06.2019). Several students from Bachelor’s StP had the opportunity to switch from paid to budget-funded places.

Another support mechanism for those students who cover tuition fees from the funds of natural / legal persons are various discounts regulated by the Regulation On Discounts on the Tuition Fee at Rīga Stradiņš University” (18.05.2021).

In academic year 2020/2021, DWSW started negotiations on the possibility of cooperating with the Riga City Council to be able to grant funding for a certain number of study places, which in turn would allow the City of Riga to attract social workers in good time, as Riga as local government needs social workers, taking into account the diverse range of social services offered by it and the large number of inhabitants.

Funding for all study programmes is used for staff remuneration, attraction of visiting lecturers, taxes, maintenance of IT infrastructure, purchase of equipment and devices, licenses. In addition to

the direct costs of the implementation of lectures and classes, the study programme must cover the infrastructure maintenance costs (facilities, 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).

A wide range of RSU material and technical facilities is available for the implementation of the study courses, which allows to book study rooms and computer rooms in the common system.

The overhead costs for full-time study programmes are proportionally higher than for part-time programmes due to more intensive use of the RSU infrastructure.

In the autumn of 2021, a study programme estimate, developed by the RSU Finance Department and approved at the RSU Rector's Office, has been updated. The following information summarizes the estimates made.

Professional bachelor study programme "Social Work" 4.0 years, full-time on-site, Latvian. It is planned to finance the study programme for budget places financed from the State budget (a total of 32 budget places in all study years), as well as from the resources of private and legal persons, setting the tuition fee with an excellence discount of 1,550 EUR per year.

Profitability in study programmes is a high priority for RSU. In order to achieve it in this study programme in the long run, RSU evaluates various options for ensuring financial stability of the study direction:

- Increase in places financed from the State budget;
- Attraction of municipal funding;
- Switch to student admission every 2 years.

In order to address the issue, RSU has applied to the Ministry of Welfare in the autumn of 2021 with a request for additional funding for budget places, as well as in the academic year 2020/2021 the Department of Welfare and Social Work started negotiations on the possibility of cooperating with Riga City Council to allocate funding to a certain number of study places, which in its turn, would give the city of Riga an opportunity to attract social workers in time, because Riga, as a municipality, taking into account the diverse range of social services it offers and the large number of inhabitants, needs social workers.

If additional funding will not be allocated to budget places, in the academic year 2023/24 RSU plans to coordinate changes in the admission of the study programme with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Science, switching to student admission once every 2 years. Such changes would allow to increase the number of budget places to 16 within one course, which in turn would allow to maintain the required minimum number of students in a group within the study period and make the study programme profitable. The planned number of students in the study programme at the scenario of admission once in 2 years – 46 students, incl. 32 budget students.

Table 5.1. Professional bachelor study programme "Social Work" 4.0 years, full-time on-site, Latvian. Information on student costs

RSU cost distribution in the study programme:	**Value (%)**
Academic staff, %	52%
Department resources, %	5%
Other direct expenditure, %	3%

Fixed costs, %	5%
Overheads, %	36%
Costs per student in the study programme, EUR	5412

Professional bachelor study programme "Social Work" 4.0 years, part-time on-site, Latvian. It is planned to finance the study programme from the resources of private and legal persons, setting the tuition fee with an excellence discount of 2,200 EUR per year. The average number of students in the programme of 49 ensures profitability.

Table 5.2. Professional bachelor study programme "Social Work" 4.0 years, part-time on-site, Latvian. Information on student costs

RSU cost distribution in the study programme:	**Value (%)**
Academic staff, %	73%
Department resources, %	5%
Other direct expenditure, %	1%
Fixed costs, %	2%
Overheads, %	18%
Costs per student in the study programme, EUR	2055

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.

Highly qualified lecturers, academics and practising specialists, participate in the implementation of PBSP "Social Work". 49 employees are involved in the implementation of the study programme – RSU's permanent lecturers, invited teaching staff from the field of social service providers and support personnel.

Study courses are provided also by other RSU structural units: Faculty of Rehabilitation (in English – here), Language Centre (in English – here), Department of Public Health and Epidemiology (in English – here), Department of Health Psychology and Paedagogy (in English – here), Department of

Biology and Microbiology (in English – here), Department of Clinical Skills and Medical Technologies (in English – here), Department of Psychiatry and Narcology (in English – here), Statistical Unit (in English – here), etc.

Application and selection procedure of the academic staff at RSU is regulated by the Regulations of Rīga Stradiņš University on Academic Staff Positions, (Regulations on Academic Elections at Rīga Stradiņš University) and Rīga Stradiņš University Process "Elections of Academic Staff".

The implementation of the compulsory and restricted elective part of the Professional Bachelor's Study Program "Social Work" is ensured by 46 lecturers, 15 of whom have been elected to RSU academic positions. Out of 15 representatives of the academic staff, there are 5 professors and 2 associate professors (see Annex 24.7).

The composition of teaching staff in the study programme is stable. Lecturers have both academic work experience and practical work experience in the field of social work. In the reporting period, changes in academic staff have occurred among both permanent lecturers and invited teachers. The changes are related to ensuring succession and interaction between generations.

In order to promote the achievement of the aim and learning outcomes of the study programme, lecturers with a wide range of academic and professional experience are involved in the teaching of the study courses:

- The study course "Social Work Theories and Methods" is taught by Assoc. Prof. Lolita Vilka, who has a long experience of cooperation with the Ministry of Welfare, participating in a number of projects, e. g. development of a dictionary of social work terminology, Assoc. Prof. Vilka has been elected to the Latvian Council of Science as an expert, Vilka participates in the implementation of the international project ERASMUS Mundus 619857-EPP-1- 2020-1-LT-EPPKA1-JMD-MOB European Joint Master in Social Work with Children and Youth.
- The study course "Applied Sociology: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods" is taught by Asst. Prof. Maruta Pranka, who has experience in developing research methodologies and tools, working at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia, SIA SKDS Ltd. and elsewhere.
- The study course "Social Policy" is taught by Acting Assistant Anna Broka, who has significant experience in project management, Broka works as a research assistant, participates in project management and expertise in EU and state funded projects.
- Study courses "Social Work at Macro-Level and in Local Community" and "Introduction to Social Work and Professional Ethics" is taught by lect. Marika Lotko, who has been elected to the Executive Committee of the European Association of Schools of Social Work, has participated in the development of a development planning strategy for one of the Latvian municipal social services.
- The study course "Latvian Social Security System" is taught by lect. Mārtiņš Moors, who has long been working at the Department of Welfare of the Riga City Council as a deputy director, being responsible for planning and organising the work of the Social Administration, strategically planning and managing the development of social services and social assistance.

The experience and employment of the lecturers give an opportunity to supplement the study courses with topicalities in the social field, and reflect the current situation in the field.

In the reporting period, a Slovak visiting lecturer was involved in the teaching of study courses. (in the study course "Theories and Methods of Social Work", "Evidence-Based Social Work").

In order to promote the development of social work as an academic discipline, two DWSW lecturers are having doctoral studies: A. Broka studies at the Tallinn University doctoral study programme

"Social Work", M. Lotko studies the Rīga Stradiņš University doctoral study programme "Sociology".

Lecturers of the Department of Welfare and Social Work improve their qualifications in training and courses organised by RSU CEG and outside RSU. For example, in academic year 2018/2019, lecturers of the department attended the following qualification improvement measures and received certificates:

- Close-up of E-Study Opportunities or Complicated Explained Simply and Quickly (A. Ābele);
- E-Studies (*Moodle*) Usage Opportunities (S. Rupaine);
- Reference Management Tool *EndNote* (S. Rupaine, M. Lotko);
- The Education Programme "Awareness in Social Work Practice. Module 1. "Social worker in the 21st century" (S. Rupaine);
- Seminar "Evaluation of competences and the results of work of managers using the co-creation method" (M. Moors);
- Inclusive Activation Seminar (Vienna, Austria) (M. Moors);
- Experience exchange event (Helsinki, Arcada University) (L. Vilka).

Lecturers and teaching staff were welcomed to make more active use of the opportunities offered by e-studies and were informed of the opportunities to attend educational seminars organised by RSU CEG to strengthen e-studies usage skills. Information on the possibilities to master various IT tools is sent to lecturers actively and on a regular basis, the training is ensured by the RSU Information Technology Department. Part of lecturers are actively involved in mastering new skills to provide the content of the course in the e-environment more successfully.

The diverse experience of lecturers (both in professional practice, research and social policy-making, participation in international projects) enables them to provide students with current knowledge, to share practical experience and examples, and students highly appreciate this, and to prepare the study course in such a way to synthesise theory and practice.

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.

Highly qualified lecturers who are experts in the field and specialise in the respective study course topics are involved in the implementation of StP.

The department has long-term cooperation with most of the invited teachers (for example, Daina Vanaga, Ilze Dreifelde, Andris Ārgalis, etc.). The composition of permanent lecturers is also stable and the number of permanent lecturers has increased since accreditation although only a small part of them are full-time employees (for example, Dagnija Staķe, Marika Lotko). Most of permanent employees have only part-time job at the department (for example, Mārtiņš Moors, Anna Broka, Silva Rupaine, etc.). The composition of lecturers of the programme in the accreditation period changed, because long-term lecturers assoc. prof. Andris Vilks and long-term lecturer lect. Ilvija Razgale deceased.

The programme employs also the lecturers, who are employers, for example, Mārtiņš Moors, who is Deputy Director of the Welfare Department of Riga City Council.

The study programme employs as teachers also its former graduates of the Bachelor's StP Iveta Dūma and Jana Pūķe. Doctoral students are also involved in the study programme to the extent

possible, for example, Ginta Elksne, who was involved in academic year 2020/2021 in the course "Applied Sociology: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods" of Ilze Trapenciere implemented in academic year 2020/2021.

The number of lecturers providing courses in Part C has increased in StP. Since RSU has introduced a centralised selection of Part C courses throughout the university, the programme includes lecturers from different sectors, according to the study course chosen by the student.

The number of lecturers has increased by introducing new study courses such as "Self-Defence Methods in Social Work".

DWSW has been actively working to attract visiting lecturers to improve the content of StP, as well as to introduce innovative methods in study processes. Stable cooperation has been established with Daniel Markovič, who is involved in teaching several courses alongside other lecturers ("Theories and Methods of Social Work", "Social Work at Microlevel and in Community"), as well as, from 2021/2022 will independently provide the study course on "Digital Technologies in Social Work".

The lecturers who supervised student placement often continue their professional careers as visiting teachers, reading study courses. Jana Pūķe, can be mentioned as an example, who has been supervising student placement at the Riga Social Service institution for several years, and now is reading the study course "Social Work with Families and Children", as well as Marina Fiļipova, with whom the department has long-term cooperation in the provision of placement in the 1st year of studies, was involved in teaching courses in academic year 2019/2020.

Impact on the quality of studies

The relationship of the composition of teaching staff to the quality of studies should be analysed taking into account the quality indicators, which include the content level and the individual level (students, lecturers) and is based on the *principle of student-centred approach*.

Achievements of students, as well as the assessment of lecturers' work in student surveys provide a basis for assessing the quality of studies:

- topicality and modernity of the study course;
- use of theoretical knowledge at practical classes, seminars;
- compliance of tests with the content of the study course;
- information and training materials available in the e-study environment and their relevance for learning the content of the study course;
- lecturer's competence in the topic of study courses;
- participation of students in the mastering of the study course;
- feedback of the lecturer on the content of the study course and the assessment received;
- lecturer's attitude to students.

When evaluating lecturers' work, students in surveys appreciate and thank for the contribution of lecturers, are able to identify benefits of the study course and the future use of knowledge and skills in the profession.

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).

Not 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).

Not 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).

Developments in the sector are discussed at meetings of the Department of Welfare and Social Work (usually before the beginning of the academic year), lecturers, practitioners and academics share mutual observations about developments in the sector and reflect on how to link study courses effectively with each other. As part of the academic year, pressing matters can be discussed at DWSW meetings.

During the meetings of the Quality Council, lecturers have the opportunity to make proposals for the necessary improvements in the study programme.

When planning new study courses (e.g. “Placement: Training of Professional Skills” and “Digital Technologies in Social Work”), their content and the title of the study course were debated and discussed at the Quality Council meeting.

Meetings on the improvement of regulations on the development of scientific paper were also organised for lecturers. This was needed both to educate lecturers on the requirements for the development of scientific research papers, because many of the lecturers are scientific advisers, and to share research experience and opinions about the development of scientific research works, by synchronizing the department level requirements with the requirements of RSU and the Faculty of PHSW.

The teaching staff of the department participates in the implementation of various projects:

- Studies of the national research programme EKOSOC-LV (2016–2018) and "Life with Covid-19" (2021)
- Project COST Action CA16206 Empowering the next generation of social enterprise scholars, which included a group of researchers (4 from RSU and 1 from the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies. The cooperation resulted in a publication (Henrijs Kalkis, Lolita Vilka, Lāsma Līcīte-Ķurbe, Ilze Trapenciere, Marta Urbāne (2021) Challenges for Social Enterprise in Latvia, Social Enterprise in Central and Eastern Europe, Routledge).
- SF project "Improvement of the management process and study content modernisation at Rīga Stradiņš University" (No. 8.2.3.0/18/A/011) of specific objective 8.2.3 "To ensure better governance at higher education institutions" Line I "Improvement and alignment existing StP content with industry development needs" Action 6 "Skills monitoring system".

Lecturers of individual study courses actively develop cooperation with the professional environment going on study visits, inviting representatives of different institutions to share experience in the study course, students can participate in the work of the institutions as volunteers. Department lecturers are actively involved in the mastering of H5P tool as part of the digitisation of study materials in order to enrich the range of methods used in the implementation of study courses.

Lecturers cooperate with each other (creating teams at national and international level) when writing scientific articles. *Faces of Social Work in Europe* (2018-2021) has been created in order to promote scientific literature in social work curated by the European Association of Schools for Social Work.The project has resulted in an article *Social Work Education in Latvia: Post-crisis Impact and Development Perspectives* (L. Vilka, M. Lotko). This edition gives students the opportunity to analyse the field of social work in Latvia in a wider context and to understand the current problems of development of social work in relation to the development of social work in other European countries.

At the end of academic year 2020/2021, due to updating of the professional standard for a social worker (2020), groups of lecturers were set up to discuss the interlinking of study courses, to prevent overlapping of topics, to adapt the content of the study course according to the developments in the professional standard. Lecturers assessed such appointments positively, stressing that they enabled them to see the placement of a study course taught in the whole study programme, to understand the succession of topics, review different study courses, delve into specific topics.

In line with the university's strategy and internal procedure, regular observation work is also performed. The cooperation of teaching staff takes place, for example, in the form of attendance of each other's lectures and classes making it possible to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the work. Mutual feedback seminars on current topics are organised for mutual cooperation of lecturers. Several members of teaching staff cooperate by jointly creating study courses, supervising papers of students, as well as performing scientific activity.

List of observations in FT and PT study programmes:

ac.y. 2015/2016

1. Special Pedagogy (lect. I. Kārkliņa, obs. M. Lotko) – SDN;
2. Sociology Theories (lect. I. Razgale, obs. M. Lotko) – SDN;
3. Psychosocial Rehabilitation (lect. I. Razgale, obs. M. Lotko) – SD;

4. Social Work with Support and Adaptive Groups (lect. I. Razgale, obs. M. Lotko) – SD;
5. Fundamentals of Psychology (lect. K. Pēča, obs. O. Brūvers) – SD;
6. Conversation and Therapeutic Relationship Establishment Skills (lect. I. Dreifelde, obs. I. Razgale) – SD;

ac.y. 2018/2019

1. Research Methodology and Logic (topic: “Research Methodology”) lect. D. Markovič, obs. I. Trapenciere – SD;
2. Evidence-Based Social Work (topic: Evidence based Social Work” in Slovakia) lect. D. Markovič, obs. O. Brūvers – SD;
3. Social Work on Streets (lect. M. Lotko, obs. A. Ābele) – SD;
4. Social Work on a Case (lect. A. Ābele, obs. M. Lotko) – SD;

ac.y. 2019/2020

1. Evidence-Based Social Work (lect. S. Rupaine, obs. M. Lotko) – SD;
2. Gerontological Social Work (lect. A. Ābele, obs. M. Lotko) – SD.

The ratio of the number of students and teaching staff in the study programme: 69 students and 46 teaching staff. The ratio of the number of students and teaching staff is 1,5.

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_pielik_PBSP_diploms_diploma_pielikums_eng.pdf	24.1_pielik_PBSP_diploms_diploma_pielikums_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	Annex_16_Statistical_Data_about_the_Students.pdf	16_pielik_Statistikas_dati_par_studejosajiem.pdf
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard	Annex 17.1_Compliance_of_Professional_Bachelor's-StPr_with_the_National_Educational_Standard.pdf	17-1_pielik_Profesionalas_bakalaura_StPr_atbilstiba_valsts_izglitibas_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)	Annex 18.2. Mapping_of_StPr_according_to_the_professional_standard.pdf	18.2_pielik_StPr_iegustamas_kvalifikacijas_atbilstiba_profesijas_standartam.pdf
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	Annex 18.1_Mapping_of_the_Study_Courses_for_the_Achievement_of_the_Learning_Outcomes.pdf	18.1_pielik_Studiju_kursu_kartejums_StPr_studiju_rezultatu_sasniegsanai.pdf
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	Annex_19_Plan_for_full_and_part-time_studies.pdf	19_pielik_StPr_planojums_pilna_un_nepilna_laika_studijam.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Annex_20.1_Study_course_descriptions.pdf	20.1_pielik_Studiju_kursu_apraksti.pdf
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)	Annex_9_StPr_organization_of_practice.pdf	9_pielik_StPr_prakses_organizacijas_apraksts.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)		

Social Work with Children and Youth (45762)

Study field	*Social Welfare*
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	*Social Work with Children and Youth*
Education classification code	*45762*
Type of the study programme	*Academic master study programme*
Name of the study programme director	*Anna*
Surname of the study programme director	*Broka*
E-mail of the study programme director	*Anna.Broka@rsu.lv*
Title of the study programme director	*Mg.SD.*
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	*To prepare highly qualified masters of social work with management level professional competence, who will be able to:* *• work in a comparative intercultural environment with children and youth;* *• develop research based on academic education, comparative international research and evidence, analysing the social needs and challenges of children and youth;* *• organise social work and the provision of services, find the most effective solutions to social problems, respecting the principles of human rights, social justice, social policy and diversity of society;* *• evaluate and implement professional activity and ensure the improvement of professional activity, in approaches based on personal freedom, empowerment and strengthening.*
Tasks of the study programme	*1. To develop students' skills in managing information, integrating theoretical knowledge and practical experience in social work with children and youth.* *2. To develop students' analytical skills and competences in conducting comparative research and using its results in social work practice with children and youth.* *3. To promote students' management skills by developing leadership and digital competence in the provision of services to children and youth in the context of cultural diversity.* *4. To develop the skills of students to systematically and critically analyse political documents by taking initiative and promoting creativity in ensuring the welfare of children and youth.* *5. To develop and cultivate the pursuit of personal and professional growth by planning personal continuing education and professional career, continuously improving own knowledge and skills in order to provide the newest services and solutions corresponding to the cultural context and suitable for the needs of children and youth.*

Results of the study programme	*Knowledge* *1. Will be able to use theoretical knowledge and practical work experience in work with families, children and youth.* *2. Will be able to develop and evaluate own professional knowledge and skills by creating a personal training system and career advancement, and will be able to analyse and use social innovations in professional activity.* *3. Will be able to carry out appropriate science-based and applied research, as well as qualitative analysis of the problems of children and youth.* *4. Will be able to use academic knowledge and evidence-based approaches as the basis for professional intervention, in line with the professional standard of social work ethics.* *Skills* *5. Will be able to ensure the safety, well-being and welfare of children and youth using a child-centred and evidence-based approach.* *6. Will be able to evaluate the needs of children, youth and their families, coordinate resources to support, advise and defend their interests and rights.* *7. Will be able to plan personal learning and career improvement process, continue professional growth, continuously improving own knowledge and skills, as well as using social innovation in own professional activities to provide up-to-date, cost-effective and culturally suitable services to children, youth and families.* *Competence* *8. Will be able to demonstrate competence and understanding of cultural diversity by providing services to children and youth.* *9. Will be able to evaluate the resources available and to advocate for reforms to the welfare system that will improve services for children and youth.* *10. Will promote cooperation by supporting, improving and providing efficient services and actively involve family, children and youth in meeting their needs.*
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	*Master's Thesis*

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 2 years - english

Study type and form	*Full time studies*
Duration in full years	*2*
Duration in month	*0*
Language	*english*
Amount (CP)	*80*
Admission requirements (in English)	*Higher education degree in the field of social sciences. Proof of English language skills.*

Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*European Joint Master in Social Work with Children and Youth*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*nav*

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 StP parameters**

No	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in the SP parameters during the accreditation (until 22.11.2021)	Planned changes within the assessment procedure (after the accreditation)
1.	Study direction	—	—
2.	Title of SP	—	—
3.	Code according to the Latvian Education Classification	—	—
4.	Head of SP	—	—
5.	Scientific degree of the Head of SP	—	—
6.	Aim of SP	—	—
7.	Tasks of SP	—	—
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	—	—
9.	Final examination upon the completion of SP	—	—
10.	Type and form of studies	—	—

No	Parameter	Description and analysis of changes in the SP parameters during the accreditation (until 22.11.2021)	Planned changes within the assessment procedure (after the accreditation)
11.	Duration of implementation	—	—
12.	Language of implementation	—	—
13.	Workload of SP (CP)	—	—
14.	Admission requirements	—	—
15.	Degree to be awarded	—	—
16.	Qualification to be awarded	—	
17.	Place of implementation	—	—

The study programme (SP) is made on the basis of the joint professional Master's SP "Social Work with Children and Youth".

Joint professional Master's SP was licensed at Riga Stradiņš University (RSU) in 2014 (Decision No 32 of Study Programme Licensing Commission of 27 August 2014) which has been successfully implemented with Mykolo Romerio Universitetas (Lithuania). This SP has developed successfully since licensing. In order to promote the development perspectives of the SP, both participating universities, by agreement of the programme council (represented by MRU and RSU) on the need to develop the study programme, expanding its scope and curriculum, decided to establish a consortium of four universities by inviting new partners. On 8 February 2019, the agreement was signed to establish a consortium between four universities — RSU (Latvia), MRU (Lithuania), the Catholic University of Ružomberok (Slovakia) and the University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal). In order to foster the development perspectives of the joint Master's SP, the programme applied for Erasmus Mundus grant funding, which was approved on 7 September 2020 in the EACEA 2020 call for proposals from the waiting list.

In Latvia, the State Education Development Agency assessed this unique opportunity as a significant achievement, because throughout the Erasmus+ implementation period (2014–2020),

no Latvian higher educational institution had managed to get in any of the approved Erasmus Mundus consortia for the implementation of joint Master's SP. The funding of the project is EUR 2 434 000, which in eligible expenses includes the costs of matriculation, tuition fees, scholarships, reimbursement of travel, settlement and residence expenses, etc.

This opens up significantly wider opportunities for the social work profession in general, as it envisages the improvement of international cooperation, the attraction of qualified specialists, networking opportunities for professionals, students and lecturers. The relevance of social work in today's society has waned, being aware of all social challenges facing the global community, including mitigating the social consequences of problems caused by Covid-19. The programme was created in response to the growing demand in the labour market for specialists highly qualified in social work with children and youth who would be able to work in child and youth day care centres, juvenile support institutions, to take part in the youth policy planning and implementation in municipalities, to develop occupational guidance services for children and youth, as well as to plan, organize, manage and evaluate the process of social work in a multicultural environment not only in Latvia and Lithuania, but also in other European Union countries, etc.

The project coordinator is the Lithuanian higher education institution Mykolo Romerio Universitetas. In the newly formed consortium, the issues of SP implementation are assessed in detail, described in the Consortium Agreement No 59-23-2021-0006 of 30.04.2021 (see Annex 26).

The main changes, unlike the previous SP, are as follows:

- Two more are being added to the two existing implementers of the joint SP: Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (Portugal) (https://www.iscte-iul.pt) and Katolicka Univerzita v Ruzomberku (Slovakia) (http://www.ku.sk). The programme is supplemented with new study courses which will be implemented by project partner universities, but such changes do not apply to the curriculum implemented by RSU.
- In Latvia, it is required to change the type of programme from professional Master's SP to academic Master's study programme, providing for the degree to be awarded according to the definition established in the legislation of the Republic of Latvia: Master of Health Sciences degree in Social Work. The diploma will be issued by Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (Portugal); it will be signed by the rectors of all 4 higher education institutions. The degree planned to be awarded in the joint programme (in English) is "Joint Master Degree in Social Work with Children and Youth".
- New study courses introduced (overall programme plan in Annex 19). SP plan with the name of higher education institution which implements the respective study course).

In Latvia, it was required to change the type of programme from professional Master's SP to academic Master's study programme, which was done under the procedures established in the legislation of the Republic of Latvia. On 10 November 2021, shortly before the submission of documents for accreditation (22.11.2021), the decision of AIKA Study Quality Commission was made to license the joint academic Master's study programme "Social Work with Children and Youth" (code 45762). As a result, no changes in the programme should be indicated during the accreditation, because no changes have been made in the academic programme.

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 social work SP at Riga Stradiņš University (RSU) has been implemented since 2005. The implemented SP in social work corresponds to the thematic group of Health Care and Social Welfare Education and the study direction — Social Welfare, which fully complies with the RSU strategy — in health and social care. Respectively, the international SP "Social Work with Children and Youth" complies with the RSU strategy and study direction — Social Welfare.

The joint academic Master's SP "Social Work with Children and Youth" is made, considering the general requirements in the Master's SP (Regulations on the National Academic Education Standard, Cabinet Regulation No 240). According to the Regulation, the curriculum of the Master's SP includes the acquisition of in-depth theoretical knowledge and the development of research skills and abilities, ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes in the field of social work. The volume of SP is 80 CP (120 ECTS).

Purpose of SP: to train holders of Master degree highly qualified in social work with the managerial level professional competence, who will be able:

- To work in a comparative intercultural environment with children and youth;
- To conduct research based on academic education, comparative international research and evidence, by analysing the needs and problems of children and youth;
- To organize social work and provision of services, to find more efficient solutions to social problems, following the principles of human rights, social justice, social policy and public diversity;
- To assess and implement professional activity and to ensure the improvement of professional activity in approaches based on personal freedom, empowerment and strengthening.

Tasks of SP:

1. To develop the students' ability to manage the information, to integrate theoretical knowledge and practical experience in social work with children and youth.
2. To develop the students' analytical skills and competence in conducting the comparative studies, and the use of results in social work practice with children and youth.
3. To promote students' leadership skills by developing leadership and digital competence in the provision of services to children and young people in the context of cultural diversity.
4. To develop students' ability to systematically and critically analyse policy documents, taking the initiative and promoting creativity in ensuring the welfare of children and youth.
5. To develop and cultivate the pursuit of personal and professional growth by planning personal further education and professional careers, continuously improving their knowledge and skills to provide the latest, most culturally appropriate services and solutions for the needs of children and youth.

Learning outcomes to be achieved

The SP curriculum consists of the theory of social work, social sciences and humanities, local environment and evidence-based knowledge of the needs of children and youth, as well as families. The latest conclusions and practical experience in comparative research, policy development and

analysis, as well as the latest knowledge on ICT solutions in social work practice with children and youth will also be used. These specialists will be able to understand the opportunities of children and youth and will promote freedom of choice in achieving their life goals, based on the principles of social justice, human rights and cultural diversity.

Knowledge

- Will be able to use theoretical knowledge and practical work experience in work with families, children and youth.
- Will be able to develop and assess professional knowledge and skills, by making personal training system and career development, and will be able to analyse and use social innovations in the professional work.
- Will be able to conduct appropriate science based and applied studies, as well as qualitative analysis of children and youth problems.
- Will be able to use academic knowledge and an evidence-based approach as a basis for conducting professional intervention in accordance with the professional standard of social work ethics.

Skills

- Will be able to ensure the safety, feeling of comfort, and welfare of children and youth through a child-centred and evidence-based approach.
- Will be able to assess the needs of children, youth and their families, to coordinate resources to support, advise and defend their interests and rights.
- Will be able to plan the process of personal learning and career development, to continue professional development, continuously improving their knowledge and skills, as well as using social innovations in their professional activity to provide relevant, profitable and culturally appropriate services to children, youth and families.

Competencies

- Will be able to demonstrate competence and understanding of cultural diversity by providing services to children and youth.
- Will be able to assess available resources and advocate for welfare system reforms that will improve services for children and youth.
- Will promote cooperation by supporting, improving and providing effective services, and will actively involve families, children and youth in meeting their needs.

The workload and structure of SP correspond to the Master study level according to the Cabinet Regulation No 240 “Regulations on the National Academic Education Standard” (see Annex 3) and the results to be achieved correspond to the knowledge, skills and competences of level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (see Annex 8 “Study Course Mapping for the Achievement of SP Learning Outcomes”).

The study programme identifies five areas of expertise: knowledge and its application, competence in research, special skills, social skills and personal skills.

Table 2. **Learning outcomes to be achieved**

	Learning outcomes of academic Master's SP "Social Work with Children and Youth"	Descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) (which correspond to the description of levels of the European Qualifications Framework) Cabinet Regulation No 322 of 13 June 2017 "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia"
Knowledge and its application	A1 Will be able to analyse and apply social theories in social work practice with children and youth, to implement the principles of democracy, methods of empowerment and strengthening to provide evidence-based practice in working with children and youth. A2 Will be able to systematically and critically analyse the latest findings on needs and their nature in a multicultural environment, implementing innovative social services and influencing the social policies of families and children and youth.	To be able to demonstrate in-depth or extended knowledge and understanding, part of which are in line with the latest discoveries in the respective field of science or professional area and lay the foundation for creative thinking or research, including when working in-between different sectors.
Skills in research	B1 Will be able to initiate, organize social research using quantitative and qualitative research methods, and to analyse social research and results in an interdisciplinary context from a national and international perspective. B2 Will be able to analyse, synthesize and critically assess research results, to apply research results in changing and uncertain situations when there is insufficient information about the phenomenon/situation.	To have ability to independently use the theory, methods and problem-solving skills in order to conduct research or artistic work, and highly qualified professional functions. To have ability to integrate knowledge from different fields, make a contribution to the creation of new knowledge, development of research or professional activity methods, to demonstrate understanding and ethical responsibility for the scientific result or potential impact of professional activity on the environment and community.

	Learning outcomes of academic Master's SP "Social Work with Children and Youth"	**Descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF)** (which correspond to the description of levels of the European Qualifications Framework) Cabinet Regulation No 322 of 13 June 2017 "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia"
Special/specific skills	C1 will be able to ensure that services are provided to children and youth in the context of cultural awareness and competence, as well as to develop young people's social and cultural competences. C2 Will be able to systematically assess the special needs of children and youth, to use empowering methods of social work intervention; to support resources and system reforms that will improve services for children and youth; to foster cooperation by supporting, improving and providing effective services, actively involving children and youth in meeting their needs.	To undertake responsibility for the results of staff team work and their analysis, to do business, innovations in the respective field of science or occupation, to do job, research or further learning in complicated and unpredictable conditions and to transform them using new approaches, if needed.

	Learning outcomes of academic Master's SP "Social Work with Children and Youth"	**Descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF)** (which correspond to the description of levels of the European Qualifications Framework) Cabinet Regulation No 322 of 13 June 2017 "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia"
Social skills	D1 Will be able to organize, coordinate and assess the social support process and results for children and youth, to use interviewing and counselling skills, to launch projects and to communicate effectively at the intercultural level. D2 Will be able to manage the information needed to work effectively with children and youth, to define and implement policies, procedures and guidelines needed for effective social work practice, to work in a team, to take responsibility for the quality of personal professional work and the work of employees, respecting cultural attitudes and diversity of values.	To have ability to reasonably explain and discuss complicated or systemic aspects of the respective field of science or professional area with both specialists and non-specialists. To have ability to independently formulate and critically analyse complicated scientific and professional problems, to substantiate decisions, and to conduct additional analysis, if needed.
Personal skills	E1 Will be able to develop personal competences: citizenship and responsibility, positive thinking, social justice, tolerance of different groups of young people, to further have personal and professional development, continuously developing their knowledge and skills to provide the latest, most beneficial and culturally relevant services to children, youth and families, as well as to use innovation in their professional activity.	To have ability to integrate knowledge from different fields, make a contribution to the creation of new knowledge, development of research or professional activity methods, to demonstrate understanding and ethical responsibility for the scientific result or potential impact of professional activity on the environment and community.

The SP structure corresponds to the legal framework in the field of education of other partner

countries (Lithuania, Slovakia, Portugal) involved in the programme, and to the requirements for the Master's SP. For successful completion of studies, all theoretical, methodological and specialisation study courses shall be undergone, research papers and essays shall be independently prepared, examinations shall be successfully passed and the Master's thesis shall be defended. In order to bring SP closer to the real situation, many study courses are based on case studies and students create similar research projects within each study course — special importance is given to independent research paper. Students choose the topics of their Master's theses taking into account the current challenges in the field of social welfare and social policy.

The length and workload of the SP implementation is 2 years and 0 months, 80 CP (120 ECTS). The student workload during their studies is divided proportionally — one year workload is 40 CP (60 ECTS), and one semester is 20 CP (30 ECTS). The length and workload is optimal to achieve all SP objectives and for the student to have an opportunity to experience the studies in all partner universities.

As mentioned above, SP has been developing within the framework of the study direction "Social Welfare", where the professional Master's SP "Social Work" was already licensed in 2005. When analysing the demand in labour market for professionals in the field of social work not only at local, but also at international level, the programme "Social Work with Children and Youth" has been purposefully improved and developed.

The study direction "Social Welfare" has already proven itself with three SP corresponding to the direction. Programme code 45762 describes the academic Master's study programme in social work, where the first part of the code "45" refers to academic education (Master's degree), to be implemented after obtaining a Bachelor's or professional Bachelor's degree, which is determined by the admission rules and requirements of the programme. The duration of studies in full-time studies in programmes with the code "45" is one to two years. The duration of SP "Social work with children and youth" is 2 years. The total duration of full-time studies is respectively at least five years. Second part of the code "762" — a group of educational programmes: Social services and education programme package: Social work. Compliance is considered. In addition, it can be mentioned that the division into the "academic" or "professional" SP partner university countries was not applied, but according to the legislation of the Republic of Latvia, the programme was licensed as academic SP in Latvia.

The content of the program includes courses that provide an in-depth understanding of interdisciplinary local and global challenges in the field of social welfare. The courses "Intercultural Mediation in Social Work" and "Professional Development and Supervision in Social Work" are current courses in the field of social work that help social workers to promote their own and their colleagues' professional growth and development. Some courses focuse on the ability to identify and respond in a timely manner to the social problems faced by families with children and young people. For example, the course "Bio-psycho-social Aspects of Children and Youth" integrates social work approaches in both health and social fields. The study curriculum also includes courses such as "Digital Social Work with Children and Youth", "Socio-Cultural Inclusion of Different Youth Groups", "Innovative Approaches to Social Work Management and Leadership", which allow social workers to identify and analyse social problems in the context of cultural environment and digital age.

Within the framework of the programme, the skills to perform objective research and analysis are strengthened, as well as to master the functions of the social field and industry, to forecast the directions of development of social change and to develop social innovations.

The title of the degree to be obtained in Latvian is "Master of Health Sciences in Social Work", but in the Consortium Agreement, the higher education institutions have agreed that the title of the

degree in English is “European Joint Master in Social Work with Children and Youth”. During the elaboration of the Consortium Agreement, during the preparation of the licensing documents of the academic programme, RSU received consultations from AIKA on the possible wording of the degree in Latvian, and the degree is defined in accordance with the legal framework of the Republic of Latvia, as approved by the Study Quality Commission on 10 November 2011. The issue of awarding the degree is also analysed in Section 3.2.2.

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

International SP will provide specialists in social work, taking into account the demand for specialists of each country, who are able to work in intercultural and multicultural environment. However, the needs of each partner country involved in SP differ significantly. In Latvia, the demand for such specialists is related to increasing impact of global migration and social challenges in a rapidly changing social economic environment.

According to Cedefop forecasts, the number of employees in 2030 will increase by about 5 % in comparison with 2019. It is expected that about half of employees will work in service sector by 2030. Although small, growth is also expected in the public services sector, where the number of employees will grow most rapidly in such areas as health and social work https://www.em.gov.lv/lv/media/598/download (available in Latvian only).

The relevance of social work in today's society has waned, being aware of all social challenges facing the global community, including mitigating the social consequences of problems caused by Covid-19. The programme was created in response to the growing demand in the labour market for specialists highly qualified in social work with children and youth who would be able to work in child and youth day care centres, juvenile institutions, to take part in the youth policy planning and implementation in municipalities, to develop occupational guidance services for children and youth, as well as to plan, organize, manage and evaluate the process of social work in a multicultural environment not only in Latvia and Lithuania, but also in other European Union countries, etc.

The goals of SP “Social Work with Children and Youth” and learning outcomes to be achieved are based on the academic and professional requirements, the needs of the society and the needs of the labour market not only in Latvia, but also abroad.

Areas of professional activity of specialists trained within the framework of the SP are marked in international and national documents:

- “European Youth Strategy 2010 - 2018: Investments and Youth Promotion” (2009) recognizes that young people are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and that young people are an important support and resource in an ageing society. The strategy includes the main objectives: to create more opportunities for youth in education and employment; to improve access to and full participation of all young people in society, and to promote solidarity between youth and society.

- In the European Youth Strategy 2019 - 2027 (2018/C 456/01), the promotion of opportunities for youth is emphasized by defining the objectives:
- to enable young people to be the ones who make their lives, to support their personal development and independence, to strengthen their resilience and to provide them with the life skills they need to adapt to a changing world;
- to encourage young people and provide them with the necessary resources to become active

citizens, promoters of solidarity and positive change, inspired by EU values and European identity;
- to improve policy decisions on their impact on young people in all sectors, in particular employment, education, health and social inclusion.

European youth policy should be based on the principle of equality and non-discrimination, the principle of inclusion, the principle of promoting the participation and keeping the link in a global, European, national, regional and local perspective, increasingly taking into account the views of young people on policy issues.

Guidelines on social protection and labour market policy 2021 - 2027 provide for that one of the challenges in Latvia in the next planning period will be a growing demand for highly qualified and ***specialized*** social workers in social services and other welfare institutions.

Social work with children and youth is a specialization that fully complies with the needs of the Guidelines for the Development of Children, Youth and Family in Latvia for 2021 - 2027. The goal of the guidelines is: a family-friendly society that promotes the welfare, healthy development and equal opportunities of children and youth, and ensures that public policies are balanced, consistent and comprehensive in the areas of children and family welfare, youth, health and right protection.

In order to achieve this goal, the task is to provide ***education and professional development of specialists whose professional activity is related to ensuring the protection of children's rights.***

The above confirms the need for specialists who are able to work with the target group of children and youth in state, municipal institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) not only in Latvia, but also in the international labour market and in an intercultural context, including international organizations.

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 joint academic Master's study programme to be accredited "Social Work with Children and Youth" has been licensed in 2021, and currently 16 students from 13 countries around the world are enrolled and study in the programme with the help of Erasmus Mundus and private funding for studies. However, statistical data on the programme on the basis of which the new programme was established should also be mentioned.

Total number of students in the professional programme which has been implemented so far, has been stable — academic year 2020/2021 — 21 student, academic year 2019-2020 — 13 students, academic year 2018-2019 — 13 students, in academic year 2021/2022, 16 students have applied in the study programme. In general, foreign students have an increasing interest in the studies at RSU and MRU, joint Master's SP "Social Work with Children and Youth". In the academic year 2019/2020, the communication was made with about 60 candidates from countries in Asia, Africa and Europe, including Latvia; for the studies in 2019/2020, 12 candidates applied, unfortunately, only 2 Indian students out of 12 applicants received the visa. In the academic year 2019/2020, 1 Latvian student and 2 Indian students started their studies at RSU, and 9 students from Africa and EU countries — at MRU.

However, since 2021, the programme will be developed as academic programme with Erasmus Mundus funding, its course of development is planned to be more dynamic and with a greater inflow of students, taking into account the international nature of the programme.

The number of students is one of the largest threats to the development of SP, and the management of SP in cooperation with partner universities 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.

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).

The joint academic Master's SP "Social Work with Children and Youth" is based on the joint professional Master's SP "Social Work with Children and Youth" implemented by RSU and Mykolas Romeris University (Decision No 32 of the Study Programme Licensing Commission of 27 August 2014). This SP has developed successfully since licensing. During this period, experience of international cooperation in organizing the study process has been gained, opening new opportunities for international cooperation.

Analysing the achievements and challenges, the meeting of the SP self-assessment group already in 2017 agreed on the need to make changes in the curriculum of the programme and attract new partners. Visiting lecturers from Slovakia and Portugal were also involved in the SP study process during this period. As the cooperation was successful and mutually enriching, it was decided to develop it further. The co-operation between the two Baltic States, which have similar cultural and historical experience and values, has been expanded at the level of the European Union. The successful collaboration with Slovakia and Portugal allowed the idea to be taken to the next level, i. e. to assess and develop the social work profession in a broader context, assessing the consequences of migration and globalisation. The decision to further develop the programme in cooperation between four universities was confirmed by the Agreement of Intent (08.02.2019) to include Catholic University in Ružomberok in Slovakia and the University Institute of Lisbon in the implementation of SP. Since 2019, Catholic University in Ružomberok (Slovakia) and the University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal) have been included as full partners and the transformation of SP has begun.

In the period from 2018 to 2019, a model of possible SP 4 semesters was developed, implementation possibilities were evaluated, including addressing potential partners in connection with internationalization and the need for specialists in the international environment, legal framework in the countries of partner universities and possible cooperation options were studied. The research of legal norms and finding a possible form of cooperation took a lot of time, but with the involvement of representatives of partner universities, including lawyers, an agreement was reached which resulted in the Consortium Agreement.

On 8 February 2019, the agreement was signed to establish a consortium between four universities — RSU (Latvia), MRU (Lithuania), the Catholic University of Ružomberok (Slovakia) and the University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal). At the same time, all universities signed a delegation to prepare the SP as a proposal for Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree project. An application was submitted for Erasmus Mundus grant funding for the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's project

"European Joint Master in Social Work with Children and Youth", which was approved on 7 September 2020 for funding from the waiting list in the EACEA (European Education and Culture Executive Agency) 2020 call.

The State Education Development Agency assessed this unique opportunity as a significant achievement, because throughout the Erasmus+ implementation period (2014–2020), no Latvian higher educational institution had managed to get in any of the approved Erasmus Mundus consortia for the implementation of joint Master's programme. The financing of the project is EUR 2 434 000, which in eligible expenses includes the costs of matriculation, tuition fees, scholarships, reimbursement of travel, settlement and residence expenses, etc. This opens up significantly wider opportunities for the social work profession in general, as it envisages the improvement of international cooperation, the attraction of qualified specialists, networking opportunities for professionals, students and lecturers. The project coordinator is the Lithuanian higher education institution Mykolo Romerio Universitetas.

In order to implement the cooperation of the above-mentioned four countries in the development of the joint degree SP, changes were made in the existing joint professional Master's SP "Social Work with Children and Youth".

- The programme is being further developed as an academic SP in order to harmonize the curriculum of SP and achieve coherence with educational standards between partner universities;
- the workload of SP is increased from 60 CP (90 ECTS) to 80 CP (120 ECTS);
- new study courses are introduced.

In Latvia, the addition of new partners to the group of study implementers determined the need to receive a new license, thus the new version of the programme was submitted for licensing on 20.07.2021 and 10.11.2021. The Study Quality Commission of the Academic Education Quality Agency made a decision to license the new SP. Until the receipt of a new accreditation decision for the study direction "Social Welfare", RSU still has two SPs in parallel, so that students who have still entered the professional programme can complete their studies. Accordingly, the joint professional SP will be closed.

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 study work planning model offered by the programmes is made carefully to comply with the students' needs and to provide full-time study opportunities and the possibility to continue professional activities at the same time. The aim of the study courses is to develop and strengthen

various theoretical approaches in social sciences and to be able to apply them in practice, using an interactive work environment, including study visits to institutions, simulations and developing the latest professional methods of social work, incl. using ICT and other techniques when working with children and youth in different settings. Practical actual experience at work enrich the content of the study process by offering students examples of daily working life in joint discussions, analyses and discussions, which is an important part of the programme curriculum. The management of the study programme (partner universities) organize meetings on a regular basis to discuss current issues and to find common solutions. SP management on an annual basis works with partner universities to promote the programme by organizing public events — international conferences, and participating therein, as well as informing the local media on the current offer.

The workload and structure of SP correspond to the Master study level according to the Cabinet Regulation No 240 "Regulations on the National Academic Education Standard" (see Annex 3) and the results to be achieved correspond to the knowledge, skills and competences of level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (see Annex 8 "Study Course Mapping for the Achievement of SP Learning Outcomes").

The study programme identifies five areas of expertise: knowledge and its application, competence in research, special skills, social skills and personal skills.

The content and concept of the study programme correspond to the set goal and tasks, and ensure the achievement of the study results in the planned study period. The compulsory part of SP includes compulsory study courses and compulsory elective study courses.

The programme is developed taking into account the general requirements of the Master's study programmes, and it complies and is harmonized with the requirements of the national legal framework in higher education of the partner universities participating in the SP. In order to achieve the defined study results, SP consists of 3 basic blocks: a block of theoretical study courses (48 CP / 72 ECTS), scientific research internship (4 CP / 6 ECTS) and scientific paper (28 CP / 42 ECTS).

Compulsory study courses (44 CP / 66 ECTS - each course is implemented in the amount of 4 CP / 6 ECTS): "Theories of Social Work", "Methodology of Social Work Research", "Professional Development and Supervision in Social Work", "Comparative European Social Policy for Children and Youth", "Interactive Methods in Working with Children and Youth", "Innovative Approaches in Social Work Management and Leadership ","Social Work with Family", "Digital Social Work with Children and Youth", "Development and Assessment of Social Projects", "Intercultural Cooperation for Youth", "Socio-cultural Inclusion of Different Youth Groups".

The set of mentioned study courses enables students to acquire knowledge and develop skills necessary to plan, coordinate and implement innovations in the field of social policy, development of social work and social services for children and youth.

Compulsory elective study courses (4 CP / 6 ECTS): "Bio-psycho-social Aspects of Children and Youth Behavior", "Career Counseling for Children and Youth", "Intercultural Mediation in Social Work".

"Scientific Research Internship and Master Thesis" (4 CP / 6 ECTS)

"Master's Thesis" (28 CP / 42 ECTS)

In order to improve the scientific research skills and competence and to develop analytical skills, the scientific (Master) thesis has 28 CP / 42ECTS. This includes "Draft Master Thesis (practical seminar)" (4 CP / 6 ECTS) and "Master Thesis" (24 CP / 36 ECTS). Students develop the structure and methodology of the Master thesis, including analysis of theoretical sources, selection of research methods and development of research tools (surveys/interviews, selection of empirical

data analysis methods, etc.), collect and analyse empirical data. This process prepares students for the competent application of the acquired knowledge and skills in further practical work, as well as for possible studies at the doctoral level.

The areas of professional activity to be acquired by the students of SP “Social Work with Children and Youth” are marked in both national and international documents as well as research documents. For example, according to the European Youth Strategy 2010 -2018, young people are recognized as one of the most vulnerable groups in society and a valuable resource in an ageing society. The strategy includes the main objectives: to create more opportunities for youth in education and employment; to improve access to and full participation of all young people in society, and to promote solidarity between youth and society.

The European Union Youth Strategy 2019–2027 (https://europa.eu/youth/strategy_en) emphasises the need to develop a cross-sectoral approach to ensure that planned policies or programmes consider the specific needs of young people or the impact thereof. The aim of the strategy is to promote democratic values, as well as social and civic participation and to ensure that young people are provided with the necessary resources to participate. The expert report on the youth policy indicator defines the key ideas of youth policy as: lifelong learning, integration/social cohesion, civic participation, security, health and welfare. The Youth Sector Strategy 2030 (Resolution CM/Res(2020)2 on the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 22 January 2020 at the 1365th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/youth-strategy-2030), as well as the Latvian National Development Plan (NDP) notes the importance and expansion and strengthening of types of work with youth to facilitate the effective transition from child to adult status. These documents emphasize the importance of work with youth and set out specific measures for better implementation of youth policy at EU level. This will require qualified social workers capable of implementing youth policy working with young people in different institutions. The learning outcomes to be achieved in the programme are focused on the implementation of national and EU strategic goals and objectives. For the training of such specialists, there is the SP “Social Work with Children and Youth”.

European universities emphasize either a general comparative approach in their social work programmes or develop social work from a specific perspective, such as human rights or social cohesion. The joint Master's SP “Social Work with Children and Youth” follows European traditions, but is unique in its approach to children and youth. The SP is an effort to achieve goals based on the EU experience and is compatible with other SPs, such as by preparing graduates who are able to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired while working in an international environment.

Critical thinking, teamwork, comparative analysis, collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, application of theoretical social work paradigms in work with children and youth are important learning outcomes of the programme.

This programme is interdisciplinary and combines social work, education, pedagogy and intercultural communication, which helps to deepen the understanding of the causes and consequences of social problems and to apply social work strategies in different contexts. The uniqueness of the programme is the interdisciplinary approach to social work related to the processes of children and youth.

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).

As mentioned in Section 3.1.2, upon graduation of the joint academic Master's SP "Social Work with Children and Youth", under the procedures set forth in the legislation of the Republic of Latvia the degree to be awarded in Latvian is "Master of Health Sciences in Social Work", but in the Consortium Agreement, the higher education institutions have agreed that the title of the degree in English is "European Joint Master in Social Work with Children and Youth". During the elaboration of the Consortium Agreement, during the preparation of the licensing documents of the academic programme, RSU received consultations from AIKA on the possible wording of the degree in Latvian, and the degree is defined in accordance with the legal framework of the Republic of Latvia, as approved by the Study Quality Commission on 10 November 2011.

However, in the opinion of professionals in the field of social work, both from the point of view of representatives of the study direction, heads of direction, programmes and licensing experts, "Master of Health Sciences in Social Work" is not appropriate for the social work profession, including having regard to the international definition of social work adopted in 2014, which states that social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline[1].

The problem lies in the insufficiently precise legal framework, namely in the contradiction of legal provisions of the Cabinet Regulation No 240 of 13 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Academic Education Standard" and the Cabinet Regulation No 322 of 13 June 2017. According to the Cabinet Regulation No 322, health science (4572) and social welfare (4576) are equivalent fields. In turn, according to Clause 22 of the Cabinet Regulation No 240, social welfare is not listed among the titles of the Master degrees. According to the Cabinet Regulation No 322, social welfare and health science are closer, however the health science is a specific field of science with a number of sub-fields in the area of health, but social welfare is not included in the sub-fields of the health sciences. It concludes that the sub-field of social welfare cannot be qualified as a sub-field of the health sciences. Also, according to the international standard "ISCED-F INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATION", Health is under 091 and there are all underlying medical fields, in turn Social Work and Counselling (0923) is a sub-field of Welfare (092). Accordingly, there is a mismatch that the phrase "Master of Health Sciences in Social Work" gives the misleading impression that social work is a sub-field of health sciences. However, taking into account the existing legislation, the licensed degree to be awarded is currently indicated in the SP parameters, however, in accordance with the implementation plan of recommendations, RSU will take the necessary steps to initiate changes in legislation (according to Annex 11. Previous implementation plan of expert recommendations and its execution) with the hope that during the accreditation the SP will be able to submit a more appropriate degree title, such as Master of Social Welfare Sciences in Social Work.

A similar SP is not implemented in the Baltic States. Social issues and social problems of children and youth are considered and analysed within the framework of general knowledge in the study programmes of politics, sociology, health and other social sciences. The SP, which will train social work professionals who are able to organize social work and specialize in providing social work and services to families, children and young people, is the only joint European Master's SP in the Baltic region. The SP has been developed by analysing the SPs offered in European universities in the field of social welfare and social work, as well as following the recommendations of the Latvian State Education Development Agency.

[1] Global Definition of the Social Work Profession: “Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels.” (IFSW) https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/

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 following study methods are used in the SP: specification of the mastered theoretical and practical knowledge in seminars, discussions, tests and test works, development of individual and group projects. In addition, students go on study trips to organizations of social service providers, where they get acquainted with the organization and management of social work, working with various social target groups (for example, in the courses “Professional Development and Supervision in Social Work”, “Interactive Methods in Working with Children and Youth””), particular attention is paid to the balance between theoretical courses and models and their application in social work practice, solving social problems, and evidence-based approaches to social work. The courses integrate the latest methods and approaches that enable the development of knowledge and competences that are relevant to today's requirements, i. e. the application of digital skills and technology in social work, art, etc. methods of therapy.

Methods of assessment of student performance and achieved learning outcomes, as well as assessment criteria for study course acquisition, are defined in the description of each study course and are available to all students prior to the start of 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 intermediate and final examinations of study courses are available to each student on their student profile in the RSU e-studies environment. Students can familiarise themselves with the criteria, conditions and binding procedures for the assessment of student performance in the RSU Academic Regulations I (see RSU

website under Study Documents, available in Latvian and English).

Education in the programme is based on humanistic, cognitive and constructive provision, promoting individual learning skills. The aim of the application of different teaching methods in Master studies is to maximally promote the acquisition of cognitive skills, abstract thinking and analytical thinking skills, as well as knowledge and skills used in professional practice. An important role in the acquisition of SP is played by a problem-oriented approach and a system approach that corresponds to the nature of the social work profession. Studies include students' contact lessons and independent work. Various forms and methods of teaching are used in contact lessons in the classroom: lectures and seminars, group work, discussions, role plays, cooperative learning, analysis of scientific literature, analytical conversation, study research, etc. The independent part of the work includes online support methods, mutual learning, self-reflection, supervision, consultations, analysis of scientific literature, visualization, diary, observation, etc. Visibility in the acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge is ensured by the use of modern technical means. Practical training, which is based on the analysis of typical situations and events close to real life and modelling of problem solutions, as well as study tours, play a significant role in practical lessons.

Responding to the proposal of employers that in the Social Welfare studies direction in general the internship should be strengthened and forms of work-based study implementation should be developed (also in the students' survey on the need to link theoretical knowledge more with practice), the Master’s SP according to the requirements of level 7 of the EQF more attention in the organization of study courses and internship more attention is paid to the critical research and analysis of professional problems in the field on the basis of institutions/organizations of specific service providers. Considering that the new SP, as well as the professional Master's SP implemented so far, will mostly enrol students without a professional Bachelor's degree in social work obtained in the Republic of Latvia, as well as Asian and African students have a very limited understanding of social work in the European Union, it is crucial to achieve in-depth understanding of social work as an interdisciplinary profession and improve skills to integrate knowledge from different fields, including understanding of intercultural peculiarities in the organization and implementation of social work. The implementation of the SP “Social Work with Children and Youth” is based on a student-centred approach, with a focus on student-led learning. An important aspect is the interaction between the lecturer and the student, as well as between students. The implementation of interaction creates opportunities for students to discuss forms of learning, methods, to create a positive atmosphere of cooperation and communication, ensuring active student activity in the study process.

The programme is based on the following: the rule that the methods applied create a didactic system where learning is understood as a variable process and involves the assistance to students; a systemic approach, where teaching and learning are recognized as planned sequential feedback activities.

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).

Scientific research internship is provided with 6 ECTS / 4 CP (26 contact hours and 136 hours of independent work). The supervisor of the scientific research internship is a social work specialist in the organization where the internship is provided. The compliance of research skills with the requirements of academic research is managed by an internship supervisor from the SP partner university. The student has the opportunity to freely choose the place of internship in coordination with the internship supervisor. The SP partner university has a wide range of social partners to ensure scientific research internship in accordance with the interests of the student. Partner institutions and organisations provide for the opportunity to communicate and perform internship tasks in English. These institutions operate in different sectors, i. e. public and non-governmental sector, locally and internationally. Students undergo internships in the field of social services – in institutions that provide social assistance, social work and other forms of support for children and young people, as well as their families. Scientific research internship is provided in accordance with the Internship training regulations for students. Before the start of the internship, an introductory lecture and a seminar on the research internship are provided. Students are introduced to the tasks of scientific research internship, methodological instructions, the chosen place of internship, documents (internship cooperation agreement, reference form of the internship supervisor), evaluation criteria. During the seminar, students present an internship report to the responsible internship supervisor of the partner university. The tripartite agreement on internship cooperation is signed between the student, the legal entity of the place of internship and the responsible structural unit of the university institution/faculty. During the internship, the student is provided with the support and guidance of a supervisor appointed by the partner university. Scientific internship and the chosen topic of the Master thesis are interrelated. During the internship the student develops skills in data collection, analysis and interpretation in the field of social work. After the scientific research internship, the student provides a report on the results of the research work achieved in practice.

Due to Covid-19 conditions study internship 2020/2021 took place remotely in the following institutions and care centres of social service providers: State Probation Service, VSAC “Riga” Branch “Jugla”, Jelgava Social Affairs Administration Day Centres “Integra” and “Harmonija”, Day Care Centre for Persons with Mental Disorders “Saule” (SIA SARC "Saule"), Association" Rīga City Care Child”, Riga Municipality Children and Youth Centre — structural unit “Imanta”.

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).

Not 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.

Previously, in cooperation with MRU, the Department of Welfare and Social Work and MRU annually

developed, coordinated and offered thematic directions for Master theses/research. They are related to the needs of social work in the field of children, youth and family issues, based on the cooperation agreement, as well as the Guidelines for the Development of Professional Social Work of the Republic of Latvia 2014-2020 and the priority directions in research 2018-2021 proposed by the Ministry of Welfare. *Main directions of the Ministry of Welfare:*

- Scope of social services - problems and solutions;
- Social security - interfering factors, development opportunities;
- Building of social capital in the community;
- Providing independent living opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- The scope of professional capital in social work for the promotion of public welfare;
- Building of human capital;
- Reducing social inequalities and promoting the inclusion of marginalized groups, etc.

In the future cooperation with Lithuanian, Slovakian and Portuguese partners, the priorities of social development and social work of all four cooperating universities will be respected and discussed. Master's theses defended in recent years have been developed in the following areas: reducing youth unemployment, the role of non-formal education in reducing juvenile delinquency, social integration of drug users, etc. Several papers have been developed in relation to the development of the social work profession and the use of specific social work tools.

Appendix 22 contains a summary of the topics of the students' final theses in the joint professional Master's SP "Social Work with Children and Youth" implemented so far.

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 study programme is implemented by universities of four countries. Students will learn each semester in other Consortium partner university. Rotation of students will take place during all four semesters, thus the integration of courses and groups will be ensured.

Figure 1 **Student Rotation Plan**

MRU	RSU	CU	ISCTE-IUL
1st semester	2nd semester	3rd semester	4th semester
1st mobility		2nd mobility	3rd mobility
30 ECTS	30 ECTS	30 ECTS	30 ECTS

First, second and third semester starts with two weeks of intensive courses. Each semester

starts with introductory event where the students get familiar with the study process and administrative issues, as well as university resources to be used by the students throughout the studies.

The Consortium partners are responsible for the provision of resources of their own university — availability of academic and administrative staff and necessary equipment.

Each partner appoints the SP academic and administrative coordinator and ensures that both local coordinators have sufficient resources to make contribution into the efficient implementation of the programme as good as possible.

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).

Not 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).

On 7 September 2020, the programme's project "European Joint Master in Social Work with Children and Youth" received approval from the EACEA 2020 call for funding from the waiting list. The funding of the project is EUR 2 434 000, which in eligible expenses includes the costs of matriculation, tuition fees, scholarships, reimbursement of travel, settlement and residence expenses, etc.

It is planned to finance the study programme in English from the resources of private and legal entities, setting the tuition fee at EUR 2875 per year for students from the programme countries and EUR 3 875 per year for students from the partner countries (see Table 3 below).

In the three years to the autumn of 2023, it is planned to reach the total number of students — at least 92 throughout the programme, 23 of them at RSU. In each study year, it is planned to admit 48 students throughout the programme, 12 of them at RSU.

RSU funding is used for staff remuneration, attraction of visiting lecturers, taxes, maintenance of IT infrastructure, purchase of inventory and equipment, study visits, licenses and private insurance costs for students. In addition to the direct costs of the implementation of lectures and classes, the SP must cover the infrastructure maintenance costs (facilities, IT solutions) and other RSU common resources used in the study programme (Student Service, Library, organisation of the study process, grant for the Student Union and other support and administrative functions).

The study program will be implemented by RSU Department of Welfare and Social Work, Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare, Department of Psychiatry and Narcology. Remuneration of the

academic staff in the first year of SP is planned to be in the amount of EUR 19.3 thousand.

Table 3. **Programme countries**

EU Member States					
Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Cyprus	Croatia	Czech Republic
Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Greece
Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Latvia	Lithuania	Luxembourg
Malta	Netherlands	Poland	Portugal	Romania	Slovakia
Slovenia	Spain	Sweden			

Non-EU countries					
Northern Macedonia	Iceland	Liechtenstein	Norway	Serbia	Turkey
Great Britain					

Partner country

Almost all countries not listed above

Table 4. **Information about student costs**

Name	**Value**
Average RSU income per programme student, EUR	EUR 1580
Breakdown of RSU costs in the study programme:	
Academic staff, %	51 %
Department resources, %	1 %
Other direct expenditure, %	20 %
Fixed costs, %	3 %
Overheads, %	25 %

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.

When developing a new SP, academic and scientific staff in compliance with provisions of Section 55, Paragraph 1, Clause 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. Academic qualifications of RSU docents involved in SP correspond to the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Application and selection procedure of the academic staff at RSU is governed by the Regulations of Rīga Stradiņš University on Academic Staff Positions, (Regulations on Academic Elections at Rīga Stradiņš University) and Rīga Stradiņš University Process “Elections of Academic Staff”.

Appropriate and highly qualified experts in the field are involved in the SP implementation in accordance with the European Commission's Erasmus + guidelines, the quality standards set by the Bologna Process and the possibility for partner countries to participate in the implementation of the joint programme. Teaching staff is involved according to the Consortium Agreement and the selection criteria set forth therein, as well as taking into account such important selection criteria as indicators of academic and scientific activities. Mobility of the involved teaching staff is an integral part of the SP. Each study course is coordinated and provided by the teaching staff from at least two partner universities. Teaching staff mobility is implemented according to the agreed plan and in compliance with the distribution of credit points in a particular study course and semester. Every teacher and researcher from the partner universities involved in the programme may teach the courses and lead the lectures, to develop the course description, to participate in seminars and assessment of learning outcomes in a partner university. Visiting lecturers and researchers of partner universities are involved in the study process according to Annex 4 of the Consortium Agreement “ESWOCHY Guest Lecturers and Invited Scholars” pages 34- 36.

Qualifications of the involved teaching staff (academic staff, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting lecturers, visiting teachers) meet the SP implementation conditions and legal requirements, as well as ensure the achievement of the SP and respective study course objectives and learning outcomes. In developing this SP, the research directions and areas of expertise of the involved partner lecturers were taken into account. Most lecturers participate in conferences organized by RSU and partner universities in the field of social welfare and social work. The current lecturers are recognized experts in the field of social welfare and have been leading researchers in social work research projects related to the study courses. Thus, it is guaranteed that the current lecturers are able to develop students' analytical and critical thinking competencies, as well as promote research succession in the field of social welfare. Doctoral students are also involved in teaching, who are also lecturers with long work experience and are known in their fields as researchers and successful practitioners. The teaching staff involved in the implementation of the

current programme represent a wide range of specializations in social fields, which provides a different view of the social work context not only from the Latvian experience, but taking into account the international context. Latvian industry and foreign expertise helps to acquire an integrated and multifaceted view of the problems, to more precisely identify the focus of the research and the ability to find a solution in a real problem environment.

The current teaching staff generally consist of the intellectual and professional potential of RSU and partner university departments and faculty staff. One of the strengths of this programme is the attracted range of foreign specialists, which provides an objective view of the development of the industry as a whole, as well as allows us to see the problems and challenges of our local social welfare system and social work in a new light. Within the framework of the programme, the academic and scientific potential of the teaching staff is strengthened by involving two lecturers from different partner universities in the organization of one study course. Elected lecturers and guest lecturers from all four partner universities, as well as additional teaching staff and experts from the work environment are involved in the implementation of the study programme. The part of the joint academic Master's study programme “Social Work with Children and Youth” implemented by RSU is provided by 9 lecturers, 6 of whom have been elected to RSU academic positions. The information on the academic positions of the teaching staff and lecturers in general is enclosed in Annex 6.1. and 24.7.

Enclosed:

24.7. Annex. Confirmation that the academic staff of academic study programmes comply with the requirements set forth in Section 55(1)(3) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

24.9. Annex. Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55(2) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

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.

In the previous reporting period, the teaching staff was from RSU and MRU.

In this period, there are no significant changes in the composition of teaching staff, i.e., the following MRU teachers are involved in the programme implementation: Dr. Raminta Bardauskienė, Assoc. Prof. Jolanta Pivorienė, Assoc. Prof. Alina Petrauskienė, Assoc. Prof. Justinas Sadauskas, Assoc. Prof. Vida Česnuitytė, Prof. Irena Žemaitaitytė, Assoc. Prof. Vida Gudžinskienė, Assoc. Prof. A. Railienė, Assoc. Prof. Gražina Čiuladienė, Assoc. Prof. J. R.Šinkūnienė and docent Agata Katkonienė.

Teachers from RSU: Prof. Inga Millere, Assoc. Prof. Lolita Vilka, Assoc. Prof. Liāna Deklava, Assoc. Prof. Lubova Renemane and docents Ulla Zumente-Steele, Marika Lotko, Ilze Trapenciere, Anna Broka.

For the implementation of joint programme, new teaching staff is involved from CU and ISTE-IUL, i.e., CU Prof. Vladimír Labá, Assoc. Prof. Marketa Rusnakova, Assoc. Prof. Irena Kamanova, Prof. KatarínaKohútová, Assoc. Prof. Daniel Markovič, Prof. Martina Mojtová, docents Lenka Štefáková, Angela Almašiová, and from ISTE – IUL Prof. Ph.D. Jorge Ferreira, Prof. Dr. LuísCapucha, Prof. Ph.D. Pablo Alvarez, Prof. Maria João Pena and docent Inês Espirito Santo.

All the involved teaching staff have obtained a Doctoral degree or are in the process of obtaining a Doctoral degree in social sciences, the lecturers have many years of academic and professional

experience in the fields of social welfare and social work. The teaching staff involved in the SP implementation are active participants in international conferences, as well as contribute to the development of professional social work at the international and local level.

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

Not 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).

Not 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).

Regular meetings of the Cooperation Council are taking place in the improvement of the international Master's SP “Social Work with Children and Youth” with the participation of MRU, RSU, CU and ISTE - IUL lecturers, evaluating the study quality aspects.

Lecturers from two partner universities participate in the management of one study course, who mutually agree on the course description and the division of the themes. Methodological discussion groups are also continued to take place and organized, involving the lecturers of the study courses, and the analysis of the content of the study courses and the learning outcomes to be achieved is conducted.

Intercultural competences are enhanced through the interaction of lecturers from different

countries through the ERASMUS + Strategic Partnership Erasmus Mundus project.

In line with the university’s strategy and internal procedure, regular observation work is also performed. The cooperation of teaching staff takes place, for example, in the form of attendance of each other’s lectures and classes making it possible to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the work. Mutual feedback seminars on current topics are organised for mutual cooperation of lecturers. Several members of teaching staff cooperate by jointly creating study courses, supervising papers of students, as well as performing scientific activity.

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_pielik_Diploma un tā pielikuma paraugs_ENG.pdf	24.1_pielik_Diploma_dipl_pielik_paraugs_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)	Annex 24.9. The_opinion_of_the_Council_of_Higher_Education.pdf	24.9_pielik_Augstakas_izglitibas_padomes_atzinums.pdf
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)	Annex 15. Conformity_of_StPr_with_the_requirements_set_for_the_joint_StPr.pdf	15_pielik_Kopigas_StPr_atbilstiba_Augstskolu_likuma_prasibam.pdf
Statistics on the students in the reporting period	Annex_16_Statistical_data_about_the_students.pdf	16_pielik_Statistikas_dati_par_studejosajiem.pdf
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard	Annex_17_Compliance_of_the_joint_StP_with_the_National_Professional_Standard.pdf	17.1_pielik_Kopigas_akademiskas_magistra_StPr_atbilstiba_valsts_izglitabas_standartam_PAPILDINFORMACIJAI.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_pielik_Studiju_kursu_kartejums_StPr_studiju_rezultatu_sasniegsanai.pdf	18-1_pielik_Studiju_kursu_kartejums_StPr_studiju_rezultatu_sasniegsanai.pdf
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	Annex_19_Study_programme_plan_1.pdf	19.pielikums_Studiju_programmas_planojums.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Annex_20.1_Study_course_desriptions.pdf	20.1_pielik_Studiju_kursu_apraksti.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)	Annex_24.7_Analysis_of_the_composition_of_the_academic_staff .pdf	24.7_pielik_Docetaju_sastava_analize.pdf