

## APPLICATION

Studiju virziena "Information and Communication Sciences" for assessment

Study field	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
Title of the higher education institution	<i>Latvijas Universitāte</i>
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# **Self-evaluation report**

Study field "Information and Communication Sciences"

University of Latvia

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## I - Information on the Higher Education Institution/College

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

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

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

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

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

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

The University of Latvia is the only classical university in Latvia and is the largest institution of higher education in Latvia in terms of student numbers (see Figure 1) among state higher education institutions and those established by legal entities. In the year 2018/2019, Turība University shows the highest number of students (3518 students) in among higher education institutions founded by an autonomous legal entities.

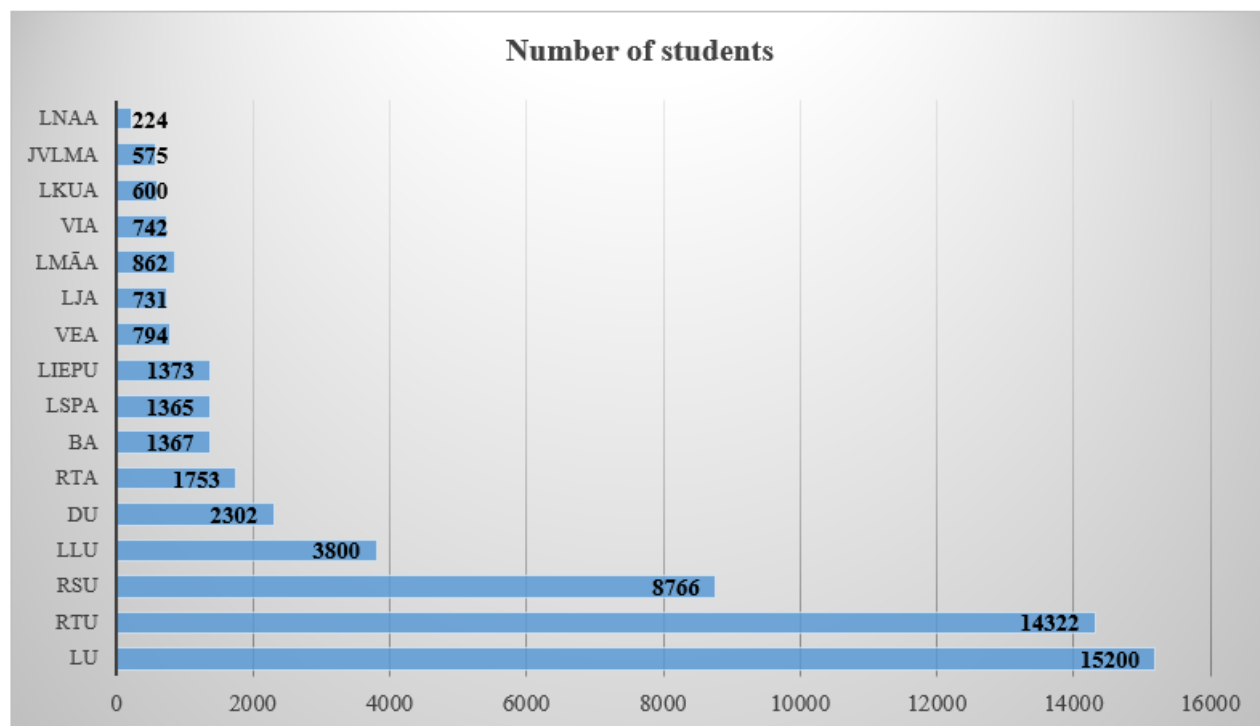


Figure 1. Number of students in state higher education institutions in the academic year 2018/2019 (<https://www.izm.gov.lv> > [augst\\_izgl](#) > [Augstakas\\_izglitibas\\_LV\\_parskats\\_2018](#))

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

The UL implements study programmes at all levels, covering 28 branches of science and 150 study programmes in 22 fields of study are implemented at 13 faculties of the University (see Table 1), where several have gained international excellence and quality assessment. The university has also got 3 medical colleges and 18 doctoral schools.

Table 1. Study fields implemented by the University of Latvia, number of study programmes therein and accreditation period (03.09.2019.)

No	Study fields	Number of study programmes	Accreditation period
1.	Architecture and construction	1	31.05.2013–31.12.2021.
2.	Life sciences	3	29.05.2013–31.12.2022.
3.	Economics	12	26.06.2013–31.12.2020.
4.	Physics, Materials Science, Mathematics and Statistics	7	29.05.2013–31.12.2022.
5.	Geography and Earth Sciences	6	24.04.2017–24.04.2023.
6.	Information technology, computer engineering, electronics, telecommunications, computer management and computer science.	5	29.05.2013–22.08.2023.
7.	Internal security and civil defence	3	05.06.2013–31.12.2023.
8.	Information and Communication Sciences	6	24.05.2013–31.12.2020.
9.	Education, Pedagogy and Sports	24	12.06.2013–31.12.2023.
10.	Chemistry, chemical technologies and biotechnology	3	24.05.2013–31.12.2022.
11.	Arts	1	16.10.2015–31.12.2022.
12.	Psychology	3	21.06.2019–21.06.2025.
13.	Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology	9	12.06.2013–31.12.2023.
14.	Social welfare	2	14.05.2013–31.12.2021.
15.	Religion and Theology	3	22.05.2013–31.12.2022.
16.	Law	4	21.06.2019–21.06.2025.
17.	Translation	2	14.05.2013–31.12.2023.
18.	Management, administration and real estate management	13	26.06.2013–31.12.2020.
19.	Language and cultural studies, native language studies and language programmes	21	26.06.2013–31.12.2023.
20.	Health Care	13	31.05.2013–31.12.2021.
21.	History and philosophy	6	24.05.2013–31.12.2022.
22.	Environment protection	3	05.06.2013–31.12.2023.

The University of Latvia conducts international-level fundamental and applied research in 4 science groups, 12 priority research areas, and 22 areas of excellence. In addition to research work and the provision of studies, the university contributes to knowledge and technology transfer. The University conducts a range of contract research projects worth more than a million euros. The UL intellectual property portfolio has 23 valid Latvian patents (the UL being the sole owner) and 9 valid European patents. In order to promote economic development, the University has set more than sixty potential cooperation solutions for different industries. The UL scientific activities are conducted in 17 scientific institutes <https://www.lu.lv/en/about-us/structure/institutes/>, while various studies, training and counselling are offered in 30 study centres <https://www.lu.lv/en/about-us/structure/ul-centres/>.

In order to promote cooperation between the UL and local governments in the fields of human resources development, education and interdisciplinary research, the UL operates the Regional centre, while in order to strengthen international cooperation, the UL has concluded more than 200 bilateral cooperation agreements with universities in 50 countries <https://www.lu.lv/en/cooperation/international-cooperation/>. The University successfully implements projects funded by the EU and other international organizations, EU Structural Funds and other funds, as well as the state budget and domestic and foreign companies.

The UL has 10 choirs, 4 folk dance groups, 2 ensembles, student theatre, student brass band, folklore dance group and pottery studio. The activities are implemented also by the UL structural units: UL Museum, UL Botanical Garden, UL Rhododendron nursery “Babīte”, University of Latvia Press (UL Press), UL Baldone Observatory. The foundations perform successfully too: UL Foundation and Alumni Club.

The competitiveness of the University of Latvia is built on academic and research excellence. The University guides and directs the development, renewal and collaboration of its academic and research staff, and ensures resources and administrative support through an excellence-driven approach. The UL employs 3199 people, incl. 1388 members of UL academic staff and 1811 – UL general staff.

The university's financial performance is characterized by a turnover of EUR 98.1 million and an

equity ratio of 68%.

In the academic year 2018/2019 there were 15 200 students at the University of Latvia, and the studies of 6 359 students were funded from the state budget. In total, about 5,000 new applicants are enrolled each year.

Figure 2 shows the dynamics of the number of students at the University of Latvia and the population of Latvia over a 6-year period, and the respective correlation trends.

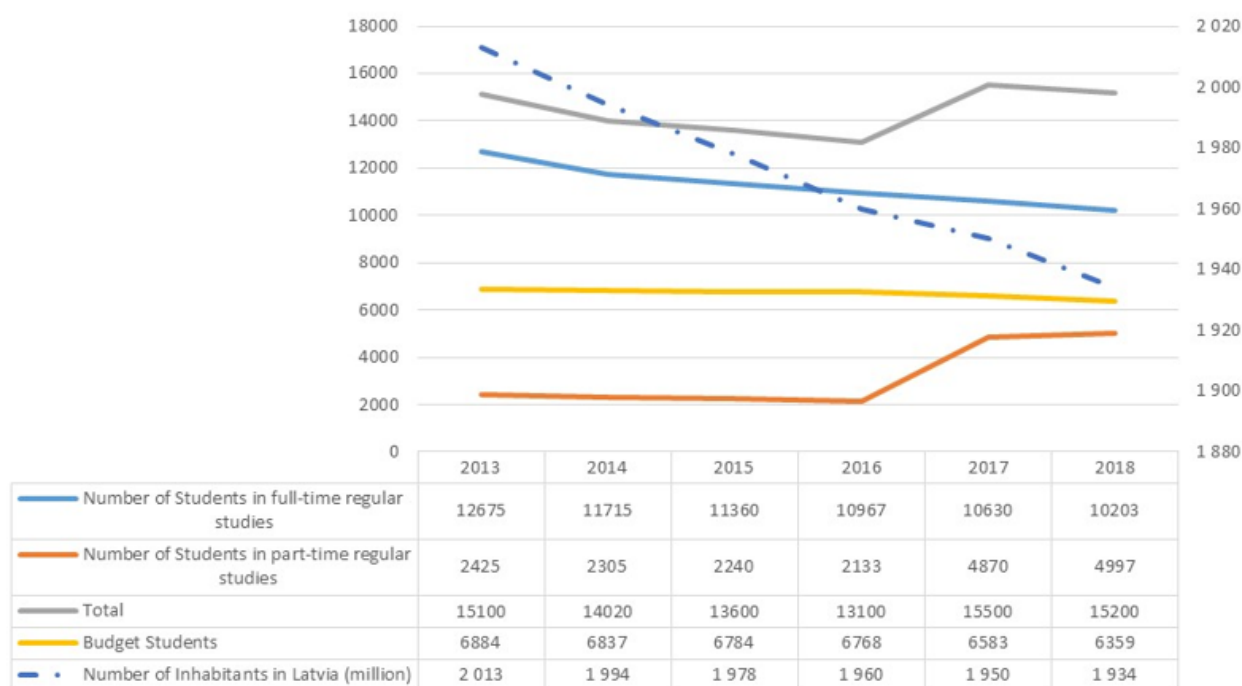


Figure 2. Number of students at the University of Latvia compared to the population of Latvia, 2013-2018

### UL vision, mission and values

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

**Mission:** The University of Latvia trains human resources that would meet the demand of the Latvian and global labour market and the needs of society; it expands the knowledge base, provides knowledge transfer by promoting sustainable development of the national economy and the society at large in compliance with the development priorities set by the Smart Specialisation Strategy of the Republic of Latvia or in the areas of smart specialization. The University of Latvia guarantees the students an opportunity to acquire high quality higher education and professional skills, as well as pursue personal development through scientific and creative work.

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

### General information about UL branches

The University of Latvia has 8 regional branches, which were taken over by the University of Latvia in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Order No. 164 of April 3, 2017 "On Liquidation of Riga Academy of Pedagogy and Education Management".

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



2 for the year of establishing the branches).

*Table 2. Year of establishment of branches*

<b>Branches</b>	<b>Foundation year</b>
<u>Cēsis</u>	1995
<u>Kuldīga</u>	1996
<u>Tukums</u>	1996
<u>Bauska</u>	1997
<u>Jēkabpils</u>	1996
<u>Madona</u>	1997
<u>Ventspils</u>	1998
<u>Alūksne</u>	1999

The development of the UL branches is linked to the UL strategic goals and development plans of the municipalities of the region. It is essential for the development of municipalities to maintain the working population levels. The study programmes implemented in branches are actively supported by the local governments, as they promote the development of Latvian regions by offering higher education close to the place of residence, thereby facilitating the development of human resources in the regions. The students combine studies with work, thus preserving jobs and connection with their family. Accordingly, the opportunity to study in the closest proximity to the place of residence and work offered at the branches facilitates the implementation of the Latvian National Development Plan 2014-2020. In line with the plan priority "Growth-Supporting Territories", it should be emphasized that "Our mission is to achieve sustainable growth by strengthening the capacities of the regions and making the most of their strengths and resources. In contrast to the current monocentric population structure, a balanced polycentric approach should be developed" (National Development Plan 2014-2020. [http://www.varam.gov.lv/lat/pol/ppd/ilgtsp\\_att?doc=13858](http://www.varam.gov.lv/lat/pol/ppd/ilgtsp_att?doc=13858)). As expected, the graduates of the programmes do not change their place of residence and continue their professional activities in their region when studies are over, thus contributing to the development and growth.

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

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

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

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

*Table 3. Number of study fields and study programmes implemented in the regional branches of the University of Latvia, data as of 2018*

Branches	<u>Alūksne</u>	Bauska	<u>Cēsis</u>	<u>Jēkabpils</u>	<u>Kuldīga</u>	<u>Madona</u>	<u>Tukums</u>	<u>Ventspils</u>
Number of study fields	3	1	2	1	3	1	1	1
Number of study programmes	3	2	5	1	13	2	4	1

The total number of students in the branches in the academic year 2018/2019 amounted to 1513.

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

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

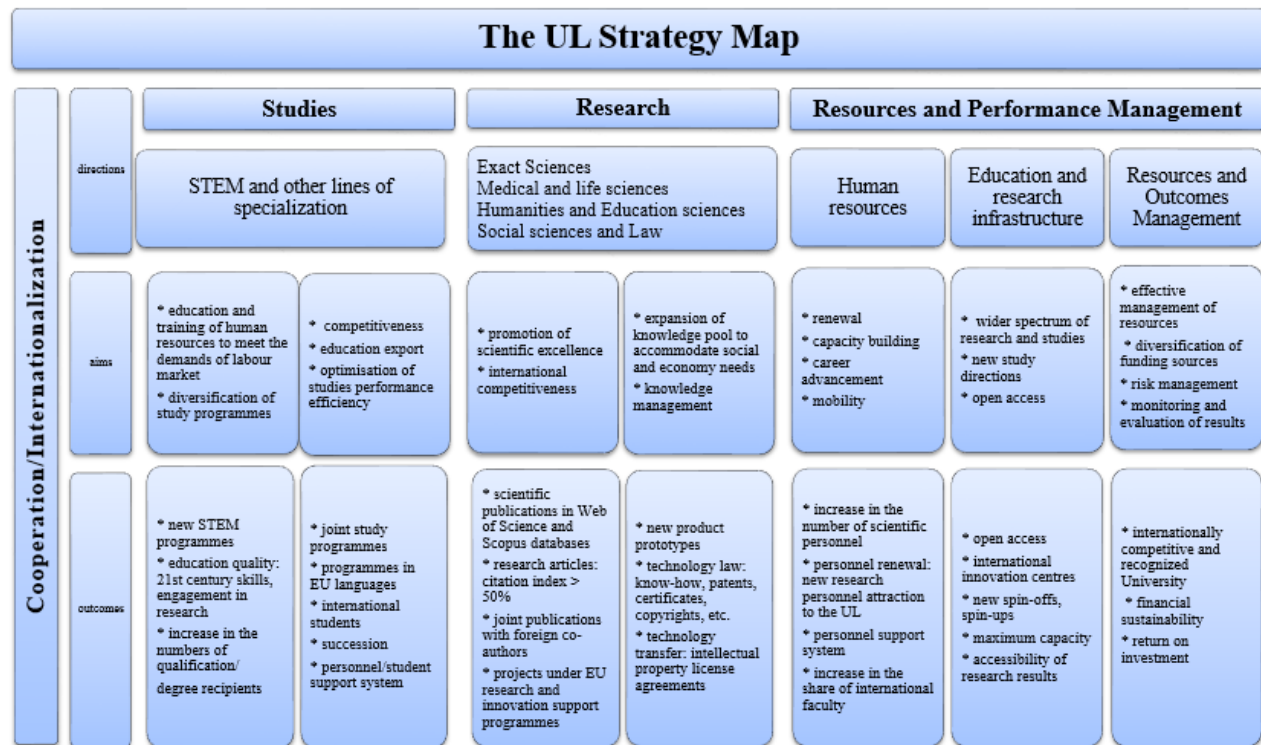


Figure 3. UL strategic objectives. 2016–2020

#### 1. The objectives of the development direction **Development of higher education:**

- Training of human resources in line with labour market demand;
- Enhancement of competitiveness and quality of education;
- Internationalization of education;
- Optimisation of study process efficiency.

#### 2. The objectives of the development direction **Development of research capacity and competitiveness:**

- 2.1. Promotion of research and scientific excellence;
- 2.2. Raising international competitiveness;
- 2.3. Expansion of the knowledge base.

#### 3. The objectives of the development direction **Development of human resources:**

- 3.1. The development of motivation and remuneration system;
  - 3.1.1. The development of UL academic and research staff remuneration system;
  - 3.1.2. The development of UL employees' performance assessment system;

- 3.1.3. The development of UL academic staff motivation system;
- 3.1.4. The reinforcement of UL employees' retention, workplace satisfaction, and motivation through job satisfaction surveys
- 3.2. Capacity building of human resources
- 3.2.1. Ensuring the availability and recruitment of human resources by strengthening the image of the University of Latvia as of an attractive employer and by improving the UL recruitment and selection system;
- 3.2.2. The development and improvement of staff further training and upskilling system
- 3.2.3. The development of staff career planning system
- 4.The development direction **Academic staff renewal and succession;**
- 5.The objectives of the development direction **Development of resources and performance management system:**
- 5.1. Financial capacity building;
- 5.2. Knowledge management system optimization, incl. Marketing activities for promoting technology transfer;
- 5.3. The establishment of UL Academic Centre;
- 5.4. The development of higher education and research infrastructure;
- 5.5. The optimization of real estate management;
- 5.6. The development of changes support system;
- 5.7. The optimisation of operational efficiency;
- 5.8. The implementation of result management system.
- 6.The objectives of the development direction **Promotion of cooperation:**
- 6.1. Expansion of research organizations networks;
- 6.2. Expansion of cooperation networks with economic operators.
- 6.3. Expansion of cooperation with the public (raising public awareness of scientific achievements)
- 7.The objectives of the development direction **Internationalization:**
- 7.1. Student mobility;
- 7.2. Academic and research staff mobility.

UL Development Strategy 2016–2020 summary is available:

- in English:  
[https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user\\_upload/lu\\_portal/eng/library/Summary\\_UL\\_strategy\\_EN\\_250517.pdf](https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/lu_portal/eng/library/Summary_UL_strategy_EN_250517.pdf)
- in Latvian:  
[https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user\\_upload/lu\\_portal/zinas/2018/julijis/LUstrat\\_Kopsavilk\\_250517.pdf](https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/lu_portal/zinas/2018/julijis/LUstrat_Kopsavilk_250517.pdf)

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

The UL is governed by the main decision-making bodies, governance and administration, as well as the councils of the core structural units. The UL students are represented in the main decision-making bodies by the Student Council, while employees are represented by trade unions.

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

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

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

**The UL Faculty** is an academic unit established for the implementation of academic activities in one or several branches of science. In this field the Faculty fulfils the common tasks of the University of Latvia and adheres to its principles. In matters of relevant academic and professional activities, the UL Faculty plays the role

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

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

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

**The Scientific Council** is the supreme decision-making body of the UL research institute. The Faculty is led by **the Dean** of the Faculty. The research institute is led by **the Director**. The work of the academic unit of the Faculty or of the research institute of the University of Latvia according to the competencies specified in its regulations is decided by the meeting of its academic staff (scientists) and guided by the head of the structural unit. The regulations of the department (faculty, research institute) may also provide for other governing bodies. The head of each academic unit is its official representative at the faculty (research institute) and beyond. He is responsible for the performance of the tasks of the unit, as well as for the employment of staff members and the efficient use of the material resources available to the unit (Constitution, Articles 6.12 to 6.14).

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

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

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

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

**The training laboratory** is a training unit that ensures the implementation of the experimental or practical part of study programmes. Centres, chairs, research and training laboratories are established on the proposal of an individual professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher by the Faculty Council or Scientific Council of a research institute. They are reorganized or liquidated on the initiative of the department or Faculty Council or the Scientific Council of the research institute. Chairs, research laboratories and professors' groups decide on all issues of their academic activities, which, by Constitution, have not been placed under the responsibility of the Faculty Council (Research institute Council) or the Senate. The sub-units of several branches of science operating in one branch at the faculties or research institutes unite in a

department. The academic potential of each department should be sufficient to provide for at least one study (research) programme. The Faculty (UL research institute) may delegate some of its functions and powers to the departments. The academic departmental sub-units may delegate to the department the powers referred to in the preceding paragraph. The department is governed by its regulations, approved by the Faculty Council or the Scientific Council of the research institute. The decision on the establishment, reorganization or liquidation of a department, a research institute, a centre is taken by the relevant Faculty Council or by the Scientific Council of the research institute, which comes into force upon an order issued by the UL. (Constitution, Art. 6.8.-6.11.).

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

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

**Department Directors** – ensure the compliance of UL operation with the requirements of internal and external regulatory acts, develop, improve and implement the internal UL regulations, control their execution, coordinate management and provide services to the staff and UL structural units. The departments, in accordance with their competence and functions, implement the UL Strategic Plan, UL Development Strategy, UL Rector's Programme and other UL Development Planning Documents, as well as initiate and implement projects of the European Union and other funds related to the improvement of the Department performance. (Administration regulations, Art.61).

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

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

examinations. The University of Latvia supports and facilitates the activities of the UL Student Council, including financially. The student self-government uses the funds for the fulfilment of the functions specified in the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Constitution, art.7).

**Trade unions** are employees' representatives who decide on the matters covered by the Collective Agreement, take part in collective bargaining and consulting (Collective Agreement, art.1.2), incl. before making decisions that may affect employees' rights and have a significant impact on remuneration, working conditions and employment (Collective Agreement, Article 5.1.2).

*Table 4. Description of the main institutions involved in UL decision making, their composition and powers. Please see attached.*

A list of the UL's main internal laws and regulations see: Appendix 1. The UL governance scheme see: Appendix 2.

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

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

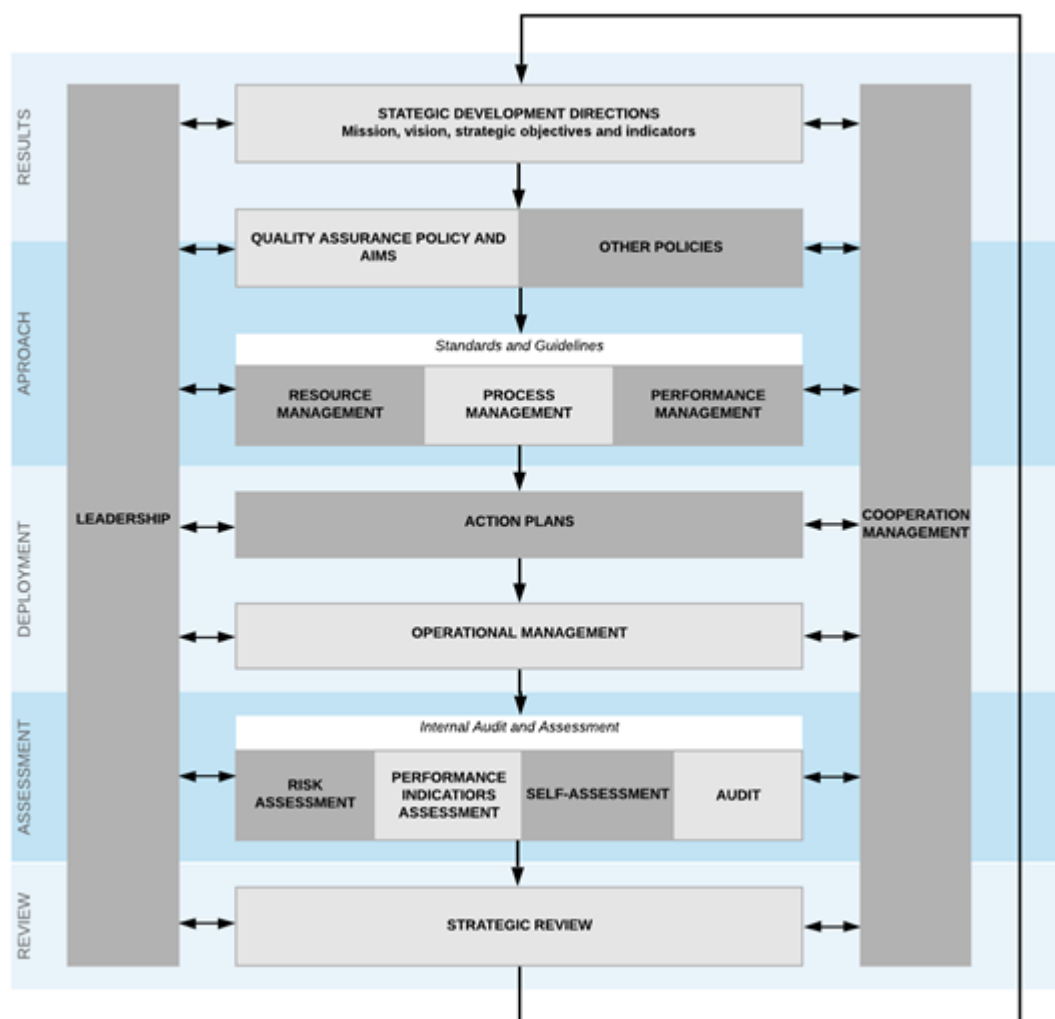
#### ***Description of the quality policy implementation mechanism***

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

The UL quality management system is implemented in accordance with the TQM (Total Quality Management) principles, integrating the excellence approach to UL corporate culture. The UL uses the internationally recognized and practically applicable quality management methodology - the EFQM (European Foundation of Quality Management) model of excellence for the implementation of comprehensive quality management. In some areas, the quality management system is enhanced to ensure compliance with current standards and frameworks, including: Adherence to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in the provision of the study process. The University of Latvia uses the

internationally recognized methodology "Results - Approach - Implementation - Evaluation - Review" to ensure cyclical and continuous quality management. RADAR, *Results - Approach - Deployment - Assessment and Refine*). Scheme of the UL Quality Management System - Figure 4.

Figure 4. UL Quality Management System Diagram



The UL strategic development directions and the expected results or the intended operational goals are defined in the UL Development Strategy 2016-2020. (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy). The strategy has been developed taking into account the development directions and priorities set in the planning documents of the European Union and Latvia. Based on the analysis of competitiveness and SWOT, the University of Latvia has defined an action plan and various programmes for achieving the strategic development goals. The strategy also defines the tasks to be performed and the tools needed to achieve the strategic goals. According to the development directions, the UL position and commitment are formulated in policies, incl. Quality Policy, Personnel Policy, etc. Expected results are defined in key areas of activity as well as in financial and governance areas and are aligned with the interests of UL stakeholders. The results describe the achievements, efficiency and sustainability as well as long-term performance. Achievements are benchmarked against others, especially those in the industry, domestically or internationally.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Table 5. Description of the main stakeholders involved in UL quality management and their role.*

*Please see attached.*

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

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

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

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

- development of new study programmes;
- admission requirements, matriculation and enrolment;
- planning, implementation and updating of study courses and modules, internships/placements;
- organization of examinations, final examinations and rotation;
- exmatriculations and issuance of diplomas and certificates;
- recognition of prior education or professional experience;
- self-assessment of study programmes;
- submission of student proposals and complaints, appeals against administrative decisions;
- promotion process.

**The development of new study programmes at the University of Latvia** is implemented in

accordance with the procedure stipulated in the Regulations on the UL Study Programmes and Continuing Education Programmes (Senate Decision No. 102, approved April 24, 2017) and includes several stages:

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

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

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

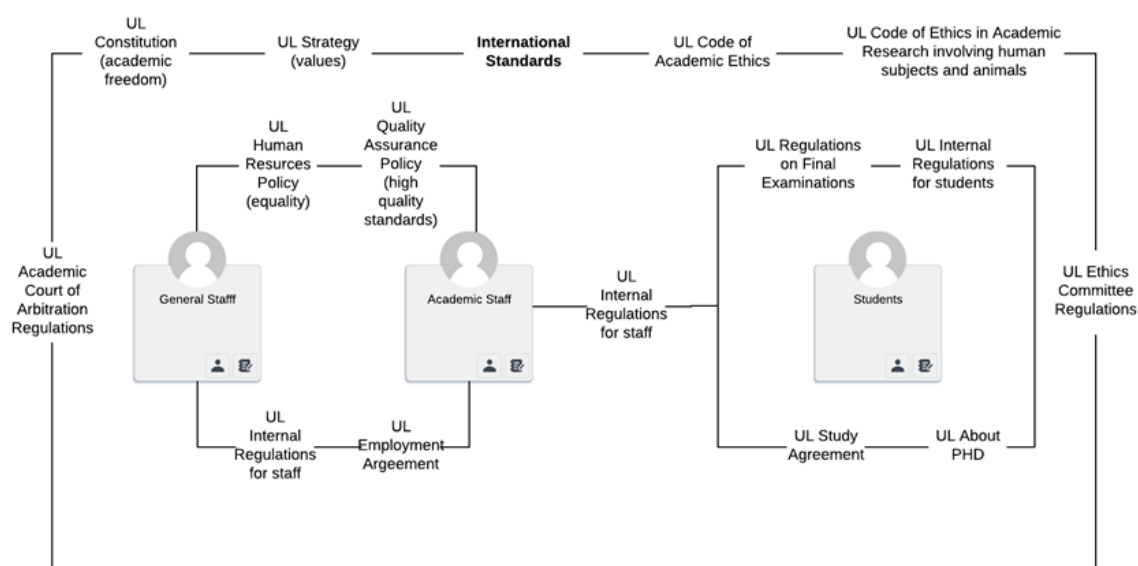


Figure 5. UL academic integrity documentation

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

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

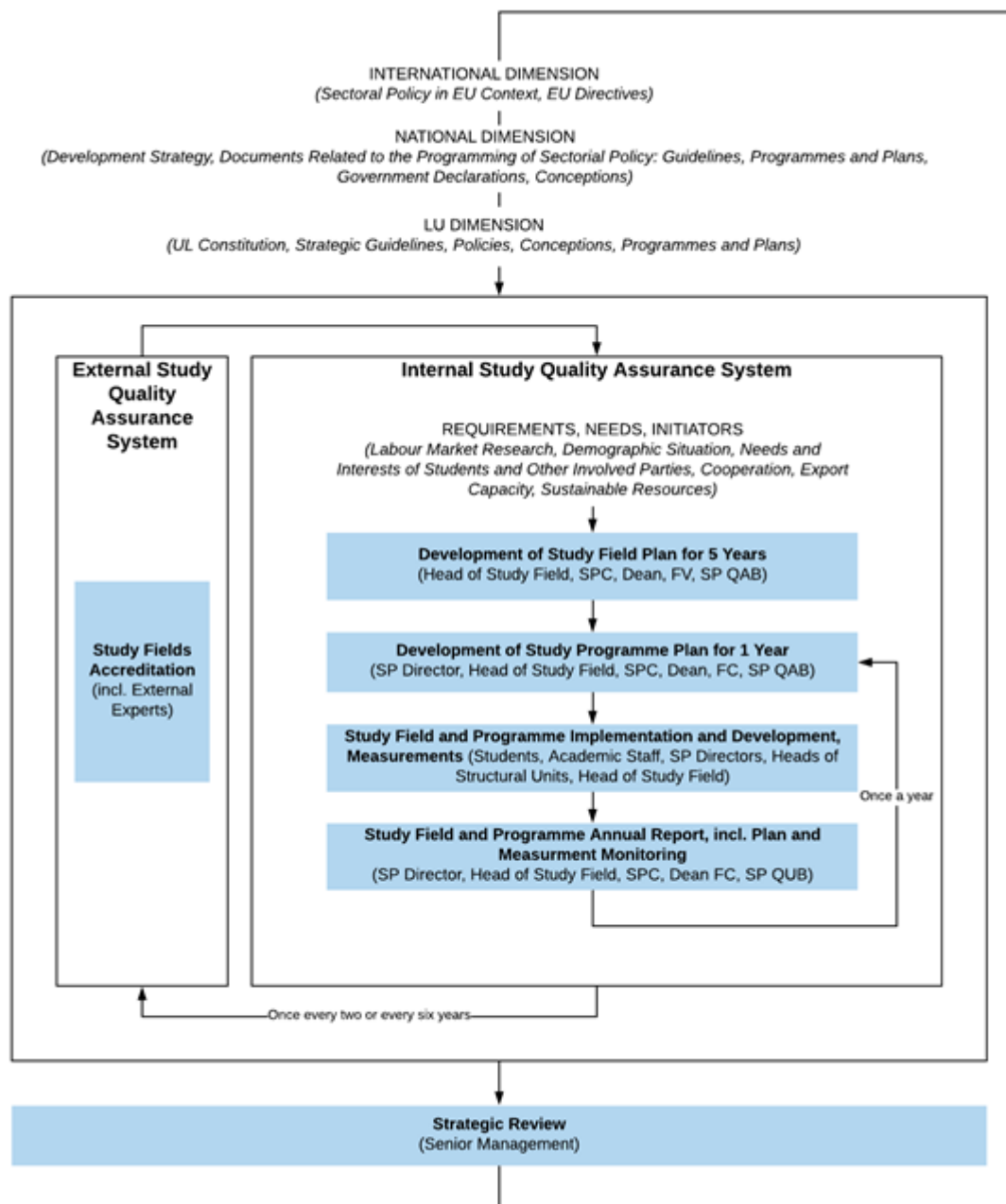
Survey”;

- graduates survey;
- employers survey.

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

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

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



Abbreviations:

FC - Faculty Council

SP Director - Director of the Study Programme

SP QAB - Study Programme Quality Assessment Board

SPC - Study Programme Council

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

In order to ensure the functioning of the system of internal quality assessment and improvement of study fields, the UL provides for the planning of the development of the study fields and the improvement of the respective study programmes. An annual review of the study field development plan for 6 years and each study programme plan for 1 year is carried out, including assessment of the actual measurement results. This information is analysed in the **Annual Study Field Report** (hereinafter - the Report, its procedure approved by the UL Order No. 1/255 "On Annual Study Field Report" of 13.07.2018), the preparation of which is supervised by the coordinator of the study field,

involving study programme directors. The study programmes are reviewed to evaluate and improve the quality of their content and implementation. The report analyses the implementation and topicality of the programmes, as well as implemented changes, evolution and improvement and the assessment provided by stakeholders. The report is evaluated by the Study Programme Council and approved by the Faculty Councils after approval by the Dean of the Faculty. Prior to the approval of the study field report by the Senate, the Department of Studies provides an opinion on the study field study quality, as well as compliance with the requirements of regulatory enactments, while the Study Programme Quality Assessment Board (hereinafter - SP QAB) provides an opinion on the study quality of the study field, based on independent expertise.

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

1.	<p>The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.</p>	<p>Complies</p> <p>Established policies and procedures for quality assurance in higher education.</p> <p>The University of Latvia's Quality Policy sets out a set of quality principles, goals and actions required to achieve them, which the University of Latvia implements in accordance with internationally recognized standards in higher education and organization management. The aim of the quality policy is to contribute to the implementation of the UL mission, the achievement of strategic goals and sustainable development by defining guidelines and principles for ensuring a consistently high quality of operations. The policy, together with other policies and a set of processes, ensures the coherent planning and implementation of UL activities. This policy is an integral part of the quality management system, it applies to all areas of UL and implements them in a unified system at all UL governance levels.</p> <p>The UL quality management system is implemented in accordance with the TQM (Total Quality Management) principles, integrating excellence approaches to the UL corporate culture. By implementing quality management, the UL provides a set of activities and methods by which quality is planned, implemented, systematically evaluated and continually improved, thus contributing to the achievement of the goals set by the UL and meeting the needs of stakeholders. For the implementation of comprehensive quality management, the UL uses the internationally recognized and practically applicable quality management methodology - EFQM Excellence Model. In some areas, the quality management system is enhanced to ensure compliance with current industry standards and frameworks, including: provision of study process - ESG.</p> <p>The UL has identified, formalized and implemented procedures for quality assurance in higher education in accordance with Latvian legislation, European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), as well as internal necessity. The UL has a system of quality assessment and improvement of study fields and study programmes included therein, which, when integrated into the UL quality management system, guarantees responsible involvement of all study management levels in the regular study quality assessment, planning and improvement. The internal quality control of the study field is carried out by the directors of the study programmes, the director of the study field, the Council of the study programmes, the dean, the faculty councils, SPQAB and, in case of external quality assessment, the UL Senate. The assessment of study quality is based on planning and review cycles both in the study field and in each study programme dimension.</p>
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2.	A mechanism for the creation and internal approval of the study programmes of the higher education institution/ college, as well as the supervision of their performance and periodic inspection thereof has been developed.	<p>Complies</p> <p>A mechanism has been de-veloped for the UL study programme design, internal approval, supervision and periodic inspection.</p> <p>The design, internal approval, supervision and periodic inspection of the UL study programmes is set in accord-ance with the relevant external regulations of the Re-public of Latvia and the UL internal regulations.</p> <p>The aim of the “Regulations of the University of Latvia Study Programmes and Continuing Education Pro-grammes” (UL Senate Resolution No. 102 of 24.04.2017) is to determine the requirements for the content and implementation of study programmes and continuing education programmes developed and im-plemented by the University of Latvia. that would en-sure the provision of high quality, domestically and in-ternationally competitive, modern study programmes with high added value, continuing education programs for students, as well as efficient implementation of re-sources. The Regulations establish the principles of the structure, content and management of study pro-grammes and continuing education programmes at the University of Latvia. The regulations include the de-scription of the study programmes and continuing edu-cation programmes implemented by the University of Latvia and their structure, as well as the rules of pro-gramme development. The Regulations stipulate that the design of the study programme concept and the full study programme development may be initiated by the UL staff representatives and employees, the UL collegi-al decision-making institutions, as well as non-UL mem-bers (e.g. employers). The evaluation of the develop-ment of new study programmes according to UL proce-dure takes place across several successive stages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) elaboration of the study programme concept;</li> <li>2) coordination of the study programme concept within the study programme council or councils and with the heads of the structural units involved;</li> <li>3) submission of the study programme conception to the Department of Studies, submission of the application to the Head of the Study Programme Quality Assessment Board (SP QAB) for evaluation of the conception by external experts and receipt of the opinion;</li> <li>4) elaboration of a full-time study programme in ac-cordance with external and internal regulations and submission for evaluation and approval to study programme council or councils and faculty council or councils or scientific councils of scientific insti-tutes.</li> <li>5) Submission of full-time study programme to Department of Studies for evaluation and approval by two independent experts and at SP QAB. To advance to the UL Senate.</li> <li>6) The examination and approval of study pro-grammes in the Senate of the University of Latvia and advancement of the study programme license application.</li> </ol> <p>The annual evaluation of the existing study pro-grammes of the University of Latvia is carried out in accordance with the “Procedure for Preparing the An-nual Reports of the Study Fields of the University of Latvia” (UL Order 13/258, of 13.07.2018), which de-termines the functioning of the system of internal quali-ty assurance of the study fields of the University of Latvia.</p>
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3.	The criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, have been developed and made public.	<p>Complies</p> <p>Criteria, conditions and procedures for assessment of students' achievements have been developed and published, which allow to verify the achievement of the intended learning outcomes .</p> <p>“Procedure for Developing and Updating Study Courses at the University of Latvia” (UL Order No.1 / 277 of 10.08.2018) stipulates that the description of each study course includes the planned learning outcomes and the criteria for their assessment, as well as publication in the e-learning environment.</p>
4.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.	<p>Complies</p> <p>Internal procedures and mechanisms for ensuring the qualification and work quality of the academic staff have been established.</p> <p>In order to ensure modern and effective HR management practice in the organization in accordance with the UL strategy, vision, mission and values, the UL has developed and implemented the “Human Resources Management Policy of the University of Latvia” (UL Senate Decision No 264 of 28.01.2019). It describes the principles and procedures of the University of Latvia in personnel selection, employment relations, provision of motivation system and personnel development. In order to ensure purposeful professional development of the UL academic staff, the University of Latvia elaborated “University of Latvia Academic Staff Development Action Plan 2018-2020” within the framework of the project operational programme “Growth and Employment” 8.2.2. Specific Objective “Strengthening Academic Staff of Institutions of Higher Education in Strategic Specialization Areas”.</p>

5.	<p>The higher education institution/ college ensures the collection and analysis of the information on the study achievements of the students, employment of the graduates, satisfaction of the students with the study programme, efficiency of the work of the academic staff, the study funds available, and the disbursements thereof, as well as the key performance indicators of the higher education institution/ college.</p>	<p>Complies</p> <p>It is ensured that information on student achievement, graduate employment, student satisfaction with the study programme, efficiency of the academic staff, available study resources and their costs, relevant indicators of the institution of higher education is collected and analysed.</p> <p>The Procedure for Organizing Regular Surveys for the Evaluation of the Study Process at the University of Latvia (UL Order No. 1/334 of 22.08.2016) stipulates that the Department of Studies of the University of Latvia organizes surveys for students, graduates and employers centrally each academic year.</p> <p>The summary of the results of the course and lecturer work is available at three levels: lecturers, study programme directors, deans.</p> <p>The results of the study surveys are described and analysed in the annual reports of study fields.</p> <p>Information about student achievements is collected at the LUIS. It is available in various sections for analysis of study field programme development.</p>
6.	<p>The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.</p>	<p>Does not comply</p> <p>The UL, by implementing quality assurance systems, guarantees continuous improvement, development and operational efficiency of the study field.</p> <p>The functioning of the system of internal quality assurance of the study fields of the University of Latvia is determined by the "Procedure for the preparation of annual reports of the study fields of the University of Latvia".</p> <p>The UL study fields are being re-accredited within the set terms.</p> <p>In order to promote the quality and competitiveness of UL study programmes, the "Order of the University of Latvia Foundation for Quality Improvement of Studies" (UL Order No. 1/149 of 20.04.2018) provides opportunities to receive support within the framework of UL projects for the quality improvement of study programmes and process.</p>

## II - Description of the Study Direction (1. Management of the Study

## Direction)

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

Information and communication science is a relatively new area of social science research. It covers a fairly broad range of information management and communication as a social phenomenon topic, and the studies are based on theoretical and methodological approaches related to information and communication science, as well as other social sciences and humanities.

The institutionalisation of communication science and research in Europe began in the 1950s, and it started ten years earlier in the United States. Communication science as a modern area of social sciences began to develop in Latvia in the early 1990s, when the Department of Journalism of the University of Latvia (UL) Faculty of Philology was reorganised into the Department of Communication and Journalism. Prior to that, research in the area of communication science was fragmentary and related to various scientific, educational and professional organisations. A major problem was the Soviet regime's attitude toward social sciences, which were limited to the role of servicing the government's ideology.

The first bachelor's degree programme in communication science was established at the UL in 1992. The pioneering role of this new area of science belongs to other developmental stages in communication science at the UL. The first master's degree programme in Latvia was established and licenced at the UL in 1998. In 2000, the university established the Faculty of Social Sciences, which was a decisive prerequisite for the establishment of a research foundation in the area of social sciences and for the more rapid development of communication science as a study and research area. The first doctoral degree programme in communication science was licenced by the UL in 2006 and accredited in 2008, thus marking out a qualitatively and quantitatively rapid development of this area of science. Today the Faculty of Social Sciences, UL has communication science at three levels – bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies, thus ensuring a full cycle of academic education.

As is the case with communication science, the origins of information and library science education and research were in the United States during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. An academic education for librarians began in Europe after World War II and mostly in the 1960s. In 1947, the Latvian Language and Literature Department of the University of Latvia established a Department of Library Science, which began to train library specialists. The first bachelor's and master's degree study programmes in library science were developed in the early 1990s. Research in library science and book publishing gradually developed. Following trends in the sector, the Department of Information and Library Studies also expanded the thematic aspects of the bachelor's programme from library science and book publishing issues to information management, including library information management issues, as well as document and archive management. The bachelor's degree programme "Information Management" was accredited in 2010. The library science educational direction was preserved at the master's degree level. Today, the full academic education cycle is ensured in library science and information management, starting with the bachelor's programme and ending with the doctoral programme.

Communication science was registered in the list of scientific sectors of the Latvian Science Council

(LSC) in 1998, setting out sub-directions “Library Science” and “Communication Theory.” On January 23, 2018, the Latvian Cabinet Ministers approved Regulation No 49 to say that the communication science area belongs to the social science area “Media and Communication.” There are three subsectors – “Library Science,” “Communication Theory” and “Other Subsectors of the Media and Communication.” The regulations say that the “Media and Communication” sector “includes journalism, the social aspects of informatics, library science, the mass media and sociocultural communication.”

The UL study field “Information and communication science” operates in a saturated and intensive field of competition. Communication science study programmes are very popular and attractive to young people, and they are offered by several universities in Latvia. The content is similar in several ways, because the programmes have been established and developed on the basis of the structure and content principles of the UL programme in communication sciences. Many graduates from all levels of study programmes at the UL information and communication science study direction work for those programmes. At the level of bachelor’s degree level, the Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) offers degrees in journalism, photography, public relations and multimedia communication. The Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (ViA) has a programme related to journalism and communication, and the mandatory section thereof offers a broader range of general education courses. That means that there are fewer sector-specific courses there than in the UL programme. The ViA programme in journalism and communication and in communication and public relations, the RISEBA University of Applied Sciences (RISEBA) has one in public relations and advertising management, the Baltic International Academy (BIA) and *Turība* University (TU) have a programmes in public relations and one in journalism and the media. All of these are professional bachelor’s degree and second-level professional higher education programmes, and it is logical that they have larger numbers of elective courses and internships than is the case at the UL. The length of studies is longer in these professional programmes. Unlike other university programmes such as the RSU master’s degree programmes in strategic and public relations management and communication and media studies, the ViA programmes on media and information literacy and strategic communication and management, the Rēzekne Academy of Technologies (RTA) programme in regional media and communication, and the TU programme in public relations, all of which offer studies in a single and narrow area of communication, the UL master’s degree programme in communication science offers integrated studies of theoretical and practical content, while also allowing students to study subordinated and narrower areas of specialisation – business communication and media studies. The doctoral programme at the UL has the same name, unlike narrowly specialised doctoral programmes at other universities (e.g., the TU programme in communication management and the RSU programme in the communication culture and the multimedia), and it offers integrated content studies in all areas of communication science, including the media and communication and the subsectors in library science, communication theory and other media and communication subsectors. The bachelor’s degree programme in information management and the master’s degree programme in library science in information are not offered at other universities in Latvia. The content of these UL programmes is based on deeply specialised knowledge and research that have been accumulated during the course of several decades, as the library science subsector of the media and communication sector has been developed. The programmes train high-level professionals – librarians and information specialists for libraries, other memory institutions and institutions and companies. The RTA has a study direction called information and communication sciences, and it offers a bachelor’s degree programme in applied history which trains specialists for museums, archives, travel companies and schools. At the master’s degree level, the university offers a professional study programme in archive work, mostly training people for archives. Of great importance in RTA programmes is a study of history, while the UL programmes in information management and library science and

information are focused on the knowledge, skills and competence that are necessary for present-day information specialists and librarians.

At all levels of the UL information and communication study programme, the focus is on a merger of academic and practical studies, including social science theories, cause-and-effect and context studies, etc, helping graduates to have a professional career that is focused on development. The university trains high-level specialists and managers, and it also offers an opportunity to have an academic career. Other universities have segmented content and narrowly specialised study programmes that are mostly focused on the timely and short-term skills and talents that are in demand in the marketplace at the specific period of time, not on the careers of managers, leaders, instructors and researchers. UL programmes devote more time to academic studies that are successful supplemented with courses that offer practical skills and competence, thus ensuring that the knowledge that is provided by the programme is sustainable.

The competitive advantages of study programmes in the UL study area of information and communication sciences include the fact that it was the UL that first developed communication science as a study programme, and that means that the university has scientific capacity, regularly creates new knowledge, engages in international and national scientific projects, offers a good study infrastructure with intellectual resources, qualified faculty members, a powerful community of several generations, as well as the involvement of the most outstanding professionals from the field of information and communication science in teaching and scientific work. The positions of the UL as a leader in the field of information and communication science is stable, and that is proven by quantitative and qualitative indicators in terms of student numbers, the content of studies, and scientific work. Graduates from the master's and doctoral programmes at the UL are employed at all of the information and communication science study programmes of all of Latvia's institutions of higher learning.

Information and communication science studies are in much demand among young people all around the world. An interdisciplinary approach is a specific element in this. In the United States, for instance, journalism students learn about the media, but also about the fundamentals of law, history and the social sciences. Another specific thing is the need to develop professional competences which facilitate stronger links between the media industry and universities. In Nordic countries, equal emphasis on the education of communication specialists is placed on academic courses and practical skills. The study format at the UL is more comparable to the Nordic model, although in the same way as communication studies in the United States, the UL ensures an important role for an interdisciplinary approach. The future development of the information and communication science direction at the UL will particularly focus on the internationalisation of studies. This will be intensified by a programme, "Growth and Employment," which was launched in 2018. It involves a specific support goal, "Strengthening the academic personnel of institutions of higher education in areas of strategic specialisation" (SAM 8.2.2.). Among other things, this facilitates the programme's ability to involve guest lectures and to expand study opportunities in English.

Data from October 1, 2019, show that 627 students were enrolled in information and communication studies as full time, correspondence course or highest-level students, representing 69% of all students at the Faculty of Social Sciences, UL.

The situation in the labour market shows that there is a demand for information and communication specialists in absolutely all areas of specialisation. Some students find jobs before they are graduated. Among the employers are prestigious and reputable companies and institutions such as the Latvian National Library, Latvian Public Television and Radio Latvia, media companies such as "All Media Latvia," press publications and Internet portals such as *Delfi*, *Latvijas Avīze*, *Santa*, *Ieva*,

*IR, Kapitāls* and the public Internet outlet *LSM.lv*. Other employers include the *VFS Films* environmental film studio, regional media outlets, the Baltic research journalism centre *Re:Baltica*, the research journalism broadcasts and projects of the *RedDotMedia* company, etc. Graduates also work for many business institutions related to the world of information and communication, including the advertising agencies *DDB Worldwide Latvia* and *McCANN Riga*, the digital communication agencies *Wrong Digital*, *Inspired Connect* and *Cube*, the creative and media agencies *Publicis Groupe Latvia* and *Mindshare*, the marketing and public relations companies *MM&A | Hill+Konwlton Strategies* and *Vīlands Associates*, the communication agency *A.W. Olsen & Partners*, and the corporate communication agency *LEAD*. Grads are also employed by the marketing and corporate communication departments of major companies such as *Tele2*, *Swedbank* and *Maxima Latvia*. They have also found jobs at government ministries, local governments, universities and other education and research institutions.

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

The study programmes in the information and communication science area conform to the principles of the Bologna Declaration, the relevant norms of the Republic of Latvia, the UL's strategic documents and the development plans of the UL, Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) and Department of Information and Library Studies and the Department of Communication Studies. Planning and implementation process of the study field "Information and communication science" relates to the current needs of the labour market, which are determined by information management and media industries, as well as by rapid transformations in media technologies and information processing and use.

The development of study content is also in line with Latvia's sustainable strategy until 2030 (approved in Parliament on 10 June 2010) and its programme on national identity, the civil society and integration policy for 2012–2018 (approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 20 October 2011), the national identity, civil society and integration plan for 2019–2020 (Cabinet of Ministers, 14 October 2013), the document on media policies in Latvia for 2016–2020 (Cabinet of Ministers, 8 November 2016), and positions on culture for 2014–2020, "Creative Latvia" (Cabinet of Ministers, 29 July 2014).

Latvia's national strategic document, "Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy Through 2030" ([https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/LIAS\\_2030\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/LIAS_2030_en_0.pdf)) emphasises the importance of social sciences. A democratic country needs residents who understand what is happening in society, looking at problems and their causes, shaping people's viewpoints and ensuring that people help to deal with problems. The importance of information and communication science studies is based on several strategic documents which speak to the national information and culture world in the present-day world, with the need for information and media literacy in professional and everyday life. That is why the development of programmes in this area is of essential importance in providing informative resources in Latvia and facilitating their accessibility. The strategy document says that the first priority is the development of the cultural space. The content and results of the information and communication science study programme are directly focused on preservation, interaction with and enrichment of the cultural space by collecting, processing, storing and providing access to information resources such as various digital collections. This is a prerequisite for new knowledge and education, and it is the foundation for

various innovations. Study programmes provide knowledge and skills that are needed so that people today can manage find, assess and use information and to help others to learn information skills and competence. The future development of the direction means a key need to integrate goals and the way in which they interweave, focusing on sustainability of national culture and the information space and making sure that students join the international labour market. Also in the future is the establishment of a larger information technology studio in the information and communication study area (there are already a few courses, students engage in projects that relate to the multimedia environment and IT). A key result of studies is the ability to analyse, critically evaluated and prognosticate information and communication phenomena, situations and processes in the context of the development of society. Information literacy and the importance of the digitalisation of cultural heritage are emphasised in the policy document “Basic Positions on the Development of the Information Society, 2014–2020” ([http://www.varam.gov.lv/eng/darbibas\\_veidi/e\\_gov/?doc=13058](http://www.varam.gov.lv/eng/darbibas_veidi/e_gov/?doc=13058)).

Scientific research work in the area of information and communication science is in line with Latvia’s Smart specialisation strategy (RIS3) (<https://www.izm.gov.lv/en/science/smart-specialisation-strategy?highlight=WyJyaXMzIl0=>). Social sciences and the humanities play an essential and horizontal role to play in Latvia’s Smart specialisation area. Beneficiaries from the contributions of social sciences and the humanities are the public at large, the national system of governance, as well as businesses. The information and communication science study programmes seek to offer an education that is modern and is appropriate for future market needs in terms of facilitating creativity. The social sciences and humanities prepare human resources for an ever more complicated society and world with global competition, multiculturalism, technologies which replace people, distance work and network organisations, new ethical challenges and the necessity to always create unique products. Information and communication sciences offer knowledge about society and offer recommendations about communication and work with information.

The research areas in which information and communication specialists are involved are among Latvia’s priorities in the area of science, 2018–2021 (Cabinet of Ministers, 13 December 2017) (<https://www.izm.gov.lv/en/science/priority-directions-in-science>). Point 9 in this document, “State and Social Security and Defence,” lists as a priority research into strategic communication, crisis communication, Kremlin propaganda and other mechanisms of destabilisation, as well as challenges against the global information world, including the information environment, the role of media content shapers and users, the relevant functions and other changes. Also of importance is the influence of the social media on the quality of Latvia’s media environment and the ability of people to gain trustworthy information.

The University of Latvia Development Strategy (2016–2020) states that the university’s goal is to become an internationally recognised university of European and world importance ([https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user\\_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/EN/1/Summary\\_UL\\_strategy\\_EN\\_250517.pdf](https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/EN/1/Summary_UL_strategy_EN_250517.pdf)). On 21 June 2019, the Council of the FFS, UL approved a Faculty of Social Sciences staff action plan for 2018–2020 to carry out the UL strategy (decision No SZF-V12.2/48). The developmental goals of the information and communication science studies are based on the **goals** of the UL as such:

- 1) To become one of the leading centres for information and communication studies in the Baltic States as a foundation for competitiveness in offering in-depth specialisation in library science, communication theory and other media and communication subsectors;
- 2) To become a leading information and communication science and interdisciplinary research centre in the Nordic region, specialising in information management, library science, book

publishing, the media, the diversity and ecology of the media, interactions between information and communication technologies and people, digital communication, culture communication, business communication, sports communication, gender communication and collective memory communication.

3) To ensure quality for all levels of study programmes in information and communication science – bachelor's, master's and doctorate, providing high-level specialists from all of these areas for the labour market.

### **Missions in pursuit of the strategic goals:**

- To continue to improve the quality of organisations and courses in the study direction, always tracking news in the field of information and communication society;
- To facilitate the research work of faculty member sin the programme, taking part in national and international projects and enhancing professional qualifications;
- To facilitate the mobility and qualifications enhancement of academic personnel at higher education and research institutions outside of Latvia;
- To continue to increase publications from the information and communication science sector, as indexed in the *SCOPUS* and *Web of Science (WoS)* databases;
- To expand work with international scholarly and study programme co-operation networks, forming contacts with similar higher education programmes in Latvia and abroad, facilitating student mobility, and attracting students and programme graduates with international experience toward pedagogic and research work;
- To develop co-operation with representatives of other areas of social sciences, the humanities and the natural sciences and abroad, working together in pursuit of financing and interdisciplinary fundamental and applies research projects;
- To improve ways of attractive students and to find new ways of doing so;
- To facilitate regeneration of academic personnel and higher capacity.

The development strategy for the information and communication science direction is also based on a set of developmental goals set out by the University of Latvia in terms of research capacity and increased competitiveness, 2016–2020 – increasing scientific excellence, internationalisation of research and the expansion of the knowledge base with a transfer of technologies. Faculty members are already involved in several priority research areas in Latvia, including innovative research technologies, public health, quality of life and the nation's sustainability, the diaspora and intercultural communication, and humans and technologies and the quality of education.

All members of academic personnel are involved in drafting goals for the information and communication science study direction. They are formulated by employees of the Department of Information and Library Science and the Department of Communication Studies, and department directors monitor the implementation of these goals.

There is a development plan of study field "Information and communication science" based on strategic goals of the UL (Appendix 3). Over the next six years, the main jobs will relate to expanding the range of courses that are taught in English, which is the foundation for research projects and new knowledge in areas of individualised specialisation (throughout the period); a Media Study Centre and an Information Management Study Centre (2020); schools on new communication and information managers for upper class students at high schools (2020); university-level and modern textbooks in Latvian and in the area of information and communication science (2022); a lifelong education programme in digital marketing, advertising, media literacy for senior citizens, storytelling, multimedia skills, digital photography and theatre, cinema and media



criticism (2020–2024); establishment of an interdisciplinary memory institution professional master’s degree study programme in partnership with the Latvian National Library and other universities; and attraction of research projects on a competitive basis while increasing the number of publications in internationally peer-reviewed publications (8–10 per year) (during the entire period).

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

*Table 7. SWOT analysis of the information and communication science study direction*

*Please, see attached.*

Despite the fact that the information and communication science field study programmes have been successful during the reporting period, there are certain weaknesses and threats therein. Faculty members from the information and communication science direction have proposed specific things to do to prevent and/or reduce these problems (Tables 8, 9 and 10).

*Table 8. Essential weaknesses in the study direction and plans to prevent them*

*Please, see attached.*

*Table 9. Essential threats and plans to prevent them.*

*Please, see attached.*

*Table 10. Essential opportunities and plans to make use of them.*

*Please, see attached.*

### **A plan for the development of the study field**

The plan to develop the study field is based on the relevant development goals, and it is being prepared by the directors of the Department of Information and Library Studies, the Department of Communication Studies and the coordinator of the information and communication science study field, and it will be approved by academic personnel from the direction at a general meeting of personnel. The plan has been reviewed together with development goals at a general meeting of department employees convened for this specific purpose, doing so once per academic year. The implementation of the plan is monitored at study programme council meetings where, on the basis of recommendations from programme directors, improvements and supplements to the plan are formulated. These are then added to the plan by the department director.

The development plan is seen as appropriate for the development goals, and it can be implemented in real terms. The development of the plan has been effective and in line with UL norms. See Appendix 3 for the plan.

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

Collegiate responsibility for the administration of the study field “Information and communication science” lies with the UL decision-making bodies – the Senate, the UL Study Programme Quality Evaluation Board (headed by Vice-Rectors), faculty councils and Study Programme Councils, which evaluate study quality and decide on study quality assurance measures.

The UL governance is responsible for the functioning of the study quality management system, the management of results, process monitoring and audits.

Responsibility for the quality of the study field “Information and communication science” and the study programmes implemented therein lies with the study director and dean, study programme directors, and sub-programme directors.

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

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

Each UL study programme has a **study programme director** who directs the development and implementation of this study programme. The director of the study programme is approved by the Senate on the proposal of the faculty council representing the respective branch of science. If the study programme covers several sub-programmes, the sub-programme director may be approved by the decision of the Faculty Council in each sub-programme. The director of the study programme is a member of the council of study programmes of the respective branch and coordinates own activities with it. The Director of the Study Programme is responsible to the Dean, Coordinator of Study Field, Study Programme Council, Faculty Council, Vice Rector, and Rector. The duties of the director of the study programme are defined in the Regulations on the Director of Study Programmes of the University of Latvia. The director of the study programme is responsible for ensuring that the content of the study programme complies with the regulatory enactments, and the improvement of the study programme, incl. elaboration of changes in study programmes, in line with sector and labour market trends, as well as taking into account the needs of stakeholders. Responsibilities of the study programme director include ensuring co-operation with Latvian and foreign higher education institutions and other UL study programme directors in matters of study content coordination and experience exchange, as well as with employers and internship sites regarding study content issues to ensure employment-relevant learning outcomes.

**Coordinator of the field of study** is responsible for the supervision of the study programmes of one study field, their conformity with the Development Strategy of the University of Latvia, ensuring topicality and development, as well as implementation of coordinated management of and cooperation among the study programmes. The coordinators of study field, in co-operation with the study programme directors and the director of the UL Regional Centre, in cases when the study programmes included in the study field are implemented in the UL branches, ensure the revision, development planning and implementation of study programmes included in the study field. The

coordinators of study field organize the work of study field councils, as well as regularly organize the development of the annual study field report and its promotion for review and approval by the Study Programme Council and the Faculty Council. The coordinators of study field in co-operation with the study programme directors and the UL Department of Studies ensure the accreditation and re-accreditation of the study field. The coordinator of study field may be the Dean of the faculty, the head of the department or the director of the study programme included in the field. The coordinators of study field are approved by the order of the Rector of the University of Latvia on the proposal of the UL Department of Studies or the decision of the Faculty Council

**Study programme councils** are responsible for all levels of academic, professional and doctoral study programmes relevant to one discipline. All study programme directors, representatives of the students registered in the respective programmes, who have no academic failures (not less than 20% of the composition of the study programme council, promoting the representation of all study programmes at all levels, as well as the largest possible number of study programmes, are nominated by the Student Council), employers' representatives (candidates are proposed by the heads of departments and study programme directors). The Study Program Council consists of the coordinator of the study field, as well as the management of the faculty – the Dean and representatives of all departments involved in the teaching of the study programme. The Council of Study Programmes and Faculty Councils approve the development strategy for the programmes of the respective branch, evaluate and submit to the Faculty Council for approval applications for the new programmes at all levels of study in the respective field, annual study programme reports, as well as changes in study programmes.

**Faculty councils**, consisting of representatives of the academic and general staff, elected for three years, and student representatives, who make up at least 20 percent of the councillors, decide on the academic, economic, financial, and other activities of the faculty that are within the competence of the faculty or may be passed on to the Senate.

The learning outcomes of UL study fields and study programmes are evaluated, as well as proposals to the Faculty Council and UL governance on further development of the programmes are provided by **the Study Programme Quality Assessment Board** (hereinafter – SP QAB). This board reviews and provides opinions on study programmes, incl. evaluates applications for new study programme concepts, new study programmes and closure proposals, significant changes in accredited study fields that require a decision of the SP QAB, as well as applications for new study modules and sub-programmes. When evaluating the concepts of new study programmes, annual reports of study programmes and of study fields, the SP QAB is guided by the opinion of anonymous, independent experts. The SP QAB consists of Vice Rectors, Chairman of the Academic Commission of the Senate or his authorized representative, Director of the Department of Studies, Representative of the Department of Student Services, Internal Auditor, Head of Quality, representative of the Department of Science, representative of the UL Library, a representative delegated by the Student Council and a representative delegated by the UL Alumni Club.

The management structure of the study field “Information and communication science” is part of the management framework of the UL and the FSS. The everyday work occurs in accordance with instructions from UL administrators, the direction's development strategy, decisions by the faculty council, instructions from the dean, and collegial decisions made by the personnel meetings of the Department of Information and Library Studies and the Department of Communication Studies. The process is led by department directors and the information and communication science study direction director. The content of programmes, including annual reports, is evaluated and approved by the Communication Science Study Programme Council, which is made up of directors of all study programmes in the direction, representatives of academic personnel, representatives of students and a representative of employers. This council approves all changes to study programmes. The

duties and responsibilities of administrative personnel and academic personnel who are involved in this regard are defined in job descriptions and UL norms. The duties and responsibilities of students are defined in the UL's internal rules and other university norms. Everyday studies are organised by the directors of the Department of Information and Library Studies and the Department of Communication Studies in partnership with study programme directors. Personnel from both departments regularly meet to talk about the study direction and to take collegial decisions about the practical aspects of organising studies and research work.

Another essential entity is the Communication Science Doctoral Study Council, which is made up of faculty members from both aforementioned departments. It organises the doctoral study programme and offers theoretical and methodological support for the bachelor's and master's degree programmes. The development of FSS study programmes is focused on an intersectoral perspective, so in collegial terms, of great importance is the FSS programme director council, which regularly discusses quality issues, exchanges experiences and agrees on issues that affect the development of all of the programmes (the council has advisory functions).

In general terms, the management system of the information and communication science study field can be said to be effective and in line with the study direction's implementation and its developmental goals and missions.

The management of the study field is supported by the **UL Administration**, whose main purpose is to ensure the legal fulfilment of the UL mission, goals and strategy, as well as to provide support to the UL staff and other UL employees. The UL Administration performs the administrative functions defined in the UL legislation: administrative process, making administrative decisions, drafting of regulatory enactments, internal control, tracking, supervision, quality control, etc., insofar as they are not performed by other UL structural units (institutions). The Administration manages UL activities in the field of private law, manages communication and co-operation between the UL structural units (institutions), as well as the public, natural and legal persons, and provides support to the UL core structures (institutions) in fulfilling their functions and tasks. The UL Administration includes the following units: Department of Science, Department of Studies, Department of Student Services, Department of Communication and Innovation, Department of Finance and Accounting, Legal Department, Department of Human Resources, Department of Information Technology and Department of Infrastructure.

**The Department of Studies** has an essential role in the management of the study field, whose main functions are to draft legal acts and documents related to the study activity, to coordinate and control their implementation and further development, to ensure planning of study processes corresponding to the UL mission, goals and strategy, preparation and implementation of licensing and accreditation, further monitoring of programme implementation and development, monitoring and analysing study course and programme content, organizing regular updating of study courses and programmes, ensuring their quality and cost-effectiveness, and the acquisition of widely demanded capabilities and practical skills, e-studies development. **The Department of Science** is involved in organizing study-related research and promoting student involvement in research. The main functions of the Department of Student Services are to organize and ensure the matriculation and exmatriculation of Latvian and foreign students, circulation of study documents and their record-keeping, to maintain the register of qualification documents, including the register of diplomas and graduates, to provide students with social, cultural and other support functions, as well as to provide advice and information to students on social security, to inform potential applicants about the study process and organization of studies, and to ensure the administration and implementation of mobility programmes. The Head of UL Quality control and Internal Auditor also participate in the development, maintenance, implementation, evaluation and improvement of the study quality management system.

Co-operation and relations among administrative personnel, academic personnel and students are based on mutual respect and co-operation, always focusing on the UL's strategic goals. During the implementation of the study process and in informal communication, the UL Code of academic ethics, Rules on academic honesty, UL internal rules of order for students, the procedure for organising study course examinations and other UL normative acts are always taken into account. Students have the right to express their views, defend their rights, and ensure an evaluation of uninvolved and collegial situations, learning outcomes and other issues.

The support that is given to the information and communication science direction by UL administrative and technical personnel is in compliance with the implementation and development of the programme.

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

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

1. Admissions requirements and criteria for basic study programmes;
2. Admissions requirements and criteria for higher-level study programmes;
3. Admissions requirements and criteria for doctoral study programmes;
4. Admissions requirements and criteria for residency programmes;
5. Admission procedures for the academic year;
6. Registration fees;
7. Tuition fees for programmes;
8. The number of study slots available for admission;
9. The procedure for preparing entrance examination materials;
10. The membership of the admissions commission;
11. The membership of entrance examination commissions;
12. The time and place for entrance examinations.

Admission procedures vary by study level.

Enrolment in undergraduate studies is centralized through the "Single Enrolment in Undergraduate Programmes," which integrates the enrolment in 12 Latvian universities. The competition for study places is based on the results of the Centralized exams or the grades of the persons who have been exempted from the centralized exams or have completed their secondary education abroad. In the case of study programmes that do not have appropriate centralized exams, additional requirements for specific grades are added, and the programmes requiring special skills or aptitude set an additional entrance examination. As a result, applicants are ranked according to their scores. Programmes may provide benefits to National Olympiads winners (for more information on admission requirements, see the description of each study programme).

Enrolment in master's degree programmes is decentralized, at each faculty, but with uniform deadlines. Enrolment is based on grades obtained during the undergraduate studies. In

programmes that allow for prior education in various fields, the entrance examination is used to determine the correspondence of the candidate's prior knowledge to the field of the study programme.

Admission to doctoral studies takes place centrally. The applicant must submit the topic of the promotion thesis and the name of approved supervisor. The applicant's eligibility is assessed by the doctoral council of the branch.

*Table 11. Rules on admitting students to the study programmes of the UL information and communication science field.*

*Please see attached.*

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

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

A good practice related to recognising courses taken at a different higher education institution in Latvia, a university abroad, or during a previous study period at the UL has been established in the information and communication science study field. Since 2013, 343 courses taken by students elsewhere have been recognised. The largest number of these courses relates to the communication study programme, which is the largest study programme in terms of the number of students in this study direction.

*Table 12. The number of students in the information and communication science study field whose courses have been recognised*

Study programme	Number of students with recognised courses as of 24 October 2019	Number of students with recognised courses since 1 January 2013
Bachelor's degree programme in information management	18	62
Bachelor's degree programme in communication science	56	214
Master's degree programme in library science and information	8	27
Master's degree programme in communication science	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>343</b>

The information and communication science study field information management bachelor's degree programme has students with recognised study courses from the Liepāja Pedagogic University

College, the Rīga Technical University, the Banking University College, the Latvian Culture College, the Alberts College, the Red Cross Medicine College of the Rīga Stradiņš University, the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, the Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, the Latvian Academy of Sport Education, the Rīga School of Law, the Rīga Construction College, the *Turība* University, the Rīga Academy of Pedagogy and Educational Management, and other educational institutions in Latvia. The communication science bachelor's study programme has students with recognised courses from the *Turība* University, the Rīga Stradiņš University, the Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, the University of Liepāja, the Alberts College, the Rīga University College of Pedagogy and Educational Management, the International University of Practical Psychology, the Latvian Academy of Culture, and other higher education institutions. The programme also has students with recognised courses from universities in other European countries, including the Hanze University in Groningen and the Maastricht University College in the Netherlands, as well as courses completed outside of studies related to the ERASMUS programme. All study programmes recognise courses taken as part of the ERASMUS programme, and the same relates to courses from other study programmes at the UL. The information management study programme, for instance, has recognised courses from the UL study programmes focusing on history, theology and religion, Russian philology, becoming a cultural history teacher, computer science, political science, Asian philology, German philology, and software design and computer network administration. The largest number of courses recognised for students in the communication science bachelor's degree programme, meanwhile, include UL programmes related to management knowledge, English philology, law, philosophy, medicine, Asian studies, Baltic philology, Russian philology, art, modern language and business studies, preschool education pedagogue, political science, psychology, social work, sociology, international economics and commercial diplomacy, international economic relations, history, becoming a high school English teacher, etc.

The range of recognised courses for students in the library science and information and communication science master's degree programme mostly relate to courses taken under the ERASMUS programme. Very few courses are recognised for students in the doctoral programme communication science, because the programme includes special courses such as "Taking Ph.D. Courses at Foreign Universities" and "Internships at a Foreign University," and in both cases, there is an evaluation of what students have gained from these studies.

Opportunities for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired in previous education (including continuing education programme) or professional experience (*"Regulation on the Evaluation and Recognition of Prior Learning at the University of Latvia"* UL Senate Decision No. 201 of 26.03.2012.) and (*"Procedure for circulation of documents on the Recognition of Learning Outcomes in Previous Education or Professional Experience"* (UL Order No.1/116 of 04.04.2014).

Since 2013, the UL has received 175 requests for recognition of courses (as of 16 September 2019), and 393 courses have been recognised. All of the procedures are public and available in the UL system of normative acts, which is available to every UL employee and student. In the information and communication science study field, more than 90% of courses that have compared experience relate to the course "Creative Project in Communication Studies" and the internship courses "Media Practice," "Advertising Practice," and "Practical Training in Public Relations." Students must submit documents to confirm their experience and take part in a process in which the experience is evaluated and either accepted or not accepted as comparable. In information management, experience is only compared to internship courses. More details about this process can be found on the [FSS homepage](#).

Since 2013, 166 results from previous education or professional experience have been recognised in the information and communication science study field. In nine cases, the comparison was rejected, and that was usually because the applicant had not submitted the necessary documents.

Only in one case were documents submitted, but the applicant could not prove the status. Five courses based on a comparison of professional experience are recognised in the information management bachelor's degree programme, and 111 in the communication science bachelor's study. 15 such courses were recognised in 2013 (13% of all courses during the reporting period), 4 in 2014 (4%), 22 in 2015 (19%), 21 in 2016 (18%), 29 in 2017 (25%), 12 in 2018 (10%), and 13 as of 1 November 2019 (11%). The professional experience results have related to well-known Latvian journalists, media editors and broadcast hosts.

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

In conformity with the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia, the UL internal regulation "Procedure for Development and Updating of Study Courses at the University of Latvia" stipulates that information on the conditions, aims, tasks, requirements for obtaining credit points, study content, organization and tasks of the students' independent work, planned learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, competence) and their assessment methods and assessment criteria are included in all study course descriptions, which are available to students in the UL Information System and UL e-learning environment. The recording of the assessment of the students' results takes place in the respective study course e-environment. The UL has formulated the learning outcomes for each study programme and for each study course as a set of knowledge, skills and competences. The courses in study programmes are developed in accordance with the principles of gradation and succession. To that end, the study programmes map the expected learning outcomes.

At the beginning of studies, students are informed of the organisation and implementation of studies in the relevant study programme, but when commencing the acquisition of each individual study course, the academic staff inform students specifically about the organisation, content, requirements, learning outcomes, examinations and evaluation criteria, as well as explain the integral quality of the study course for achieving the overall outcomes of the study programme. The students can familiarize themselves with the criteria and conditions for assessment of student achievement and the binding procedures in the course descriptions and e-learning environment, as well as at the beginning of each course during the first lecture, when each lecturer introduces students to the course organization, briefly describes the requirements for intermediate and final examinations, describes grading criteria and examination procedures, without changing these requirements and grading criteria throughout the semester.

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

There are two types of tests in each course: the interim assessment or so-called semester examinations and the final examination. The overall assessment of the acquisition of a study course



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

Taking an examination is a mandatory requirement for obtaining credits for the acquisition of a study course. The procedures and criteria for the assessment of interims are determined by the responsible department in accordance with the profile of the study course. The study course acquisition rating is calculated in the UL centralised recording system according to the algorithm specified in the course description, taking into account the assessments obtained in the interims and examination, and recorded in the examination report.

Types of interim assessment are: quiz, individual work, practical work, report, and other types of work according to the profile of the study course. The number and type of interim assessments are specified in the description of the study course. To be assessed on the acquisition of a course, the assessment obtained for the examination is to be positive. The acquisition of a course may be positively assessed even if the examination has been failed but this possibility has been specified in the study course description. The overall assessment of course acquisition is calculated in the UL e-studies environment according to the algorithm specified in the course description, taking into account the assessments obtained in interim tests and examinations.

At the end of each study course there is a final examination: examination or defence (course work, final project, term paper, field course, internship). The procedure of defence and assessment of course paper, final thesis project, term paper, field course and internship is stipulated in UL normative acts.

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

For the evaluation of students' knowledge, skills and competence in each study course, the 10-point scale criteria described above are used. The criteria for each study course are based on the learning outcomes and assessment descriptions (see Table 13) published in "Procedures for the Development and Actualization of Study Courses at the University of Latvia."

*Table 13. Assessment descriptions*

*Please see attached*

Acquisition level	Grade notations	Explanation (pursuant to Cabinet Regulations No 141, 512, 240 and the UL Senate Decision No 211 of 29.06.2015)
very high acquisition level	10 (with distinction)	knowledge, skills and competence exceed the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course and testify to the ability to carry out independent research and deep understanding of problems
	9 (excellent)	knowledge, skills and competence fully comply with the requirements set for the study programme, study module or the study course and the students possess the ability to use the acquired knowledge independently
high acquisition level	8 (very good)	the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course are completely met, though in certain issues the students do not have an understanding deep enough to use the knowledge independently for solving more complex problems
	7 (good)	in general the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course are met but occasionally the inability to use the acquired knowledge independently is established
average acquisition level	6 (almost good)	the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course are met, but there is a lack of deep understanding of the problem and inability to use the acquired knowledge
	5 (satisfactory)	in total, the study programme, the study module or the study course is acquired but there is insufficient knowledge of certain issues and inability to use the acquired knowledge
	4 (almost satisfactory)	in total, the study programme, the study module or the study course is acquired, however, there is insufficient understanding of some basic concepts and there are considerable difficulties in practical application of the acquired knowledge
low acquisition level	3 (weak)	the knowledge is superficial and incomplete; the student is unable to use it in specific situations
	2 (poor)	here is superficial knowledge of only some issues; most of the study programme, study module and the study course is not acquired
	1 (very, poor)	there is no understanding of the fundamentals of the course and there is almost no knowledge of the study programme, study module or the study course

The relevance of assessment methods and procedures to the achievement of the objectives of study programmes and the needs of students are analysed and developed, taking into account the experience of academic staff, by analysing the results achieved by students and the results of surveys conducted over several academic years. Students in the surveys recognise the importance of clearly formulating the results of the studies and defining the evaluation criteria, as well as the regular feedback on student achievements in the study process. In order to ensure this, the academic staff systematically analyse their experience, collaborate with colleagues, analyse student achievements and develop course descriptions by investing the description of the results of studies and their evaluation criteria, thereby providing justification for the assessment.

In evaluating the results of studies, compliance with the basic principles for the valuation set by the Cabinet regulations of the Republic of Latvia No 141 Regulations on the State Standard for First Level Professional Higher Education of 20.03.2001, No 512 Regulations on the State Standard for Second Level Professional Higher Education of 26.08.2014 and Regulations on the state standard of the academic education of 13.05.2014 is considered:

- **the principle of openness of the evaluation and clarity of requirements** - the University has established a set of requirements for evaluating the results of studies in line with the aim and objectives of the study programme as well as the aim and objectives of study courses;
- **the principle of the possibility of reviewing the evaluation** - the University has established the procedures for reviewing the obtained assessment;
- **the principle of mandatory evaluation** - it is necessary to obtain a positive assessment of the content of the entire study programme;
- **the principle of the variety of types of testing used in the evaluation** - different types of testing shall be used in the evaluation of the acquisition of the study programme;
- **principle of conformity of assessment** - in the course of testing, the student is given an

opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, skills and competence in relevant tasks and situations. The content to be included in the tests corresponds to the content specified in the course programmes.

The basic criteria for the evaluation of final papers are determined by the UL Decree No 1/38 of 03.02.2012 (Amendments: UL Order No 1/69 of 26.02.2015) On the development and defence of the final papers (bachelor's, master's, diplomas and qualifications) at the University of Latvia. Additional criteria may be determined for the evaluation of final papers, which shall be approved by the Faculty Council on a proposal from the relevant Study Programmes Council.

The elaboration, requirements and assessment procedure of the final work of the study field "Information and communication Science" are described in the "[Methodological Guidelines for the Development and Defense of the Course, Bachelor's, Diploma Papers, and Master's Theses](#)" (order of the FSS Council, No SZF-V12.2/13). The control and evaluation of the final thesis consists of several stages – the development of a research project or concept, the preliminary defense of the final thesis and the final defense of the final thesis. Such a multi-level grading system enables students to follow the completion of their final theses, to encourage students' motivation to work and to ensure that the work is done in a systematic and high-quality manner. Criteria for evaluating the quality of final theses consist of the following parameters:

- choice of topic, clarity of explanation and texts logic;
- theoretical basis of the thesis;
- research methodology and application of research methods;
- analysis of the results and conclusions;
- the quality of the literary language;
- compliance with scientific work norms and technical requirements.

The assessment of the final thesis and its defense in the study field "Information and communication science" takes into account:

- 1) compliance of the thesis with the quality criteria;
- 2) presentation of research results by the author of thesis (ability to present the results in a scientific, concentrated and reasoned manner, to formulate conclusions, to indicate possible future directions of the research);
- 3) answers to questions and ability to discuss.

The views expressed by the students in the surveys indicate that the system and criteria for developing, monitoring and evaluating of final thesis are satisfactory to them and that they are considered to be relevant to a competent and equitable follow-up. They also welcome the comprehensive explanation of these criteria in the "[Methodological Guidelines for the Development and Defense of the Course, Bachelor's, Diploma Papers, and Master's Theses](#)" by the FSS.

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

The UL respects the principles of fair and responsible conduct as stipulated in "[The Academic](#)

*Ethics Codex of the University of Latvia*," (UL Senate 27.10.2008. decision No. 170) and in "*Regulations for Academic Integrity at the University of Latvia*," (UL Senate 25.02.2013. decision No 287) and [publicly available](#) to students of the UL and its staff.

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

The UL as the developer of the System and its operator constantly updates the System and provides other higher education institutions with the opportunity to use the System on the basis of a cooperation agreement. Currently, based on the cooperation agreement, seven higher education institutions in Latvia, Daugavpils University, Liepāja University, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Riga Stradiņš University, Rēzekne Academy of Technologies, University College of Economics and Culture and Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration use the System. Some 80,000 papers are in the data set for comparative purposes.

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

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

All papers in the information and communication studies programmes are compared in this system. The papers are examined in an automatic regime (the final versions of the papers), though additional examination can apply to the first drafts of annual papers and final papers before pre-defence. This practice has proven to reduce the number of identified examples of plagiarism in final versions of papers quite substantially, because dishonest or improper practices are identified and changed during the study process. In those cases, in which coincidence of texts is found, UL normative acts and procedures speak to specific steps to be taken – information provided to study programme directors, academic advisors and the reviewer, with the final examination commission then taking the final decision on the matter.

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

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

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

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

The site consists of the following sections:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The faculty website can be reached from the UL website via the faculty reference.

The FSS Website is based on the unified UL visual style. The primary target audience for the site is made up of future and existing UL students, partners, scholars and the public at large. The Website provides and stores public information, allowing those who access it to learn about the work of the FSS in a digital manner and on the Internet. These are the sections of the Website:

- NEWS and EVENTS – news about the FSS and its planned events (the information is prepared and posted by the FSS public relations specialist);
- STUDIES with the subsections BACHELOR'S DEGREE STUDIES, MASTER'S DEGREE STUDIES and DOCTORAL STUDIES (the information is prepared by the FSS public relations specialist in partnership with the study programme director and the Study Department, and it is then posted to the Website by the Department of Communication and Innovation);
- QUICK PATHS (the number can change): QUICK PATHS IN BRIEF (FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES, FOR PHILANTHROPIERS, FOR THE MEDIA and FOR GRADUATES);
- Other sections (I WANT TO BECOME A STUDENT AT THE FSS, STUDIES, THE LIFE OF THE FSS, RESEARCH and ABOUT US).

Information for the FSS Website is prepared and posted by the faculty's PR specialist. The information is prepared in partnership with study departments, study programme directors, faculty members and SPPI researchers. When necessary, the content is translated and posted in English (<https://ulfss.UL.lv>).

The structure of the Website in English is comparable to the content in Latvian in most ways, save for the fact that the section I WANT TO BECOME A STUDENT is replaced with ADMISSION. This section is meant for foreigners, degree students and guest students who can learn about available study programmes, admission procedures and scholarships. The other sections are analogous to the Latvian text.

If someone wants to publish information on the portal that is in a foreign language other than English, then a translation to Latvian or a brief summary must be added.

The directors of UL structures are responsible for preparing information that relates to their structures and posting it on the Website, also being responsible for its correctness and updating. Content administrators are responsible for maintain the homepage, posting the information and regularly updating it. The person responsible for the content posting at the respective faculty is public relations specialist Andra Rutkēviča.

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

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

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

The study programmes included in the study field are regularly provided with review of study courses, regular surveys and measurements, self-assessment, etc., according to the procedure established by the University of Latvia. The activities targeting the advancement of study field are planned for a period of six years and guided by the UL Development Strategy, sector and labour market trends, study outcomes, stakeholder needs, as well as internal and external (accreditation, licensing) quality assessment recommendations.

Internal quality control for the study programmes of the UL information and communication science study field is organised by the Communication Science Study Programme Council, as well as by faculty members from the Department of Information and Library Studies and the Department of Communication Studies. The indicators related to achieving study field aim and objectives are found in Table 14. The work is co-ordinated by the Study Department, UL. The directors of the Department of Information and Library Studies and the Department of Communication Studies evaluate academic personnel on the basis of the results of research and study work, the effectiveness of their work, the development of their competence and the improvement of their quality, doing so in partnership with programme directors on the basis of the individual results of the annual work of academic personnel. The development plan of the direction and the results of its implementation are discussed at least twice during an academic year at a meeting the Communication Science Study Programme Council. The process is also regularly discussed at faculty member meetings at the Department of Information and Library Studies and the Department of Communication Studies. The deputy executive director of the faculty for study issues also keeps track of the quality of studies at the faculty.

*Table 14. Indicators related to achieving study field “Information un communication science” goals and missions.*

*Please see attached.*

There are many different activities related to the ongoing analysis and updating of study programmes, as well as to the need to improve the study process. These involve targeted co-operation with employers and professional organisations, formal and/or informal surveys of employers and social partners, focus group discussions, student surveys about the quality of study courses and the way in which the study process is organised, questionnaires for graduates and students about the quality of study programmes, monitoring of the careers of graduates. The basis for quality assurance is active international co-operation with analogous study programmes abroad, the involvement of employers and social partners in preparing study content, participation in evaluating the achievements of students throughout the study process, preparation of theses and dissertations, ensuring practical research. Analysis and updating of the UL information and communication science study programmes involves all of the aforementioned methods. Of particular importance are focus group discussions with employers, as well as questionnaires that they are asked to fill out. Each year, there is a student and graduate survey about the quality of



study courses. The information and communication study programmes have established particularly good co-operation with the Latvian National Library, the Latvian Advertising Association, the Latvian Communication Association, the Latvian Journalists Association, the Latvian Media Ethics Council and other organisations.

There is also co-operation among instructors who are involved in the programme, including mutual evaluation of instructions and regular evaluation of faculty members by faculty departments. Faculty members from the UL information and communication science study field sit in on the open lectures of their colleagues. This is done before faculty members are elected to academic posts or in honour of new publications of research. Study programme directors sit in on lectures taught by new faculty members, and the academic advisors to dissertations sit in on the lectures that are taught by their doctoral students. There are also ongoing reciprocal links to inform parties that are involved in the process about the learning outcomes and competence of students and graduates.

The importance of ensuring the quality of the study direction, the results of the study programmes therein, an annual report, changes to study programmes and other issues are regularly reviewed by the Communication Science Study Programme Council and the FSS council. There are five study programmes in the study direction. The Communication Science Study Council has representatives who are faculty members, employers, graduates and students. Student representatives are also involved in the FSS council's work.

Regular reports on and reviews of study field, changes and self-assessments are evaluated by UL Study Programme Quality Assessment Board (QAB), including independent experts, who evaluate the documentation before approval by the UL Senate.

The quality assurance system of the UL information and communication science study field is, in general terms, to be seen as effective and in line with the developmental goals of the direction, because:

- 1) The FSS council prepares information and communication science field study programmes review reports each year;
- 2) The reports are considered and accepted by the UL Senate;
- 3) In surveys, students praise the quality of courses and the organisation of the study process, also offering useful proposals each year on things that could be improved;
- 4) There is an ongoing reciprocal link with graduates who evaluate the programme;
- 5) Representatives of employers take part in final exam commissions and help to prepare new programmes and courses by pointing to areas which require improvements;
- 6) Quality improvement indicators are identified and supervised, department directors submit a department development review to the dean and present a brief report to the faculty council each year, and the dean presents faculty development reviews to the rector and discusses them with the rector so as to assess problems and to identify future goals;
- 7) The Department of Information and Library Studies and the Department of Communication Studies have extensive contacts with professionals from their sectors and other professionals in Latvia and with other universities abroad to talk about programme quality issues and to absorb their progressive experience.

## **2.2. Analysis and assessment of the system and the procedures for the development and review of the study programmes by providing specific examples of the procedures for the**



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

The establishment of UL new study programmes is performed in accordance with the procedure specified in "[Regulations on University of Latvia Study and Continuing Education Programmes](#)" (approved with the Senate decision No. 102 of April 24, 2017) and include the following steps:

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

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

On the basis of the SP QAB decision, Study Programme Councils examine the recommendations issued by experts and devise a plan to implement the same.

The reviewing of study programmes involves:

- **Study Programme Directors** – responsible for ensuring the operation of the study programme, reviewing, evaluating and developing of the same, while reflecting it in the annual self-assessment report and preparing the analysis of the evaluation as expressed by the parties involved in the programme, viz. students, alumni, employers, etc.; responsible for discussion of the programme's activities at the meetings of the Study Programme Council, etc. (Senate Decision No 249 "Regulations on the UL Study Programme Directors" as of 25.05.2009);
- **Coordinator of the study field** – responsible for the development of a strategy for the study field, accreditation and re-accreditation, and, in cooperation with programme directors, the annual self-assessment report on the quality of studies in the given study field as well as improvements to the same;
- **Dean of the Faculty** – responsible for the organisation of the study work at the faculty, for

economic, financial performance and recordkeeping; for annual accounts on the study and scientific activities of the faculty to both the Faculty Council and the Rector (UL Constitution, approved at the session of the UL Constitutional Assembly as of 29.03.1996);

- **Study Programme Council** – responsible for the development of a strategy for the development of study programmes, the evaluation of annual self-assessment reports and the evaluation of changes to the programme (University of Latvia Senate Decision No. 248 of May 25, 2009 “Regulations on the University of Latvia Study Programme Council”);
- **Faculty Council** – evaluates and approves changes to study programmes, study field self-assessment reports, etc. (UL Constitution, approved at the session of the UL Constitutional Assembly as of 29.03.1996);
- **Department of Studies** – analyses study programmes and courses, makes proposals for their development, reorganisation or closure (Regulations on the Administration to the University of Latvia approved by the UL Order No 1/244 on July 17, 2017);
- **Quality Assessment Board for UL Study Programmes** – evaluates new study programmes, major changes to existing study programmes, annual self-assessments of study fields, outcomes of study fields and programmes and prepares proposals for the Faculty Council and UL leadership on the future development of programmes, etc.
- **UL Senate** – evaluates and approves conceptual study process regulatory documents, study field self-assessment reports, etc. (UL Constitution Assembly Decision No 6 “Regulation on UL Senate” as of 10.05.2001).

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

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

The results of the surveys are analysed and discussed within the study field and are reflected in the annual self-assessment reports.

Of particular importance in the work of the information and communication science study field are regular surveys of students about study courses and the work of instructors. The results are examined by all programme directors, department directors, and the instructors of the specific courses. On the basis of student views, study programmes are supplemented with new courses, courses which students dislike are excluded from the programmes, and course content is enriched with new information and/or skills that are in demand in the labour market. Along with surveys, there are focus group interviews and individual or group conversations between instructors and students in the master’s degree and doctoral programmes. During the reporting period, the Department of Information and Library Studies has conducted several studies to learn the views of people who work in the sector and of employers about competences that are important in the sector, as well as the importance of programmes that are offered by the department and necessary changes therein. More detailed information about the use of survey data to improve studies can be

found in study programme descriptions.

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

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

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

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

The "*Procedure for Organisation of Examinations of Study Courses at the University of Latvia*" (approved by Senate decision No 211 of 29.05.2015) has been developed and implemented for the comprehensive evaluation of UL study processes, where the right of students to file complaints regarding the procedures for interim and final assessment and the procedures for resolution of these complaints have been determined. The complaint is submitted by the student to the member of academic staff who has evaluated the examination, on condition that the student has requested a justification for the assessment from the academic staff prior to submitting the complaint. The lecturer must review the application within 5 working days. If the lecturer considers that the student's application is not substantiated, they shall submit the application to the Head of Department for consideration and decision.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Proposals and complaints are registered with the faculties or commissions where they are submitted, and the results of the complaint and the decisions taken are noted.

The number and decisions of proposals and complaints are reviewed and evaluated annually in the Dean's reports.

Study programme directors, the FSS secretary and study methodologists from the information and communication science study field are always prepared to provide consultations to students about

how to submit complaints, but in most cases, the involvement of programme directors or the director of the department makes it possible to deal with various issues that students dislike in a fast and effective way. Complaints from students in the information and communication science direction study programmes are reviewed at the level of study programme directors who look for a solution. Preventive work is done to deal with problems and conflicts. This involves information about course requirements, the schedule and requirements for final examinations, co-operation with academic advisors and the rights and obligations of students. Ways of dealing with all problems and conflicts are also explained. The content and requirements of each course can be found in materials posted in the Information System of UL. Of key importance in preventing and resolving conflicts and problems is the work of programme directors and the study methodologist. During the reporting period, no complaints were received about the information and communication science study field.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- financing of study places, broken down by state-funded, UL-funded and student-funded study

places;

- the number of student scholarship recipients and the number of studies and student loans;

In order to prevent violations of the principles of academic integrity in the UL students' final theses and promotion papers, the UL ensures automatic examination of all submitted final theses and doctoral theses by using the unified computerized plagiarism control system.

The cases of possible plagiarism have identified in the UL bachelor study program "Communication Science." All of them are evaluated, student admission or non-admission examination is organized according to the evaluation results. No cases of plagiarism have been detected by the system in the bachelor's study program "Information Management," master's degree programs "Library Science and Information" and "Communication Science" as well as in the doctoral study program "Communication Science."

There have been cases when students do not fully understand the concept and essence of self-plagiarism and repeat some parts of the previous paper in the final thesis. These violations are most often detected during the work process and corrected by students in due course.

The supervisors of final thesis pay special attention to ensure that the student regularly and qualitatively consult with the supervisor during the thesis development process. The supervisor is able to see the work at various stages of its development, thus ensuring that the student does the work independently and honestly. The supervisor may refuse to accept the defense if these conditions are not met.

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

- a freshman survey of the first-year students on the commencement of studies, which is conducted electronically once a year. The aim of the survey is to find out the motivation for choosing the study field and programme and sources of information, as well as to evaluate the application and registration process in order to improve the student engagement package. Data is collected and analysed by the UL Department of Studies, but the necessary improvement measures are proposed by the UL governance, faculty governance, programme directors, in cooperation with the UL administrative departments;
- a freshman survey of the first-year students on the first study experience, also conducted electronically once a year. The aim of the survey is to obtain an evaluation of the first study experience at the UL and study support measures to improve the study environment and facilitate student adaptation. The data are collected and analysed by the UL Department of Studies and presented to the faculty governance and departments. The necessary improvement measures are proposed by the faculty governance and the Department of Studies in cooperation with other departments of the University of Latvia;
- In order to find out the students' opinion about the content of the study courses and to obtain the evaluation of the work of the teaching staff, every semester an electronic survey is conducted on the study courses, including study internship, term papers and final papers. Data is collected by LUIS and is available to faculty, programme directors, and the Dean of the Faculty, as well as the Department of Studies. The data is analysed by the programme directors, the dean, and the necessary improvement measures are proposed by the programme director, the dean, and the Study Programme Council. The results are used to prepare annual reviews of study areas, as well as to develop study programme development plans.
- In order to obtain students' evaluation of the study programme for its further development, improvement of the study process, improvement of the quality and study environment, a

survey of the students of the last study year on the study programme as a whole is conducted. The survey is conducted electronically once for each study programme. The results are compiled by LUIS and made available to programme directors and the Dean of the faculty. The data is analysed by the programme directors, the dean, and the necessary improvement measures are proposed by the programme director, the dean, and the Study Programme Council. The results are used in the preparation of annual study field reviews, study field self-assessment reports for the field accreditation and re-accreditation, and in the preparation of study programme development plans.

- In order to identify the main reasons for discontinuation of studies and to facilitate the reduction of drop-out rates, a survey is conducted of students who have expressed a wish to discontinue studies or have already discontinued studies. The survey is conducted throughout the academic year, while the results are compiled by the Department of Studies once a semester.
- The aim of the graduates' survey is to obtain an evaluation of the graduates' satisfaction with the quality of the acquired programme, the knowledge, skills and competences acquired at the University of Latvia, the contribution of the graduated study programme to their employment. Surveys of graduates of study field "Information and communication science" programmes are conducted electronically once a year. The results are used to improve the content of the study program. For example, graduates of the master's degree programme in communication science stated that they would have the desired multimedia product design skills that are immediately applicable in the workplace. In the study program 2019/2020 the course "Multimedia Practice" was included in the study year.
- The aim of the employers' survey is to determine how employers assess the compliance of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by UL graduates. The survey of employers of graduates of study field "Information and communication science" programmes is conducted once a year both in electronic and paper form. Focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews are also often practiced to obtain more detailed information about the strengths and weaknesses of the graduates' qualifications. Employers are also asked about opportunities for cooperation with the University of Latvia, organization of joint events and implementation of other activities. Their views are used to improve the content of study programs and to develop forms of cooperation. The survey is conducted once a year in both electronic and paper format.

Each year the coordinator of the study field in cooperation with the study programme directors prepares a report on the operation of the study field and the programmes therein during the academic year. During the preparation of the report, statistical data is collected and analysed, and the obtained information is used for the development and implementation of the improvements to the study plan. The report includes the following data, which are collected and analysed annually:

- the list and the total number of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Latvia which implement study fields;
- number of study programmes in other study fields implemented by HEI, broken down by study level and indicating the total number;
- description of study programmes implemented in other study fields by HEIs;
- the number of students in the programmes, indicating the total number, the number of students matriculated in the 1st study year, the number of graduates;
- mobility of teaching staff during the reference period;
- involvement of employers in programmes during the reporting period;
- number of programme students studying abroad in exchange programmes;
- number of international students in programmes;
- summary of the results and analysis of the students' survey on the study courses of the

programme;

- summary of the results and analysis of the student survey on the programme as a whole.

In order to ensure the satisfaction of students, graduates and employers with the quality of studies and their results, survey results and statistical evaluations have been used to improve the structure of the information and communication science programmes. Programmes have been enriched with new courses, while courses that are not in demand about students or are out-of-date in terms of content are excluded from the programme. Because of present-day labour market demands, the study programmes now have courses that teach skills which can immediately be used at work – digital photography, data visualisation, leadership, influencers, and dealing with crisis communication situations. The views of employers and students are important when organising student internships, determining the work to be done, as well as the skills and competence that are to be obtained therein.

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

The University of Latvia applies the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG) to ensure the quality of studies. Information on how the ESG are respected when assuring the quality of studies is reflected in Table 15.

*Table 15. Implementation of “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG) at the University of Latvia.*

*Please see attached.*

The main directions of activities in compliance with ESG continuous quality advancement at the UL are: design and approval of programmes; student-centred learning, teaching and assessment; teaching staff and teaching resources and student support. All the quality assurance standards and guidelines accepted in the European Higher Education Area are used to ensure the quality of the study field “Information and communication science.” Special attention is paid to establishing student-centered teaching principles in the implementation of all study programs. The immediate challenges include improving information management and regular cyclical external quality assurance.

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

**3.1. Provide information on the system developed by the higher education institution/college for determining the financial resources required for the implementation of the study direction and the relevant study programmes. Provide data on the available funding for the relevant study programmes, as well as the sources of the funding for the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities and their use for the development of the study direction. Provide information on the costs per one student (for each relevant study programme of the study direction) by specifying the headings indicated in the calculation**



## **of costs and the percentage of the funding among the indicated headings.**

The available funds of the study field “Information and communication science” implemented by the University of Latvia are determined by the state budget funding (grant) and income from tuition fees.

The amount of state budget funding for a particular study year is determined in accordance with the agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science and the University of Latvia. The amount of funding is affected by:

- number of study places financed from the state budget,
- baseline cost of the study place in the given year,
- level of the study programme,
- cost ratio for the thematic area of education.

The tuition fees for each programme at the University of Latvia are determined annually based on the estimated cost of the study place (which includes all forecasted costs – staff remuneration, technical support, infrastructure maintenance and administration costs), the expected number of students and market situation. The tuition fee for a particular student is fixed for each study year for the duration of the studies.

Both state budget funding and tuition fees are aggregated in the UL total budget for the fiscal year. The UL budget is established in accordance with the general principles of budgeting and the budgetary procedure established for each year.

The core structural unit implementing the study programme plans the tuition fee revenue for the given calendar year by submitting it to the Department of Studies, which collects it and submits it to the Finance and Accounting Department for the overall UL budget.

According to the budgeting principles of the University of Latvia, the expected revenue of the study field is distributed as follows: 74% of the direct and direct eligible costs of the study field (remuneration of teaching staff, costs of materials and services, costs of premises and other core structural units) (covering all supporting processes – information resources, marketing, IT, financial accounting, management, provision of sports, cultural and social activities, development programmes) – 26%.

The faculties concerned, in cooperation with the Finance and Accounting Department, plan their direct costs for the financial year in question.

The Finance and Accounting Department prepares a joint draft of the UL budget and the Chancellor of the UL directs it to the Senate Finance and Budget Commission, from where it is forwarded to the UL Senate for approval.

After the approval of the current year's budget, the estimated revenue and expenditure of the respective core structural unit are imported into the IT system of the UL, which is linked to the accounting system and provides an opportunity to track the actual financial situation of the core structural unit throughout the year.

The Dean and Executive Director of the Faculty, who implement the operational financial management of the core unit, are responsible for the rational use of the financial resources of the respective faculty within the set budget.

The Finance and Accounting Department is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the

budget and preparing appropriate reports for UL management and controlling organizations.

The financial resources for the study programmes in the information and communication science study field mostly come from the national budget subsidy, as well as faculty revenues from tuition fees. The budget of the Faculty of Social Science in 2018 was EUR 2,088, 779, 66% of which came from financing for the study process. This financing was expected to increase by 5% in 2019.

Finances and support for the research work and participation in scholarly conferences of doctoral students are planned and paid from research project financing, as well as resources that are meant for the development of doctoral studies.

The bachelor's degree programme in communication study programme is the largest one in numerical terms, and its finances mostly are based on tuition fees, with the national budget subsidy representing only 11% of the budget. Costs per full time student amount to EUR 1,881. Of this money, 37% represents compensation for academic personnel, 14% compensation for general and assistance personnel, 23% other costs related to the study programme, and 26% indirect costs related to the UL's centralised provisions. More detailed calculations of the cost of the bachelor's degree programme in communication studies can be found in Appendix 38.

The bachelor's degree programme in information management is basically funded by the national budget, with the subsidy representing 79% of the programme's financing. The cost per full time student is EUR 1,953, with 41% representing compensation for academic personnel, 15% compensation for general and assistance personnel, 18% other study programme costs, and 26% indirect costs. More detailed calculations of the cost of the bachelor's degree programme in information management can be found in Appendix 38.

The master's degree programme in communication science is mostly financed by the national budget (91%), while tuition revenues represent 9%. The cost per student is EUR 2,55, with 40% representing compensation for academic personnel, 15% compensation for general and assistance personnel, 19% other programme costs, and 26% indirect costs. More detailed calculations of the cost of the master's degree programme in communication science can be found in Appendix 38.

The master's degree programme in library science and information receives 95% its funding from the national budget. The cost per student is EUR 2,795, with 44% representing compensation for academic personnel, 16% compensation for general and assistance personnel, 19% other programme costs, and 26% indirect costs. More detailed calculations of the cost of the master's degree programme in library science and information can be found in Appendix 38.

The doctoral study programme in communication science is fully financed by the national budget. The cost per student is EUR 5,233, with 34% representing compensation for academic personnel, 12% compensation for general and assistance personnel, 28% other programme costs (including the Doctoral Studies School, support for dissertation processes, etc.), and 26% indirect costs. More detailed calculations of the cost of the doctoral programme in communication science can be found in Appendix 38.

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

The Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS), University of Latvia (UL) has 4,693.1 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace in rooms that are meant for administrative and scientific processes, representing 57.9% of the floorspace of the building. Auditoriums for the study process represent 2,122.2 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace, with 25 auditoriums of various sizes (Table 16). These are used for all of the study programmes in the faculty. Ten of the 25 auditoriums are fully or partly equipped with modern and stationary multimedia projects, computers and audio equipment. The faculty uses mobile equipment to ensure the study process in auditoriums which are not equipped with a projector and a computer.

Table 16. The auditoriums of the Faculty of Social Sciences, UL

Size of auditorium	Number	%
Up to 50 seats	9	36
51 to 80 seats	12	48
81-120 seats	2	8
121 or more seats	2	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Some classes are taught in FSS computer classrooms to ensure the practical aspects of the study process (75 workstations for students) and at the Multimedia studio. The computers, licences and software of the computer classrooms are renewed each year in accordance with the faculty's financial situation. The FSS, UL communication studies and other study programmes have facilities for practical aspects of the programme in the practical laboratory and the Multimedia studio. The studio has a filming area, as well as two video editing rooms which cover 166.44 m<sup>2</sup>. The study can be used to record materials at HD quality for television stations, as well as audio recordings for radio stations. The studio has eight *Sony* and *Panasonic* video cameras with tripods and ten microphones that are directional or can be pinned to clothing. Students have access to five portable and two stationary professional lighting sets. Editing of recorded materials involves four *Apple* and seven *PC* computers with *Adobe Premiere*, *Adobe Photoshop* and *Final Cut Pro* editing software. Photograph skills are taught with the help of three *Canon* digital cameras. The studio has a modern video editing system that enables a simulation of live television broadcasts. Audio editing involves a special 16-channel sound system that prepares materials for radio stations. Seminars at the studio are taught by a trained video engineer and by professionals from the sector.

The investments that are needed to upgrade the material and technical foundations of the faculty are assessed each year, and an investment plan is prepared to ensure high-quality and uninterrupted study and scientific processes. The infrastructure and material and technical foundations are in good condition. The faculty plans to move to the UL Academic Centre's Letters House in 2023.

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

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

UL Library is included in the Library Register of the Ministry of Culture (BLB1000). It received the accreditation certificate on June 22, 2017, and it was re-awarded the status of National Library for five years.

## ***Library opening hours, access to information resources and services***

The basic principle of the library work is the accessibility of its services to all users, with all departments ensuring the same range and quality of services. The variety of the services offered, the layout of the library facilities and their opening hours will continue to be closely linked to the provision of necessary information to its users.

The opening hours of the UL eight sectoral libraries are conveniently adapted to students' needs. The libraries are open from 9 am to 9 pm on weekdays – with some of them open from 9 am to 6 pm – and from 9 am to 5 pm on Saturdays. The Library of Natural Sciences and the Library of the House of Science are open to UL personnel – students, academics, research and general staff – 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. At the Library of Natural Sciences, the UL personnel have the 24-hour access to free-access stock, self-service book ordering, extension and return, computers, and cell phone charging point. Having purchased copy cards at the Library of Natural Sciences, users have the access to the copy machine at any time of the day. In its turn, the Library of the House of Science offers its readers a free-access collection, two self-service systems for book lending, extension and return, and a self-service wall for using laptops. The UL Library is the first in the Baltic States to provide such facilities and services. The self-service wall is equipped with 36 laptops. Using a student or staff card, UL personnel can take and use laptops for 6 hours a day, moreover, not only in the library area, but anywhere in the building too. The laptops are equipped with licensed programs necessary for students of the UL Faculty of Physics, Mathematics and Optometry.

Four sectoral libraries are open for visitors throughout the year, including summer.

The library of the FSS, UL holds a large part of the UL information and communication science sector collection at Lauvas Street 4, and it is open from Monday to Saturday (60 hours total per week) for user convenience. Users have access to a free collection of necessary publications – 21,204 titles (40,711 copies) as of 1 November 2019. The library is in three rooms with total floorspace of 544 m<sup>2</sup>.

The Faculty of Social Sciences library has 84 workstations, including 18 with computer equipment. Users have access to two copiers, three printers, four scanners and a binding machine. Printed sources of information are on 1,200 metres of shelving.

Students have the right to use all the UL's libraries. An advantage of the library of the FSS is the rich collection of books and periodicals in the field of information and communication science, as well as the presence of reading rooms in the same building where the studies take place.

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

## ***Free services***

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

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

- Delivery of information resources

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

- Self-service

All sectoral libraries offer users the self-service scanning, with 5 sectoral libraries ensuring self-service book ordering, extension and return. With the aid of the equipment, readers can independently issue and return information resources or extend their use. 36 laptops Using the self-service equipment with 36 laptops in the Library of the House of Science UL students, academic and general staff can obtain one of them at their temporary disposal. The service is available 24/7 through the use of UL student or staff card.

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

In the reading rooms, users can make use of reference books and periodicals, stationary and portable computers (both of UL Library and their personal ones), Internet access, including WI-FI which works in all UL buildings. The library of the Faculty of Social Sciences has 56 workstations (19 with and 37 without computers). Reading rooms for students are meant not just for studies and research, but also for meetings and recreation.

- Night subscription, pre-booking of information resources

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

- Delivery of information resources in summer

With this offer, twice a week users can order necessary information resources from the 4 sectoral libraries which are closed in summer, and receive them at the most convenient sectoral library (the Library at Kalpaka Boulevard, at Rainis Boulevard, Library of Natural Sciences, Library of the House of Science).

- Information and Counselling

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

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

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

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

- User training

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

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

Special attention is paid to foreign students. The library has prepared and has been conducting presentations in English "Step by step, the library of UL – for you!", whereas computer classes serve for acquiring skills in using e-resources. To enhance the level of studies, students' knowledge and skills to work independently, to find, critically evaluate and use qualitative information resources and e-tools are paramount. In order to improve the skills and abilities of its users, the Library has developed a training system with seminars offered for different levels of study programmes.

For undergraduate students, they include the presentation "Step by Step: The Library of UL – for You!", the seminars "Electronic Common Catalogue and Primo for Your Successful Studies" (90 min), "Get to Know E-Resources" (90 min) and "E-Resources in the Field" (90 min.). In their turn, students in the Master's study programmes and residents are offered the seminar providing advanced skills in working with the relevant electronic resources, namely, the seminar on "E-Resources in the Field" (90 min).

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

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

Library staff conduct regular seminars and computer classes in the UL branches all over Latvia, i.e. in Alūksne, Bauska, Cēsis, Jēkabpils, Kuldīga, Madona, Tukums and Ventspils.

Library staff conduct regular classes to enhance information literacy of students and academic personnel.

### ***Paid services***

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

- Compiling a list of information resources

In the shortest time, the UL Library specialists prepare a list of information resources on the user's topic of interest, the theme appeared, for example, in the process of studies or developing some

work. The user can order the list electronically by filling in an electronic application form where they can indicate the desired chronological framework, languages, types of information resources (books, journal articles, electronic resources, etc.), etc.

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

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

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

The UL Library compiles the collection in accordance with the fields of studies and academic work of the University, requirements of its study programmes; thus, it provides information for all levels of the UL studies, that is bachelor's, master, doctor's, as well as for research. Replenishing the collection of information resources, the purchase of e-resources is a priority.

New acquisitions for the collection are carried out in accordance with the UL centralised funding, which is approved annually by a UL order.

The allocated funding is used for purchasing necessary books, for subscription to specialised databases and periodicals.

The Library carries out the acquisition of information resources at the request of UL academic staff, at the proposal of the Student Council or at the suggestion of Library staff, with all requests being entered into the ULIS and approved by Dean or Executive Director. Anyone interested can also recommend a particular publication to the collection by submitting their proposal orally or in writing to Library staff. In a situation when the proposal is supported by the Dean/Executive Director of a particular faculty, the Library purchases the publication recommended by the interested party.

As of 1 January 2019, the UL Library provides access to approximately 1.8 million information resources. The collection is based on the UL's study and research infrastructure, and it is offered at 8 sectoral libraries and the Repository.

### ***Literature at the library for the information and communication science study field***

The collection of the FSS library, UL has 12,525 copies as of 1 November 2019. This is the largest, most demanded and most important collection of information and communication science literature in the country (Table 18). There are various encyclopaedias, handbooks, scholarly monographs, textbooks and popular and scientific publications.

Each year, instructors can order the latest publications to improve the courses that they teach. Nearly all course has at least one important textbook that is available to students and instructors. The FSS Library tracks the latest international and local offers of new literature in the area of information and communication science. The primary publishers of academic literature are *Sage* and *Routledge*, and their offers are always monitored so that the literature that is necessary for the information and communication science direction can be ordered and purchased (Table 17)

*Table 17. Increases in the collection of UL SZF library (2013-2019)*

Year	Titles	Copies	Value
2019 (1.11)	113	2111	EUR 2,990
2018	110	154	EUR 4,350
2017	145	162	EUR 3,660
2016	216	295	EUR 4,060
2015	233	378	EUR 8,500
2014	189	294	EUR 5,960
2013	360	522	LVL 10,950

Between 1 January 2010 and 27 October 2019, the UL Library collection related to the information and communication science study direction has included 49,644 copies, of which 12,525 are only at the library of the Faculty of Social Science. Also of key importance is scholarly literature that relates to scholarly research methodology and is of an interdisciplinary nature. As of 1 November 2019, the library of the Faculty of Social Sciences has 570 copies of books about social science ethics, 323 copies of books about scholarly ethics, 734 copies of books about psychology, 648 about economics, etc.

*See: Table 18. The collection of print publications related to the UL information and communication science study field at the UL library and at the FSS, UL library.*

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

In cooperation with the UL Department of Information Technologies, the UL Library ensures the use of the e-resources repository of the University of Latvia.

To guarantee constant free online access to UL scientific achievements, the Library, authors of publications, UL structural units or UL publishing representatives regularly replenish the repository with electronic versions of their publications, digitised information resources of cultural and historical value, UL personnel's PhD theses and their summaries (<http://dspace.lu.lv>).

The Library offers on-site reading rooms for accessing digitised copyrighted publications.

As of 1 November 2019, the repository has more than 44,958 publications, and 2,131 relate to information and communication science.

### **Databases**

In agreement with the UL Strategic Plan 2010–2020, the UL Library is increasing the share of e-resources and developing remote access to e-resources to enable readers to access resources remotely.

In 2019, the UL subscribes to 34 e-resource platforms (which contain e-books, e-journals, reference resources, tools, multimedia, statistics, and mixed-format databases). They make available 17,592 full-text e-journals (including individual subscriptions), 2.5 million full texts of doctoral and master's theses from around the world, 4 statistical databases, 2 research tools, 9 reference databases, and 2 research platforms. The UL also connects to 122 credible open access databases with multi-format materials. Each year, the Library offers 110 new electronic resources on average. Overall, on 25.09.2019 the UL Library purchased 1311 eBooks, with 160,000 eBooks available by the *ProQuest Ebook Academic Complete* subscription.

Simultaneously, the UL Library regularly provides its users with trial access to various databases. Within the funding granted to the Library, the number of databases is purposefully assessed, and the usability of the subscribed databases is analysed.

The list of e-resources available in the Library section of the UL portal facilitates the search in databases. More information about the e-resources is available through the UL Library webpage "E-



resources from A to Z" (<http://www.biblioteka.lu.lv/e-resursi/a-z/a/>).

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

### ***Subscribed E-resources for the information and communication science study direction***

#### **E-journals**

**EBSCO Academic Research Complete** is one of the most valuable scientific information resources, with information from more than 12,500 full text and 7,300 peer reviewed journals. The database also has annotations from 12,500 journals and 13,200 books, reports and conference materials.

**EBSCO Host** is a multisector database with E-books, E-journals and other E-resources with several full text and review databases. *EBSCO* includes E-books and journals from publishing houses such as *Wiley-Blackwell*, *Springer*, *Taylor & Francis Group*, *BioMed Central*, *Brill Academic Publishers*, *Bentham Science Publishers* and others. *EBSCO Host* also has specialised information and communication science databases:

- **Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA)** has an index of approximately 700 periodicals, as well as books and research reports dating back to the 1960s as well as summaries of articles related to library science, information management, etc.
- **Newspaper Source** is a full text database of newspaper, television and radio news from newspapers in the United States, as well as international and regional newspapers.
- **Central & Eastern European Academic Source** is a database with more than 400 full text journals in areas such as economics, politics, medicine, law, information and library science, literature science, linguistics, and history and sociology as applicable to Central and Eastern European countries.

**Emerald Insight** is a full-text database in areas of science such as economics, business, bookkeeping and management, library science and information science, education, medicine, etc.

**JSTOR** is a database of journals, books and original sources with several collections, with access to journals from the world's leading publishers: Sage Publications, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Blackwell Publishing, Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, John Wiley & Sons, etc.

**Oxford Journals** is a collection with access to more than 280 authoritative and leading journals that have been published by the world's most important scientific organisations. The database has full text journals with a high level of quotability index indicators in various areas of science, including information and communication science.

**Sage Journals Online** offers a database of full text Sage journals with articles from more than 500 journals in areas such as the humanities, the social sciences, etc.

**SpringerLink** offers access to more than 6 million articles from more than 3,400 magazines covering the exact sciences, the humanities and the social sciences.

**Taylor & Francis Social Science and Humanities Library** offers access to full texts from more than 1,100 scientific journals.

#### **E-books**

**Dawsonera** is an E-book platform with E-books that have been purchased by the UL Library from the world's leading publishers such as *Blackwell Publishing*, *Cambridge University Press*, *Springer Verlag*, *John Wiley & Sons, Inc.*, etc. The full text E-books at the library are available in the eBook

Catalogue, which offers search functions. Each book includes bibliographic information, an annotation and the full text of the book.

**EBSCO eBook Collection** is a multisectoral database platform of E-books, E-journals and other E-resources with several full text and review databases. The E-books and journals come from publishers such as *Wiley-Blackwell*, *Springer*, *Taylor & Francis Group*, *BioMed Central*, *Brill Academic Publishers*, *Bentham Science Publishers*, etc.

## Dissertations

**ProQuest Dissertations and Theses** is the largest database of dissertations and master's theses in the world, with more than 2.3 million texts among which more than 1.9 million can be downloaded in full text and in PDF format. The full texts are available for most dissertations that have been added to the database since 1997. Some 2,000 new PDF documents are added to the database each week, which means more than 90,000 new texts each year. The database has information about the humanities, the social sciences, the natural sciences and medicine. Information in the database dates back to 1637 and continues to the present day. All dissertations that have been published since 1980 and all master's theses that have been published since 1998 have summaries that are written by their authors.

## Information resources

**Letonika.lv** is an information and translation system that offers systematised and encyclopaedic information and translation information. The system allows users to search and work with information from 11 encyclopaedias and other information resources, 13 dictionaries (translation, explanatory, terminological), as well as a collection with 10,000 images, audio recordings and videos. The database also has a Latvian literature library with 200 full text literary works, as well as language support collection with materials to assist the Latvian language. *Letonika.lv* is a guide into Latvian culture, history, language, nature and literature.

## News

**LETA** is the Latvian national information agency, and it offers databases named "News" and "Archive" to offer an opportunity to search for published news, photos, videos, news releases, articles from Latvian publications, statistics and other information. The *LETA* business portal *Nozare.lv* has sectoral information for businesspeople and others who are interested in it.

## Other resources

**Sage Research Methods** is a research method library with more than 1,000 books, publications, journal articles and other resources from the world's leading scientists in the field of social sciences. *SAGE Research Methods* is an important online tool for researchers. It has several sections, and the UL has access to two of the library sections – *SAGE Research Methods – Books and Reference*, as well as *SAGE Research Methods Cases* (case study materials about research projects, with more than 1,100 case studies which reflect the research challenges and successes that researchers have experienced. The system helps to understand why researchers chose the relevant methods, how they overcame problems in their research, and what they did differently than that which is theoretically described in journal articles and textbooks. *The Methods Map*, in turn, is a tool which makes it easy to find the most appropriate methods for research.

**Scopus** is a database from the *Elsevier* publishing house with bibliographic and quotation information from multisectoral scientific publications.

**Web of Science (WoS)** is a research platform from the *Clarivate Analytics* company, offering unified access to information about publications in major scholarly journals and quotations, which

makes it possible to evaluate the scientific achievements of authors. The database has scientific information about more than 2,000 journals in the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities and art, offering bibliographic and quotation information about articles, summaries, and other information. The database has extensive search, selection and result analysis opportunities. Web of Science has offered information since 1990, and it has several quotation index databases.

**Freely accessed E-resources in the information and communication science direction**  
(see <https://www.biblioteka UL.lv/e-resursi/nozares/>)

The UL Library has information about various freely accessed E-resources. For the information and communication science direction, particularly important are the *Bookyards*, *De Gruyter Open*, *Journals for Free*, *Online Dictionary of Social Sciences*, *Palgrave Open*, *Periodika.lv*, *Project Gutenberg* and other databases.

*Table 19. Statistics about the use of multisectoral databases.*

*Please see attached.*

## **Primo Discovery**

### ***Primo Discovery***

In autumn 2016, to modernise the availability of electronic resources, the UL Library started implementing the latest web service *Primo Discovery* and *SFX*.

*Primo Discovery* is a search engine that gives the possibility to browse simultaneously all the UL Library information resources in the UL i-cloud (subscribed and open-access online databases, digital libraries, electronic catalogue, UL Library-created bibliographic databases), access full texts, order and extend the use of information resources from the UL Library collection. The programme sorts the list of results by relevance, customises search results by 10 criteria, provides access to user's account information and other services available to users of the Common Catalogue.

For ensuring *Primo Discovery* services, the *SFX* snap-in is being implemented, and it helps information resources (databases and their content units) network and link to the *Primo* central index, where information is searched.

The collection of the library is line with the development of studies and scientific research, because it is supplemented each year with the most important information resources in accordance with the informational needs of academic personnel and students.

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

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

In the case of elected academic positions, as well as the acting academic staff, the recruitment and selection are regulated by the "[Regulatory enactments on academic and administrative positions at the University of Latvia](#)." According to the regulations, the following academic positions exist at the University of Latvia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher, lecturer,

researcher, assistant, research assistant.

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

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

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

If the Senate chooses to decline the proposal from the department and not to publish vacancies, a visiting academic may be recruited; while if the respective department considers a member of hourly-paid staff to be more relevant to the development plans and needs of the faculty, the prospective employee concludes a contract for a specified period (usually for the duration of the study course). In such cases, the decisions relating to the candidates' recruitment and selection are taken by the structural units, i.e. faculties. Centralized in these cases is only control that ensures that the unit's remuneration is in compliance with internal and external laws and regulations.

The Rector of the University of Latvia concludes an employment agreement with the person elected for the entire term of office.

The Department of Information and Library Studies and the Department of Communication Studies, which offer the information and communication science study direction, has professors, associate professors and docents who are leading specialists in several areas. See Appendix 45 "Information about recruitment and/or employment of the teaching staff of the study field "Information and Communication Science" at the University of Latvia."

**3.5. Specify whether there are common procedures for ensuring the qualification of the academic staff members and the work quality in place and provide the respective assessment thereof. Specify the options for all teaching staff members to improve their qualification (including the information on the involvement of the teaching staff in**

**different activities, the incentives for their involvement, etc.). Provide the respective examples and specify the way the added value of the possibilities used for the implementation of the study process and the improvement of the study quality is evaluated.**

One of the key aspects of Human Resource Development as stipulated in the UL Development Strategy for 2016-2020 is the advancement of the UL academic staff professional development system. The UL is aware of the changes in the role of academic staff, who play a key role in ensuring the quality of studies and acquisition of knowledge, skills and competence, and therefore, in line with the UL Strategy a single UL academic staff professional development system is introduced by amending internal regulatory documents and offering to academic staff professional development opportunities. The professional development of the UL academic staff is organised in accordance with the Republic of Latvia Cabinet regulations No 662 of 11.09 2018., Regulation on Requirements for Necessary Education and Professional Qualification, and Procedure of Continuing Professional Development of Educators where paragraph 16 states: "Educators of higher education and colleges shall, by the end of the term of their election, undertake a vocational development programme on innovations in the higher education system, or the higher education didactics, or the management of educational work at 160 academic hours (including at least 60 contact hours). Professional development may include international mobility and participation in conferences and seminars, as attested by the documents submitted, and is in line with the objective of professional development."

The Department of Studies of the University of Latvia and the Adult Education Centre of the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art of the University of Latvia provide informative, consultative and methodological support to the UL academic staff in the field of the higher education didactics. The Adult Education Centre of the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art of the University of Latvia offers a vocational development programme "Didactics of Higher Education: modern theories and practices", as well as continuing education programmes "Pedagogical aspects of the development of study programmes in higher education", "The professional development of the competence of the student trustee." Several instructors from the information and communication science study field have taken the course on student curators.

On the completion of the continuing education programme "Methodology for the formulation and evaluation of the learning outcomes," programme directors and academic staff target the updating of their study courses and the mapping of the learning outcomes of the respective study programmes and study courses. This ongoing education programme has been taken by several instructors from the information and communication science study field.

The UL academic staff has the opportunity to advance the English-language skills by completing the continuing training programme "Professional English Language Enhancement Course for Academic Staff" at the Centre for Applied Linguistics of the UL Faculty of Humanities. In recent years this programme has been completed by several instructors from the information and communication science study field. Other faculty members have improved their English language skills via other programmes and various language courses.

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

instructors regularly take this course.

To promote collegial learning and identify good practices in teaching, the continuing education programme “Promoting the colleague experience exchange of academic staff” where academic staff carries out peer observation, thereby directly promoting the exchange of teaching experience among academic staff and contributing to the UL organisational development has been developed. UL academic staff working with freshman students are a special target group for continuing training and as such are offered a continuing education programme “Professional development advising first-year students”. In particular, academic staff in continuing education programmes welcome the opportunity of study process modelling, testing new learning methods.

All of these programmes are based on an analysis of the professional improvement needs of instructors in the context of higher education development trends. As part of the professional improvement system for UL academic personnel, the UL Study Department conducted an electronic survey of academic personnel, which obtained information about the timely professional improvement needs of instructors from all faculties. Several of them said that they were prepared to work on the content of ongoing education, offering it to colleagues in accordance with the need for professional and didactic improvements. After the completion of each programme, participants are surveyed, and the results of the survey are examined. Participation in ongoing education programmes is voluntary or based on a recommendation from administrators at the relevant faculty.

In preparing the self-evaluation of the study direction, information was gathered about the opportunities which instructors in the information and communication science study direction used to improve their qualifications during the reporting period (Table 20). The data show that faculty members have used various professional improvement opportunities. Particularly popular are conferences at which information about the latest in the relevant area of science can be obtained, along with involvement in the work of professional organisations, as well as training as part of courses, summer schools and seminars.

*Table 20. The Department of Information and Library Science Studies and Department of Communication Studies, FSS, UL faculty member growth facilitation indicators (number).*

*Please see attached.*

The implication of ESF project “Restoration of Academic Personnel and Improvement of Competences at the University of Latvia” (Agreement No 8.2.2.0/18/A/010, Reg No ESS2018/209) allowed instructors to go on an internship at *Tilde*, which is the leading technology localisation company in the Baltic States and at the *SKDSK* market, marketing and public opinion research centre. Specialised courses (e.g., English language, public speaking skills, skills of scientific work and publications) related to this project have been taken by several faculty members from the information and communication science study field.

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

67% of people who have been elected to academic posts in the information and communication science study direction at the FSS, UL hold a doctorate, while 80% of instructors from other faculties who teach classes at the faculty have a doctoral degree. Hourly instructors who teach some courses are experienced professionals in the areas of information and communication who hold a doctoral or master's degree and have substantial practical work experience and reputation in the relevant area.

The English or other foreign language talents of instructors make it possible to teach some classes in English, and that has been done for several years at the bachelor's and master's degree level. The Latvian language skills of faculty members comply with requirements in this area, and the procedure of state language skills tests for certain jobs allows any class in the study direction to be taught in Latvia.

The workload for academic personnel is calculated on the basis of the principle that of the total annual workload of 1,600 hours, 1,000 hours are devoted to academic work, while 600 hours are devoted to scholarly research. Academic work includes advising bachelor's final papers (16 hours per year), master's theses (24 hours per year) and Ph.D. thesis (50 hours per year), as well as reviewing Ph.D. (20 hours per work). Lectors and assistants without a scientific degree do methodological and research work to prepare new study materials (up to 20 hours per semester). This is more or less in line with the developmental goals of the information and communication science direction – to become one of the leading information and communication study centres in the Baltic States, to provide high-level information and communication sector specialists to the labour market, and to become a leading information and communication science, as well as interdisciplinary research centre in the Northern European agreement. The division of the workload gives preference to academic work, thus giving priority to the first two goals while also ensuring time and human resources for the systematic achievement of the third goal.

The composition of faculty members has been rejuvenated substantially during the reporting period, and a process of replacing generations has begun and will continue in future years. Information on personnel changes see: Appendix 47.

This process has had a positive effect on the quality of the study process because of the rejuvenation of instructors. This also makes the development of the programme more promising and sustainable.

Most instructors are members of academic and professional organisations such as the European Communication Research and Education Association, the Baltic Media Researchers Association and the European Public Relations, Education and Research Association.

Foreign faculty members visit the UL each year with guest lectures as part of the ERASMUS programme or individually. A partnership with scholars from other countries will facilitate the higher education reforms that focus on the internationalisation of studies. The outgoing mobility indicators of faculty members in the UL study direction "Information and communication science" are not at a high level. Mobility is hindered by the everyday workload of faculty members, a lack of instructors who can replace them, and a low level of financing for science, which limits opportunities to do research work abroad.

A key factor in increasing qualifications occurs when faculty members spend time at foreign universities to exchange experiences, deliver guest lectures, and take part in conferences and seminars. The outgoing mobility of faculty members and the increasing number of times that they do so help to reach the study direction goal of becoming one of the leading information and communication science study centres in the Baltic States. Facilitating outgoing mobility is defined as one of the direction's developmental priorities (see the information and communication science

direction development plan). There is a more detailed faculty member mobility plan for the next reporting period, which states that each faculty member from the information and communication science direction must participate in outgoing mobility programmes at least once during their elected term. To monitor this plan and to involve instructors in the mobility programmes, this topic will be discussed at annual meetings involving instructors and administrators of the department and the faculty.

A review of the mobility of faculty members from the sector is attached as Appendix 5. The mobility plan for the next reporting period, in turn, is depicted in Table 21.

*Table 21. The outgoing mobility plan for faculty members, 2020–2026.*

Academic year	Minimal number of participants	Optimal number of participants
2020/2021	2	3–4
2021/2022	2	3–4
2022/2023	2	3–4
2023/2024	2	3–4
2024/2025	2	3–4
2025/2026	2	3–4

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

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

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

Academic support in academic matters is managed centrally by the UL Department of Student Services and the responsible persons with the respective faculties: director of the study programme, study advisor, trustee, mentor, coordinator, academic staff, and the UL Students' Council and Faculty Students' Councils. Advice on the use of library and Internet resources is provided by the UL Library. The University of Latvia Library provides consultations on the use of the library and Internet resources. Table 22 shows examples of key tasks to be performed by student support units / staff.

*Table 22. Examples of key tasks to be performed by student support units/staff.*



Structural unit/staff	Key responsibilities
<b>Faculty Student Council</b>	Represents students at national and international level, defends and represents students' interests in academic, material and cultural life, participates in the faculty council, observers participate in tests
<b>Trustee</b>	Informs students of the developments in the study process, provides individual support to those students who face difficulties entering academic environment of the UL and initiates adaptation and team-building measures.
<b>Coordinator, study advisor</b>	Provides study advice, assists in day-to-day issues related to the study process, files study records, <u>advises</u> on the Information System of the University of Latvia (LUIS).
<b>Mentor</b>	A senior student who helps freshman students adapt to the study environment and share their experience.
<b>Student Council (SC)</b>	The purpose of the SC is to represent UL students and to defend their rights and interests. The SC represents the students' interests in academic issues by electing student representatives to the decision-making bodies of the University of Latvia, considering issues related to the study process and its improvement.
<b>Director of the study programme</b>	Organises and manages the development of a study programme in accordance with the requirements of the specific scientific or economic sector, cooperates with employers and internship sites in matters of study content, evaluates and approves individual study modules and individual study plans, etc.
<b>Department of Student Services</b>	Organises the admissions process, advises the Faculty and students on mobility programmes, study, social and cultural issues, advises and organises career coaching and consultancy. Organises adaptation measures for students, provides training for trustees, mentors, organises cooperation with employers, etc.

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

The Career Centre provides the following services to students:

- individual counselling for future studies and careers, setting up an individual career plan, providing support for the transition between different levels of education and from education to the labour market;
- workshops for career planning skills ("Career planning and development skills," "My first job interview," "Stress management," etc.);
- Internet resource – Career Centre home page (information available in both Latvian and English) <https://www.karjera.lu.lv/> and <https://www.karjera.lu.lv/eng/> provides up-to-date information on career planning issues, occupational information and the labour market;
- the "E-career" electronic resource <https://ekarjera.lu.lv/lv/login> and <https://ekarjera.lu.lv/login>, which enables students to quickly find their internship opportunities and jobs by adding their CVs to a database and employers to recruit employees by listing information on job vacancies in the database.

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

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

The assessment of infrastructure accessibility for persons with disabilities has been conducted in cooperation with *Apeirons*. The results obtained are considered both in the construction of the new infrastructure and in the provision of study programmes.

Support for students in the information and communication science study direction programmes is

provided by the University of Latvia and the FSS. Study programme methodologists play an important role in this. Their job includes management of the study programme's student work: 1) Providing consultations to students about the organisation of the study process at the UL, explanations of UL normative acts, and informative support about all aspects of the study process; 2) organisation of examinations (preparing the schedule, reaching agreement with departments, documentation of exams, etc.); 3) entering the grades of students into the LUIS; 4) preparing and monitoring documentations of student studies in line with UL normative acts; 5) preparing and controlling admission and graduation documents for students; 6) monitoring the implementation of the study programme in accordance with specified procedures; 7) monitoring tuition payments; 8) monitoring student registrations; 9) monitoring sabbaticals. FSS methodologists work with student service representatives, study programme directors and methodologists from other study areas in the implementation of study programmes and in the management of student work. They also do everyday things that are necessary for the organisation and management of the faculty's work.

General personnel from the FSS, UL are also involved in the information and communication study direction – the dean, the executive director, two department directors, three study methodologists, an engineer and IT specialist, the faculty's secretary, a consultant, the faculty's administrator, the faculty's public relations specialist, an external contacts co-ordinator for the ERASMUS programme, a photographer, and the deputy executive director for study work. The FSS library has a chief librarian and two librarians. Management personnel at the FSS include four guards, two coatroom employees and a janitor.

The interests of students in the information and communication science study direction are also represented by the student self-governance system of the FSS, UL. Its job is to represent students at the national and international level, as well as to defend and represent the interests of students with respect to academic, material and cultural issues at the UL and in other countries and institutions. The self-governance representatives have the right to take part in decision-making institutions at all levels of the UL, as well as to take part as observers during exams. They have veto rights at the university's Senate, the faculty council and the Constitutional Council when it comes to aspects of student interests. The FSS student self-governance system has a Culture and Sports Commission, Academic Commission, Social Affairs Commission, Public Relations Commission, a chairperson, a deputy chairperson and an office administrator. Each commission supports students by organising their events, informing students about important issues, helping them to deal with problems, and facilitating co-operation with older students. The self-governance system facilitates academic honesty and informs students about the threats of plagiarism. The Sports Sub-Commission organises orienteering competitions, sports events, various championships, etc. The Social Affairs Commission organises a "warm paw" week, a blood donor week, etc. The Culture Commission is responsible for the Aristotle festival, acoustic Christmas, spring ball and a seminar for new members. The Marketing Sub-Commission looks for sponsors to supplement the celebration and event budget. If students have any problems related to studies, the study process, instructors, etc., the self-governance system listens to the complaints and deals with the problems. At the level of the faculty or university, it also deals with issues that have to do with the rights and interests of students.

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

### **4.1. Description and assessment of the directions of scientific research and/or artistic**

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

Scientific research work in the UL information and communication science field relates to the "Media and communication" sector and its subsectors - "Library Science," "Communication Theory," and "Other Media Resource and Communication Subsectors." It also makes a major investment in pursuing interdisciplinary research.

The strategy for this work is set out in the "University of Latvia Research Programme, 2015-2020," as approved by the UL Senate via Decision No 268, 25 January 2016. The document defines four areas of development: 1) Scientific capacity and development of competitiveness; 2) compliance of research to economic needs and knowledge transfer; 3) human resource development; and 4) facilitation of international scientific co-operation. The mission of the programme is to achieve the strategic goal for UL development - scientific excellence. Scientific research must be based on 1) the base financing for studies and research to ensure the basic work of universities; 2) contribution financing or *ex post* financing that is granted for achieved research results; and 3) development financing (*ex ante* financing), which is obtained on a competitive basis.

Scientific research work in the information and communication science field is part of the defined research programme "University of Latvia Research Programmes, 2015-2020" and the "Social and Law Science Sector" and the "Political Science and Communication Science Subsectors" (Table 23). The mission is to study issues that are of key importance aspects of social sciences, as well as important issues in the Latvian economy which have a high potential for the transfer of knowledge and publications that can be quoted. The social and law science sectors have potential for interdisciplinary co-operation at the UL and elsewhere. Technology transfer, as well as educational and social management areas, the social science sector group can partner with most of the other scientific sector groups that are represented at the UL. Sustainable society, human resources development and quality of life issues have potential for interdisciplinary co-operation with the humanities sector group and with certain sectors in the areas of exact sciences, medicine and life sciences.

*Table 23. Compliance of the scientific research work of the information and communication science direction to the UL social and law science sector groups' developmental directions and goals*

Please see attached.

The doctoral study programme "Communications science" conforms to the developmental directions and goals of the UL social and legal science sector groups. It ensure the development of human resources and regeneration of scholarly personnel. The programme also helps scholars to develop their capacity and competitiveness by publishing research results, participating in projects, appearing at conferences and taking part in science communications events. Doctoral students are involved in international academic organisations, partner with foreign colleagues and are involved in mobility.

Scientific personnel from the information and communication science study field have also been involved in creative artistic events. See Appendix 46.

#### **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.**

There are several ways in which scientific research and artistic creativity relate to the study process:

- Students (and particularly master's degree students and doctoral students) can take part in research conducted by the direction's academic personnel as voluntary participants or in the context of certain courses in which they can earn credits for their participation, thus gaining a better understanding of research processes (for more detail, see the descriptions of specific study projects);
- Students are involved in research work when they prepare their annual papers, bachelor's thesis, master's thesis and dissertation, and they can also participate in research work if there is appropriate financing;
- Instructors in the direction use the results of their research and that of colleagues in developing course content;
- Instructors in the direction prepare new study courses on the basis of theoretical conclusions and new knowledge that they have tested in research projects;
- Doctoral students can conduct research with the help of equipment of the UL State National Importance Research Centre for Socio-Economic and Public Leadership;
- Instructors from the direction help to involve students in artistic creativity projects if there is available financing.

Scholarly research results are regularly used in the study process. The knowledge created by scholarly work of faculty members in the "Information and communications Science" direction is regularly included in the updating and enrichment of study course content. Of essential importance are scientific projects such as "Living Together with Difficult Memories and Diverse Identities (LIVINGMEMORIES)" (ERA.NET RUS Plus-S&T, EU-FP7 Initiatives' Project). These results are included in the master's degree course "Collective memory and communication." Another project, "Latvia's Media Ecology: Analysis of Changes Caused by the Fourth Industrial Revolution" (Latvian Science Council Fundamental and Applied research programme), has developed research approaches and new knowledge that are the foundation of the "Media ecosystem" study course.

The link between scientific research and the study process is in line with accepted practices in the field of information and communication science in the world, and it relates to the study direction's developmental goal – to become one of the leading information and communication science study and research centres in the Baltic States and the Northern European region.

**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.**

Since 2006, faculty members and doctoral students from the Department of Communication Studies, FSS, UL have been involved in the *European Communication Research and Education*

*Association* (ECREA). The organisation's Intranet has been a key factor in integrating these people into the community of communication researcher sin Europe. Of equal importance has been participation in the activities of the association's thematic sections, as well as in network communities. For nearly 20 years, instructors from the department have taken part in the regional *Baltic Media Researchers Association* (BMRA). The Department of Communication Studies is an institutional member of the *European Public Relations Education and Research Association* (EUPRERA), which seeks to integrate the academic community and the professional environment so as to facilitate new knowledge, as well as in the *European Communication Research and Education Association's Central and East-European (CEE) Network*.

Faculty members from the Department of Information and Library Studies take part in the unified Nordic and Baltic Nordic Research School in Library and Information Science's (NORSLIS) doctoral programme. Some faculty members are involved in other local and international academic organisations with thematic profiles that are in line with their scientific interests. Such participation develops international co-operation and also makes it possible to update the content of study courses and study programmes, as well as to quickly learn about new and important aspects of the sector.

During the 2017/2018 academic year, the information management study programme concluded agreements with two internationally recognised experts, Kuldar Aas and Tarvo Kärberg (Estonia), on teaching the course "Electronic Documents: Digital Storage."

Since 2015, the Faculty of Social Sciences has had a UNESCO media and information literacy office, which is high praise for the faculty's work. The office creates a knowledge-based platform for the development of media and information literacy in Latvia, also conducting research in this area. Information and communication science direction study programmes have a good partnership with the UNESCO Latvian National Commission. Professor Vita Zelče is a member of its Communication and Information Sector Council, and she attended the UNESCO General Conference in Paris in 2017 as an expert.

Academic personnel from the information and communication science field have also been involved in research networks organised by foreign universities and other institutions. Professor Vita Zelče, for instance, has taken part in an interdisciplinary researcher network, "Changing Conditions and Relationships: Private Photos as a Source of Central European History" (German History Institute in Warsaw, 2014–2018), as well as "Historical Trauma Studies" (University of Tampere, since 2018). Assistant Professor Marita Zitmane takes part in a gender equality support and research network organised by the Swedish Embassy, "Networking Women Fika." Assistant Professor Laura Ardava-Āboliņa took part in producing a collective monograph, "Twenty Years After: 1989 and the Politics of Memory" at the University of Florida (2010–2014) and in a collective monograph, "Women Presidents and Prime Ministers" at Penn State Greater Allegheny in the United States (2012–2017).

Academic personnel from the information and communication science study field have taken part in several international scientific projects during the reporting period:

- *COMPACT: From Research to Policy Through Raising Awareness of the State of the Art on Social Media and Convergence (Horizon2020-ICT-2016-2017) (Information and Communications Technologies Call)*
- *Living Together with Difficult Memories and Diverse Identities (LIVINGMEMORIES) (ERA.NET RUS Plus-S&T, EU-FP Initiatives' Project)*
- *Children Born of War – Past, Present, Future (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Innovative Training Networks, H2020-MSCA-ITN-2014)*

This process has allowed faculty members to accumulate valuable experience in terms of

international teams of researchers, to expand their scientific contacts, and to write scholarly papers.

The internationalisation of the studies of the UL information and communication science study field has been facilitated by international student conferences and summer schools that are organised by the Department of Information and Library Studies and the Department of Communication Studies.

Students from the Department of Information and Library Studies have a unique opportunity to take part in *BOBCATSSS*, which is an annual student-organised international conference in one of the countries of Europe to discuss important aspects about library science and information science. The conference is organised by students from library and information science study programmes in at least two countries. During the reporting period, University of Latvia students and instructors took part in 16 *BOBCATSSS* symposiums in a row.

In 2018, the symposium was organised by students from the UL Department of Information and Library studies under the leadership of Lector Liene Viļuma and in partnership with Hungarian students from the Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest. The conference, "The Power of Reading," was held in Rīga from January 24–26 (<https://bobcatsss2018.lu.lv>), attracting 150 participants who prepared a collection of conference reports, "*Proceedings of BOBCATSSS 2018.*" Part of the process was a limited elective course in the bachelor's degree programme, "Organisation of International Conferences (Organisation of the International *BOBCATSSS* Conference on Library Science and Information Science)." The course was taken by 15 students who then took part in organising the conference.

From 2011 until 2018, the Department of Communication Studies organised a summer school, "*Riga Summer School! Find. Feel. Film,*" at which participants learned about the production of short documentary films and heard lectures about the new media, gender research, cinema and digital stories. The summer schools were organised by Lector Kaspars Rūklis. The conference had a special theme each year, including the identity of Rīga, the diversity of perceptions about history, media literacy, digital media content, etc. 38 short documentaries were produced over the course of the years. Of these, several were presented at international forums such as "Dialogue of Cultures" (St Petersburg), at the Latvian centre in Rockville, Maryland, in the United States, at the universities of participants in the summer school, and at a "*Living Together with Difficult Memories and Diverse Identities (LIVINGMEMORIES)*" conference in Tartu. The best films were aired on Latvian Public Television. Each year, the summer school had 15–20 students from EU countries, Turkey, Georgia, Russia, Australia, Hong Kong, India, Taiwan, the United States and Bolivia. Support for the school was provided by the German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, DAAD*), the State Education Development Agency (SEDA), the Rīga City Council, Tele2, and other institutions. The "*Riga Summer School! Find. Feel. Film*" summer school proved to be a popular international brand for the UL. There are plans to relaunch the summer school after a strengthening of its material, technical and financial foundations.

The Department of Information and Library Studies partnered with the Latvian National Library in 2018 and 2019 to organise international summer schools for digital social sciences and humanities, "*The Baltic Summer School of Digital Humanities.*" The theme of the first one was "*Text Mining, Mapping & Data Visualisation,*" and it was held from July 17–20, 2018 (<http://www.digitalhumanities.lv/bssdh/2018>). Students learned about the computerised processing, mapping and visualisation of text. Primary topics included analysis of corps of texts, computer stylisation, data journalism, data modelling, data visualisation, fake news technologies and how to recognise them, and the use of geographic information systems in the humanities and social sciences. Lectures and seminars during the process were headed by 12 researchers and

professionals from Latvia, Poland, Estonia, Sweden, Lithuania and the Netherlands, with more than 30 students attending the summer schools. The knowledge that was tested during the 2018/2019 summer school was used to prepare a new course, “Digital Humanities and Social Sciences” (4 CP) for the master’s degree programmes in communication science, library science and information, and Baltic philology.

The second summer school theme was “*Essentials of Coding and Encoding*,” and it took place from July 23-26, 2019, aimed at facilitating learning about the fundamentals of software design and text coding in the humanities and social sciences (<http://www.digitalhumanities.lv/bssdh/2019>). The topics of lectures and seminars included the fundamental principles of software design in the *Python* language; types of coding (marking) texts); theme modelling; analysis and visualisation of metadata with *Palladio*; digitalisation of newspapers in Europe (collections of digitalised newspapers); the principles of machine translation algorithms; the movement of eyes in researching how print and digital texts are read; as well as digital sociolinguistics. Lectures and seminars were headed by 10 instructors from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Finland, Germany, Belgium and Bosnia and Herzegovina, with some 40 participants taking part. The information from the 2019/2020 summer school was used to prepare a new course, “Computerised Text Analysis and Data Visualisation” (4 CP) for the master’s degree programmes in communication science, library science and information, and Baltic philology.

Faculty members and researchers from the “Information and communications science” study direction will continue to take part in applications for *Horizon* programme projects, taking part in international researcher consortiums and planning taking on the tasks of co-ordinating projects. There are also plans to become more actively involved in *COST* activities and research networks. During the 2021/2022 academic year, there will be an international summer school as part of the Latvian Science Council Fundamental and Applied Project Programme project “Jeopardizing Democracy through Disinformation and Conspiracies: Reconsidering the Experience of Latvia.”

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

Academic personnel from the UL information and communication science studies field have been involved in a diverse range of scientific research work. In general terms, all of this work is targeted in accordance with the primary research areas of the Advanced Social and Political Research Institute (ASPRI), FSS, UL: 1) Latvia in international relations, particularly with Russia and new European neighbours; 2) democracy and minorities; 3) regional development in Latvia; and 4) the media, information and culture. The planning and co-ordination between the ASPRI and the departments of the FSS determine the topics of scholarly research work, as well as links between it and regional interests and the content and future development of study programme content. This partnership ensures effective scientific work organisations and an institutional structure. Research work in the information and communication science study direction focuses on five sub-topics:

1) The current situation and history of the national media and communication industries; 2) interactions between people and communication technologies; 3) the availability of information resources and knowledge, information literacy and media literacy; 4) social memory and the representations of and communication about history; and 5) the communication of identity in the present-day society. In future, it will be fundamentally necessary to include important aspects of global communication and the development of the information society in the ASPRI's primary research areas.

During the reporting period, academic personnel from the information and communication direction took part in at least 17 UL, national and international projects (Table 24). Among them are prestigious Horizon2020 and EU-FP7 initiative projects, National Research Programme projects, as well as fundamental and applied research organised by the Latvian Science Council (LSC). While this self-evaluation report was being written, several project-related grant applications were being prepared.

*Table 24. Scientific projects in which academic personnel from the information and communication studies field have been involved*

*Please see attached.*

During the reporting period, academic personnel from the information and communication science study field have published some 450 scholarly papers and chapters in scholarly monographs, as well as 14 scholarly monographs and collections of papers (Appendix 37).

During the reporting period, faculty members from the Department of Information and Library Studies and the Department of Communication Studies took part in some 200 conferences with papers, and approximately one-half of these were international conferences.

Generally speaking, the scholarly research work of academic personnel from the information and communication science field must be seen as successful, and the results of this work has very much helped to improve the quality of the content of study programmes in all areas.

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

The involvement of students in research projects is of key importance in the development of science and the regeneration of faculty members and researchers. Several bachelor's and master's theses and Ph.D. thesis have been written and defended during the reporting period on research topics that are of importance. Several doctoral students are involved in study work, helping instructors to lead seminars in their research areas, and serving as academic advisors for annual papers and bachelor's theses that are in line with the themes of their dissertations. Doctoral students also review master's theses, thus accumulating the review experience that is very much necessary in scientific work. This ensures the involvement of students at all levels in research and the resulting integration of knowledge in the study process.

There are several ways in which students are involved in research work:

- During their first years of studies, students are given a chance to take part in the information



and communication science direction research projects that are organised by academic personnel and doctoral students, doing so as volunteers who gather data, etc.;

- During the bachelor's degree programme, students are offered packets of topics for their annual papers, and students can choose them for their annual papers and then their bachelor's paper under the leadership of a specific instructor. Topics in the packet are in line with the scientific work topics of instructors and/or important research projects being pursued by academic personnel from the information and communication science direction. Packets are updated at the beginning of each academic year and are made available to students at least one month before they have to submit the topics of their bachelor's theses;
- Bachelor's theses are written on the basis of continuing on with the topic of annual papers on the basis of the principle of further development. When choosing topics for their annual papers, students are encouraged to consider whether and how the topic can be developed in the form of empirical research for the bachelor's thesis and, perhaps, for a master's thesis and dissertation. If a bachelor's degree programme student hopes to link his or her professional career to academic work, then he or she can work together with faculty members (particularly the academic advisors to annual papers and bachelor's theses) in coming up with an individual and long-term research programme. There have been examples in the information and communication science direction of this – students have written and defended dissertations which basically began with the first annual paper;
- There are several courses devoted to scientific work in the master's degree programme, with students learning how to do scientific work and then preparing an individual project, taking part in a scientific project organised by faculty members from the study sector, writing a scientific paper and presenting it at a scientific conference;
- The topics of doctoral dissertations are linked to the scientific work topics of the academic advisor. If the advisor has financing for research, doctoral students can be offered a role of becoming researchers in the project. In practice, most doctoral students have been involved in the projects of the ASPRI, FSS, UL as scientific assistants;
- Doctoral students are involved in the study process as advisors for course papers and bachelor's theses which relate to the topic of their Ph.D. thesis. The thematic packets for course papers that are prepared by doctoral students are part of the overall list of themes that are offered by faculty members, and these lists are available to students at the start of each academic year.

The mission of the involvement of students in research work is to ensure successiveness in terms of experienced researchers transferring their knowledge, skills and competence to younger researchers so as to ensure a regeneration of information and communication science researchers. At this time, students are involved in several research projects that are being pursued by academic personnel from the information and communication science direction (Table 24). More detailed information about the scientific projects of students can be found in study programme descriptions.

Doctoral students take part in projects as researchers or scientific assistants, while master's degree students participate as scientific assistants. Students at all levels of the study programme take part in scholarly projects as volunteer researchers. Students are interested in being involved in international and national projects.

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

## their impact on the study process.

During the reporting period, the UL and its “Information and communication science” study direction made extensive use of various innovations. This was because of the need for high-quality training of specialists for a rapidly changing labour market.

The most important aspect of this process was **product innovations** that include new study courses, new modules, updated and supplemented study course content, as well as study forms and teaching methods. Examples include innovative content in study programmes in terms of knowledge about the digital world, behaviours and participation therein, as well as the ability to analyse the emergence of this world. Other examples include successful courses such as “Basic Concepts and Tools of the Internet,” “Social Media and Digital Culture,” “Corporate Communication in Social Media,” “Digital Humanities and Social Sciences,” “Computer Analysis of Text and Data Visualization,” “Network Society,” “Theories of Information Seeking and Retrieval,” as well as “Strategic Business Communication in Social Media.” New courses include “Communication Management of Influencers” and “Risks of Informative Space and Media Literacy.” Product innovations also relate to courses in which theoretical knowledge is merged with practical skills, including “Media Practice,” “Leadership,” “PR Strategy and Tactics,” “Advertising Strategy and Tactics,” “Advertising Texts,” “Digital Photography,” “Education of Information Users”, “Culture of Communication in Information Institutions,” “Culture Project Management,” “Multimedia Practice” and “Management of Culture and Communication.”

Student-run media outlets are another important innovation. *KIVI TV* (<https://www.szf.lu.lv/szf/dzive/kivi-tv>) has been working successfully for nearly ten years, offering students a chance to take part in the production of a television broadcasts in a manner that is as close as possible to actual work at a television stations. The student medium “*MansMedijs*” (<http://www.mansmedjs.lu.lv>) is also important. It is a portal on which students publish their analytical articles about public issues, feature articles, stories about people, entertaining materials and advice columns.

During the 2020/2021 academic year, there are plans to launch a lifestyle E-magazine for FSS students so as help students to develop skills in journalism, graphic design, photography and editorial work. Another hope is to launch an FSS podcast, “Graduate, what are you doing?” as well as a photo book of the best work of students each year.

During the reporting period, several ongoing education programmes were organised at the “Information and communications science” study direction – “Digital Skills for Work Needs,” “Contacts in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Digitally Competent Citizen,” “Design Thinking at a Library,” “Literature Collections at Libraries: Theory and Practice,” “Librarians at Educational Institutions,” “Developing Innovations at Libraries,” “Innovations at Educational Institution Libraries,” “Management of Research Data,” and “Practical Research at Libraries” (<https://www.szf.lu.lv/studijas/muzizglitiba/nerformalas-izglitibas-programmas>).

Project innovations are also created in scholarly work. The Latvian Science Council project “Latvia’s Media Ecology: Analysis of Changes Caused by the Fourth Industrial Revolution,” for instance, has created a media ecology research methodology, while the project “Jeopardizing Democracy through Disinformation and Conspiracies: Reconsidering the Experience of Latvia” helps to develop a methodology to research disinformation practices.

The developmental plans of the “Information and communications science” study direction include study innovations such as an information skills index, a media skills index and a new and traditional

media supervisory methodology (Appendix 3).

During the reporting period, there were also **process innovations** in the study process, including student-centred teaching methods. Most courses use a diversity of methods, including lectures, seminars, practical work role playing, etc.). Students are involved in the teaching process by dealing with problems, preparing presentations, studying the experience of other countries, engaging in research, preparing media products, implementing projects etc. During the reporting period, the E-environment has been of increasing importance. It is a platform for submitting and grading tests and study-related papers, as well as to ensure communications between faculty members and students. A good example is the “Project Exchange” component of the “PR Strategy and Tactics” course. Students prepare public relations campaigns after completing their theoretical courses, focusing on actual communications challenges and/or problems at specific companies and situations. Students work in groups of four to five, the aim being to learn about the role of various public relations specialists and the work that they do in preparing campaigns. The “Project Exchange” also includes presentations and written presentations of situations and their solutions. Faculty members provide consultations for the students, and each group can meet twice with the “contributor” of the situation/challenge or the specific company/institution/organisation in pursuit of a solution. The “Project Exchange” is as close as possible to actual communications processes while also providing support for students. Students have deal with communications challenges and situations for companies and institutions such as *Tet*, the Rīga International Airport, the Bank of Latvia, the *SEB Bank*, *Latvijas Balzams*, *Fazer*, the Latvian National Museum of History, the Latvian National Theatre, *Maxima*, *Rimi*, *Sun Finance*, the Latvian Communications Sector Association, etc. Representatives of these entities attend final project presentations, evaluate them and ensure reciprocal links with students. In the course “Practice of Organizational Communication,” students participate in the organization of annual music and art festival *Bildes* together with the Office of the Festival. Tasks include organizing meetings with musicians, creating social media content for the festival, organizing competitions, assisting festival office staff, attending festival events and concerts, analyzing festival, and drafting recommendations for next year’s festival. Similar practices are offered at other practical courses related to work in the media and advertising.

Process innovations also relate to support for the study process. During the reporting process, the UL introduced a new course description format, focusing particular attention on the formulation of learning outcomes.

The most important **marketing innovations** at the FSS have included a student admission campaign on social networks that occurs in parallel to the UL admission campaign. This process has had good results. At the start of the 2019/2020 academic year, 15% more people applied than was the case during the previous academic year. There have also been innovations related to tuition fees. To encourage FSS bachelor’s study programme graduates to continue their studies at the master’s degree level, those who pay for their own studies are offered a 5% discount on tuition during the first year of studies.

In order to encourage schoolchildren to enter the FSS bachelor’s study programme, several new professional programmes were organised in 2020 – the “Information Management School” and the “New Communications Specialist School.” This has allowed high school students to meet with faculty members and to learn programme content that will give them advantages in the admission process.

During the reporting period, there have also been **organisational innovations** that have improved the organisation and effectiveness of study work. Semester plans now include a cluster system, which facilitates a more concentrated set of courses, encouraging students and faculty members to achieve learning outcomes in a targeted way. There have also been innovations in the

planning and implementation of student internships, particularly focusing on a partnership between students and specialists from the relevant sector. Digital tools have been of increasing importance in the organisation of the faculty's work, particularly in terms of the UL E-study environment.

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

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

The information and communication science sector has established strong co-operation with foreign universities such as the University of Vilnius, the University of Tartu, the Vytautas Magnus University, the University of Helsinki, the University of Stuttgart, and the State University of Minsk. These partnership relate to joint project applications, an exchange of guest lecturers under the ERASMUS programme, and meetings at conferences and seminars. See Appendix 6.

During the reporting period, faculty members from the information and communication science direction have published 42 scholarly papers and chapters of collective monographs in partnership with foreign colleagues (Appendix 37).

Organisations of employers in the field of information and communication are also partners to the study programmes – the Latvian Journalists Association, the Latvian Association of Broadcast Organisations, the Latvian Association of Press Publishers, the Latvian Journalists Union, the Latvian Association of Public Relations Professionals, the Latvian Advertising Association, the Latvian Union of Librarians, the Latvian Association of Academic Libraries, and the Latvian Association of Archivists. Many faculty members are members, board members or directors of these organisations, and they are involved in assessing study programmes for accreditation purposes, in the work of study programme councils, in public discussions, scientific conference and other events. Student internships are also organised in partnership with organisations of employers, as is the content of professionally oriented study courses. Employer organisations have helped to disseminate employer questionnaires about the results of the study programme and the qualifications of graduates. Employers also take part in the work of the Communication Science Study Council, and that means that academic and employer organisations help in the implementation and development of the study sector, allowing it to track important issues and needs in communication sectors.

The selection criteria for international and local partners are based on shared operational goals and objectives, academic and professional interests, and experience of sustained and successful collaboration.

*Table 25. The goals of co-operation and internationalisation of the information and communication science study field.*

*Please see attached.*

The goals of cooperation and internationalization in the field of information and communication science have been developed in accordance with the directional development goals and development plan, which in turn corresponds to the strategic goals of the University of Latvia.

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

Foreign students become involved in the university via student exchange programmes such as Erasmus+. The external liaison officers at partner universities carry out the selection of students at their home universities in the early stage of the incoming student mobility selection process. Afterwards, student's nominations are sent to the Mobility Division, Department of Student Services, the UL. After examining the nominations, students fill out their applications forms in [Dream Apply](#). The Department Erasmus Coordinator of the FSS, UL conducts the collection and grouping applications of student by selected study programmes. The evaluation of student applications is based on the Learning Agreement. After data form application is collected, this data is sent to the directors of study programmes, who decide accept or not the student's studies at the FSS, UL. Decision is made based on student applications. The directors of the study programmes send their decision to the Faculty/Department/University external liaison officers or Department Erasmus Coordinator for acceptance or non-acceptance student applications in the system and signs the Learning Agreement.

Programme directors correlate information about the courses that will be taught during a specific semester at the UL. At the faculty level, this information is collected by the international exchange programme co-ordinator, and then the university disseminates it to foreign students who have arrived at the university during the specific seminar. Such students contact the instructor of the course to learn more about it. Instructors organise informational meetings with foreign students individual or in groups, doing so on the basis of the instructor's views and the number of students who are interested in the course. After agreeing on the optimal form of studies (full time lectures/seminars, group work or individual work), the foreign students register for the relevant course. The FSS's library has a wide range of information and communication science literature in English, German and Russian, and that helps students to cover the content of the courses.

Personnel have good foreign language skills. All instructors freely read and speak English. During the first semester of 2019/2020 academic year, five courses in the information and communication science study programmes were taught in English. The plan is to gradually increase the number of such courses.

Generally speaking, the system for involving foreign students can be seen as effective and in line with the developmental goal of the information and communication science study field – to become one of the leading sectoral study centres in the Baltic States.

Foreign faculty members are recruited on the basis of individual contacts and under the auspices of the ERASMUS programme. They are brought in to teach courses in areas where local resources are limited, as well as in areas in which it is necessary to learn as quickly as possible about the latest ideas and research methodologies. There are several courses in which a partnership with foreign faculty members has been regular and long-lasting. The system for attracting foreign faculty

members can be seen as effective and in line with the developmental goal of the information and communication science study field – to become one of the leading sectoral study centres in the Baltic States. This also makes it possible to systematically improve the quality of the information and communication science field study programmes by attracting high-level instructors to teach the study courses.

### **Outgoing mobility of faculty members during the reporting period**

Outgoing mobility of faculty members during the reporting period mostly involved short trips to partner universities, particularly in the Nordic countries and the Baltic States. Longer trips are planned for the future. The motivation of faculty members in getting involved in mobility programmes can vary. Many have too much work in teaching classes and doing research work, while others have small children. During the reporting period, several faculty members have had internships at US universities. See Appendix 48.

A number of faculty members have visited foreign universities and delivered lectures as part of the ERASMUS programme. See Appendix 48 for examples.

### **Incoming mobility of faculty members during the reporting period**

The incoming mobility of faculty members during the reporting period was stable and in line with the needs of the study programmes. Guest instructors are usually recruited to teach a specific study course or a part thereof, and the co-operation with many of these people has been long-lasting and regular. In some cases, guest instructors are asked to teach specific courses as part of concrete mobility programmes for which an appropriate part of the relevant course has been identified. The incoming mobility of faculty members during the reporting period can be said to have been in line with the direction's developmental goals, though there is an opportunity to expand the process. Possible hindrances in increasing incoming mobility include a lack of financing for the wages, travel and accommodations of guest lecturers. Of key importance in facilitating incoming mobility is the European Social Fund project SAM 8.2.2 "Strengthening the Areas of Strategic Specialisation of Academic Personnel at Higher Education Institutions." During the first round of this programme, there was support for the information and communication science direction, and financing will make it possible to involve three doctoral students or doctoral degree applicants and three representatives of foreign academic personnel. An agreement was reached in the spring of 2019 with Professor from foreign university. See Appendix 48.

Foreign guest lecturers are recruited each year by all of the information and communication science field study programmes. See Appendix 48 for examples.

Lectures in information and communication science field study programmes have been delivered by Prof Pilar Lacasa (University of Alcalá, Spain), Lector Kādi Rissma (University of Tallinn, Estonia), Fredrik Palm (University of Umeå, Sweden), and Prof Emeritus Andrejs Plakans (Iowa State University, USA), among others.

Students from the information and communication science direction study programmes have also had a chance to attend lectures and seminars involving high-ranking officials, politicians, ambassadors and high-level scientists who have visited the UL and the FSS. Examples include the EU's high commissioner for foreign and security policy and European Commission vice president Federica Mogherini, European Commission vice president Valdis Dombrovskis, the speaker of the House of Commons in the UK, John Bercow, Canadian ambassadors Alain Hausser and Kevin Rex, and many others.

### **Mobility of students during the reporting period**

Facilitating the mobility of students has been one of the developmental priorities in the direction

during the reporting period, and it will remain one of the most important developmental missions during the next period. Generally speaking, mobility indicators during the reporting period have had positive trends. There have been better indicators in terms of attracting foreign students. This has been achieved because faculty members have actively developed courses that are taught in English, with a flexible approach toward various teaching forms. Courses in English are offered as full lectures and seminars (if five or more foreign students have registered for the course), as well as individual or group work that the instructors organise. Facilitating incoming mobility will require improvements in the way in which the process is co-ordinated and students are registered at the university level. Information for foreign students is assured at the faculty level, but there is no centralised system to inform foreign students about available courses, the requirements, registration procedures, the availability of instructors at the university level, etc. In some cases, this can hinder the attraction of potential students for the courses that are offered.

Statistical data about the incoming and outgoing mobility of students can be found in Appendix 8. Bachelor's, master's and doctoral students are regularly informed about mobility opportunities. Programme directors work with instructors to ensure maximal opportunities to integrate course that have been taken at foreign universities in the UL study programmes via course comparison and by making it as easy as possible for students to fulfil their academic obligations when they return from studies abroad. Outgoing mobility indicators tended to grow during the reporting period. There is a competition for slots in the Erasmus programme. Outgoing mobility is complicated by the professional careers of students in Latvia. Many of them have jobs and do not want to lose their place of employment and the professional careers that they have embarked upon.

Generally speaking, the mobility of students under the framework of the study direction has been satisfactory. Systematic work has been done during the reporting period to facilitate incoming and outgoing mobility among students, and that has had the result of positive mobility trends. Work will have to be done in future to continue this process. The information and communication science direction study programmes have bilateral Erasmus agreements with 31 foreign universities on the exchange of students and faculty members (Appendix 6). The information and communication science study direction plans to continue to expand the network of partner universities.

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

Students in the UL information and communication science study field are offered internships in the information management bachelor's degree programme and the communication science bachelor's degree programme.

In the information management bachelor's degree programme, there are three types of internships – an academic internship in information management in organisations, an academic internship in information resource management, and an academic internship in information service management. Internships are elective courses which students usually choose and praise because of the opportunities that the internships ensure – to strengthen theoretical knowledge and to develop skills.

The internships are divided up into themes. Academic internships are meant to strengthen knowledge and skills in document and archive management (4 credits, 4<sup>th</sup> semester), and these are

chosen by students who have taken document management courses (“Fundamentals of Document Management,” “Preservation of Documents,” “Electronic Documents: Digital Storage,” and “Description of Archives”). Academic internships in information resource management (4<sup>th</sup> semester) and academic internships in information service management (6<sup>th</sup> semester) are meant to strengthen information management skills in library work.

The bachelor’s degree programme in communication science has a mandatory internships worth 6 credits or 240 work hours (6 work weeks), and it is taken by full time students during the 5<sup>th</sup> semester and by part time correspondence course students during the 7<sup>th</sup> semester. Each internship takes place during the course of a single semester. Internships include “Media Practice” (6 credits), “Advertising Practice” (6 credits), or “Practical Training in Public Relations” (6 credits). With the permission of the internship director and programme director, a student can engage in the internship over the course of two semesters, taking 2-credit and 4-credit internship courses. In that case the internship is possible no sooner than during the 4<sup>th</sup> semester. This study model includes the courses “Introductory Practice in Professional Communication” (2 credits), and then “Media Practice” (4 credits), “Advertising Practice” (4 credits) or “Practical Training in Public Relations” (4 credits).

Internship locations are usually offered by the Department of Information and Library Studies or the Department of Communication Studies, but students are free to choose their own locations. In that case, the department concludes a separate agreement with the institution that is offering the internship. The rules of internships are found in Appendix 7. Students have often said in surveys that they would like internships during the first year of their studies.

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

During the reporting period, the UL “Information and communications science” study direction has not had any joint programmes.

The UL FSS plans to become involved in the establishment of the Latvian National Library’s inter-university memory institution and heritage study professional master's degree programme. The UL, the Latvian Academy of Culture and the Rīga Technical University are involved in this process, and during the course of 2020, a working group is to be set up to plan the programme’s concept. The programme will train memory institution specialists for museums, archives, libraries and other institutions. A particular focus will be on digitalisation issues and digital skills and competence.

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



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

During the previous accreditation of the information and communication science study field, experts provided a set of recommendations that have been implemented in accordance with a plan approved by the Communication Science Study Programme Council. The implementation of the recommendations made by the experts of the previous accreditation is summarized in Appendix 9.

The implementation of recommendations from experts during the previous study field accreditation has had a positive effect on the study process, including the internationalisation of studies and the quality of study content.

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

***(Not applicable)***

# Annexes

I. Information on the Higher Education Institution/ College		
List of the governing regulatory enactments and regulations of the higher education institution/ college	Appendix 1.pdf	1.pielikums.pdf
Information on the implementation of the study direction in the branches of the higher education institution/ college (if applicable)		
Management structure of the higher education institution/ college	Appendix 2.pdf	2.pielikums.pdf
II. Description of the Study Direction - 1. Management of the Study Direction		
Plan for the development of the study direction (if applicable)	Appendix 3.pdf	3.pielikums.pdf
Management structure of the study direction	Appendix 4.pdf	4.pielikums.pdf
II. Description of the Study Direction - 3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction		
Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction	Appendix 40.pdf	40.pielikums.pdf
Biographies of the teaching staff members (in Europass Curriculum Vitae format)	Appendix 41.pdf	41.pielikums.pdf
Summary of the statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff over the reporting period	Appendix 5.pdf	5.pielikums.pdf
II. Description of the Study Direction - 4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation		
List of the publications, patents, and artistic creations of the teaching staff over the reporting period	Appendix 37.pdf	37.pielikums.pdf
II. Description of the Study Direction - 5. Cooperation and Internationalisation		
List of cooperation agreements	Appendix 6.pdf	6.pielikums.pdf
Statistical data on the teaching staff and the students from abroad	Appendix 42.pdf	42.pielikums.pdf
Statistical data on the mobility of students (by specifying the study programmes)	Appendix 8.pdf	8.pielikums.pdf
Description of the organisation of the traineeship of the students	Appendix 7.pdf	7.pielikums.pdf
Information on the agreements and other documents confirming the traineeship of the students in companies	Appendix 35.pdf	35.pielikums.pdf
II. Description of the Study Direction - 6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures		
Overview of the implementation of the provided recommendations	Appendix 9.docx	9.pielikums.pdf

Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Confirmation signed by the rector, director or the head of the study programme or the study direction of the higher education institution/ college which states that the official language proficiency of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study direction complies with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.	Appendix 10.1.pdf	10.1. pielikums.pdf
III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period		
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of 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 (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		
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)		
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules		
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.		
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme		

Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under <a href="http://www.europass.lv">www.europass.lv</a> ), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.		
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education		
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement		
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.		
<b>Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments</b>		
Electronically signed application form for assessment of a study direction	APPLICATION.pdf	IESNIEGUMS.pdf

## Other annexes

Name of document	Document
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Appendix 32. Publications indexed in international databases	Appendix 32.pdf
Appendix 43. The UL Senate Resolution No 61	Appendix 43. The UL Senate Resolution No 61.pdf
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Appendix 44. External expert evaluations	Appendix 44. External expert evaluations.pdf
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38.pielikums. Studiju programmu pašizmaksas aprēķini	38.pielikums. Pašizmaksas aprēķini.pdf
Appendix 38. Self-Cost of Study Programmes	Appendix 38. Self-Cost of Study Programmes.pdf
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Appendix 45. Information about recruitment and/or employment of the teaching staff of the study field "Information and Communication Science" at the University of Latvia	Appendix 45.pdf
46. pielikums. LU informācijas un komunikācijas zinātnes virziena zinātniskā personāla ir iesaiste mākslinieciskajā jaunradē	46.pielikums.pdf
Appendix 46. Involvement of the scientific personnel from the information and communication science study field in creative artistic events	Appendix 46.pdf
9. pielikums. Iepriekšējās akreditācijas ekspertu sniegto rekomendāciju ieviešanas plāna izpilde	9.pielikums.pdf
Appendix 9. Implementation of recommendations provided by experts during the previous accreditation	Appendix 9.pdf
47. pielikums. Nozīmīgākās izmaiņas studiju virziena "Informācijas un komunikācijas zinātne" mācībspēku sastāvā	47.pielikums.pdf
Appendix 47. The most significant changes in the teaching staff of the study field "Information and Communication Science"	Appendix 47.pdf

48. pielikums. Informācija par studiju virziena "Informācijas un komunikācijas zinātne" mācībspēku iesaisti izejošajā un ienākošajā mobilitātē	48. pielikums.pdf
Appendix 48. Information about the involvement of the teaching staff of the study field "Information and Communication Science" in outgoing and incoming mobility	Appendix 48.pdf
1.tabula. Labojums	1.tabula-labota.pdf
1-Table. Amendment	1-Table.ENG-labota.pdf
44.2. pielikums. Ārējo ekspertu atzinumi. Papildinājums	44.2. pielikums. Ārējo ekspertu atzinumi. Papildinājums.pdf
Appendix 44.2 External expert evaluations. Supplement	Appendix 44.2 External expert evaluations. Supplement.pdf

# Information Management

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Information Management</i>
Education classification code	<i>43322</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic bachelor study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Baiba</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Holma</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>baiba.holma@lu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>asociētā profesore, Dr. philol.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	<i>26405619</i>
Goal of the study programme	<i>To ensure basic and specific knowledge and skills related to information management at libraries, information services or centres, archives, museums, other state and private institutions and companies, covering the following thematic blocs which speak to the competence of the information specialist: management of information resources; management of information institutions; management of information services; management of information technologies.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<i>1) On the basis of a student-centred approach, to ensure the learning of knowledge and skills in the area of information management;</i> <i>2) To encourage students to understand information management, the informational behaviour of individuals and the processes of the information society;</i> <i>3) To ensure a base of theoretical knowledge in library science, information science, book publishing, archival science, information and records management, as well as other areas of the social sciences that are necessary for the student to continue studies at the master's degree level.</i>

Results of the study programme	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A description of information resources, their historical development and functions, their primary parameters and processing methods for management of same;</li> <li>2. An explanation of the informational behaviour of people, the emergence of informational needs, the types of those needs, the determination of the level of information literacy and recommendations as to how that level can be boosted;</li> <li>3. An understanding of informational and other processes that are the foundation for information and memory institutions such as libraries, archives, museums and information centres, as well as the work of information systems in other institutions;</li> <li>4. Familiarity with information services and the relevant information technologies so as to satisfy the need for information in various areas of life (scholarly work, professional work, handling of everyday issues).</li> </ol> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Handling information resources (various documents) and various information systems and information retrieval systems (databases, catalogues, collections) to ensure the ability to access and find information resources;</li> <li>6. Assessing the quality of information resources and their appropriateness for the needs of various groups of information users;</li> <li>7. Design and presentation of information services that are appropriate for various user groups and individuals;</li> <li>8. Effective use of information technologies to manage information services and resources;</li> <li>9. Use of field and related fields theories and appropriate research methods to identify and find solutions to various problems in the field;</li> <li>10. To work in teamwork, to plan time and tasks, to ensure successful communications and to resolve conflict situations.</li> </ol> <p><b>Competence</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. An evaluation of the quality of information resources, their cultural and historical values, the establishment of physical and/or digital collections of information, and the provision of user services;</li> <li>12. An evaluation of the processing of information resources, establishment of information systems (catalogues, databases, collections, Websites, etc.), along with maintenance and utilisation of same;</li> <li>13. An evaluation of information services and their effectiveness and appropriateness for various groups of information consumers.</li> </ol>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	Bachelor's thesis

## Study programme forms

**Full time studies - 3 years - latvian**

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of social science in information and library science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

**Places of implementation**

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

**Part time studies - 4 years - latvian**

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	4
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of social science in information and library science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

**Places of implementation**

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

**Part time extramural studies - 4 years - latvian**

Study type and form	<i>Part time extramural studies</i>
Duration in full years	4
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of social science in information and library science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

**Places of implementation**

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

**Full time correspondence studies - 4 years - latvian**

Study type and form	<i>Full time correspondence studies</i>
Duration in full years	4
Duration in month	0

Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>120</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of social science in information and library science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

#### **Places of implementation**

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

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

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

#### Parameters of the information management programme

Name of the programme	<b>Information Management</b>	
Programme code in line with Latvia's education classifier	43322	
The type and level of the programme	Academic bachelor's programme	
Qualification level (NKI/EKI)	(LKI/EKI)	
Scope of the programme	120 credits 180 ECTS	
Implementation, type, length (shown in months if less than a year), language		
Full time	3 years	Latvian
Full time correspondence course	4 years	Latvian
Full time distance learning		
Part time	4 years	Latvian
Part time correspondence course	4 years	Latvian
Part time distance learning		
Location	University of Latvia, Faculty of Social Sciences	
Programme director	Dr Baiba Holma	

Admission requirements	<p>A completed secondary education</p> <p>Admission is on a competitive basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· People who have completed their secondary education beginning in 2004: CE Latvian language + CE English language, CE French language or CE German language + CE mathematics;</li> <li>· People who have completed their secondary education prior to 2004, as well as people who have completed their secondary education abroad, or people with special needs: The secondary education average grade in Latvian language and literature, the average grade in English, French or German, and the average grade in other subjects</li> </ul> <p><i>Additional points:</i> Winners of 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Faculty of Social Sciences, UL scholarly research competition in the last two years receive additional points. The research work must be original and submitted only to the Faculty of Social Sciences, UL competition.</p> <p><i>Advantages:</i> The 1<sup>st</sup> place winner in the Faculty of Social Sciences, UL competition. for scholarly research work in the area of information management in the last two years. The research work must be original and submitted only to the Faculty of Social Sciences, UL competition.</p>
Awarded degree, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification	A social science bachelor's degree in information and library science
Aim of the programme	<p>To ensure basic and specific knowledge and skills related to information management at libraries, information services or centres, archives, museums, other state and private institutions and companies, covering the following thematic blocs which speak to the competence of the information specialist:</p> <p>management of information resources;  management of information institutions;  management of information services;  management of information technologies.</p>
Objectives of the programme	<p>1) On the basis of a student-centred approach, to ensure the learning of knowledge and skills in the area of information management;</p> <p>2) To encourage students to understand information management, the informational behaviour of individuals and the processes of the information society;</p> <p>3) To ensure a base of theoretical knowledge in library science, information science, book publishing, archival science, information and records management, as well as other areas of the social sciences that are necessary for the student to continue studies at the master's degree level.</p>



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**Knowledge**

1. A description of information resources, their historical development and functions, their primary parameters and processing methods for management of same;
2. An explanation of the informational behaviour of people, the emergence of informational needs, the types of those needs, the determination of the level of information literacy and recommendations as to how that level can be boosted;
3. An understanding of informational and other processes that are the foundation for information and memory institutions such as libraries, archives, museums and information centres, as well as the work of information systems in other institutions;
4. Familiarity with information services and the relevant information technologies so as to satisfy the need for information in various areas of life (scholarly work, professional work, handling of everyday issues).

**Skills**

5. Handling information resources (various documents) and various information systems and information retrieval systems (databases, catalogues, collections) to ensure the ability to access and find information resources;
6. Assessing the quality of information resources and their appropriateness for the needs of various groups of information users;
7. Design and presentation of information services that are appropriate for various user groups and individuals;
8. Effective use of information technologies to manage information services and resources;
9. Use of field and related fields theories and appropriate research methods to identify and find solutions to various problems in the field;
10. To work in teamwork, to plan time and tasks, to ensure successful communications and to resolve conflict situations.

**Competence**

11. An evaluation of the quality of information resources, their cultural and historical values, the establishment of physical and/or digital collections of information, and the provision of user services;
12. An evaluation of the processing of information resources, establishment of information systems (catalogues, databases, collections, Websites, etc.), along with maintenance and utilisation of same;
13. An evaluation of information services and their effectiveness and appropriateness for various groups of information consumers.

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

During the reporting period, the average number of students has been 87 ((92 in 2014, 95 in 2015, 93 in 2016, 87 in 2017, 77 in 2018 and 78 in 2019) per academic year. The drop-in student numbers are attributed to the demographic crisis that lasted until 2017, as well as to a drop in the number of tuition-free study slots.

202 students have been admitted to the programme during the reporting period. The number has been rather similar during the course of three years -- 43 full time students in 2015, 40 full time and part time correspondence course students in 2018, and 37 full time and part time correspondence course students in 2014. These differences can be attributed to the number of tuition-free study slots each year, as well as admission to both forms of studies. Admission to part time correspondence course studies is organised only once every four years because of demand.

132 students were graduated from the programme between October 1, 2014, and October 1, 2019 (19 in 2014, 27 in 2015, 15 in 2016, 16 in 2017, 40 in 2018 (including 32 full time and 8 part time correspondence course students), and 15 in 2019) (Figure 7). Most of the graduates (124) were full time students. The differences in numbers can be attributed to different numbers of admitted students for full time or part time studies.

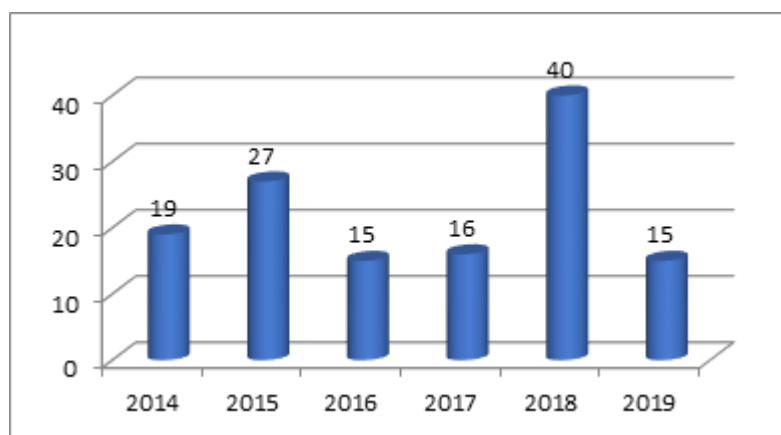


Figure 7. Graduates from the programme (by year)

An average of 16.2% of students have dropped out before completing their studies, mostly after the first semester, which is why there are around 30 students who drop out during the first year and a bit more than 20 in subsequent years. Each year, there have been one to three full time students who have not begun their studies. In the part time correspondence course form, very few students have dropped out. The main reasons for quitting include students who believe that the content of the programme is not in line with their hopes, as well as various personal reasons. 84% of students have been graduated from the programme, however.

An average of 69 students have had their tuition covered from the national budget each year (76 in 2014, 76 in 2016, 64 in 2017, 57 in 2018 and 63 in 2019), while an average of 18 students have paid their own tuition (16 in 2014, 18 in 2015, 17 in 2016, 23 in 2017, 20 in 2018 and 15 in 2019),

including all part time students and a few full time students (10 in 2014, 12 in 2015, 9 in 2016, 14 in 2017, 8 in 2018 and 4 in 2019).

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

The name of the bachelor's degree programme reflects the content of the concept of information management. This term is explained as *management of informational processes and their creation, obtaining, organisation, storage, dissemination and utilisation*. The aim of information management is to help people and organisations to efficiently access, process and use information in all modern forms and carriers (documents in the broadest sense of the word). Information management is reviewed from three perspectives -- libraries, organisations and companies, as well as individuals. The library perspective is the oldest one, and it was the foundation for the bachelor's programme in information management. The information management approach to organisations, companies and individuals is comparatively newer, but is gaining greater dominance. It is gradually being included in the content of the study programme.

The name of the programme is directly linked to its **aim** - to ensure fundamental and specific knowledge and skills related to information management libraries, information services or centres, archives, museums, other state and private institutions and companies, etc. Students learn the main blocs of an information specialist competence -- management of information resources, management of information institutions, management of information services, and management of information technologies.

The **objectives** of the programme are based on a *student-centred approach which ensures knowledge and skills in information management, helps students to understand processes related to information management, people's informational behaviour and the information society, provides fundamental theoretical knowledge about library science, information science, book publishing, archival science, information and document management, as well as other social sciences that are necessary to continue studies at the master's degree level*. All of this is aimed at achieving the programme's goal and study results. Courses of the programme ensure the **learning outcomes**, which mean that the student **knows**: 1) how to describe information resources, their historical development and functions, their primary parameters and processing methods in the contemporary information world, 2) understands the informational behaviour and various informational needs of people so as to determine the level of information literacy and to offer methods to improve such skills, 3) understand informational and other processes that are at the foundation of information and memory institutions such as libraries, archives, museums and information centres and information systems, 4) be familiar with information services and the information technologies that underpin them, and be able to satisfy the information needs of people in various areas of life such as scholarly and professional work, as well as handling of everyday issues. This also helps students to gain **skills**: 1) in terms of processing information resources so as to ensure their accessibility and availability, 2) evaluate the quality of information resources and their appropriateness for the needs of specific information user groups, 3) draft and offer appropriate information services to groups and individuals, 4) skilfully and effectively use information technologies to manage information services and resources, 5) use field and related field theories and appropriate research methods to explain and deal with problems in various situations, 6) as well as engage in teamwork

to plan time and missions, ensure successful communication and resolve conflicts. Students in the programme also are **competent**: 1) in terms of evaluating the quality of information resources and their cultural and historical value so that physical and/or digital collections of resources can be assembled for user needs. 2) Students are also competent in identifying and evaluating the processing of information resources so as to establish, maintain and utilise document information systems such as catalogues, databases, collections, Websites, etc., 3) as well as evaluating information services, their effectiveness and their appropriateness for various groups of information users.

The degree which students earn is a social science bachelor's degree in information and library science, and it demonstrates the knowledge and skills that students have gained as part of the programme -- various aspects of information management, as well as basic understandings about social processes and information exchange opportunities in society, which interact and change one another.

Admission requirements for the programme are in line with its goals and missions -- a secondary education and fluency in Latvian and one foreign language as well as in mathematics, so as to deal with issues related to information management and to achieve successful results in the student's studies.

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

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

Latvia's national strategic development document "Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy Through 2030" states that a key priority is the development of the cultural space of the country. The content and results of this bachelor's programme are directly focused on the **preservation, interactivity and enrichment of the cultural space** in terms of collecting, processing, storing and making available information resources such as various digital collections. This is one prerequisite for creating new knowledge (educating students), and it is a foundation for various types of creativity and innovation. The programme also provides knowledge and skills that allow a modern **person to manage information** in terms of finding, evaluating and using it, as well as to help others to learn **information skills and competence**. This aspect, along with the importance of **digitalising cultural heritage**, in turn, are emphasised in another national policy document, "Fundamental Positions on the Development of the Information Society (2014-2020) (See [www.varam.gov.lv/in\\_site/tools/download.php?file=files/text/...](http://www.varam.gov.lv/in_site/tools/download.php?file=files/text/...)). In Latvia and Europe, of greater importance is **the policy of open science** (See [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/goals-research-and-innovation-policy\\_lv](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/goals-research-and-innovation-policy_lv)), which refers to free access to scholarly information resources and management of

research data that are supported by academic libraries. That means that the issue of necessary competences is overseen by the relevant study programme.

In line with the programme's study results, most graduates find jobs at various information and memory institutions such as libraries, archives, museums and information centres. Surveys of students show that approximately 60% of graduates plan to work or are already working at such an institution. Some graduates choose jobs related to information management at other institutions which require the establishment and maintenance of information systems, databases and Websites, then evaluating their utility and researching the users thereof. The surveys also show positive appreciation of the knowledge and skills that the students have obtained.

According to library statistics (Culture Ministry, 2018), there are 1,597 libraries in Latvia with 3,724 employees. Approximately 35% of these people have an education of one level or another in library science, and that suggests that various types of libraries are promising places of employment for graduates from the bachelor's programme.

A second potential part of the labour market relates to archives and records management at institutions. As the number of electronic documents increases along with circulation thereof in the work of institutions and in the public at large, there is clearly a need for professionals who know how to manage e-information resources and are familiar with E-governance issues at institutions and at the national level. The study programme ensures this via courses on records and archive management.

The content of the bachelor's programme is based on several sources of information:

- 1) Recommendations from the professionals of field, as obtained through focus group discussions, and a survey assisted by the Delfi method, as well as in formal and informal interviews;
- 2) Ideas from conferences in Latvia and abroad, as well as publications in scholarly journals about developmental trends in the field of information science;
- 3) Ideas from the field's conceptual documents and competence models (for example, IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) guidelines and an information specialist competence model from the United States);
- 4) The views of partner universities abroad (particularly in terms of ERASMUS+ faculty member exchanges, as well as other partnership projects), as well as the study plans of such universities as found on their Internet sites (e.g., the University of Tallinn, the University of Borås, the Media University College of Stuttgart, the University of Porto, etc.);
- 5) Recommendations from students that are regularly obtained through surveys at the conclusion of each semester and at the end of the study programme.

The study programme is based on Part A - mandatory courses, Part B - limited electives, and Part C - electives:

1. **General educational content** courses (Part A);

2. **Fields'** courses (Part A and B), which are divided up into the following logical categories:

- a. **The theoretical foundations of information management** (information and memory institutions and information processes in present-day societies, management issues, the development of the sector and the related professional competences, open science and open data)
- b. **Information resource management** (information resources, their history, functions, processing (organisation of information and knowledge), their digitalisation, establishment of

collections, including e-repositories, establishment of databases, websites and information systems;

- c. **Information service management** (information services, their quality, research into user behaviours, groups of information users, education for such groups, as well as information literacy).
- d. Information and communications technology (ICT) management is an interweaving aspect in all of these categories, which is necessary so as to ensure management of information resources and information services.

**3.Related fields'** courses from other areas of social sciences, helping students to gain an understanding about society, its social groups, policies and management, fundamental issues related to legal, economic and modern communications processes, knowledge about which is a key prerequisite for information management.

Part B, with limited electives, features modules that help students to find an area of specialisation -- information management at libraries, or information management at institutions. Specialisation begins during the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of studies.

The most important improvements to the study programme during the reporting period are found in Table 26.

*Table 26. Improvement of the study programme during the reporting period and in line with the sector's developmental trends, as well as recommendations from professionals and students.*

*Please see attached.*

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

Courses in the study programme underpin the goals and achievable results thereof. The mapping of the courses in accordance with results shows that the courses ensure the learning of knowledge, skills and competences, thus making it possible to achieve the goals of the study programme. The conclusion is that students who complete the programme will have achieved all of the anticipated results.

The mapping table (Appendix 14) shows that most of the courses relate to processes that are at the foundation of information and memory institutions, information system operations, as well as knowledge about information resources, their history, their characteristics and their processing, along with the ability to evaluate all of these aspects. This knowledge and skills also ensure competence in selecting qualitative information resources to establish a physical and/or digital collection for user purposes.

Slightly fewer in number are courses on information services which help students to understand the informational behaviour of individuals and to determine the level of effectiveness therein. Of key importance here are courses which provide knowledge and aid in developing research skills. Accordingly, there is also a slightly smaller number of courses which teach skills in preparing

information services for various user groups, as well as one which help to develop competence in evaluating the effectiveness and quality of services.

In numerical terms, the next group of courses focus on the ability to make effect use of information technologies for the management of information services and resources. These are closely linked to information resource processing and the establishment of various information systems (databases), also allowing the students to develop the competence of evaluating the results that are obtained from the work.

Many of the courses allow students to learn general skills and knowledge in areas such as teamwork, time and job planning, successful communications, and handling of conflict situations.

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

The programme involves a diversity of methods, including lectures, seminars, practical activities, individual work, group work, field trips, tests, papers, case studies and academic internships. 50-60% of the courses are lectures, and students consider this to be an appropriate proportion of the structure, only indicating that some of the lectures might be more interesting.

Nearly 40% of faculty members use forms that allow students to become more actively involved in the process. This refers to seminars, practical activities and field trips. Most courses involve at least two seminars which help students to develop their professional and general skills in areas such as information searches, critical evaluation of sources of information, teamwork and planning of time. Quite a few of the course have structures in which practical activities are of key importance. There are individual forms of work which allow students to develop skills in working with information sources and systems, design of websites and databases, information service analysis and evaluation, etc. In surveys, students have praised field trips and suggested that there might be more of them.

Tests, essays, exams and practical work are organised to test and monitor knowledge about various subjects. Students have indicated in surveys that there might be more regular tests in some courses. They also propose that faculty members could provide grades for the work that is done more quickly.

Students appreciate the e-forms of courses and the study materials that are available therein. Students are offered a chance to strengthen their knowledge and learn skills for workplaces by choosing academic internships. During the reporting period, 63% of students selected an internship and praised the skills that they learned. Students have suggested that internships be offered during the first year of studies so that they can better understand links between the courses and real life.

Students have a regular chance to consult with instructors, and all graduate and annual student surveys show that the responsiveness of instructors is very much appreciated. Students can also receive consultations from the study methodologist and the programme director.

**Grades** in the study programme are based on UL procedures (see <http://www.lu.lv/par/dokumenti/noteikumiunkartibas/parbaudijumi>) always trying to ensure grades that are as objective as possible:

- 1) Results are evaluated on the basis of a *quality indicator* -- a grade on a 10-point scale (in accordance with the State Academic Education Standard) and a *quantity indicator* -- the number of credits earned for each course.
- 2) To earn credits, students must pass the concluding exam with a grade no less than 4 (almost average), with particular attention focused on ensuring that the grade for the exam is successful.
- 3) The final grade is based on an oral or written final exam, taken together with midterm exams, tests, individual work, appearances at seminars, delivery of papers, etc. (the total grade takes into account the fact that midterms must represent at least 50% of the total grade, while the final exam represents no less than 10% of the grade).
- 4) The frequency of grades depends on the scope and specifics of the course. In all courses, the final grade is cumulative in the sense that the work of the student is evaluated throughout the semester along with the final exam. Most instructors offer comments and explanations of their grades. Some faculty members, according to students, have not offered sufficient explanations of mistakes that have been made and have not regularly evaluated the work that has been done. These instructors have been asked to address these problems. Other instructors have been asked to ensure more midterms so that the grade is not based on a single midterm and the final.

Requirements for earning credits and information about testing forms and evaluations are listed in the course description which is available in the University of Latvia Information system (LUIS) and the *Moodle* environment. Instructors inform students about these during the first lecture of the course.

The programme is concluded with the writing and defence of a bachelor's thesis, which is also rated on a 10-point scale. The criteria for the defence of a thesis are found in the methodological instructions of the Faculty of Social Sciences (*University of Latvia, Faculty of Social Sciences. "Methodological Instructions for the Writing and defence of Annual Papers, Bachelor's Theses, Master's Theses and Dissertations," Rīga, 2018 (in Latvian)*).

The results of knowledge evaluations and bachelor's theses are discussed at department meetings, and conclusions are used to improve the study process.

Studies are organised so that full time students attend lectures and activities four days a week (20 contact hours). 20 hours per week are meant for independent studies, most often on Fridays. Part time students attend lectures on Saturdays, ensuring at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  of contact hours as part of the courses. During the reporting period, part time studies were organised once every four year. Between the 2014/2014 and 2017/2018 academic year, 12 students were graduated, with a second admission in the 2018/2019 academic year (12 students).

Similar study methods and assessment are used in full-time regular and part-time correspondence study programmes. They are expected to be the same for full-time correspondence studies and part time regular studies. Part-time studies have a greater emphasis on self-study (e.g., individual practical work) as well as individual study tours (e.g., individual visits to an information center), while lectures and seminars are more common. The evaluation criteria are the same.

Once a semester, students are required to fill out surveys to evaluate the way in which the courses were taught (methods, grading systems) and the content of courses. They are also asked to pass comment on the programme as such. Students have appreciated the possibility to express their opinions about the programme. Objections and suggestions are discussed at department meetings,



and if these are found to be justified, the department looks at ways of taking them into account when discussing how to improve the programme.

The general conclusion is that the study programme is **student-centred**, with a diversity of teaching methods. On the basis of student recommendations, faculty members have tried to change these methods with the greater use of interactive forms. Internships for students helped to strengthen knowledge and skills. Independence in studies was ensured (four days of studies, one day for independent studies). Instructors have been available and responsive to consultations (electronic or at various times of the day and night). Courses have clearly formulated grading criteria which are available and are taken into account. Commissions evaluate annual papers and bachelor's theses, and students receive explanations of the evaluations, as well as advice. The Faculty of Social Sciences has a system for student appeals. The student-centred approach was also shown in the sentence that a student wrote in the 2018/2019 academic survey: The student wrote that he or she most appreciated the fact that *"faculty members and students have established co-operation and a community."*

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

The bachelor's programme in information management has an academic internship related to information management at organisations, another to information resource management, and another on information service management. These are electives which students usually appreciate very much in that they can strengthen their theoretical knowledge, develop skills, and ascertain how *"all of this operates in real life."*

The internships are divided up into these. The internship related to information management at organisations helps to strengthen knowledge and skills in records and archive management (4 credits, 4<sup>th</sup> semester - for full time students; 6<sup>th</sup> semester - for part time students). This internship is open to students who have passed courses Introduction to Records Management, Document Preservation, Electronic Records: Digital Preservation and Archival Description. The internship in information resource management (4<sup>th</sup> semester - for full time students; 4<sup>th</sup> semester - for part time students) and then one in information service management (6<sup>th</sup> semester for full time students, 7<sup>th</sup> semester for part time students) are focused on strengthening information management skills related to libraries, information centres and other institutions. The internship in information resource management is open to students who have passed courses in Information Sources and Seeking, Information Organisation, Knowledge Organisation, Basic Concepts and Tools of the Internet, and Basics of Database Design (all mandatory courses). The internship in information service management (*now it is in Part A of the programme*) is available to students who have passed courses on Information Services, Digital Libraries and Repositories, and Information Literacy (Table 27).

*Table 27. The themes of internships the bachelor's study programme on information management.*

Academic Practice (Management of Information Resources)	Academic Practice (Information Management in Organisations)	Academic Practice (Information Services Management)
4 <sup>th</sup> semester – for full time students 4 <sup>th</sup> semester – for part time students	4 <sup>th</sup> semester – for full time students 6 <sup>th</sup> semester – for part time students	6 <sup>th</sup> semester– for full time students 7 <sup>th</sup> semester – for part time students
2 credits	4 credits	2 credits
Courses that must be passed before an internship		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Sources and Seeking;</li> <li>• Information Organisation;</li> <li>• Knowledge Organisation;</li> <li>• Basic Concepts and Tools of the Internet;</li> <li>• Basics of Database Design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Records Management;</li> <li>• Document Preservation;</li> <li>• Electronic Records: Digital Preservation;</li> <li>• Archival Description</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Services;</li> <li>• Digital Libraries and Repositories;</li> <li>• Information Literacy.</li> </ul>

Academic internships help to strengthen the results of the study programme, including knowledge about information resources at the relevant institution, information systems (document search systems, etc.) and information services, as well as skills related to processing information resources, establishing and utilising search systems, preparing and evaluating information services for information users, etc. All of this helps students to develop the competences that are part of the programme (Table 28).

Table 28. The relationship between internships and the results of the programme.

Please see attached.

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

During the reporting period, 132 graduates prepared and defended their concluding theses. Topics can be proposed by specialists in the field, faculty members or students on the basis of their interests and/or the requirements of their places of employment. It can be concluded, therefore, that the topics are timely and in line with labour market needs, as well as informational processes in society.

The topics of bachelor's theses can be divided up into three categories:

- 1) Theoretical and general aspects of information management (institutional operations, professional competences, education, informational behaviour, information literacy and other skills necessary for the use of information, etc.);
- 2) Information resources and their management (various information resources, publishing, e-books, e-dictionaries, bibliographic compendiums, digital collections, websites);
- 3) Information services and their management (local studies, family research, library and other

institutional services, facilities, etc.).

During the reporting period, the largest proportion of bachelor's theses related to *information services and their management* - 44%; about general aspects of information management, informational behaviour, and information literacy and media literacy - 31%; and about information resources and their management - 25% (Table 29).

The most popular topics in the areas of information services included *library services, library facilities, their elements and their appropriateness for modern trends and requirements, user training* (23%), and *local studies and family research* (17%).

In the category of general aspects of information management, 23% of theses were about *information habits, informational literacy, media literacy and the opportunities which modern information and communications technologies afford when using information*. In the category of information resources, in turn, the most popular topics related to various e-resources, their evaluation and their usage (8%).

The dominant topics during the study year frameworks were as follows:

- The 2013/2014 academic year: Research into library services (42%)
- The 2014/2015 academic year: Local studies, family research and research into the services of libraries and museums (48%)
- The 2015/2016 academic year: Local studies, and family research (27%), as well as professional aspects and competences in the area of information management (27%)
- The 2016/2017 academic year: Digital resource research (38%)
- The 2017/2018 academic year: The habits of information users, information literacy, everyday information skills and media skills research (23%), as well as research into library services, facilities and user training (20%)
- The 2018/2019 academic year: Local studies, and family research (13%), as well as research concerning the habits of information users, media literacy, everyday information literacy and digital literacy (13%).

Table 29. Topics of bachelor's theses by academic years.

Table 29. Topics of bachelor's theses by academic years

No.	Topics	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Total
1.	General aspects of information management	3	4	7	5	15	7	41
2.	Information service management	11	14	5	5	17	6	58
3.	Information resource management	5	9	3	6	8	2	33
		19	27	15	16	40	15	132

The average grade for bachelor's theses is 7.8, which is close to 8 (very good). Table 30 shows that 8 was the most common grade during these years, applying to 36 bachelor's theses. The average grade per year ranges from 7.5 to 8.3. The lowest grades were given during the 2015/16 academic year, while the highest ones were given during the 2013/14 academic year. In surveys, students most often praise the research skills that they have learned and the courses at which these skills were taught. They consider the courses to be useful and interesting, which helps to explain the reason why high grades are dominant.

Table 30. Grades for bachelor's theses (2013/14 academic year to 2018/19 academic year).

Table 30. Grades for bachelor's theses (2013/14 academic year to 2018/19 academic year)

Grade	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Total
10	1	2	2	2	5	1	13
9	8	7	1	3	11	3	33
8	7	5	3	6	12	3	36
7	2	9	5	4	9	5	34
6	1	2	4	1	1	3	12
5		1		2			3
4		1					1
Average	8.3	7.7	7.5	8.1	8.1	7.6	132

## 2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

### Student surveys

Surveys of students were organised regularly at the end of each semester during the reporting period, and they were ensured by the University of Latvia Information System (LUIS). The surveys were used to learn about the views of students vis-à-vis the quality of courses, the organisation of the study process, satisfaction with educational resources, factors which hinder studies, the overall quality of studies, satisfaction with studies, and the views of students about the extent to which the knowledge that they have learned links to their professional career.

If the results are viewed on a yearly basis, then it is evident that the average rating of the programme among students was 7.9 on a 10-point scale. On average, 84% of students were satisfied with their studies in the bachelor's programme, and an average of 65% reported that they planned to work in the sector in future.

Students have been most appreciative over the course of time about well-prepared and interesting lectures, seminars and activities which involve the students themselves, as well as field trips and internships -- everything that "links theory to real life." Positive views were expressed about the E-study environment and the materials that are available therein. Students appreciate access to databases, their ability to express views about the study process, as well as the "cosy rooms" of the faculty. Students also pointed to instructors who received high ratings again and again. These are people who are well prepared, know how to motivate their students, make requests that can be fulfilled, use interesting study forms, and are kind and humane.

When it comes to the study programme as such, criticisms from students have related to the need for a broader range of thematic courses, additional information technology courses, greater Section B elective choices, and, in some years, the way in which lectures are planned.

### Evaluation of courses

Evaluations of courses are conducted each semester, with students being asked to evaluate the content of the course, the teaching methods, and the ability of the instructor to ensure that students are interested in the topic. Between the 2016/17 and 2018/2019 academic year, for instance, the following courses gained the highest ratings on a seven-point scale: Archive work -- 6.66; Usability and the information architecture -- 6.66. Courses taught by Docent Daina Pakalna regularly receive high marks. In comments, students have noted that her courses are well-considered, with clear requirements and with interesting elements. These are the courses:

- Study of Local History at Libraries -- 6.47 (this is an area in which many bachelor's theses

have also been researched);

- Information Infrastructure and Institutions -- 6.44;
- Introduction to Studies and Research -- 6.43;
- Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods -- 6.4 (this course has provided valuable knowledge and skills related to research processes);
- The Normative Background of Information Work -- 6.4.

In general terms, a regular evaluation above 6 (of 7) was received by 32 courses during the reporting period (52% of courses in the programme).

### Graduate surveys

Surveys of graduates were regularly conducted during the reporting period. A questionnaire was used to determine the views of alums about the study environment, the knowledge and skills that they obtained, the study process, work experience during their studies, the study programme as such and any improvements to it that might be necessary.

In all reporting years, an average of 79% of students were satisfied with the programme, and an average of 76% of graduates rated the quality of the programme at a high level.

Each year, the most positive comments have come with respect to the **study environment**, which includes personnel, facilities and material and technical support. Each year, for instance, respondents say that most instructors are competent and responsive, that office workers do their work at a high level of quality, that librarians are supportive, that there is access to databases, that there is good material and technical support and that the facilities of the faculty are pleasant.

There has been a broader range of views when it comes to the **content and quality of the programme**. When asked about the compatibility of courses and the field, for instance, students have given a rating between 68% and 92% over the course of the years. Some years had students who wanted to diversify the themes of study and gain broader knowledge and skills in information management. Such students pointed to the meaning of information management at any institution that has information resources, while the study programme mostly related to memory institutions when it came to information management. In general terms, graduates were particularly positive about courses about information technology usage, research and those that helped them to develop their information skills. Most grads (an average of 70%) had positive views about the knowledge that they gained from the programme and the applicability of the knowledge at work.

Graduates in all years have rated positively those study methods which have helped them to gain knowledge and skills, particularly in a real work environment. Of particular use have been internships, field trips, as well as various types of group work. E-courses were also viewed positively. One student wrote that "*E-studies very much helped me to organise my everyday studies and planning, as well as to review things that were discussed during lectures.*"

Critical responses related to the courses in which lectures were too academic and theoretical and without real examples. As a result, students were not sure that the skills that they learned would be useful at work. There have also been instructors whose attitudes toward students and their topics has been sloppy.

There are two basic groups of recommendations from graduates in terms of improving the programme. These are presented in Table 31, which also includes notes on how the recommendations have been implemented.

*Table 31. Recommendations from graduates on improvements and notes on implementation.*

*Please see attached.*

## Employer surveys

During the reporting period, the Department of Information and Library Studies has conducted several studies to learn about the views of sectoral employees and employers about the competences that are important in the field, about the timeliness of the department's programmes and any changes that might be necessary.

One such study was conducted in January and February 2016. The goal was to identify timely competences in the labour market so as to evaluate the correspondence of study programmes to the needs and to make any necessary improvements. The study was based on the Delphi method to identify and compare the views of experts (there were two rounds, with 45 library experts taking part in the first one, and 30 participating in the second one). Table 32 shows the results of the research, presenting information as to whether and how competences are ensured during the bachelor's programme.

*Table 32. The most important competences for an information specialist (according to employers) and ensuring these at the bachelor's study programme.*

*Please see attached.*

Analysis of the programme in accordance with this research shows that the courses of study do provide information specialists with the competences that they need.

A second study was directly focused on what employers think about the content of the department's study programme. It was conducted on November 23, 2017, as a focus group of employers and representatives of professional organisations in the field (the Latvian Association of Librarians, the Latvian Association of Academic Libraries, directors of public and academic libraries), as well as faculty members from the department who were given a previous opportunity to examine the study programmes. During the discussion, participants named what they thought to be the most important competences for specialists, and they also made recommendations on how the programme could be improved. Among essential competences, focus group participants spoke of communications skills, pedagogical skills to teach children and adults, media literacy and information literacy, familiarity with sources of information in various areas, data design, data analysis, data management, familiarity with people's need for information, design of user-oriented information services, the ability to think in a structured and critical way, design thinking and creativity. The following recommendations were made on how the programme could be improved; 1) A clearer area of specialisation related to information management at libraries and other institutions; 2) Changes to the content, names and semester of instruction for some courses (e.g., a change in the name of the course on Webpages); 3) Supplementing the programme with courses on contact and communication issues, pedagogy, literature and data management. All of these recommendations have been taken into account so as to improve the programme.

## Conclusions about the use of research results to improve the programme

The primary recommendations from students that have been implemented as part of the effort to improve the programme:

- Expanding the *thematic* range of courses, with specialised modules related to information management at libraries and information management at organisations (institutions)
- Improving the *student-centred approaches to teaching methods* while optimally making use of opportunities that are afforded by information and communications technologies;

- New courses on contacts and adult pedagogy;
- Improved information technology courses in the programme.

## **2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.**

During the reporting period, 20 students took part in the outgoing ERASMUS+ exchange programme, and one student took part in the incoming ERASMUS+ exchange programme (from the University of Tartu, 2015/2016). Of particular importance in the ERASMUS+ exchange programme has been a three-month internship at the library of the University of Glasgow (1 student). During the reporting period, students have spent time at the University of Tallinn in Estonia (8), the University of Silesia in Poland (2), the University of Lodz in Poland (1), the Oslo and Akershus University of Applied Science in Norway (2), the Media University of Stuttgart in Germany (1), the Eötvös Loránd University in Hungary (2), the University of Porto (1), the University of Borås in Sweden (2) (Appendix 8).

Nearly all students had much praise for benefits from the exchange programme, including experience with the study process at a university in another country, the courses that they took and the contacts that they made. During the mobility, students took courses related to library science and information science, as well as other courses in the social sciences and humanities.

## **III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)**

### **3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.**

The bachelor's programme is offered by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Latvia (UL FSS). Section II.3 has more information about its resources and provisions.

There is good informational support for the study process, and it is in the hands of the library of the University of Latvia (LUB). The bachelor's study programme on information management and the master's degree programme on library science and information have a range of themes that have led the LUB, from January 1, 2010, until May 24, 2019, to add 36,985 copies (Table 43). Some of these **(12,378)** copies are available at the library of the UL FSS (Table 34).

*Table 33. Printed publications (copies) (the overall collection of the LUB).*

Table 34. *Print publications (copies) at the UL FSS library.*

Table 33. *Printed publications (copies) (the overall collection of the LUB)*

<b>"Information Management" and "Library Science and Information"</b>						
<b>Print publications (copies)</b>			<b>By language (copies)</b>			
Books	Serials and periodicals	Other publications	Latvian	English	Russian	Other
<b>23 003</b>	12 460	1522	15 003	6 411	10 140	5 431
<b>Total: 36, 985 copies</b>						

Table 34. *Print publications (copies) at the UL SZF library*

<b>"Information Management" and "Library Science and Information"</b>						
<b>Print publications (copies)</b>			<b>By language (copies)</b>			
Books	Serials and periodicals	Other publications	Latvian	English	Russian	Other
<b>11 263</b>	783	332	3 286	8 661	273	158
<b>Total: 12, 378 copies</b>						

The LUB also provides access to electronic resources:

1. The UL E-resource repository;
2. The databases of journals publishers, etc.;
3. E-book platforms.

The university subscribes to electronic resources such as databases and E-book platforms, and these are available in the UL network and outside of it. Access requires a LUIS username and password.

The following subscribed E-resources contain materials for the bachelor's programme "Information management":

- *Central & Eastern Europe Academic Source (EBSCO host)*
- *Emerald eJournals Premier*
- *JSTOR*
- *Letonika*
- *Oxford Journals*
- *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*
- *SAGE Journals Online*
- *SAGE Research Methods*
- *ScienceDirect*
- *Scopus*
- *SpringerLink*
- *Taylor & Francis Social Science & Humanities Library*
- *Web of Science*

The LUB also provides access to E-books in accordance with the thematic range of "Information management":

- *Dawsonera*
- *ProQuest Ebook Academic Complete*

To make the electronic resources more easily available, the LUB has introduced the latest web technology services, **Primo Discovery and SFX**. These enable access through a single link to all



search results that come from all of the databases that the LUB offers.

All in all, the collection of the library is in line with the studies and scholarly research needs. The collection is supplemented each year with the timeliest information resources in accordance with the informational needs of academic personnel and students. In surveys, students have particularly praised this ability to access databases.

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

### **III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)**

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

An average of 25 faculty members were involved in the study programme during the reporting period and during each year. The number has remained quite stable, though there have been changes. During the 2015/2016 academic year, for instance, two instructors from the Department of Information and Library Studies retired, while two joined the staff of the UL to take over the teaching of existing courses and to prepare new courses. Other changes had to do with the inclusion of new courses in the programme or the exclusion of courses from the programme. The quality of studies did not suffer, because the changes were supported by professionally trained and motivated instructors whose work led to positive evaluations from students.

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

Three professors (Viesturs Zanders, Vita Zelče and Aija Zobena) and three associate professors (Baiba Bela, Baiba Holma and Ivars Ijabs) are involved in the implementation of the Bachelor study program "Information Management" in accordance with Article 55, Paragraph three of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Analysis of the qualifications of faculty members shows that during the reporting period, 56% of the

average 25 number of faculty members had a doctoral degree while 44% had a master's degree in the relevant sector. Instructors from various faculties have taught courses in accordance with the themes of the bachelor's programme – an average of 10 from the UL Faculty of Social Sciences (including faculty members from the Department of Communications Studies, the Department of Political Science, and the Department of Sociology), one from the Faculty of Economics and Management, 4 from the Faculty of Computer Science, 2 from the Faculty of Law, and 3 from the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences. On average, one-half of the faculty members were elected by the UL.

Some courses were taught, and some internships were provided by qualified specialists from the Library of the University of Latvia, the National Library of Latvia, the The National Archives of Latvia Management, and the state agency "Cultural Information Systems" (11 during the reporting period). Sectoral professionals also advised some of the research work of students and took part in thesis defence commissions (3). It must be noted that courses on records and archive management, as well as organisation of internships are entirely in the hands of guest lecturers from the sector.

Professionals from the sector are also brought in to deliver specific lectures in courses in the bachelor's programme. The course "Digital libraries and e-repositories," for instance, gives students a chance to hear a lecture from Māriete Jankevica-Balode, the system librarian for the Latvian National Digital Library, talk about the digital object management system and the addition of metadata to it. UL Library system librarian Ilga Rampāne delivers a lecture on the UL e-resources repository and open science, also talking about joint practical activities related to the addition of resources to the repository. During field trips that are organised in many of the sectoral courses of the programme, too, sectoral professionals take active part in the process.

80% of faculty members at the Department of Information and Library Studies who take part in the bachelor's programme have a doctoral degree in philology, while one faculty member is currently writing her dissertation. During the reporting period, all faculty members have been involved in research projects in their areas of scientific interest. Major topics include Latvian book science, usability of websites, information services and reading, information skills, media skills and other adult skills and assessment of same, as well as education and professional competences related to library science and information science. All of these research topics mean that faculty members gain new knowledge in support of achieving the study results of the programme.

Faculty members have also been actively involved in improving their own competences as part of the project No 8.2.2.0/18/A/010, "Restoration and Improvement of Competences among Academic Personnel at the University of Latvia."

Bachelor's programme students have also had a chance to listen to guest professors who have visited the university as part of the ERASMUS+ exchange programme:

- Anna Severina, University of Silesia, Poland, in 2014
- Jolanta Šulca, University of Silesia, Poland, in 2016
- Agata Valčaka-Neviadomska, Lodz University of Technologies, Poland, 2016
- Fernanda Ribeiro, University of Porto, Portugal, spring of 2018
- Armando Manheiro da Silva, University of Porto, Portugal, spring of 2018
- António Lucas Soares, University of Porto Portugal, spring of 2019

Guest lecturers have taught classes or delivered individual lectures as part of other projects:

- Džons Lubāns (USA), spring of 2016 (a course on leadership)
- Kuldar Aas and Tarvo Karberg (National Archives of Estonia) -- "Electronic Documents: Digital Storage." Spring of 2017 (as senior experts in digital preservation and archiving) -- guest

lecturers at the course "Electronic Documents: Digital Storage"

- Aira Leppik (University of Tallinn, Estonia), spring of 2019, a lecture on information science in Estonia.

### **Involvement of employers in the programme during the reporting period**

Professionals from libraries, archives and museums have been involved in the programme during each academic year (Table 35). For instance, senior specialists from the National Archive of Latvia have regularly taught courses on document management and preservation, as well as establishment and description of archives. Among them have been the director of the National Archives of Latvia, Māra Sprūdža and the deputy director, Gatis Karlsons. For several years, classes were taught by Valdis Rūsiņš, a senior specialist at the Political Archive of the Latvian Foreign Ministry. Two specialists from the National Archives of Estonia, Kuldar Aas and Tarvo Karberg, taught courses related to digital preservation of records management, as well as aspects of digitalisation during the 2017/2018 academic year.

Many courses related to library work were taught by library specialists. A course on information systems was taught by Baiba Mūze, Tieto Alise and Ilga Rampāne from the University of Latvia Library (LUB). Sandra Cīrule is a teacher at the Department and previously directed a library, and she teaches the course "Publicity of Information Organizations". The course "Information Services" has been taught by the National Library of Latvia specialist Aiga Grēniņa, "Basics of Information Institution Management" by Iveta Gudakovska, previously a director of the UL Library and now the director of the UL Museum, profession-related English has been taught by a librarian from the Latvian Academic Library, Edīte Muižniece, and courses on international co-operation among memory institutions have been taught by National Library of Latvia director Andris Vilks, and by Uldis Zariņš, the director of the library's Development Department, among others. Guests lecturers have delivered specific lectures in several courses. The head of the Intellectual Information Centre Library, Dace Bula, visits the University each year to talk about patents, trademarks, design samples and their search systems. Students who are taking the course "User Groups: Children and Youth" visited Dubulti Children's Library of the Jūrmala Central Library. Specialist Ilga Rampāne (LUB) delivers a lecture and leads an activity related to the UL E-repository. Most advisors for final papers are specialists from the sector.

*Table 35. The involvement of people from the sector in the programme.*

*Table 35. The involvement of people from the sector in the programme*

	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
<i>Employees of sectors involved in the programme:</i>	9	9	8	8	21	7
<i>Delivery of lectures</i>	4	4	3	3	8	4
<i>Teaching of courses</i>	5	5	5	5	13	1
<i>Advising a final paper</i>	0	0	0	0	1	2
<i>Participation in a final paper commission ā</i>	0	0	0	1	1	0
<i>Other (indicate type))</i>						

**4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).**

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

**4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.**

During the reporting period, Associate Professor Baiba Holma from the Department of Information and Library Studies has been involved in several national and international projects. One of them was titled "Educators and Innovators at Libraries" (<http://www.kis.gov.lv/projekti/bibliotekam/daily-innovators-and-daily-educators-in-the-library>), which was an international project that was part of the ERASMUS+ programme (Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway). The project involved research in the specific countries vis-à-vis the educational needs of adults, also preparing educational materials for librarians who wished to organise such activities. The project had a great deal of scholarly and practical value, and the results were used in a very diverse way in study courses on design thinking, creativity in the development of services, the facilities and functions of public libraries, etc.

Another example is project No 8.2.2.0/18/A010, "Rejuvenation and Improvement of Competences among Academic Personnel at the University of Latvia." This involved an internship at SIA Tilde (200 hours). During the internship she learned about the latest language technologies, which are discussed in the course "Introduction to Information Science" and in some master's degree programme courses. She did also research about the usability and usage of the digital resource "Letonika" developed by Tilde.

As part of her dissertation about the usability of websites, lecturer and doctoral student Liene Viļuma conducted research and helped to design a new portal for the University of Latvia. She uses her theoretical ideas and practical examples in her courses on the basic concepts and tools of the Internet, usability and the information architecture, etc.

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

Faculty members in the programme work together in various ways. For instance, one faculty member may invite a colleague to deliver a lecture during a course which focuses on a topic in which the colleague has greater expertise (e.g., the topic of digital collections in Latvia for the course "Local Studies at libraries"). Another example is joint field trips if the topics of courses supplement one another (e.g., "Digital libraries" and "Introduction to Metadata"). Particularly successful co-operation relates to joint research projects on subjects such as the information literacy of residents, the usability of digital resources, etc.

The relationship between students and elected faculty members is 1 faculty member per 15.6 students. This is an optimal situation in which the student-centred approach is one of the fundamental principles in that learning requires a partnership between students and their instructors.

# Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	Appendix 12.pdf	12.pielikums.pdf
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	Appendix 15.pdf	15.pielikums.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (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	Appendix 14 InfBSP_kartejums.pdf	14.pielikums Inf_BSP_kartejums.pdf
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	Appendix 13 BSP_InfParv.pdf	13.A pielikums BSP_InfParv.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Appendix 39.A.pdf	39.A pielikums.pdf
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	Appendix 33.A.pdf	33.A pielikums.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	Appendix 11.A.pdf	11.A pielikums.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	Appendix 10.4.pdf	10.4. pielikums.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under <a href="http://www.europass.lv">www.europass.lv</a> ), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.		
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	Appendix 10.2.A.pdf	10.2.A pielikums.pdf
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	Appendix 36.A.pdf	36.A pielikums.pdf
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	Appendix 34.A.pdf	34.A pielikums.pdf



# Communications Studies

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Communications Studies</i>
Education classification code	<i>51321</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Doctoral study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Vita</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Zelče</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>vita.zelce@lu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Dr. hist.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	<i>29417510</i>
Goal of the study programme	<i>To allow students to gain an internationally recognised academic higher education and scientific qualifications on the basis of individual scholarly work that relates to fundamental and applied research into the mass media and communication sector so as to develop competence that is required in the labour market at the 8th ISCED education level, finding employment opportunities in the Republic of Latvia's classification of professions at the 1st basic group level.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<i>1) To teach communication theories at a high level, focusing on a theoretical understanding of communication and information processes in the context of social sciences and development of society, as well as strengthened media and communication science sectors and subsectors (library science, communication theory, other areas of the media and communication)</i> <i>2) To teach the latest theoretical approaches and methods in communication studies at a high level, also focusing on the professional application of same;</i> <i>3) To teach university pedagogical theories and practices at a high level (lectors, seminar directors, individual student work, the knowledge of the work of the research project advisor, and learning of skills and competence);</i> <i>4) To publish research work in peer-reviewed international and local scholarly publications;</i> <i>5) To learn about presentation skills related to research and its results at a high level by delivering papers at international and local conferences, seminars, schools, etc.;</i> <i>6) To learn and develop creative and critical thinking, analytical and argumentation skills and competence at a high level;</i> <i>7) To independently write a thesis and pre-defend it before the doctoral studies council so as to confirm high-level knowledge, skills and competence in the area of communication studies.</i>



Results of the study programme	<p><i>Knowledge:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A high level of knowledge, understanding and analysis of classical and new scholarly theory in the area of social sciences;</li> <li>2. A high level of knowledge, understanding and analysis of the classical and new research ideas in the area of communication science;</li> <li>3. A high level of knowledge, understanding and use of methodology and modern research methods related to communication science;</li> <li>4. A high level knowledge, understanding of links between communication science and other areas of science and professional areas of operations.</li> </ol> <p><i>Skills:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. A high level of independent work in terms of evaluating and developing qualitative methodologies that are in line with communication science research;</li> <li>6. A high level of independent investments in expanding the boundaries of knowledge in the area of communication science, or a new understanding of existing knowledge and its application in practice by conducting essential original research in which at least one part relates to international peer-reviewed publications;</li> <li>7. The ability to offer oral and written communication about the student's area of scholarly work in the sector of communication studies as related to academic circles and the public at large;</li> <li>8. The ability to constantly raise scientific qualifications by taking part in projects, earning achievements that relate to the international criteria of the scientific sector, and doing research or developmental work at companies, institutions or organisations that require high-level knowledge and skills.</li> </ol> <p><i>Competence:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Independent and high-level critical analysis, synthesis and evaluation so as to resolve important aspects of communication science research, pedagogy or innovations;</li> <li>10. Independent submission of original research ideas, plans and structures so as to manage extensive communication science scholarly projects, including international projects.</li> </ol>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	A doctoral thesis

## Study programme forms

### Full time studies - 3 years - latvian

Study type and form	Full time studies
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	0
Language	latvian
Amount (CP)	144
Admission requirements (in English)	A master's degree in social sciences or humanities

Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Scientific doctoral degree (PhD) in media and communication</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

#### Full time correspondence studies - 4 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time correspondence studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>4</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>144</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>A master's degree in social sciences or humanities</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Scientific doctoral degree (PhD) in media and communication</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

#### Part time studies - 4 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>4</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>144</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>A master's degree in social or humanities studies. Admission is subject to a competition: Entrance examination – an interview during which the applicant's level of knowledge in the field of communication science, its relevant sub-sector and a foreign language is assessed, as well as the quality of the research paper applied for. An advanced concept of research work that will be carried out during doctoral studies is a prerequisite for participating in the interview.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Scientific doctoral degree (PhD) in media and communication</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

**Part time extramural studies - 4 years - latvian**

Study type and form	<i>Part time extramural studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>4</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>144</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>A master's degree in social sciences or humanities</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Scientific doctoral degree (PhD) in media and communication</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

**Places of implementation**

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

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

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

#### **Parameters of the study programme “Doctoral study programme in communication science”**

Title of the study programme	Doktora studiju programma “Komunikācijas zinātne”	
Title of the study programme in English	Doctoral study programme in Communication Science	
Code of the study programme according to the Latvian Education Classification	Mass media and communication in accordance with Regulation No 49 from the Cabinet of Ministers, 23 January 2018, “Regulations on the Sectors and Subsectors of Science in Latvia”	
Field of science (refer to doctoral study programmes)	51321	
Type and level of study programme	Doctoral study programme	
Qualification level to be achieved (NQF / EQF)	8 <sup>th</sup> level	
Occupation code in the Classification of Occupations		
Volume of study programme (CP, ECTS recommended)	144 CP / 216 ECTS	
Implementation mode/form, type, duration (if less than a year, in months) and language of implementation		
full-time regular studies	3 years	Latvian
full time correspondence studies	4 years	Latvian
full-time correspondence studies (distance learning)		
part time regular studies	4 years	Latvian
part time correspondence studies	4 years	Latvian

part-time correspondence studies (distance learning)	
Place of implementation	Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia
Director of the study programme	<i>Dr. hist.</i> , Professor Vita Zelče
Admission requirements	A master's degree in social or humanities studies. <i>Admission is subject to a competition:</i> Entrance examination – an interview during which the applicant's level of knowledge in the field of communication science, its relevant sub-sector and a foreign language is assessed, as well as the quality of the research paper applied for. An advanced concept of research work that will be carried out during doctoral studies is a prerequisite for participating in the interview.
Degree, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification awarded	A scientific doctoral degree (PhD) in communication science
Aim of the study programme	To allow students to gain an internationally recognised academic higher education and scientific qualifications on the basis of individual scholarly work that relates to fundamental and applied research into the mass media and communication sector so as to develop competence that is required in the labour market at the 8 <sup>th</sup> ISCED education level, finding employment opportunities in the Republic of Latvia's classification of professions at the 1 <sup>st</sup> basic group level

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Objectives of the study programme

- 1) To teach communication theories at a high level, focusing on a theoretical understanding of communication and information processes in the context of social sciences and development of society, as well as strengthened media and communication science sectors and subsectors (library science, communication theory, other areas of the media and communication)
- 2) To teach the latest theoretical approaches and methods in communication studies at a high level, also focusing on the professional application of same;
- 3) To teach university pedagogical theories and practices at a high level (lectors, seminar directors, individual student work, the knowledge of the work of the research project advisor, and learning of skills and competence);
- 4) To publish research work in peer-reviewed international and local scholarly publications;
- 5) To learn about presentation skills related to research and its results at a high level by delivering papers at international and local conferences, seminars, schools, etc.;
- 6) To learn and develop creative and critical thinking, analytical and argumentation skills and competence at a high level;
- 7) To independently write a thesis and pre-defend it before the doctoral studies council so as to confirm high-level knowledge, skills and competence in the area of communication studies.

Learning outcomes to be achieved	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A high level of knowledge, understanding and analysis of classical and new scholarly theory in the area of social sciences;</li> <li>2. A high level of knowledge, understanding and analysis of the classical and new research ideas in the area of communication science;</li> <li>3. A high level of knowledge, understanding and use of methodology and modern research methods related to communication science;</li> <li>4. A high level knowledge, understanding of links between communication science and other areas of science and professional areas of operations.</li> </ol> <p>Skills:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. A high level of independent work in terms of evaluating and developing qualitative methodologies that are in line with communication science research;</li> <li>6. A high level of independent investments in expanding the boundaries of knowledge in the area of communication science, or a new understanding of existing knowledge and its application in practice by conducting essential original research in which at least one part relates to international peer-reviewed publications;</li> <li>7. The ability to offer oral and written communication about the student's area of scholarly work in the sector of communication studies as related to academic circles and the public at large;</li> <li>8. The ability to constantly raise scientific qualifications by taking part in projects, earning achievements that relate to the international criteria of the scientific sector, and doing research or developmental work at companies, institutions or organisations that require high-level knowledge and skills.</li> </ol> <p>Competence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Independent and high-level critical analysis, synthesis and evaluation so as to resolve important aspects of communication science research, pedagogy or innovations;</li> <li>10. Independent submission of original research ideas, plans and structures so as to manage extensive communication science scholarly projects, including international projects.</li> </ol>
The final examination at the end of the study programme	A doctoral thesis

Doctoral studies in the area of communication science began in 2006 in Latvia, when the doctoral programme at the University of Latvia (UL) was licensed. This was the first study programme of this type in Latvia. External experts have always praised the programme, and it received the maximum term of accreditation in 2008 and 2013. The programme is implemented by the UL Faculty of Social Science, the Department of Communication Studies, and the Department of Information and Library

Studies.

On November 3, 2009, the Latvian Cabinet of Ministers amended regulations on awarding doctoral degrees so that the rights were delegated to universities (Regulation No 1,000). The UL was given the right to award doctoral decrees in the field of communication science. In 2011, this was confirmed by the UL Council on Sociology, Political Science and Communication Science Promotion, which has the right to decide on awarding a doctoral degree. Since then, 13 dissertations in the area of communication science have been defended.

The doctoral programme is and will continue to be closely linked to the UL's bachelor and master's degree programmes relating to information and communication studies. The programme is also linked to the Advanced Social and Political Research Institute (ASPRI), Faculty of Social Sciences, which ensures academic studies in the area of communication science, as well as the sustainability of research-related media in the sector of communication science.

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

The UL doctoral programme in communication science is among the demanded doctoral programmes at the UL. Applicants include graduates from other universities.

During the reporting period, the number of students in the communication science doctoral programme has declined (Appendix 28). There are several reasons for this. External reasons include:

- 1) the fact that there has been a targeted attempt in the area of higher education policy to focus potential students from social and humanities programme to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), the argument being that this is needed by the Latvian economy;
- 3) the number of state-paid tuition recipients has declined by 65%;
- 4) since the beginning of the review period, when some students were given on competitive basis scholarships in framework of ESF Project 1.1.2.1.2. "Support for implementation of doctoral study programs" (2009-2014), doctoral students today have little support from the university and have to finance their own lives;
- 4) universities in many EU member states, including the other Baltic States, offer state-financed study programmes, as well as financing for studies and everyday needs. This is not the case at the UL;
- 5) finally, the wages of university faculty members and scholars is low in the area of social sciences and the humanities.

During the reporting period, all but one of the doctoral students had full-time jobs in parallel to their studies. This has had an influence on the ability of students to achieve study results. Some students who worked very hard could not pass promotion exams, write scholarly publications and write their dissertations in a timely way. The period of time for writing the dissertation has ranged from one to seven years after doctoral studies are completed. Students often choose to stop their studies so that during the break, they can satisfy study requirements that they have missed. Doctoral



students often stop their studies because of overload, health problems, personal life, individual career plans, etc. Doctoral students must have a very powerful individual motivation, career plan, as well as material support to study successfully and earn the doctoral degree in a timely way.

From the 2015/2016 to the 2017/2018 academic year, one doctoral student in the programme was involved in the Horizon-2020 Marie Skłodowsky-Curie innovative training network (H2020-MSCA-ITN-2014), “Children Born of War – Past, Present, Future” (CHIBOW), and the student wrote his dissertation while taking part in the programme. He plans to defend it during the 2020/2021 academic year.

Starting from the 2017/2018 academic year, two doctoral students have joined the doctoral study programme each year. In entrance exams, particular attention is paid to the individual motivation of applicants, because that is an important prerequisite for successful studies and the writing of a thesis. Before students are accepted, they meet with faculty members to discuss their study and professional career plans, as well as the study opportunities that are offered by the UL.

Several doctoral students who received fragmentary support in terms of targeted scholarships from the ESF Project 1.1.2.1.2. “Support for implementation of doctoral study programs” (2009–2014) are planning to defend their dissertations in the near future.

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

The name of the doctoral study programme in communication sciences, the degree that can be earned, the aim, objectives and admission requirements are mutually linked. After a student defends his or her dissertation before the UL Council of Sociology, Political Science and Communication Science, he or she receives a Ph.D. degree in media and communication (prior to August, 2018, it was abbreviated as *Dr. sc. comm.*).

The communication science doctoral programme operates in accordance with regulations about Latvia's scientific sectors and subsectors (as confirmed by the Cabinet of Ministers on January 23, 2018, No 49), and it is also in line with the social science sector relating to the media and communication. There are three subsectors – library science, communication theory and other media and communication subsectors. Thesis can be written in these subsectors. Prior to January 23, 2018, the programme was in line with the communication science sector that was confirmed by the Latvian Council of Science (LCS) in 2006. It also included three subsectors – library science, communication theory and communication psychology and ethics.

The promotion councils of the UL sociology, political science and communication science were established in accordance with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 1001, which speaks to the procedure and criteria of awarding a doctoral degree (approved on December 27, 2005 and amended on August 14, 2018). The members of the council are LCS experts. Each dissertation is reviewed by three experts, including one foreign expert, one from another Latvian university who relates to the LCS media and communication sector, and one from the UL promotion council who has the rights of an LCS expert.

In accordance with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 1001, the final paper written by students can involve:

- a doctoral thesis;
- a set of thematically unified scholarly publications which have to be accepted for publication in an anonymously peer-reviewed scholarly journal, available in scientific information collections, and are cited in internationally available databases;
- a reviewed scholarly monograph that is devoted to a single topic, is internationally available in scientific information collections, and contains a bibliography and a summary in a foreign language.

The UL doctoral programme in communication science is open to people who have earned a master's degree in the social sciences or humanities, have passed an entrance exam and satisfy UL admission rules. The entrance exam is a set of conversations during which the student's knowledge in the areas of communication science and the relevant sub-sector, foreign language skills and the quality of the proposed scholarly work are all discussed. A mandatory prerequisite for this is an extensive concept related to the research work which the doctoral student will do. This is judged on the basis of admission criteria for UL doctoral study programmes (these are published each year on the UL portal under the section "Admission").

The aim and objectives of the communication science doctoral programme and the knowledge, skills and competence that are obtained by students are in line with the 8<sup>th</sup> NQF/EQF level (Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 322 on education classification in Latvia), and that is the doctoral study level.

The aim of the communication science doctoral programme at the UL is to allow students to obtain an individually based set of scholarly work, an internationally recognised academic higher education, as well as scientific qualifications in the areas of the media or other areas of communication so as to learn the competences that are demanded by the labour market at the 8<sup>th</sup> ISCED education level. Employment opportunities relate to the 1st basic group of Latvia's profession classification. The programme trains highly qualified scientific workers and instructors in communication science who satisfy international requirements. It also trains highly qualified communication sector professionals who can engage in original research and write scholarly publications that satisfy the requirements of *SCOPUS* and *WoS* database indexes. There are seven objectives in this regard, including consequently high-level knowledge, skills and competence phases, including a high level of knowledge about the social sciences, communication sciences, research methodologies and methods, university-level pedagogic theory and practice, research and presentation of results, as well as creative and critical thinking, analysis and argumentation. The programme also includes promotion exams, scholarly publications for indexed *SCOPUS* and *WoS* databases, as well as the preparation of the thesis. All of this helps the student to obtain high-level knowledge, skills and competence in the field of communication science.

The programme achieves ten learning outcomes that are classified as knowledges, skills and competence. The learning outcomes that are to be achieved state that graduates of the programme have high-level knowledge, understanding and skills in terms of analysing the classical and modern scholarly theories about social sciences and communication sciences, as well as ideas from research so that they can use communication science research methodologies and modern research methods. They are also familiar with and understand links between communication science and other areas of science and professions. Doctoral students learn how to independently evaluate and prepare communication science research with appropriate and qualitative methodology, doing so at a high level. They also independently make an investment in expanding the boundaries of communication science knowledge or offer a new understanding of existing knowledge and its use in practice. Students conduct major original research, and at least part of the work is published in internationally peer-reviewed publications. Students can provide oral and written high-level communication about their scholarly work with academic circles and the public at

large. They constantly increase their scientific qualifications by engaging in scientific projects and making achievements that are in line with international criteria. They conduct research or help the development of companies, institutions and organisations which require high-level knowledge and skills. This makes it possible to ensure competence in terms of high-level critical analysis, synthesis and evaluation so as to deal with important research, pedagogic or innovation missions. They can also independently propose original research ideas, as well as plan, structure and manage major communication science projects, including international ones.

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

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

The content of the UL communication science doctoral study programme is based on study programme aim, objectives and achievable learning outcomes, as well as with timely aspects of communication science and professional work.

The programme trains high-level specialists in areas such as the media and communication, as well as the subsectors library science and communication theory.

The need for and importance of the doctoral study programme in the area of communication science is based on the current information and communication science situation and their increasing social role. The shifting situation in the information environment means that there is an increasing demand for high-level experts who can make comments about the changes, offer explanations and prognoses, and be highly prepared for work in the environment. This means that there is a need for doctoral-level specialists in the communication theory subsector. A prerequisite for democratic countries is a powerful media system, including both the public and the commercial media. The present-day world faces increasing threats against the value of a liberal democracy, including freedom of speech. There is increasing disinformation, the need for media understanding competence, the increasing role of the new media, globalisation of media content and new formats of the media economy. These and other processes increase the need for highly qualified researchers and instructors. Latvia's media world, too, has many enormous problems. Among them is a comparatively small offer of high-quality and analytical content. Often the media face political or material instructions, and the legal framework for media operations is not in line with current realities. There is a lack of transparency when it comes to media economics and owners, the walls are collapsing between public relations and journalism, there is a lack of high-quality media offers for young people, there is comparatively little national budget financing for the public media, the education of journalists and media research. Ethical standards in journalism are foggy, and journalists as a professional community have weak solidarity and unity. A qualitative and analytical evaluation of these problems is an absolute prerequisite for media policies and the resolution of

problems. This is confirmed by a new approach toward media policies and activities (See “Basic Positions for Latvia’s Media Policies, 2016–2020,” Cabinet of Ministers, November 8, 2016).

The importance of communication specialists for state, local government and business institutions is on the rise, and this requires a high level of organisation, strategic and corporative communication specialists. Also of key importance are new media technologies, including the fourth industrial revolution. The importance of all types of communication, but particularly digital communication, has increased as a results of this. The UL’s communication science doctoral programmes train doctoral-level specialists for the media and communication sector and the communication theory subsector, and this work is fully in line with the needs of the country and its economy, as well as the demand for specialists in the labour market.

During the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Latvia’s major libraries have become influential centres for culture, public life and science. The network of libraries is of importance, particularly in terms of regional development. The new building of the Latvian National Library was opened to visitors in 2014, and this substantially increased the prestige of libraries and meant that the new library had dimensions of important culture and social institutional work. Latvia’s national developmental strategy (“Latvia’s Sustainable Development Strategy Through 2030”) emphasises the development of culture, and libraries are part of this process. Their work creates prerequisites for the development of the information society (See “Basic Positions on the Development of the Information Society, 2014–2020, Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 486, October 14, 2013). People today must know how to find, evaluate, use and manage information, and the job for librarians is to provide help so as to facilitate an increase in information skills and competences.

Libraries are also important int that they provide information resources, collecting, processing, storing and making available such resources. Among other things libraries provide and maintain various digital collections. The Ministry of Culture has a library development strategy, “Creative Latvia: A Strategy for the Library Sector, 2014-2020.” Its central goal is to “develop libraries as an important resource for the wise and sustainable growth of society so as to ensure the accessibility and popularisation of Latvia’s cultural heritage, improvements to the writing skills and information skills of people while supporting cultural and educational processes, facilitating the use of creative potential and processes of national unity so as to ensure the availability of state and local government services to people.” This means that libraries need high-level specialists with doctoral degrees. The UL communication study programme is the only one in Latvia that offers a doctoral degree in the library subsector of the media and communication sector. The work of this process is fully in line with the needs of the state and its economy, as well as demand in the labour market.

The doctoral programme at the UL is targeted at providing two kinds of high-level specialists for Latvia’s labour market – competence researchers and university instructors, as well as competent communication specialists.

The structure of the programme is based on the UL’s statutes, which speak to study programmes and ongoing education (approved by the UL Senate on April 24, 2017). Changes to the programme are also based on this document. Content changes are made because the latest ideas from communication science must become part of the study programme. This is based on modern scholarly practices, with ever greater importance for the internationalisation of research. The content of the study programme includes newly created and tested knowledge from instructors who engage in research projects.

Since the previous accreditation of the programme, the following changes have been made to the programme (See Table 46):

- 1) The structure of the improved mandatory part of the programme (Section A) has been

harmonised with the UL study programme and the ongoing education regulations (as confirmed by the UL Senate on April 24, 2017). Section A is made up of the Ph.D. thesis, individual scholarly work, doctoral exams, theoretic courses in the science sector and/or subsector, a school for doctoral students or equivalent experience, and a module of general skills;

2) The names of courses and credits have been made more precise when it comes to course that relate to writing the thesis. This makes the process more flexible and ensures better opportunities for individual development, because during the course of one semester, doctoral students often have to merge several stages of scholarly work and/or return to what has already been done to test and supplement results that have been obtained. The previous version of the programme involved the achievements during each semester in terms of writing the dissertation, and it was identified by a specific name for the phase of work. Sometimes this did not relate to the actual work of the student, and now this shortcoming has been addressed;

3) Mandatory part (Section A) of the programme now includes study course "Publication of a Scientific Article in an International Peer-Reviewed Journal" (8 CP) and mandatory elective part (Section B) includes "Publication of a Scientific Article in an International Peer-Reviewed Journal. II" (8 CP). The focus is on writing articles and publishing them in a scholarly publication that is indexed in the *SCOPUS* or *WoS* database. The new courses have replaced a course that focused on the publication of scholarly articles in universally recognised and peer-reviewed scholarly publications (4 CP), ensuring a greater focus on the important aspect of scientific work – publishing research results in high-quality publications that are indexed in internationally recognised databases;

4) The theoretical courses in Section A of the study programme have been altered a little bit. There is a new course on the development of communication science and the contemporary situation (4 CP), which contains part of the content of the previous course on communication theory and focuses more on the latest trends in the sector. The study course on cognitive science methods for social science research (4 CP) has now been integrated into a course on social science research methodology (4 CP), because during the reporting period, the knowledge and skills of potential doctoral students have increased when it comes to methodology and the use of methods;

5) Section A of the study program is supplemented by the courses of the doctoral school "Analysis of Political, Social and Economic Processes in the Post-Soviet Space" implemented by the Advanced Social and Political Research Institute (ASPRI) of the Faculty of Social Sciences;

6) Section A of the study programme now has a general skill module which includes several courses that were previously part of Section B (advising and reviewing annual papers), as well as an introductory course on instructor work so that students gain greater competence in this area (previously the course focused on university didactics and contemporary theory and practice). There is also a separate course on reviewing master's theses.

7) The Section B course on communication theory, its development and modern approaches therein has content from courses on communication theory and communication ethics and psychology. The changes are based on new rules on Latvia's science sectors and subsectors (Cabinet of Ministers Instruction No 40, January 23, 2018, No 49), which also changed the communication science subsector. There is a new course on the latest trends in social theory, which is aimed at learning about the latest ideas in the social sciences.

8) A new Section B course relates to scholarly research methodologies in communication studies, merging a previous seminar on doctoral studies and a course of academic ethics in communication science research.

9) The section B course on preparing courses of study at the bachelor's and master's degree level now contains content from several courses that were focused on instruction, including repeated

teaching of study courses in bachelor's and master's degree study programmes, as well as assistance in study courses. The aim is to reduce the workload of doctoral students in study programmes so that they have more time to write their dissertations.

10) Part B includes a new course "Conducting the Study Course "Academic Project in Communication Studies" of the Bachelor of Communication Science programme", which facilitates the acquisition of skills of the doctoral student as a research project supervisor and strengthens the links between the different study programs in the field of communication science.

11) The Section B course on publishing scholarly papers in locally peer-reviewed journals or collections, or in a local and peer-reviewed collective monograph now includes content from previous courses on publishing scholarly papers in compendia and non-peer-reviewed scholarly journals and on short scholarly publications. Here the aim is to reduce the number of times that doctoral students publish their research results in comparatively low-level scholarly journals and to encourage them to write papers that are appropriate for high-level international publications.

The aim of all of these changes is to help graduates of the doctoral programme in communication science to ensure their academic growth, to learn the latest scientific ideas, to write the dissertation, and to enjoy a professional career in the labour market.

*Table 46. Changes to the doctoral study programme in communication science*

*Please see table attached.*

144 credits must be earned to complete the doctoral programme in communication science (Appendix 29). Students can attend full-time regular studies (6 semesters) or full-time correspondence studies, part-time regular studies, and part-time correspondence studies (8 semesters). During the process, students can ask for sabbaticals, which are based on documents which regulate doctoral studies at the UL. Full-time regular studies last for three years (52 weeks a year, 40 hours per week, with 48 weeks of work and 4 of holidays). Part-time correspondence studies take four years, with 36 workweeks per year with 40 hours per week.

At the beginning of the academic year, each doctoral student prepares his or her individual plan, which is approved by the scientific supervisor and the council of the doctoral program.

*Table 47. The content and structure of the doctoral programme in communication science*

Content and form	Mandatory courses	Mandatory electives
Writing the dissertation, individual scientific work	92 CP	10 CP or 4 CP
Promotion exams and theoretical courses in the sector and/or subsector	14 CP	8 CP
Doctoral school or comparable experience	6 CP	
General skills module	12 CP	2 CP or 8 CP
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>124 CP</b>	<b>20 CP</b>

All students take **mandatory courses** (Section A), which mostly involve lectures and seminars. Students systematically read literature and other sources and then, under the leadership of the instructor, discuss what they have learned while also analysing the structure, content, theoretical and methodological approach, argumentation, etc., of the scholarly compositions. Instructors teach review and/or thematic lectures. Guest lectors are involved.

**Mandatory electives** (Section B) can be chosen in accordance with each student's subsector and scholarly and academic interests. Students must earn 20 credits in this section. The total number of credits offered in Section B is 62, which means that students have every opportunity to put together individual study plans in accordance with their area of specialisation, the topic of their dissertation, and their academic interests.

In both sections, there can be comparison of courses which students have completed at other universities if the council on doctoral study programmes agrees. This council also determines the content and format of promotion exams. While writing their thesis, students must take into account the relevant procedures and the division of work semester by semester.

The study and research work in the Section B electives is aimed at ensuring the successful writing of a dissertation in one of the communication science subsectors, as well as in-depth knowledge in the subsector and area of specialisation from the sector that relates to the media and communication. Section B courses and individual research and pedagogical work is evaluated in credits and in accordance with the volume of work that is anticipated in the programme.

Section A of mandatory courses leads to 124 credits:

**1) The doctoral thesis and individual scholarly work** (92 CP). The process of writing a doctoral thesis is sequential, with a certain amount of work being done each semester. At the conclusion of each phase, the student informs his or her academic advisor and the council of doctoral study programmes about what has been achieved. This includes analysis of literature, data and sources, identification of a methodology and the research work. During their studies, students must present a paper at least once at a high-level international conference or publish an article in an international and peer-reviewed journal that is indexed in the *SCOPUS* or *WoS* database. The dissertation and the research work are part of the programme aim and objectives 5, 6, and 7, leading to the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> learning outcomes;

**2) Doctoral exams and theoretical courses in the sector and/or subsector** (14 CP). Theoretical courses offer in-depth knowledge about modern communication science theories and concepts, the latest research, science and research work, as well as the methodology of social science research. Preparation for these exams facilitates a high level of knowledge, as well as scientific and professional competence in the chosen subsector and area of specialisation. It also helps students to use foreign languages in their academic work. The doctoral exams and theoretical courses serve objectives 1, 2, 4 and 8, and lead to learning outcomes 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 and 9.

**3) A doctoral school or comparable experience** (6 CP). Doctoral students take courses that have been designed by the ASPRI, Faculty of Social Sciences, focusing on the analysis of political, social and economic processes in the post-Soviet world (see <https://www.UL.lv/en/admission/studiju-programmas/doktorantura/skolas/procesu-analize>). This is a partnership platform for doctoral students in the fields of political science, sociology, communication science, history, economics, philology and geography, as well as for instructors and researchers in these areas. Doctoral students regularly take part in interdisciplinary seminars about post-Soviet issues, doing so in partnership with social partners. Areas of research include: 1) analysis of 20<sup>th</sup> century history, social memory and commemorations of the Soviet and post-Soviet heritage; 2) critical analysis at all levels of education to evaluate the effects of the Soviet period on the educational system of Latvia and other post-Soviet countries so as to come up with ways of strengthening critical thinking; 3) analysis of the capabilities, activities and interactions of residents, households, social groups, companies and organisations so as to model economic growth and sustainable development; comparative analysis of new strategies; analysis of the social aspects of economics in the post-Soviet space; 4) analysis of the information environment to look for commonalities (the Russian media and Russian speakers) and differences (the level of freedom of speech), the main agents (media, media owners, etc.) and the practices which reflect the heritage of the past and mark out new strategies; 5) analysis of the process of democratisation and its successes and failures in the post-Soviet world and in relation to the inherited political culture, civil society, party system, natural resources, economic development specifics and experience in reducing corruption; 6) analysis of Russia's efforts to use soft power such as entrepreneurship, the

Russian language, culture, Orthodoxy, sports, etc., to enhance its influence on the basis of the energy dependency of neighbouring countries; areas in which the interests of Russia and the EU/NATO intersect in the post-Soviet arena; and 7) spatial and structural changes and development in post-Soviet countries. Doctoral students prepare, discuss and review manuscripts of scholarly papers. This school ensures missions 1, 2 and 7, and enables the achievement of learning outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10.

All of these courses can be replaced with comparable experience from foreign universities or research institutions with a value of at least 6 credits.

4) **The general skills module** (12 CP) includes an introductory course on teaching classes (4 credits), a pedagogical internship at the university level, as well as a course on scientific research methodologies in communication science (4 credits). The module also includes individual pedagogic work in terms of advising and reviewing annual papers (2 credits), as well as reviewing master's theses (2 credits). This work ensures objectives 3 and 6 and leads to learning outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Students must earn 20 credits from the **mandatory elective section** (Section B). The theoretical segment offers in-depth theoretical courses related to the subsectors of the media and communication sector, as well as contemporary social science theories. The programme also includes individual study and research work by doctoral students in various forms such as publication of scholarly papers in international and local peer-reviewed scholarly compendiums and journals, taking part in international and local scientific conferences and seminars, internships at foreign universities, participation in summer schools, etc. Doctoral students also help to ensure the bachelor's and master's degree programmes by preparing and teaching courses. They also direct an excellent study course at the bachelor's level which focuses on scholarly projects in communication science (2 credits). The aim is to create interest among students in research work. They must engage in scholarly research which is presented at scientific conferences for students. The limited electives in the programme ensure all of the programme aim, objectives and learning outcomes (particularly outcomes 2, 3, 7 and 9).

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

The mapping of the learning outcomes of the UL's doctoral programme in communication science demonstrates links between the courses and the overall learning outcomes of the programme (Appendix 30). The mapping outcomes show that the planned learning outcomes of the courses fully conform to all achievable outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. The courses particularly speak to high-level knowledge and understanding about the classical and modern theories of communication science, as well as ideas from the latest examples of research (the 2<sup>nd</sup> learning outcome). Particular focus is on the ability of doctoral students to communicate information about their scholarly work orally or in writing, presenting this information to academic circles and the public at large (7<sup>th</sup> learning outcome). They also have competence in conducting independent and high-level critical analysis, synthesis and evaluation so as to deal with serious



communication science missions related to research, pedagogy or innovations (9<sup>th</sup> learning outcome). The mapping of the course also confirms that the programme's content is of an interdisciplinary nature because it emphasises links among various areas of science (4<sup>th</sup> learning outcome). Also of importance is familiarity, understanding and utilisation of communication science research methodology and modern research methods (3<sup>rd</sup> learning outcome), as well as the ability to prepare high-level research methodology (5<sup>th</sup> learning outcome). Other skills related to learning outcomes are an important part of courses, and the 8<sup>th</sup> result is achieved in more than one-half of the courses. Comparatively fewer courses offer high-level knowledge in other areas of social science (1<sup>st</sup> learning outcome), but the ability to make independent and high-level investments in expanding the range of communication science knowledge can offer a new understanding of existing knowledge and how it can be put into practice via major original research in which at least some papers are at the level of internationally peer-reviewed publications (6<sup>th</sup> learning outcome). It must be said, however, that other learning outcomes are also the foundation for achieving the 6<sup>th</sup> learning outcome in specific.

The main areas of research at the UL doctoral programme in communication science are ones that relate to doctoral thesis and relate to the sectors which focus on the media and communication and the subsectors related to library science and communication theory. Research done by doctoral students mostly relates to a fourth research area, as defined by the ASPRI, Faculty of Social Sciences, focusing on media, information and culture. The scholarly work and studies of the students also interweave through other the ASPRI research areas such as Latvia's international relations, particularly in terms of Russia and new European neighbours, democracy and minorities, as well as regional development in Latvia. Some students, for instance, are researching the regional media, examining Russia's influence on Latvia's media and cultural space, discuss the representation of and discourses about various social phenomena in the media, consider problems in democracy, and research the discourse of various ethnic and social minorities in the media.

The work of the doctoral programme also relates to programmes in other sectors of science. Doctoral students teach courses on advising and reviewing bachelor's theses (2 CP), advising and reviewing annual papers (2 CP), reviewing master's theses (2 CP), preparing and teaching courses at the bachelor's and master's degree level (8 CP), and management of scholarly projects in the field of bachelor's degree programme and in the area of communication science. These courses help students to learn skills related to management of scientific work, as well as to teaching classes. They learn more about how to review scholarly papers, and they also gain co-operation and leadership skills. This relates to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> objectives of the programme, as well as learning outcomes 5, 7, 8 and 10.

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

Doctoral studies in the area of communication science are organised by the Faculty of Social Sciences and led by the doctoral studies council which has representatives from the Department of Communication Studies and the Department of Information and Libraries Studies. The goal is to

achieve programme aim and learning outcomes on a student-centred basis. Classes are taught in Latvian in most cases. Others are taught in English. A course in the latest trends in social theory is one such course, and publications for internationally peer-reviewed journals, appearances at conferences, participation in summer schools, internships at foreign universities, etc., are all conducted in English. The workload of students relates to 40 academic hours per credit. The studies are based on student-centred learning and teaching principles. The programme is dominated by dialogue and a partnership between faculty members and students. Proposals from students are taken into account when thinking about improvements to the programme, and respect is given to the diversity of students. Each doctoral student has a specific form of learning and writing the dissertation. Studies are organised in harmony with a study plan that is prepared specifically for each individual doctoral student. This plan is prepared at the beginning of each academic year in consultation with the academic advisor of the Ph.D. thesis. This means that each student has the most appropriate form, scope and schedule for studies, as well as academic, pedagogic and scientific work. In partnership with their advisors, doctoral students also prepare short-term and long-term career plans for themselves.

Once per semester, doctoral students are expected to file a report with the Doctoral Study Programme Council on how they are doing with their work. Once a year they appear before the council to report on their research work and what they have done in terms of writing the doctoral thesis. Students are also expected to submit a written report each year.

Theoretical courses aimed at learning practical research skills are based on lectures, seminars, colloquiums, practical work, independent work, writing and presentation of papers, preparation of presentations, public appearances, etc. The courses use the Moodle system, which registers course descriptions and other materials and also serves as a communication platform. Often the study process involves synthesis between individual and group work. For instance, individual students analyse an issue, prepare a thematic review of academic literature, etc., and then discuss their work in a group setting and/or before an audience. The individual work of doctoral students is of key importance, particularly when it comes to theoretical seminars.

Doctoral students teach lessons and lead seminars in the bachelor's degree programme, manage and review annual and bachelor's degree papers, review master's theses and lead the research projects of bachelor's degree students, thus improving their pedagogic skills and gaining experience and examining their capabilities in this regard.

The evaluation system is in line with regulations on organising course exams at the University of Latvia (approved by the Senate on June 29, 2015, decision No 211). Grading of theoretical courses involves a 10-point skills, while courses that relate to the dissertation and research and pedagogic work are graded on a pass/fail basis.

All course evaluations involve midterm exams. These are organised by faculty members in accordance with the specifics of the course and the need to achieve learning outcomes. Midterms are often an oral, written or combined report presented by students to their academic advisors, an oral, written or combined report filed to the doctoral study programme council and/or the director, an oral, written or combines report before the director of the bachelor's or master's degree programme, an independently prepared report, a review of literature, or presentations. These exams encourage students to study their materials throughout the semester, also making it possible to examine knowledge, evaluate the growth of students, and to identify any problems that relate to the work. At the conclusion of each course, there is an oral, written or combined examinations.

Currently programme is being implemented in full time regular studies. According to the students' interests, programme can also be implemented in full time correspondence, part time regular and

part time correspondence studies. Teaching methods and assessment are the same in all forms of study – full time regular, full time correspondence, part time regular and part time correspondence.

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

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

During the reporting period, ten doctoral thesis have been defended by doctoral students at the Faculty of Social Sciences, most of them relating to the communication theory subsector. One dissertation was defended in the area of library science. Table 48 indicates the topics of Ph.D. thesis, as well as information about how they were defended.

*Table 48. Defended Ph.D. thesis (2013–2019)*

*Please see attached*

The thematic spectrum of the defended dissertations is quite broad, with three dissertations focusing on digital communication, two dealing with media analysis, three analysing media and public arena discourse, and two dealing with memory communication and discourses. Most of the works cover several themes and are of an interdisciplinary nature, which makes it impossible to say that they contain a single document.

At this time, there are 13 doctoral students who are writing dissertations. Table 49 shows their subjects, annotations and the year when the students plan to defend them. Topics include media research (3 dissertations), the digital media and online communication (2), identity communication (2), cultural communication (2), political communication (1), and library science (1).

*Table 49. Doctoral thesis currently being written*

*Please see attached*

**2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.**

Surveys involving doctoral students show that students are generally satisfied with the study programme that they have chosen (90% of respondents). Students are particularly happy about the

ability to take part in the Faculty of Social Sciences, UL research projects, to publish papers in scholarly publications, to take part in international and local scientific conferences, as well as to become involved in international communication science research organisations and researcher networks. Students also laud the partnership between doctoral students and faculty members. They have praised the UL and Library of the Faculty of Social Sciences and the study and research resources that can be found there. The students also welcome the involvement of professors from abroad, because the classes that they teach offer new knowledge and help to ensure a contextual self-evaluation of knowledge and research work at the individual and programme level. Also viewed positively are activities related to the doctoral school “Analysis of Political, Social and Economic Processes in the Post-Soviet Space” (the ASPRI) as well as other activities. The work of faculty members who teach classes, as well as that of study methodologists has been praised by students, who also feel that the building of the Faculty of Social Sciences is appropriate for studies. Nearly all doctoral students admit that it is not possible to write and defend their dissertation in the anticipated period of time (3 or 4 years), because they have to merge work and studies. Students would also like greater and more systematic support from the UL for studies at foreign universities.

The Communication Science Doctoral Study Council analyses the views of doctoral students and informs other faculty members and the administration about them.

## **2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.**

The mandatory elective section of the UL doctoral programme in communication science includes several courses that are aimed at facilitating the mobility of students. These include “Taking Pd.D. Courses at Foreign Universities” (4 CP), “Taking Part in Summer Schools for Ph.D. Students and Early Stage Researchers” (4 CP), and “Internship at a Foreign University” (4 CP).

Doctoral students most often choose to attend summer schools at foreign universities. Student Mārtiņš Pričins, for instance, has taken part in the 6<sup>th</sup> ICA international political communication summer school, “Political Communication and Electoral Behaviour” at the University of Milan (2018), and the “Resilience League 2016” autumn school at the International Centre for Defence and Security in Narva. Students often have to pay for such programmes themselves, and an improvement in the support system for social science doctoral students at the UL would facilitate the ability of other doctoral students and young scholars to become more mobile. Doctoral student Liene Viļuma took part in the “Baltic Digital Humanities Summer School,” which was organised by the Latvian National Library and the UL (2018).

Doctoral students in the area of communication science have made comparatively little use of the ERASMUS programme, because it is difficult to merge longer periods of absence with work and a professional career. Students have often said that they have to merge these two processes and the UL does not offer support that would allow them to make a living. From February 1 to April 30, 2014, Ph.D. student Kristiāna Kirša took part in the ERASMUS programme internship process at the Centre for Baltic and Eastern European Studies at Södertörn University in Sweden. As a guest researcher at the centre, Kirša worked on theoretical aspects of her dissertation, ““They” Discourse in the Latvian Press: Analysis of the Newspapers *Jaunākās Ziņas*, *Pēdējā Brīdī*, *Brīvā Zeme*, *Sociāldemokrāts* and *Centra Balss* (1930–1933).” Kirša made use of available information resources at the university’s library, databases, etc. During seminars with researchers at the centre, she

examined her theoretical approaches and the work that she had done up to that point. The student received recommendations on her future work with the dissertation. Doctoral student Sanita Burķīte, in turn, plans to use the ERASMUS programme mobility opportunities during the 2019/2020 academic year.

Oskars Gruziņš was a doctoral student from 2015 until 2018, and he took part in a project called “Children Born of War – Past, Present, Future” (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Innovative Training Networks, H2020-MSCA-ITN-2014). This innovative training network helps to facilitate the mobility of early stage researchers. The co-ordinator of the project is the University of Birmingham in the UK, with other participants including the University of Leipzig, the University of Augsburg and the University of Greifswald in Germany, the University of Ruane in France, the University of Latvia, the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland, the University of Ústi nad Labem in Czechia, the Ludwig Boltzmann War Consequence Research Institute in Austria, and the Southern Netherlands Psycho-Trauma Centre and the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. Partner organisations include the GESIS Leibnitz Social Science Institute, the ICON Institute, and the “Interperform” theatre arts studio in Germany, the Peace and Development Facilitation Organisation in Uganda, the BBC in the UK and the Russian State Humanities University in Russia. Gruziņš did work at the GESIS institute, the University of Leipzig and the Russian State Humanities University, and he took part in shorter thematic seminars at several partner universities, research institutes and scholarly conferences.

Doctoral students have also taken part in international scholarship competitions to gain an opportunity to expand their knowledge in the United States. In 2013, doctoral student Kārlis Dagilis received a Fulbright Scholarship which allowed him to spend time at the University of Maryland. In 2017, the university provided him with support that has allowed him to continue his studies in Maryland.

The level of mobility among UL communication studies doctoral students is not very high, and that means that there must be a research for more extensive financing, as well as for ways of encouraging the motivation of students through discussions, experience stories and mobility, as well as network practices. Networking and participation in summer schools and conferences is facilitated by the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA), whose members are all students in the programme. The association issues a weekly digest about its work, and all doctoral students receive it via E-mail.

The UL doctoral programme recognises study courses, summer schools and internships as part of the mobility process. This is on the basis of regulations about this procedure at the University of Latvia (Decision No 190, December 29, 2008). The UL fully recognises courses that have been taken in study programmes that are based on intergovernmental or inter-university agreements, as well as international education programmes about which the student has received written agreement with his or her study programme director.

### **III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)**

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

**respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.**

The doctoral programme in communication science is organised by the Faculty of Social Sciences at the UL. More about its resources and support can be found in Chapter 3 of Section II.

An absolute prerequisite for the programme is the library and its databases. These are listed in Chapter 3 of Section II. Of particular use is access to international scholarly journal databases such as *JSTOR*, *SAGE Journals Online* and the *Taylor & Francis Social Science & Humanities Library*, as well as e-books from *Dawsonera*, and the *EBSCO eBook Collection*.

Doctoral students are also helped very much by the *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses* database, which is the largest database of its kind in the world and has more than 5 million documents. Many of these offer full texts in the PDF format. The full texts are available for most of the dissertations that have been added to the database since 1997. Some 200,000 new documents are added each year, and they come from nearly 100 state universities. The database has information related to the humanities, the social sciences, the natural sciences and the medical sciences. It has information starting in 1637 and continuing to the present day. All dissertations that have been published since 1980 and all master's theses that have been published since 1988 have summaries that have been written by their authors.

In 2017, the UL provided access to the *SAGE Research Methods* database, which is intensively used during studies and when working on master's theses. The work of doctoral students is eased by the *Primo Discovery* search programme that was introduced in 2016. Also of great importance are the latest print works in the field of communication science – scholarly monographs, textbooks, handbooks, methodological publications, etc. The Library of Faculty of Social Sciences regularly procures such works.

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

The scholarly work of doctoral students at the UL doctoral programme in communication science occurs in partnership with the ASPRI, Faculty of Social Sciences, UL, which was established in 2004 with the goal of developing the potential of social sciences in Latvia, facilitate partnerships among Latvian scholars in Latvia and internationally, and to serve public interests by investigation problems and prognosticating developments in terms of science-based changes in Latvia's social and political processes. The institute is managed by a council, and the members thereof are delegated professors and associate professors from the faculty's departments. Prof Aija Zobena is the director of the institute.

The ASPRI has four major research areas: 1) Latvia in international relations, particularly with Russia and new European neighbours; 2) Democracy and minorities; 3) Regional development in Latvia; and 4) The media, information and culture. The institute employs more than 40 leading researchers, researchers, junior researchers and assistants. The Social Memory Research Centre and the Diaspora and Migration Centre operate under the framework of the institute.

The ASPRI is located at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Lauvas Street 4, as well as the UL National Importance Research Centre at Kalpaka Boulevard 4, where there are modern seminar facilities.

The ASPRI is also the structure which oversees national and international research projects in which the communication science doctoral programme has become involved on a competitive basis (see Table 24).

The ASPRI also handles the UL project “Sustainable Development and Quality of Life in the Nation” (2016–2019), which is part of an UL research programme research priority from 2015 to 2020, “Public Health, Quality of Life and the Sustainability of the Nation.” Here the aim is to engage in a multidisciplinary approach in researching public demographics, migration processes, public health and social aspects so as to propose recommendations on how social development problems can be addressed in a sustainable way. Several doctoral students were briefly involved in this programme. In 2019, two students obtained financing on a competitive basis in relation to the “Sustainable National Development and Quality of Life project.

### **III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)**

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

The doctoral courses of the study programme are taught, and dissertations are advised by highly qualified academic personnel: Prof Tālis Tisenkopfs, Prof Viesturs Zanders, Prof Vita Zelče, Prof Juris Rozenvalds, Prof Aija Zobena, Associate Prof Baiba Holma, Prof Emeritus Skaidrīte Lasmane, Associate Prof Baiba Bela, Prof Iveta Reinholde and others. During the reporting period there has been a generational replacement, with promising young faculty members who earned their doctoral degrees at the UL joining the staff. Examples include Assistant Prof Marita Zitmane and Assistant Prof Zane Radzobe. This marks out a new phase in the development of the communication science doctoral programme.

Of essential importance is the involvement of faculty members from other faculties at the UL. University pedagogy courses, for instance, are taught by high-level docents from the UL Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Art.

As part of the “Analysis of Political, Social and Economic Processes in the Post-Soviet World,” students can attend lectures that are delivered by representatives of other UL faculties and scientific institutions, as well as guest lecturers. During the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 academic years, for instance, “Doctoral School in Post-Soviet Studies I” (4 CP) classes were taught not just by people from the Faculty of Social Sciences, but also by high-level specialists from other UL faculties and scientific institutes. Lectures have also been delivered by foreign lecturers such as Prof Emeritus Andrejs Plakans from Iowa State University in the United States and Docent Ludmila Artamoshkina from the St Petersburg State University in Russia. Another similar course relates to the methodology of social science research which is taught to several doctoral programme students who wish to learn how to become instructors. Each specific topic is reviewed by high-level specialists, including guest lecturers from abroad.

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

Latvia's parliament adopted a law on universities on November 2, 1995, and it says that no fewer than five people with a doctoral degree must take part in each academic doctoral study programme. At least three of them must be experts from the relevant sector who are approved by the Latvian Science Council (LSC). The UL doctoral programme in communication science has lecturers and academic advisors for dissertations, and they are faculty members with doctoral degrees. The current advisors for dissertations are Prof Viesturs Zanders, Prof Vita Zelče, Associate Prof Baiba Holma, Assistant Prof Viktors Freibergs and Assistant Prof Zane Radzobe. Three faculty members are involved in the programme and the council of the faculty, and they all have the rights of an expert from the LSC. The communication theory subsector from the media and communication sector is represented by LSC experts Zelče and Zitmane, while the library studies subsector is represented by senior researcher Gustavs Strenga.

The qualifications of faculty members are fully ensured by the programme's learning outcomes – obtaining a high level of knowledge and skills related to communication science, the relevant methodologies, research, communication of the results of scholarly research, critical analysis, synthesis and evaluation, important communication study research, pedagogic and innovation tasks, scientific projects and management competence.

**4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).**

During the reporting period, faculty members from the UL doctoral programme in communication science have published about 200 scholarly papers, chapters in collective monographs and monographs (see Appendix 37). Some are indexed in the *SCOPUS* and *WoS* databases (see Appendix 32).

Between 2013 and 2019, more than 40 publications from faculty members of the doctoral programme in communication science were indexed in the *SCOPUS* and *WoS* databases. Approximately ten of these papers or chapters were accepted for publication. In numerical terms, the high-level publications from faculty members have been increasing. 17 papers were published between 2013 and 2015, 23 between 2016 and 2018. More than one-half of the publications (58%) were written in partnership with foreign colleagues, which speaks to the distinct internationalisation of the research work. The topics of the publications are in line with the in-depth areas of specialisation of the authors, including research related to the communication theory and library



studies subsectors.

**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).**

Faculty members from the UL doctoral programme in communication science who represent the Department of Information and Library Studies and the Department of Communication Studies have been involved in several national and international research projects during the reporting period (Table 50).

*Table 50. Scientific projects in which academic personnel from the information and communication studies field have been involved*

*Please see attached*

**4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.**

Faculty members from the UL doctoral programme in communication science have been involved in several major projects at the national and international level, and the results and experience gained during this process are used for study purposes. New knowledge is integrated into the curriculum of courses, methodologies are tested by doctoral students, and networks related to international projects enrich co-operation with other universities.

**Major projects**

1. ERA.NET RUS PLUS (EU-FP7) initiative project "Living Together with Difficult Memories and Diverse Identities" (LIVINGMEMORIES) (2015-2017). This was an interdisciplinary social science and humanities project that was focused on social memory, as well as impressions of conflicts and protests in human memory and identity. The project involved research groups from the University of Helsinki, which was the lead partner, the Perm State Polytechnical University, the University of Tartu, the Goethe University in Frankfurt, the Koç University in Istanbul, and the UL. The researcher group from the UL involved Prof Vita Zelče as the coordinator of Latvian team, leading researcher Skaidrīte Lasmane, As. Prof. Laura Ardava-Āboliņa, As. Prof. Zane Radzobe, As. Prof. Jurijs Ņikišins, As. Prof. Marita Zitmane, and doctoral student Sanita Burķīte. The researchers wrote publications and delivered papers at conferences and seminars. The project enriched the networking experience of UL researchers. See <http://www.livingmemories-era.net>.
2. The H2020-ICT-2016-2017 (Information and Communications Technologies Call) project

“COMPACT: From Research to Policy Through Raising Awareness of the State of the Art in Social Media and Convergence” (2017–2020). The aim of this project was to facilitate the meaning of state-of-the-art technologies in social networks and media convergence among leaders in society. The authors analysed the literature, national law and other documents that relate to the social media and their technologies. The project was co-ordinated by the National University of Ireland at Galway. Other participants were the School of Communication and Media in Slovakia, the Data Business Centre in Slovenia, the Pan-European ICT and E-Business Networks for SME Association in Belgium, the Bulgarian Association of Programming Companies, the Jozef Stefan Institute in Slovenia, the OntotextAD company in Bulgaria, the Non-Governmental Organisation Agency for European Innovations (AEI) in Ukraine, the Media 21 Foundation (M2aF) company in Bulgaria, The Catholic University in Portugal, the Social Development Partnership Association in Croatia, the IT-Forum company in Denmark, the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) in Greece, and the MEDIAFRAME LTD company in the United Kingdom. The research group from the UL was led by Prof Vita Zelče, and the researchers were As. Prof. Līva Brice and doctoral student Raivis Vilūns. They collected and correlated data for the project's database, prepared publications and organised a seminar. The specific aspect of the project is co-operation among institutions of various types – universities, business enterprises, NGOs and media outlets. See <http://compact-media.eu>.

3. H2020 Marie Curie Innovative Training Network (ITN), “Children Born of War – Past, Present, Future” (CHIBOW) (2015–2019). The aim of this interdisciplinary project was to create knowledge about the way in which 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-century wars and military conflicts influenced the lives of children and, particularly, the lives of children who were born during wars. The plan was to develop an understanding of how “children born of war” are or are not integrated into society, how military, government and non-governmental organisations are involved in this integration, what kinds of policies they have, and how the future lives of ‘children born of war’ are influenced by memories of war, public norms and views. As part of the project, 14 doctoral theses dedicated to “children born of war” were written at universities in European Union member states. At the UL, the thesis is being written by Oskars Gruziņš. The project is being co-ordinated by the University of Birmingham in the UK, and participants include the University of Leipzig and the University of Augsburg in Germany, the University of Ruane in France, the University of Latvia, the University of Silesia in Poland, the University of Greifswald in Germany, the University of Ústí nad Labem in Czechia, the Ludwig Boltzmann War Consequence Research Institute in Austria, and the Southern Netherlands Psycho-Trauma Centre and the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. Partner organisations include the GESIS Leibniz Social Science Institute, the ICON Institute, and the “Interperform” theatre arts studio in Germany, the Peace and Development Facilitation Organisation in Uganda, the BBC in the UK and the Russian State Humanities University in Russia. Gruziņš did work at the GESIS institute, the University of Leipzig and the Russian State Humanities University, and he took part in shorter thematic seminars at several partner universities, research institutes and scholarly conferences. The project group at the UL was led by Prof Vita Zelče, who was assisted by Ph.D. student Sanita Burķīte. See <https://www.chibow.org>.
4. The UL and Culture Ministry partnership project “The Diversity of Latvia’s Media Environment” (2017). The job was to gather information about the media in Latvia and to analyse and evaluate their work so as to identify the overall situation in the sector. The results were used to develop media policies in Latvia, study processes and new knowledge about the media in Latvia. The research group included As. Prof Laura Ardava-Āboliņa, As. Prof Viktors Freibergs, Prof Emeritus and leading researcher Skaidrīte Lasmane, As. Prof Zane Radzobe, Associate Prof Ojārs Skudra, As. Prof Marita Zitmane, as well as doctoral students Sanita Burķīte, Kārlis Dagilis, Elīna Gulbe, Rolands Tjarve, Laura Uzule and Raivis Vilūns. The

director of the project was Prof Vita Zelče. See [https://www.szf.u.lv/fieladmin/user\\_upload/szf\\_faili/Petnieciba/Latvijas-mediju-vides-daudzveidiba-small.pdf](https://www.szf.u.lv/fieladmin/user_upload/szf_faili/Petnieciba/Latvijas-mediju-vides-daudzveidiba-small.pdf).

5. Fundamental and applied research projects, LCP, "The Ecology of the Media in Latvia: Analysis of Changes Caused by the Fourth Industrial Revolution" (2019–2020). The aim here is to study the ecology of the media in Latvia and its strengths and weaknesses, particularly focusing on the presence of fake information and direct disinformation and how these influence the everyday lives and decisions of people. Researchers are conducting surveys of residents, going on ethnographic field trips and analysing media materials. They are writing scholarly papers and a collective monograph, along with popular articles. They are also taking part in scholarly conferences and organising seminars. The principal investigator of the project is As. Prof Marita Zitmane, with Prof emeritus Skaidrīte Lasmane as the lead participant and Prof Vita Zelče as the researcher. Doctoral students Velta Skolmeistere, Laura Uzule and Raivis Vilūns are also involved.
6. Fundamental and applied research projects, LCP, "Jeopardising Democracy through Disinformation and Conspiracies: Reconsidering the Experience of Latvia" (2020–2022). This interdisciplinary project was aimed at looking at the role of disinformation and conspiracy theories in Latvia's information world, as well as their influence on the lives, health, security and welfare of Latvia's population. The researchers examined the experience of people during the 20<sup>th</sup>-century totalitarianism era and the period after the restoration of independence and evaluated the risks that disinformation and conspiracy theories cause to present-day democracy and its values. The aim of the new knowledge is to shape understanding about disinformation and excitement about conspiracy theory, encouraging an examination of facts and the development of critical thinking in Latvia. The project was directed by Prof Vita Zelče, the lead participant was Prof Viesturs Zanders, and the researchers were As. Prof Zane Radzobe, Prof emeritus Skaidrīte Lasmane, As. Prof. Marita Zitmane, Ph.D. candidate Oskars Gruzīņš, Ph.D. student Mārtiņš Pričins and others.

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

The foundation for the faculty members of the communication science doctoral programme is the Department of Information and Library Studies and the Department of Communication Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, UL. This includes Prof Viesturs Zanders, Prof Vita Zelče, Associate Prof Baiba Holma, and As. Prof Viktors Freibergs, As. Prof Zane Radzobe and As. Prof Marita Zitmane. The partner for the study programme and its research projects is the ASPRI, Faculty of Social Sciences, which implements scholarly and research projects and teaches a course on the analysis of political, social and economic processes in the post-Soviet world.

The doctoral programme also involves faculty members from other departments of Faculty of Social Sciences – the Department of Political Science and the Department of Sociology, as well as faculty members from the Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Art, as well as researchers from various institutes such as the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art. This encourages co-operation,

dialogue and discussions among faculty members and scholars, initiates ideas for research and helps to apply for joint projects. Another important partner in the programme is the Latvian National Library, which offers resources and infrastructure that can be used by faculty members and doctoral students.

The partnership between faculty members and doctoral students involves joint projects, co-authorship of scholarly papers and publications, participation in scholarly conferences and the doctoral study programme council meetings, evaluation of the content of new courses, visits and examination of lectures taught by others, consultations, formal and informal events, seminars and workshops to exchange ideas, as well as mutual links and activities on social networks.

The Faculty of Social Sciences is going to move to the Academic Centre of the UL in the 2023/2024 academic year. This will improve, intensify and make more everyday the contacts and co-operation of faculty members from faculties that are currently housed in other UL buildings. This will also facilitate co-operation and joint projects and/or events with the National Library.

Lectures and seminars in the doctoral programme have 4–9 students. Some courses involve doctoral students from other programmes in the areas of social sciences and/or humanities. For instance, there are the courses “Doctoral School in Post-Soviet Studies I,” as well as “Methodology of Social Science Research.”

Individual partnership exists between academic advisors and doctoral students who are writing their doctoral thesis. The advisor helps the student to plan his or her career, which involves publications, participation in conferences, involvement in the bachelor’s and master’s degree programmes, as well as membership in academic organisations and networks. On average, faculty member advises one doctoral thesis, and the recommendation is that faculty members not undertake more than three Ph.D. thesis at the same time.

The work and partnerships of faculty members and students in the doctoral programme are underpinned by the ability to gain high-level knowledge, skills and competence, as well as the creation of new knowledge in the area of communication science. This means that the development of the sector has a characteristic of sustainability and quality.

# Annexes

<b>III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme</b>		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	Annex 28.pdf	28.pielikums.pdf
<b>III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof</b>		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	Appendix 31.pdf	31.pielikums.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (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	Appendix 30.pdf	30.pielikums.pdf
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	29.pielikums.pdf	29.pielikums.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Appendix 39E.pdf	39.E pielikums.pdf
<b>Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments</b>		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	Appendix 33.E.pdf	33.E pielikums.pdf
<b>Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments</b>		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	Appendix 11.E.pdf	11.E pielikums.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	Appendix 10.4.pdf	10.4. pielikums.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under <a href="http://www.europass.lv">www.europass.lv</a> ), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.		

If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.	Appendix 10.3.E.pdf	10.3.E pielikums.pdf
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	Appendix 10.2.E.pdf	10.2.E pielikums.pdf
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	Appendix 36.E.pdf	36.E pielikums.pdf
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	Appendix 34.E.pdf	34.E pielikums.pdf

# Communications Studies

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Communications Studies</i>
Education classification code	<i>43321</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic bachelor study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Zane</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Radzobe</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>zane.radzobe@lu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Doc., Dr. art.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	<i>29609918</i>
Goal of the study programme	<i>To allow students to gain knowledge, skills and competence in media analysis and production, journalism, corporative communication, public relations and advertising, providing general theoretical and practical knowledge about the role of communication in present-day society, as well as competence in researching and analysing communication phenomena and developing the ability to work creatively in various areas and industries in the field of communication.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<i>1) To facilitate knowledge in the areas of communication theory, communication history and sociology, communication psychology, communication ethics, social science research methods, current communication processes and study modules;</i> <i>2) To facilitate the development of skills in relation to journalism, corporative communication, advertising and multimedia production;</i> <i>3) The facilitate knowledge in the area of communication research methods, as well as skills in using these methods for analytical purposes;</i> <i>4) To develop the creative thinking and competence of students to work in various areas and professions related to communication;</i> <i>5) To improve academic knowledge and research skills as a foundation for further studies at the master's degree level.</i>

Results of the study programme	<p><i>Learning outcomes are formulated in accordance with the knowledge, skills and competence described in Latvia's 6th-level qualifications framework structure.</i></p> <p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. An understanding of the meaning and functions of communication in society, as well as familiarity with the role of communication science among social sciences and humanities, as well as their interdisciplinary aspects;</i></li> <li><i>2. Knowledge about basic and specialised aspects of communication science, with a focus on the sector's classical theories and latest discoveries;</i></li> <li><i>3. Specialised knowledge in one of the study programme's modules;</i></li> <li><i>4. An understanding of the professional standards and operating principles of the communication sector;</i></li> <li><i>5. An understanding of academic work standards and ethical norms.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Skills</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>6. The use of communication science theories and methods to deal with academic and professional issues;</i></li> <li><i>7. Becoming part of the professional environment in accordance with study module specialisation, including the offer of creative solutions to professional issues;</i></li> <li><i>8. Effective explanations of issues related to communication science to specialists and non-specialists and discussions about these issues;</i></li> <li><i>9. Independent work on uncomplicated academic research with the help of communication science research methods;</i></li> <li><i>10. Effective planning and implementation of independent and group work in academic and professional areas.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Competence</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>11. Independent obtaining, selection and analysis of information, with critical evaluation of social and communication processes;</i></li> <li><i>12. Independent ongoing education with creative solutions to professional issues, with the ability to react effectively to shifting demands in the professional environment;</i></li> <li><i>13. An understanding of basic professional and academic ethics issues and the ability to evaluate one's responsibility for one's professional or academic work influence on society and the environment.</i></li> </ol>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>A bachelor's thesis</i>

## Study programme forms

### Full time studies - 3 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>3</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>



Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	Secondary education
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	Bachelor of social science in communication science
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

#### Part time studies - 3 years, 5 months - latvian

Study type and form	Part time studies
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	5
Language	latvian
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	Secondary education
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	Bachelor of social science in communication science
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

#### Part time extramural studies - 3 years, 5 months - latvian

Study type and form	Part time extramural studies
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	5
Language	latvian
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	Secondary education
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	Bachelor of social science in communication science
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

#### Full time correspondence studies - 3 years, 5 months - latvian

Study type and form	Full time correspondence studies
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	5
Language	latvian
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	Secondary education
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	Bachelor of social science in communication science

Qualification to be obtained (in english)	
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#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

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

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

#### Parameters of the bachelor's degree programme "Communication science"

Title of the study programme	<b>Bakalaura studiju programma “Komunikācijas zinātne”</b>	
Title of the study programme in English	<b>Bachelor’s degree programme in communication science</b>	
Code of the study programme according to the Latvian Education Classification	43321	
Type and level of study programme	Academic bachelor’s degree programme	
Qualification level to be achieved (NQF / EQF)	6 <sup>th</sup> level	
Volume of study programme (CP, ECTS recommended)	120 CP / 180 ECTS	
Implementation mode/form, type, duration (if less than a year, in months) and language of implementation		
full-time regular studies	3 years	Latvian
full time correspondence studies	3 years and 5 months	Latvian
full-time correspondence studies (distance learning)		
part time regular studies	3 years and 5 months	Latvian
part time correspondence studies	3 years and 5 months	Latvian
part-time correspondence studies (distance learning)		
Place of implementation	Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia	
Director of the study programme	Dr. art., Assistant Professor Zane Radzobe	

Admission requirements	<p>A general secondary education</p> <p><i>Admission is on a competitive basis:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People with a secondary education completed since 2004: CE in Latvian + CE in English, French or German, and CE in mathematics;</li> <li>- People with a secondary education completed prior to 2004 (not inclusive), as well as people who have obtained a secondary education abroad, or people with special needs: An average grade in Latvian language and literature in the secondary education document, a grade in English, French or German in the secondary education document, plus an average grade for specific subjects in the secondary education document;</li> </ul> <p><i>Additional points:</i> Winners of 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> place in scholarly research work competitions in communication science and/or a creative competition in communication science organised by the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia during the past two years. The research must be original and only submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia competition;</p> <p><i>Advantages:</i> Winners of 1<sup>st</sup> place in scholarly research work competitions in communication science and/or a creative competition in communication science organised by the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia during the past two years. The research must be original and only submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia competition.</p>
Degree, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification awarded	Social science bachelor's degree in communication science
Aim of the study programme	<p>To allow students to gain knowledge, skills and competence in media analysis and production, journalism, corporate communication, public relations and advertising, providing general theoretical and practical knowledge about the role of communication in present-day society, as well as competence in researching and analysing communication phenomena and developing the ability to work creatively in various areas and industries in the field of communication.</p>

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Objectives of the study programme

- 1) To facilitate knowledge in the areas of communication theory, communication history and sociology, communication psychology, communication ethics, social science research methods, current communication processes and study modules;
- 2) To facilitate the development of skills in relation to journalism, corporative communication, advertising and multimedia production;
- 3) The facilitate knowledge in the area of communication research methods, as well as skills in using these methods for analytical purposes;
- 4) To develop the creative thinking and competence of students to work in various areas and professions related to communication;
- 5) To improve academic knowledge and research skills as a foundation for further studies at the master's degree level.

Learning outcomes are formulated in accordance with the knowledge, skills and competence described in Latvia's 6<sup>th</sup>-level qualifications framework structure.

**Knowledge**

1. An understanding of the meaning and functions of communication in society, as well as familiarity with the role of communication science among social sciences and humanities, as well as their interdisciplinary aspects;
2. Knowledge about basic and specialised aspects of communication science, with a focus on the sector's classical theories and latest discoveries;
3. Specialised knowledge in one of the study programme's modules;
4. An understanding of the professional standards and operating principles of the communication sector;
5. An understanding of academic work standards and ethical norms.

**Skills**

6. The use of communication science theories and methods to deal with academic and professional issues;
7. Becoming part of the professional environment in accordance with study module specialisation, including the offer of creative solutions to professional issues;
8. Effective explanations of issues related to communication science to specialists and non-specialists and discussions about these issues;
9. Independent work on uncomplicated academic research with the help of communication science research methods;
10. Effective planning and implementation of independent and group work in academic and professional areas.

**Competence**

11. Independent obtaining, selection and analysis of information, with critical evaluation of social and communication processes;
12. Independent ongoing education with creative solutions to professional issues, with the ability to react effectively to shifting demands in the professional environment;
13. An understanding of basic professional and academic ethics issues and the ability to evaluate one's responsibility for one's professional or academic work influence on society and the environment.

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

The academic bachelor's degree programme "Communication Science" is taught in Latvian. During the 2019/2020 academic year, there are 56 study slots with tuition paid by the state, while remaining students pay for their own studies. Part time correspondence course studies are also financed by the students. Beginning with the second year of studies, students can compete for scholarships financed by UL philanthropists, and several students have obtained these. Of particular importance is an excellence scholarship from the *Delfi* portal, which is available on a competitive basis for journalism students.

Statistical data about students during the previous accreditation term show that the number of students has declined. This is largely due to external factors which are to be seen as commensurate even though the limits of the programme's opportunities are trying to improve the situation. The most important external factor for the decline in the number of full-time students relates to demographics. There has been a radical and long-lasting decline in the number of high school graduates, and full-time studies in the programme are mostly chosen by graduates from specific years. Other external factors include emigration, social and material inequality in the country, low income that does not allow many parents to finance the university studies of their children, as well as national educational policies, particularly in terms of supporting the teaching of exact sciences at high schools and universities. This has facilitated a fundamental decline in applicants for studies in the social science and humanities, and in some cases, this has substantially hindered social science bachelor's degree programmes.

Most of the students who drop out of the programme do so during the first year of studies, and that is most often because they cannot merge studies with full time work. Given references from students, the programme has been improved in several ways, including a reordering of the times when classes are taught so as to ensure balance in the academic and practical work of students. During the next accreditation period, the Faculty of Sciences, UL and the Department of Communication Studies has promised to introduce a cycle of preparatory activities for high school students so as to facilitate potential interest in becoming students and to develop the necessary learning skills so that the high school students get basic knowledge about the communication sector even before they enter the programme.

The shift in the number of graduates in comparison to third-year full time students has to do with the fact that some students do not write their bachelor's thesis in a timely way and are thus not allowed to defend it. The main reason is that students are busy at work, and so the programme is being restructured so as to ease the workload during the sixth semester. Students are also encouraged to link their bachelor's thesis to the annual papers that they wrote in the past and to continue their partnership with their annual paper academic advisors, thus extending the amount of time that is available for writing the thesis. Despite these statistical indicators, this group of students is almost always graduated, often by changing their study form to correspondence studies and defending their thesis together with other students of that form during the 7<sup>th</sup> semester.

Trends in the number of correspondence studies students show that the decline in the number of students is relatively insignificant. This has to do with the fact that this form can be merged with full time work because classes are taught on Saturdays. Such students also tend to be older than full time regular students. In recent years there has been a distinct trend which shows that the correspondence studies are restored for students who left their studies a long time ago. They are specialists in the sector who make active use of norms which say that their previous courses can be recognised and compared to professional experience. The number of students who transfer from similar programmes from other universities has also been stable. At the same time, correspondence studies students often use individual study plans and take active use of sabbaticals, and that is why their studies often take longer than seven semesters.

Statistical data about students in the programme are presented in detail in Appendix 16.

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

The name of the bachelor's degree programme, the degree that is to be obtained, the aim and objectives, the learning outcomes and the admission rules are mutually linked and appropriate given that the programme takes six semesters (seven in the case of correspondence studies students).

Programme aim and objectives are reflected in the learning outcomes that are defined in course description. Assignments are evaluated during midterm and final exams, as well as via the defence of internships. Graduates earn a social science bachelor's communication science degree and have knowledge about the most essential theoretical and practical aspects of communication science. The aim and objectives of the programme and the knowledge, skills and competence that students gain are in line with the sixth EQF level (Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 322, "Regulations on Latvia's Education Classification"). The programme prepares graduates for ongoing education in master's degree programmes, as well as for jobs in communication-related professions such as journalism, corporate communication, public relations and advertising.

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

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



The structure of the bachelor's degree programme in communication science is meant to ensure that it can react in a timely way to changes in the sector and the labour market. Its defined learning outcomes reflect the latest trends in the development of communication science and the dynamic demands of the labour market. The harmonisation of study strategies and goals is regularly discussed by the Communication Science Study Council, Faculty of Social Sciences, UL and the Communication Studies Department and methodological seminars in accordance with trends in the sector and the labour market. Discussions are about objectives and achievable aim in terms of internships, annual papers and creative projects, among other things.

The limited electives (Section B, including module choices) of the programme are regularly reviewed in response to changes in the sector and labour market, as well as to the latest developmental trends in communication science. Many of the faculty members in the programme also work in the relevant communication sector (see CVs in Appendix 41), and course content is regularly updated with important case studies and analysis. Guest lecturers who are specialists from the sector often take part in the module courses with lectures that help students to understand various aspects of the sector.

Information about necessary improvements to the programme comes from employer responses, student and graduate surveys, as well as consultations with instructors, some of whom are members of the academic staff at the University of Latvia and conduct research in communication studies in line with the research directions and projects of the Advanced Social and Political Research Institute (ASPRI), Faculty of Social Sciences, UL (see Subchapter 4.4 in Section II). Other are practitioners from the sector. This has led to the creation of new courses such as "Issue and Crises Communication" and "Corporate Communication in Social Media." In addition to this, there are other changes in the programme that are dictated by trends in the development of the latest sectors and areas of science.

The previous knowledge of students and responses from employers mean that particular attention in the programme is focused on the writing abilities of students. In addition to the course "Issues of Latvian Language Culture," the programme has the course "Text, Author, and Genre," where students learn about various types of texts and how they are written. Academic writing skills are prepared when students write papers in courses, when they write their annual papers, and when they write their bachelors thesis. Writing skills that are necessary in the sector are also nurtured in courses related to module specialisation ("Public Relations Writing," "Advertising Texts," "Work in Editorial Office," etc.). In response to suggestions from employers, a new course in the programme is "Creation of Media Text."

The programme is also supplemented on the basis of technological changes in the sector. The content of module courses is updated in accordance with developments in the sector, and the programme also includes several new courses. Since 2018, there has been the course "Social Media and Digital Culture." In 2019, the programme added the courses "Media Literacy" and "Digital Photography." The programme will soon have the course "Communication Management of Influencers."

On the basis of trends in the sector and information about jobs, changes are being introduced in journalism courses. In addition to newswriting courses which help journalists to understand the foundations of journalism, data collection methods and ethical principles, the programme has courses which help students to work in so-called "soft journalism" genres and to specialise in them. These changes apply, for instance, to a course on feature writing. Specialised genres have courses such as "Introduction to Theatre, Cinema and Television Criticism" and "Digital Photography."

In accordance with shifting labour market demands, the structure of the programme has been transformed from four modules to two. This is both because of fewer students and because of trends in the sector, because in comparison to the previous accreditation period of the programme, a strict separation between journalism and multimedia production, as well as between corporate communication and advertising no longer apply to the changing realities in the sector that requires specialists to work effectively with various hybrid forms of communication. The merged modules – “Media Studies” and “Business Communication” – offer students a perception of sectors that is close to the job market while also allowing them to specialise. Programme planning ensures that students who choose limited electives in accordance with their interests can shape a narrower specialisation which basically is in line with the content of previous modules. Alternatively, then can learn more diverse knowledge and skills in mutually conflating sectors. In addition to module courses, the programme’s mandatory, limited elective and elective sections emphasise aspects of visual communication, given that such communication are dominant at this time.

*Table 36. Changes in the bachelor’s degree academic programme “Communication Science”.*

*Please see attached.*

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

The scope of the bachelor’s degree programme is 120 credits (180 ECTS) (see Appendix 17 for study programme plans for full time and correspondence studies and Appendix 39 for descriptions of courses). The programme is made up of:

- **The mandatory Section A** with 66 credits. These courses provide students with general knowledge about theories and practices in social science and communication. The mandatory section includes the writing of the bachelor’s thesis (10 credits) during the sixth semester (seventh for correspondence studies students);
- **The limited elective Section B** with 46 credits. This includes courses which educate students about the latest communication science trends in social sciences and an interdisciplinary context, as well as specialised knowledge in line with the selected study module. Section B includes a mandatory internship in accordance with the selected module (6 credits). Section B also includes the writing of an annual paper during the 4<sup>th</sup> semester (2 credits), and an excellence course, “Creative Project in Communication Studies,” in which students are admitted on a competitive basis after an evaluation of the proposed project’s innovation in the sector or in academic research;
- **Section C** has six credits, and these are courses that are taught at the Faculty of Social Sciences and at other faculties. Students are free to choose them from the broad UL bachelor’s programme course catalogue in accordance with their interests and level of knowledge.

In general terms, the programme fulfils its defined aim – to train specialists in areas such as media analysis and production, journalism, corporate communication, public relations and advertising. These offer general and specific knowledge about social sciences, communication science and

specific communication sectors in line with the specialised modules of students. Students have skills and competence in these areas, as well as competence in researching and analysing communication phenomena and working creatively in industries. The assignments of the programme are successive in pursuit of the goals, evaluating the course content, aim and learning outcomes and their links to the context of the programme.

During their first years of studies, students take Section A courses to learn about communication history, psychology, communication ethics, important modern communication processes (emphasising media literacy and critical thinking), as well as introductions to specialised communication sectors (the courses “Introduction to Corporative Communication and Advertising,” “Introduction to Journalism” and “Introduction to Communication Studies.” Students also learn how to write and analyse texts. This creates a bedrock of knowledge, skills and competence that are necessary for the further studying of specific and deeper communication science issues. This satisfies programme objectives 1 and 5 by providing the relevant knowledge (learning outcomes 1, 2 and 5), as well as skills (learning outcomes 6, 8 and 11). During the third semester, students take the Section A course on social science methodology and the course “Communication Theories,” which help to satisfy programme objectives 1, 3 and 5, as well as learning outcomes 1, 2, 6, 9 and 11. These courses were planned in the programme after the first study year and on the basis of student claims that they were too complicated in the previous study period.

Beginning in the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester, students choose their specialised study modules, as well as Section B and C courses according to their interests. The module courses satisfy programme objectives 1, 2 and 4, as well as learning outcomes 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 13. Section B electives and Section C courses satisfy programme objectives 1, 4 and 5, as well as learning outcomes 1 and 2. According to norms, this section of the programme also includes English language classes. These are Section B electives, taking into account the variety of foreign language skills among students.

During the course of their studies, students engage in a series of smaller academic and practical projects as part of courses, helping to satisfy programme objectives 3, 4 and 5, as well as learning outcomes 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13. To a greater extent, however, these assignments and outcomes are emphasised when students write their annual paper during the 4<sup>th</sup> semester and their bachelor’s thesis in the 6<sup>th</sup> semester (7<sup>th</sup> for correspondence studies students) (programme objectives 3 and 5, and learning outcomes 5, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 13). Students also take part in internships at an institution that is appropriate for the sector. This means handling professional assignments during six working weeks during the 5<sup>th</sup> semester or splitting up the internship (2 credits and 4 credits, which mean two and four working weeks) no sooner than after the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester (programme objective 4 and learning outcomes 4, 6, 7, 10, 12 and 13).

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

The study programme is aimed at satisfying its aim via various learning outcomes, always taking into account a student-centred set of education principles.

A diversity of teaching methods is used:

- Lectures and seminars with a diversity of active teaching forms such as discussions, group work, simulations, writing of various types of media, public relations and advertising texts, educational field trips, presentation of student projects which are discussed and evaluated by other students, etc.;
- Independent work by students – papers, essays, presentations, research, media, public relations and advertising products, etc.;
- Internships and creative assignments at an appropriate institution and defence of the internship;
- Writing and defending scholarly research papers.

Teaching methods are chosen in accordance with the aim, specifics and planned learning outcomes of each course. Instructors use the latest pedagogic approaches in their lectures, focusing on a visual depiction of data, taking into account the natural attention spans of students (introductory and encouraging activities, splitting of topics into smaller units, summary phases). There are purposeful reciprocal links between instructors and students, who are encouraged to ask questions and engage in discussions. Several instructors have recently improved their pedagogic qualifications by taking the UL ongoing education course “Introduction to an Instructor’s Work.” Pedagogic methods are regularly and collegially discussed at Communication Studies Department meetings where learning outcomes are analysed at the end of each semester.

Seminars and independent work are organised in smaller groups or as individual assignments, but students must always receive responses to the assignments which they complete. A reciprocal link on grades is offered in writing, using the technical opportunities of E-studies, E-mail or orally by discussing projects individually or in groups. If such links are not possible because of the number of students who are taking a course, then instructors are available for individual consultations. Each instructor must ensure a fixed time for consultations at a length of at least one lecture each week. In some situations (during internships and when the instructor’s job at the University of Latvia is not his or her main place of employment), consultations can be handled via E-mail, chats, Skype, etc.

An obligatory requirement in the programme is the use of the E-study environment in teaching courses. In line with each course and its specifics, the Website gives access to students to study materials, theoretical presentations on teaching material, as well as constantly updated information about assignments in the course, thus ensuring that students can track their progress in the course and in terms of grading trends.

The programme also uses pedagogic methods which are linked to presenting professional behaviours, engaging in role playing, etc. There are also educational field trips, practical projects, case studies and reality simulations, training students to be able to be actively and creatively involved in dealing with situations that are close to actual work environments. A combination of these methods ensures that the study process is business-like and democratic. Students become sure that the process is focused on their professional growth, and the results of the process also depend on the extent to which the student is individually involved in the process.

In general terms, the study programme is focused on the creative development of personalities (creative assignments and opportunities for self-expression). Students gain competence in terms of studying and organising their own and group work independently and look for creative solutions to academic and professional problems. That is why the programme has mandatory internships and an elective excellence course to which students are admitted on a competitive basis after they propose a creative project. The programme also has two student media editorial boards. The portal *mansmedijs.lv* is closely linked to journalism courses, and it publishes the articles which students write in courses such as “Work in Editorial Office,” “Reporter’s Workshop.” The portal also publishes

the results of research that students have conducted, as well as other creative articles. The multimedia *Kivi TV* studio, in turn, is not directly linked to courses, but all students can engage in activities outside of the programme if they are interested in them. Both editorial forms help students to establish skills and competence, and given that the best articles by students are publicly available, that helps students to put together a portfolio and gain provable experience to launch their professional career. The Communication Studies Department has given permanent facilities to both organisations, and they have proven themselves to be a partly voluntary editorial form that creates distinct group identity among students, enhances their interest and deepens their involvement in module courses that are linked to the sector.

The final exam in the programme is academic research which leads to bachelor's theses. In addition to theoretical knowledge and analytical skills that are taught by instructors, the programme has a separate course on course papers which prepared students for their theses. Course papers require less academic research, but in order to make the process as close as possible to the bachelor's theses, course papers are defended in a public meeting and in line with the procedure that applies to theses. Students from the master's degree programme are reviewers of the papers which students write, and their responses are of a recommendatory nature. This is a role-playing process which allows authors of course papers to train themselves in terms of discussing their work in an academic environment. Master's degree students, for their part, learn how to evaluate work that is done by students.

When working on their course papers and bachelor's theses, students have access to regular, individual and in-depth consultations with their academic advisors. There is also a series of lectures outside of the programme about academic work – the structure, plan and form of papers, work with methods, the choice of theoretical foundations, and work with academic databases. These sessions merge lectures and seminar-type activities, with the instructor answering specific questions from students and offering solutions to important problems which relate to the work that they are doing.

Similar lectures are offered to students before they choose their specialised study module after the first academic year, as well as before mandatory internships to discuss administrative and content-related issues that have to do with modules or internships.

The student-centred education framework also focuses special attention on the ability of students to adapt to the study process and to be successful in future. Particular attention is focused on the adaptation of first-year students. During the first week of studies, they have a programme of events during which they meet with key people such as the programme director and the methodologist. They learn about the process of studies, the facilities of the Faculty of Social Sciences, the placement of auditoriums, the geographic location of the faculty and the work of the student self-government. These activities are meant to introduce students to the study process, with introductory lessons about the E-study environment, information about the work of the Library of UL, etc. Students learn about the opportunities that are offered by the UL, the Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication Studies Department, and they also get to know their classmates.

The study process is then focused on the successful adaptation of students to the university. There is a movement of curators who support students in dealing with psychological and everyday problems. In addition to regular consultations with instructors about courses, first-year students have access to instructors who will provide consultations on modules and specialised courses. This system facilitates the emergence of a group identity, as well as in-depth interest in the courses that are on offer. Students also have access to weekly and individual consultations with the programme director about courses, administrative issues and any conflicts that may have arisen during the study process.

Also taken into account so as to ensure greater success in learning are things which students have

reported in surveys about how hard it is to move from a secondary education system to a higher education. Particular problems relate to theoretical courses during the first year of studies, as well as a lack of experience with teaching forms that are typical of higher education. That is why the programme has been restructured so that first-year students mostly deal with introductory courses, as well as courses which purposefully use the knowledge base of students from general education high school, using pedagogic methods that they are familiar with as a foundation for the relevant knowledge and pedagogical methods. The course “Text, Author, and Genre,” for instance, involves seminar study forms and individual preparation for them. Students also learn how to write academic papers. More complicated courses that relate to social science and communication research methodology, communication science theories, etc., have been moved to the second year. The restructuring is partly based on views from students and faculty members to say that simultaneous internships and work on a bachelor’s thesis makes it hard to focus fully on one or both courses. That is why the internships were moved to the fifth semester.

It must be noted that the study programme is flexibly adapted to the conditions and needs of individual students, particularly those who are taking the correspondence course. In line with norms, the programme also recognises and compares courses taken by students at other universities and programmes if they have not completed their bachelor’s degree, also recognising and comparing the professional achievements and experience of students.

Learning outcomes are evaluated in accordance with UL statutes concerning examinations. The evaluation of the knowledge, skills and competence of students during the course of a semester involve various midterm examinations such as seminars, papers, practical work, creative work, presentations, tests, etc. The grades that are given to such exams represent no less than 50% of the final grade. This ensures a reciprocal link between instructors and students. Ongoing evaluations allow students to track their individual progress in the course and to adjust learning strategies if necessary. The instructor, in turn, can monitor the extent to which students understand the content that has been taught, adjusting the pedagogic approach if that is necessary. At the conclusion of each course, there is an oral or written exam with a grade that represents no less than 10% of the final grade. The final exam is graded on a 10-point scale in accordance with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 240 and UL Senate Decision No 211, 29 June 2015, and on the basis of the following criteria: the amount and quality of knowledge, skills and competence that have been learned in accordance with the planned learning outcomes.

The requirements for each course in terms of earning credits and the proportion of each requirement are clearly stated in the course description, with a definition of grading criteria and learning outcomes of each evaluation. Some students have complained that they have only partly understood the grading criteria, and in reaction to this, the programme has introduced a unified policy related to the need to explain grading principles during the introductory lecture of each course, as well as to present them in the E-study Website of the course.

Special criteria relate to annual papers and bachelor’s theses. The process is monitored with a specific period of time to write the text and upload parts of it in the E-study environment (the concept, the theoretical part, the methodology and research plan, the empirical part, the first draft and the final draft that is submitted to the academic advisor). Individual grading of parts of the process are seen as midterm exams, and if students do not do the work in accordance with the schedule, they can be banned from defending the paper or thesis during the specific semester. The first three uploads of parts of a bachelor’s thesis are seen as a foundation for pre-defence, and that is part of the grade given in that context. After the successful pre-defence of the thesis, students move from “Bachelor’s Thesis in Communication Science I” to “Bachelor’s Thesis in Communication Science II” and continue work on the thesis until its final defence. This multi-step grading system was introduced to reduce the treat that students who fail to plan their work in a timely way end up

not completing the thesis or do not do so at a sufficiently academic level.

The programme has a specific system for taking exams for a second time. If a student takes a test for a third time to avoid subjective decisions, then the exam is accepted by a grading commission that is approved by the programme director. There are also procedures to deal with student complaints and appeals.

Full time regular and part time correspondence study programmes use similar teaching methods and the same evolution criteria. It is planned that this practice will also take the form of full time correspondence studies and part time regular studies. Part-time correspondence studies focus more on the student's independent studies, while contact hours are mostly devoted to lectures and seminars.

To summarise information about how the study process has student-centred educational principles and grading systems, it must be stressed that the process takes into account the diversity of needs among students (problems with adaptation at the beginning of the process, an individual approach to studies, the involvement of academic and support personnel in dealing with student problems, a variety of ways of implementing the programme (full and part time studies), etc.). There is a diversity of pedagogical methods which are regularly analysed so as to ensure optimal learning outcomes. The programme helps students to be independent while, at the same time, offering pedagogic and administrative support when that is necessary. Instructors are familiar with various types of tests and use differentiated midterms to monitor the progress of student knowledge, skills and competences in a universal manner. The study process creates a business-like and democratic environment in which reciprocal links between student and instructor are of key importance. Grading criteria are clearly formulated and understandable.

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

The bachelor's programme includes a mandatory internship worth 6 credits or 240 working hours (6 work weeks) during the 5<sup>th</sup> semester for full time students and the 7<sup>th</sup> semester for correspondence course students. Internships are usually organised during a single semester, though with the permission of the internship director and the programme director, a student can organise the internship during two semesters, which involves 2 and 4-credit internship courses. In such cases, the internship is possible no earlier than during the 4<sup>th</sup> semester.

The aim of the internship is to improve and develop the practical working skills of students in areas that are part of the programme – journalism, multimedia production, advertising, public relations and corporate communication. Overall assignments during an internship help students to learn about the work principles of sectoral companies and organisations, organise their professional development, do work individually or in a team, develop critical and creative thinking, and become familiar with professional ethics. Specific assignments and the knowledge, skills and competences of students are described in detail in the relevant internships and are individually agreed by the student and the internship directors from the university and the institution where the internship is being held.

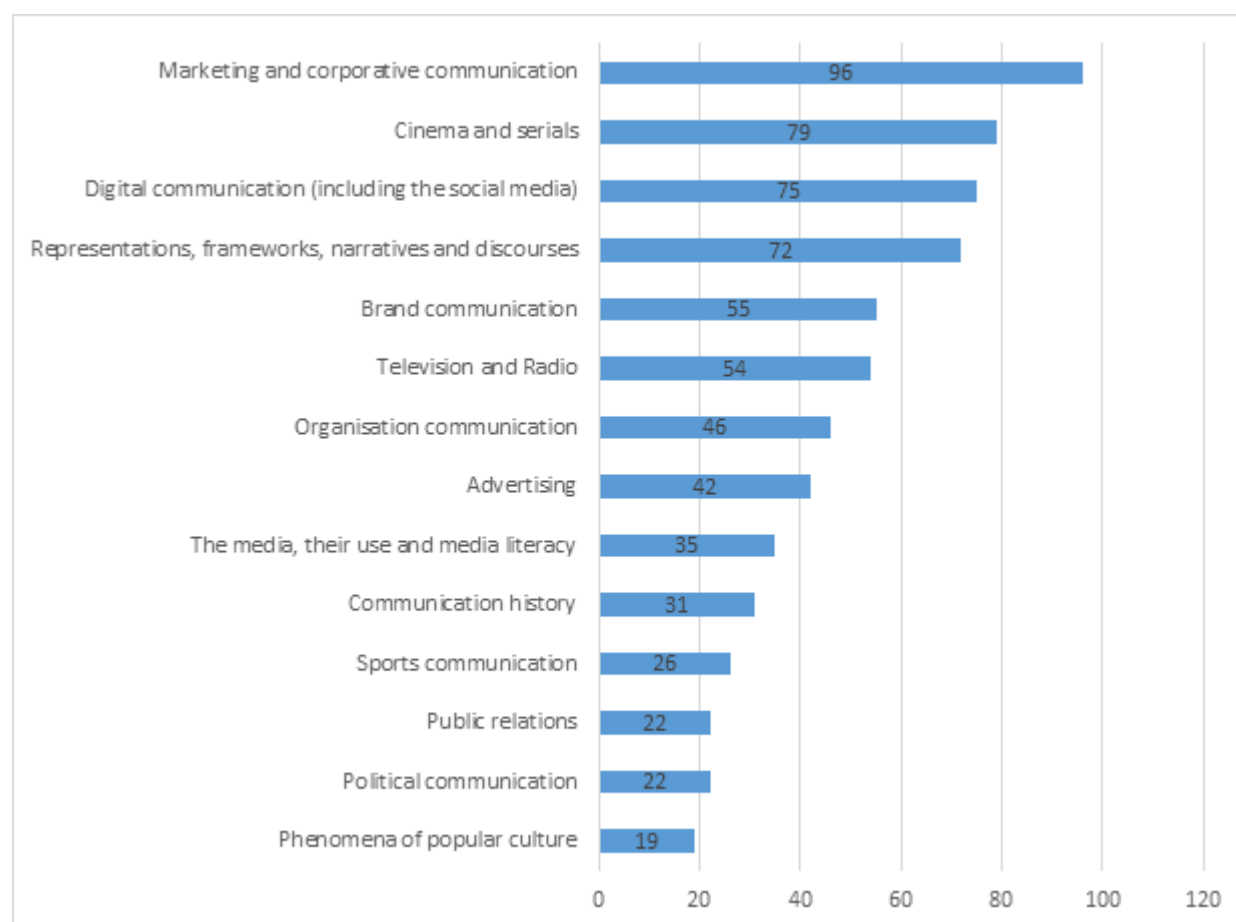
The mission of the internship ensures the 4<sup>th</sup> programme mission (the ability of students to work creatively in areas of communication and industry that are in line with their area of specialisation). The internships help to satisfy programme objectives 1, 2 and 4, as well as learning outcomes 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13.

Internships and their scope and quality are much appreciated in student responses to the programme. Some students get a permanent job offer from the institution where they have served as interns, and in this sense the programme directly helps students to enter the job market in a sector that corresponds to their studies.

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

Between the 2013/2014 and the 2018/2019 academic year, 674 bachelor's theses were written and defended in the bachelor's degree programme (see Figure 8). The themes cover a fairly broad range of issues in the area of communication science, and in this sense the range of topics depicts the great diversity, dynamics and fragmentation of the present-day communication environment. Many of the defended bachelor's theses have been of an interdisciplinary nature.

Figure 8. Topics of communication science bachelor's theses (2013/2014–2018/2019 academic year)



Research related to business communication dominates in terms of the topics of theses. 14% of defended theses relate to marketing and corporate communication, 8% are about brand

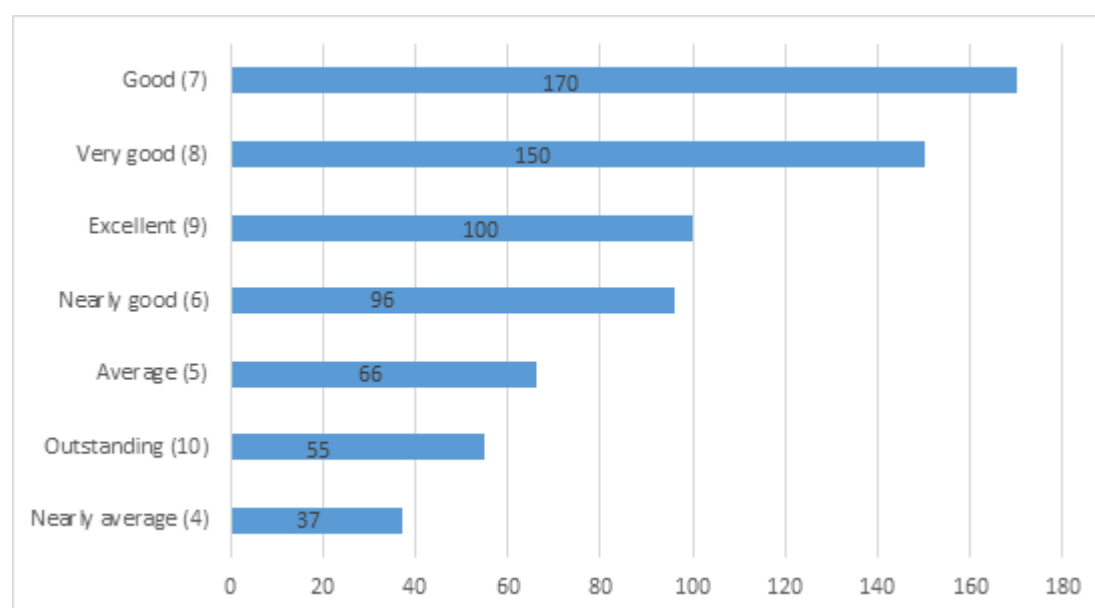


communication, 7% about organisation communication, 7% about advertising, and 3% about public relations practices. Business-related themes are also interwoven in digital communication research, which represents 11% of the total number of theses. The proportion of these topics has been greater in recent years than at the beginning of the reporting period. The representations, framing, narratives and discourses of various topics on the Internet, electronic media, print media and cultural products have been analysed by 11% of the students. Television and radio issues and broadcasts are the focus of 8% of theses. 5% of thesis author have analysed media work, media usage practices and media literacy. An equal proportion of theses discuss communication history, media history, the representation of history, and the role of social memory in communication. Many students enjoy researching the cinema and television programmes, and this topic is found in 12% of the defended theses. Bachelor's degree students have also focused on sports communication (4%), political communication (3%), and phenomena of popular culture (3%).

The range of bachelor's thesis topics has also been influenced by aspects of the communication sector and changes therein. During the 2018/2019 academic year, for instance, students have looked at marketing communication on social networks, the work of influencers, centennial films in Latvia, the representation of basketball star Kristaps Porziņģis on news portals, as well as practices related to investigate journalism. The theoretical foundation for bachelor's theses is made up of communication science theories, as well as theories from other social sciences and the humanities. Students make successful use of qualitative and quantitative research methods, often using questionnaires, various types of interviews, as well as text analysis, semiotic and ethnographic methods. Most students prefer to extract data from the digital environment and/or via the use of present-day communication technologies. Many students use computer software for data analysis, particularly SPSS and NVivo.

Grades for bachelor's theses during the reporting period: Outstanding (10) for 8% of defended theses, excellent (9) for 16%, very good (8) for 22%, good (7) for 25%, nearly good (6) for 14%, average (5) for 10% and nearly average (4) for 5% of the theses (see Figure 9).

*Figure 9 Grades given to communication science bachelor's theses (number) (2013/2014-2018/2019 academic year)*



## 2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement

## **of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.**

Student surveys to gather data about courses are collected in a centralised manner by the UL electronic system. At the end of each course, students are required to evaluate their experience on a scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree), as well as to offer their views in free-form comments. This requirement is included in the contracts that they signed with the UL when starting their studies. Students are asked about the study environment (auditoria, technical aspects, availability of educational materials), as well as about the pedagogic and professional skills of instructors.

During the reporting period, students mostly evaluated courses as “good” or “very good,” with the average evaluation ranging between 5 and 7, with 7 being the highest possible evaluation. A positive trend is that instructors have encouraged increasing numbers of students to fill out the questionnaires, thus obtaining more precise data for the management of the programme. The data are used to update the content of the courses and the programme. It is on this basis that the programme has placed an increasing emphasis on practical assignments.

Surveys of graduates and employers help to gain more detailed information about links between the study process and the labour environment. Informal conversations also help. Graduate surveys are mandatory in the programme in accordance with the contract that students have signed. They are conducted at the end of each semester (the spring semester for full time students, the fall semester for correspondence course students). Graduates are given a series of standardised questions, and here, again, they are asked to rate their experience on a scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (fully agree). There are also open-ended questions in which students provide more extensive answers. The survey asks grads about study programme resources (facilities, library and other information resource availability, faculty members), administrative aspects (the work of office workers and methodologists), the content and organisation of the study process, their own views about the knowledge, skills and competence that they have learned, and the extent to which all of this has been in line with labour market needs. Free-form comments can be expressed about the study environment, auditoriums, the library, extracurricular activities, student self-governance, the knowledge and skills gained during the studies, the study process (courses, E-courses, lesson planning, the availability of information, the UL portal, LUIS, international partnership programmes, etc.), and about the first work experience of students in the context of the studies. Students can also cite specific pluses and minuses about the programme and make note of those aspects of the programme which require improvements.

During the reporting period, graduates have rated the programme’s components at a medium-high and high level. The average evaluation with respect to 52 questions for full time and correspondence course students is above 5 points of 7. Graduates are usually most positive about the theoretical knowledge and skills that they have gained in accordance with the programme’s defined goal sand missions (courses are declared to be interesting, useful and mutually linked, with much praise for the analytical skills that students have developed, their ability to take decisions on the basis of information analysis, their ability to deal with professional problems in a creative way, their presentation skills and their ability to debate and prove their point, their ability to organise their work and learning process, their ability to work in a group, etc.). Unchangingly high appreciation has also been demonstrated by graduates vis-à-vis the material aspects of the study process (e.g., facilities), the library resources and the availability of study materials, the attitude and competence of faculty members, and the work of study methodologists. For full time students, the lowest rating (between 3 and 4) relates to the ability to merge work and studies, as well as in

response to the question of whether job assignments are in line with knowledge and skills from the programme. Here it must be noted that some full-time students who have been graduated from the programme have not yet found jobs in the sector.

A more detailed evaluation of the programme by graduates can be found in the free-form answers. Students have praised the study environment, the library and the study process as such. More critical remarks relate to the availability of information (specifically the ERASMUS exchange programme, as well as information about extracurricular activities), as well as the work of the student council. Among strengths in the programme, students have pointed to specialised module courses, and particularly the emphasis on various practical assignments and practices. Here it must be noted that there is a difference in response to these questions between graduates who are already working in the sector and those who are not. Those who have jobs are more likely to view theoretical courses as a positive element in the programme. This suggests that graduates who have not yet found jobs find it harder to perceive the utility of theoretical courses in their educational process because they do not yet have the necessary experience.

The student responses have led to a focus on several aspects of the programme. The process emphasises practical activities, active learning methods, as well as extensive internships. The programme is also structured so that students deal with sectoral courses as soon as possible, learning about theory in parallel. Instructors are told to emphasise the linkage among programme courses, theories, methods and practices, also looking at their influence. The structure of the programme is explained to new students during the introductory week, when students are also informed about the work of the student council and the extracurricular opportunities which the UL offers.

When asked about possible improvements to the programme, most students have talked about technological aspects – the need for state-of-the-art computers in auditoriums, updating of equipment at the multimedia studio, as well as courses which focus on communication in the digital environment. Here it must be said that these issues are not seen by students as a real threat against the programme, but these ideas have been taken into account in the programme's long-term plans. Already the programme includes new courses such as "Social Media and Digital Culture," "Media Literacy," "Digital Photography" and "Communication Management of Influencers." A list of things to be bought for the multimedia studio has been assembled, and these things will be purchased in accordance with the financial opportunities of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

During the reporting period, graduate and student surveys have shown that they are of great use in identifying risks in the programme, because they offer valuable information about the pedagogical practices of faculty members, as well as about the psychological specifics of studies. In some cases, there have been larger problems related to individual issues, and these have been discussed with faculty members at the programme and department management level to find a solution. In one case a faculty member was sacked because of long-lasting disagreements with students. In this context, the information from the questionnaires that is assembled and regularly analysed is of invaluable help in the programme's everyday management processes, also supplementing other conflict resolution forms that are available to students such as consultations with the programme director.

The survey of employers along with informal consultations with sectoral specialists began in October 2019. Most of the initial data came from small and medium-sized communication sector companies which employ one or more bachelor's degree programme graduates. Employers have been asked about general trends in the labour market (how easy it is to find qualified employees), selection criteria for potential employees (education, skills), as well as the views of programme

graduates in this context. Most employers said that it has been hard to find employees and that specific requirements usually are not presented to potential employees. Graduates of the communication science bachelor's programme are much appreciated in this context, with employers noting that these people have power theoretical knowledge. Several employers, however, noted a shortage of practical experience, particularly when working with numbers and data, in some cases problems with language (both native and foreign), unpolished presentation skills, and delays in making use of creative thinking in the work process. The programme helps students to develop these skills and gain practical experience by offering new courses and by shifting emphases in existing courses. A new 6-credit course, "Research Methods in Social Sciences," is aimed at strengthening the knowledge and skills of students in terms of using various research methods. At the same time, it must be noted that alongside critical remarks, some employers have particularly praised creative thinking and the ability of programme graduates to merge into the professional environment. Such data apparently relate to a statement by one employer that it is hard to generalise in this regard, because in these aspects, of great importance are not just the employee's knowledge and skills, but also his or her personality.

## **2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.**

Students in the programme regularly use the opportunities that are provided by the ERASMUS programme and other mobility programmes. During the reporting period, 79 students participated in student mobility. Student mobility in this regard has been stable, with an average 11-12 students going abroad to study. See Appendix 8.

Students have studied in Italy, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Russia, China, Lithuania, Slovakia, Estonia, Finland, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Korea, Georgia, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, China and Taiwan. Most students, however, do so in other EU member states, and the most durable interest among students has related to universities in Mannheim, Turin and Porto. Learning outcomes are recognised in accordance with procedures, though in some cases there have been problems with universities which do not change their study plans in a timely way. Programme managers are currently offering additional instructions to students about the principles of recognising study courses from other universities.

## **III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)**

### **3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.**

The resources of the study programme are reviewed in detail in the self-evaluation report, Chapter 3 of Section II and in the sections that deal with finances, materials and technologies, infrastructure and methodological and infrastructural support. Among the resources of the bachelor's degree programme is the portal *mansmedijs.lv*, which is an educational operation for print media students. The multimedia studio and the broadcast *Kivi TV* provide technical training and practice for audiovisual journalism and multimedia production students. The studio has a pavilion to record video and audio projects. There are digital cameras, video cameras, tripods, radio microphones, hand-held microphones and appropriate computer equipment.

The study process has good informational support from the Library of the University of Latvia (LUL). In accordance with the requirements of the communication science bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes, there have been 4,260 copies of print texts in the LUL collection between January 1, 2010 and October 27, 2019. Some of these (2,890) are only available at the Library of Faculty of Social Sciences (see Table 37).

*Table 37. Print texts (copies) in the LUL collection and the Library of Faculty of Social Sciences (together).*

*Please see attached.*

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

## **III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)**

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

During the reporting period, there have been several changes relate to a replacement of generations in the programme. Retired instructors have been replaced by young instructors who have defended their doctoral degrees in the past six years and have launched successful academic careers. New assistant professors include Zane Radzobe, Marita Zitmane, Laura Ardava-Āboliņa, Līva Brice and Olga Kazaka. Elected as lectors during the reporting period have been Vita Dreijere, Inga Latkovska and Guna Spurava. These changes have not endangered the programme, because the replacement of faculty members was planned in advance. In the long term, the planned changes in the composition of faculty members has allowed timely planning, with experienced instructors preparing those who will replace them (younger colleagues who are taking over courses spend a long time in consulting on the content of the courses, sometimes taking the courses, etc.). This ensures succession in the transfer of content within the programme, and the younger generation of instructors also ensures the development of the programme. The replacement of

generations must be seen as a good thing. The programme regularly involves doctoral students in educational work, particularly in advising course papers and bachelor's theses, thus developing their pedagogical skills and gradually deepening their knowledge in accordance with their academic interests with an eye toward moving these toward the academic themes that are necessary for the programme's long-term development.

The replacement of instructors in the programme also relates to the programme's focus on highly qualified specialists as instructors. The programme purposefully brings in specialists who are at the top of their fields and in high demand, which means taking into account that aspects of specialist careers in a sector can lead to a lower pedagogical workload or a refusal to teach classes. To reduce risks to the programme in this context, the programme is gradually introducing mechanisms that make co-operation with sectoral specialists easier. Depending on the course content, lessons can be planned in a concentrated manner. For 2-credit courses, for instance, can have lectures not once a week, but three lectures once every three weeks, etc. this forms synergy between the sector and academic personnel who learn from one another while students can learn the most important knowledge and skills. During the reporting period, programme instructors have also been involved in a UL project that is focused on sending theoretically educated instructors to spend some time at companies in the sector. Three are also instructors in the programme who are shaping their active career while active working in the sector as specialists. This means that the programme can attract specialists and stars from the industry as instructors or guest lecturers, and this is something which is highly appreciated by students and by representatives of the sector.

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

Two professors (Vita Zelče and Aija Zobena) and three associate professors (Baiba Bela, Baiba Holma and Ivars Ijabs) are involved in the implementation of the Bachelor study program "Communication Science" in accordance with Article 55, Paragraph three of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Instructors in the bachelor's programme can more or less be divided up into two groups – academic personnel and practitioners. Synergy between the two groups ensures the development of the programme in line with the latest scientific and professional trends.

Norms require instructors in the programme to have a master's degree or doctoral degree. In some cases, relating to sectoral specialists, course professionals teach classes in partnership with appropriately qualified instructors who ensure pedagogic and academic oversight. This is an essential model for the programme in that it makes it more competitive because people in the sector do not have any formal requirements vis-à-vis education, which means that some of the best specialists lack the relevant academic degrees.

**4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff**

members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).

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

**4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.**

During the reporting period, instructors from the programme took part in several prestigious national and international projects, including "Horizon2020," national research programme projects, Latvian Science Council (LSC) fundamental and applied research projects, "ERA.NET RUS Plus-S&T" and others. Data and knowledge from such research are included in the content of courses (e.g., "History of Communication", "Ethics of Communication", "Introduction to Communication Studies", "Social Media and Digital Culture", "Communication Theories", "Communication and Popular Culture") which the faculty members teach.

A series of faculty members have been actively involved in professional organisations, have won prestigious prizes, and have undertaken additional professional duties (members of professional juries, working groups, consultative councils, etc.). Linked to the programme, too, is the UNESCO Media Literacy and Information Literacy Office, which the Faculty of Social Sciences established in 2016. Its director, Guna Spurava, teaches a course on media literacy.

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

The programme is built so as to ensure sequence in the courses, gradually moving from generalised

issues to narrower areas of specialisations. Guest lecturers from the industry are asked to teach individual cases, which means that programme instructors can exchange knowledge and increase their competence while, at the same time, more precisely communicating their research interests to colleagues. Issues related to courses and the programme are regularly discussed at department meetings, and changes in courses and programmes are discussed in detail. At the administrative level, the focus is on student reviews of course content. Module instructors partner more closely, informally planning practical work, and jointly taking part in creative and internship defence committees and thesis defence committees. During the next reporting period, more formal co-operation mechanisms are planned such as joint panels and sections at the UL's annual conferences, etc., so as to more precisely exchange information about the important research interests of colleagues.

At the end of October 2019, there were 499 students and 13 elected faculty members in the programme, which means that the proportion between instructors and students was 1:38. The number of students in various courses can differ. The large number of students per elected faculty member led to a competition to find associate professors for the 2019/2020 academic year, and it is also a reason for involving professionals and doctoral students in the programme. Section A lectures are delivered to the entire class of students from the same year (divided up by study form) and the largest classes at this time have around 100 students. If necessary, students are divided up into three seminar groups, and absolute groups relate to courses to teach foreign languages and the Latvian language. The number of students in Section B elective courses depends on individual student choices, as well as specialised sub-programmes. On average, student numbers range from around 15 in specific and professional sub-programmes and 20 or so in other Section B electives. At the individual level, faculty members work together when preparing annual papers and bachelor's theses. Also of importance to first-year students is the institution of curators.



# Annexes

<b>III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme</b>		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	Appendix 16.pdf	16.pielikums.pdf
<b>III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof</b>		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	Appendix 19.pdf	19.pielikums.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (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	Appendix 18.pdf	18.pielikums.pdf
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	Appendix 17.pdf	17.pielikums.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Appendix 39.B.pdf	39.B pielikums.pdf
<b>Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments</b>		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	Appendix 33.B.pdf	33.B.pielikums.pdf
<b>Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments</b>		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	Appendix 11.B.pdf	11.B pielikums.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	Appendix 10.4.pdf	10.4.pielikums.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under <a href="http://www.europass.lv">www.europass.lv</a> ), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.		

If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	Appendix 10.2.B.pdf	10.2.B.pielikums.pdf
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	Appendix 36.B.pdf	36.B pielikums.pdf
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	Appendix 34.B.pdf	34.B pielikums.pdf

# Communications Studies

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Communications Studies</i>
Education classification code	<i>45321</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic master study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Vita</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Zelče</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>vita.zelce@lu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Dr. hist.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	<i>29417510</i>
Goal of the study programme	<i>To allow students to gain in-depth and expanded knowledge about communication theories and methodology, improve skills in engaging in communication research and the use of methods, develop analytical and critical thinking skills and creativity, and competence in the area of communication science and its practical applications – journalism, media work, advertising, corporate communication, communication management, strategic communication, audio-visual communication, digital communication and research into communication processes.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. To facilitate in-depth learning about modern communication science theories and methodologies, placing these into the context of social sciences and social development;</i></li> <li><i>2. To develop scholarly research and analytical skills by preparing students for independent scholarly research work in the area of communication studies and corresponding areas of professional work, as well as for studies in the doctoral programme;</i></li> <li><i>3. To facilitate specialized and in-depth knowledge in the chosen study module, specializing in analytical and research skills;</i></li> <li><i>4. To develop the skills, competence and leadership of students in terms of information and communication technologies, database usage, data processing and analysis, presentations, pedagogic work and expert and leader skills;</i></li> <li><i>5. To encourage the use of knowledge and skills in various areas of communication to deal with specific problems and to create innovations;</i></li> <li><i>6. To expand creative and critical thinking, analysis and argumentation skills, as well as responsibility for the use of knowledge in practice and competence in doing scholarly work;</i></li> <li><i>7. To allow master's degree students to engage in individual studies by becoming involved in research projects in groups that are led by professors;</i></li> <li><i>8. To provide knowledge, skills and competence in accordance with present-day communication science trends, the development of the professional environment and communication technology, as well as demands in the labour market.</i></li> </ol>

Results of the study programme	<p><b>Knowledge:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An in-depth understanding of the classical theories and latest discoveries in the field of communication science;</li> <li>2. In-depth familiarity with the deeper module theories and latest ideas and practices in the study programme;</li> <li>3. In-depth familiarity and understanding of communication science research methodologies, as well as academic and professional ethics;</li> <li>4. In-depth familiarity with contacts among various areas, critical and creative thinking and the use of same in professional and scientific areas.</li> </ol> <p><b>Skills:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Independent use of the theories of communication science and other social sciences, resolving methodical problems in areas of communication;</li> <li>6. Independent research work and/or highly qualified professional functions in the area of communication science;</li> <li>7. Well-argued explanations of complicated and systemic issues in the communication science sector and the profession, debating these with specialists and non-specialists';</li> <li>8. Independent development of communication science competence and in-depth specialisation so as to develop new theoretical and practical approaches and problem solutions;</li> <li>9. Taking on responsibility for personnel group work results, engaging in entrepreneurship and creating innovations in the field of communication.</li> </ol> <p><b>Competence:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Independent formulation and critical analysis of complicated scientific and professional problems in the field of communication;</li> <li>11. Justification of decisions in communication science areas, along with in-depth analysis of problems;</li> <li>12. An investment in areas of communication science and other sectors so as to create new knowledge and to develop research or professional activity methods;</li> <li>13. An understanding and acceptance of ethical responsibility for scientific and/or professional work (including unpredictable and complicated circumstances), also keeping in mind possible effects on society and the environment.</li> </ol>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	Master's thesis

## Study programme forms

### 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)	<i>Bachelor's degree or second-level professional higher education, or comparable higher education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of social science in communication science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

#### Part time studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Bachelor's degree or second-level professional higher education, or comparable higher education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of social science in communication science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

#### Part time extramural studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time extramural studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Bachelor's degree or second-level professional higher education, or comparable higher education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of social science in communication science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

#### Full time studies - 1 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
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Duration in full years	1
Duration in month	6
Language	latvian
Amount (CP)	60
Admission requirements (in English)	Bachelor's degree (at least 160 CP) or second-level professional higher education or master's degree in social sciences or humanities
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	Master of social science in communication science
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

#### Full time correspondence studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	Full time correspondence studies
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	latvian
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	Bachelor's degree or second-level professional higher education, or comparable higher education
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	Master of social science in communication science
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

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

Study type and form	Full time correspondence studies
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	latvian
Amount (CP)	60
Admission requirements (in English)	Bachelor's degree (at least 160 CP) or second-level professional higher education or master's degree in social sciences or humanities
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	Master of social science in communication science
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

#### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
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University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050
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### Part time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	60
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Bachelor's degree (at least 160 CP) or second-level professional higher education or master's degree in social sciences or humanities</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of social science in communication science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

### Part time extramural studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time extramural studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	60
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Bachelor's degree (at least 160 CP) or second-level professional higher education or master's degree in social sciences or humanities</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of social science in communication science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

### Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

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

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

**Parameters of the study programme “Master’s degree study programme in communication science”**

Title of the study programme	<b>Maģistra studiju programma “Komunikācijas zinātne”</b>	
Title of the study programme in English	<b>Master study programme in Communication Science</b>	
Code of the study programme according to the Latvian Education Classification	45321	
Type and level of study programme	Academic master’s degree study programme	
Qualification level to be achieved (NQF / EQF)	7th level	
Volume of study programme (CP, ECTS recommended)	80 CP/120 ECTS 60 CP/80 ECTS	
Implementation mode/form, type, duration (if less than a year, in months) and language of implementation		
full-time regular studies	2 years 1 year 6 months	Latvian
full time correspondence studies	2 years 6 months 2 years	Latvian
full-time correspondence studies (distance learning)		
part time regular studies	2 years 6 months 2 years	Latvian



part-time correspondence studies	2 years 6 months 2 years	Latvian
part-time correspondence studies (distance learning)		
Place of implementation	Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia	
Director of the study programme	<i>Dr. hist.</i> , Prof. Vita Zelče	
Admission requirements	<p>Bachelor's degree or second-level professional higher education, or comparable higher education</p> <p>Admission is on a competitive basis: Bachelor's thesis grade + entrance exam; students who have earned a bachelor's degree in communication science at the UL can take part in the competition with this calculation formula: Average weighted grade + grade on the final exam</p> <p>Additional requirement: CV</p> <p>Advantages: The right to be registered without the competition rests with those who, during the previous academic year, have been graduated from the UL bachelor's programme in communication science with a weighted average grade that is not below 8 and a bachelor's thesis grade of 10 (outstanding).</p>	
Degree awarded	Social science master's degree in communication science ( <i>Mg. soc. sc.</i> )	
Aim of the study programme	<p>To allow students to gain in-depth and expanded knowledge about communication theories and methodology, improve skills in engaging in communication research and the use of methods, develop analytical and critical thinking skills and creativity, and competence in the area of communication science and its practical applications – journalism, media work, advertising, corporate communication, communication management, strategic communication, audio-visual communication, digital communication and research into communication processes.</p>	

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## Objectives of the study programme

1. To facilitate in-depth learning about modern communication science theories and methodologies, placing these into the context of social sciences and social development;
2. To develop scholarly research and analytical skills by preparing students for independent scholarly research work in the area of communication studies and corresponding areas of professional work, as well as for studies in the doctoral programme;
3. To facilitate specialized and in-depth knowledge in the chosen study module, specializing in analytical and research skills;
4. To develop the skills, competence and leadership of students in terms of information and communication technologies, database usage, data processing and analysis, presentations, pedagogic work and expert and leader skills;
5. To encourage the use of knowledge and skills in various areas of communication to deal with specific problems and to create innovations;
6. To expand creative and critical thinking, analysis and argumentation skills, as well as responsibility for the use of knowledge in practice and competence in doing scholarly work;
7. To allow master's degree students to engage in individual studies by becoming involved in research projects in groups that are led by professors;
8. To provide knowledge, skills and competence in accordance with present-day communication science trends, the development of the professional environment and communication technology, as well as demands in the labour market.

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Learning outcomes to be achieved

Knowledge:

1. An in-depth understanding of the classical theories and latest discoveries in the field of communication science;
2. In-depth familiarity with the deeper module theories and latest ideas and practices in the study programme;
3. In-depth familiarity and understanding of communication science research methodologies, as well as academic and professional ethics;
4. In-depth familiarity with contacts among various areas, critical and creative thinking and the use of same in professional and scientific areas.

Skills:

5. Independent use of the theories of communication science and other social sciences, resolving methodical problems in areas of communication;
6. Independent research work and/or highly qualified professional functions in the area of communication science;
7. Well-argued explanations of complicated and systemic issues in the communication science sector and the profession, debating these with specialists and non-specialists';
8. Independent development of communication science competence and in-depth specialisation so as to develop new theoretical and practical approaches and problem solutions;
9. Taking on responsibility for personnel group work results, engaging in entrepreneurship and creating innovations in the field of communication.

Competence:

10. Independent formulation and critical analysis of complicated scientific and professional problems in the field of communication;
11. Justification of decisions in communication science areas, along with in-depth analysis of problems;
12. An investment in areas of communication science and other sectors so as to create new knowledge and to develop research or professional activity methods;
13. An understanding and acceptance of ethical responsibility for scientific and/or professional work (including unpredictable and complicated circumstances), also keeping in mind possible effects on society and the environment.

The UL master's degree programme in communication science was the first master's degree programme of its type in Latvia. It was established and licensed in 1998. In 2000, the UL established the Faculty of Social Sciences, which was a decisive prerequisite for the successful development of the master's study level in communication studies. The master's degree programme was accredited in 2000, 2002, 2008 and 2013.

The master's degree programme in communication science is closely linked with and is implemented in partnership with the UL Information and communication studies at the bachelor's and doctoral level and the scholarly work of the Faculty of Social Sciences, thus ensuring communication in the areas of academic studies and sustainable research.

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

The master's degree programme in communication science is one of the highly demanded UL study programmes. In terms of student numbers, it is a medium-large master's degree programme at the university (Appendix 24).

During the reporting period, the number of students in the communication science programme has declined, as has been the case with many other programmes. There are several reasons for this, and the primary ones are external:

- 1) Latvia's higher education policies are purposefully aimed at shifting potential students from the social sciences and humanities to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programmes, justifying this on the basis of needs in the economy and claiming that social sciences and the humanities are useless while also engaging in discourse about future unemployment;
- 2) The number of tuition-free places in the UL communication science master's degree programme shrank by 36% between 2015 and 2017;
- 3) In recent times, several other universities in Latvia have opened communication science programmes, and these compete with UL programmes with lower tuition fees and narrowly specialized study content;
- 4) There has been simpler access to studies in EU member states, including the other Baltic States, where there is access to state-financed study programmes in which students often receive necessary financial support that is not available at higher education institutions in Latvia;
- 5) The consequences of Latvia's economic crisis led to some employers changing their attitudes toward hiring master's degree students, reducing favourable attitudes toward a merger of work and studies and increasing workloads and intensity at places of employment and thus forcing many master's degree students to stop, encumber or drag out their studies.

In this situation, the UL communication science study programme has managed to stabilise student numbers. There has been increased interest in the programme among people who have a bachelor's degree or master's degree from other sectors such as the natural sciences, medicine

and health care) and who have a successful professional career that requires high-level knowledge from another sector. This has led to a change in the composition of students:

- 1) A smaller proportion of students who earned a bachelor's degree in communication science at the UL during the previous academic year;
- 2) An increasing proportion of master's degree students who have earned a bachelor's or master's degree from other study programmes at the UL, as well as at other universities in Latvia and abroad;
- 3) An increasing number of students are returning to their studies after a longer interruption.

For instance, the first-year student group in the 2017/2018 academic year had 31% of UL communication science bachelors, 31% of other UL bachelor's studies, 31% were graduates of programmes at other Latvian universities, and 7% of them were graduates from foreign universities. 44% of the students continued their master's degree studies immediately after they had completed their bachelor's study, while 56% did so after one or more years. Analysis of master's degree students shows that they continue their studies after an average of 4.8 years of interruption. Experience indicates that graduates of other programmes can successfully become master's degree students in the area of communication science. Of particular importance in this process are courses such as "Communication Theory in the Context of Social Sciences," "Quantitative Methods in Communication Research," "Qualitative Methods in Communication Research," and "Communication Theory, Models and Practices." The aim is to facilitate the successful inclusion of graduates from other programmes in communication science studies.

Trends related to the number of students show that not all students can deal with the requirements of the study programme, and so they leave their studies. The greatest number of dropouts is seen during the first semester of studies. The main reasons include the inability to merge studies with work. Analysis of reasons why students leave the university shows that there are students who cannot merge work with studies for a long time. They have financial problems and need to find comparatively more practical and immediate workplace skills than is the case with that which is offered by the academic study programme. There is also insufficient preparation for studies at the UL. Some students have health problems, others have changed their jobs or residents, and others have complications in their private lives.

Each year, one to three master's degree students suspend their studies for one or more semesters to deal with professional and personal issues, improve their health, go on childbirth or child care leave, prepare for the 26th Song Festival and 16th Dance Festival, or because of other reasons.

The communication master's degree programme is a full-time regular studies programme. Positive demand monitoring means that the programme can be implemented with full-time correspondence courses, or part time correspondence part time regular studies courses. Because of interest among potential students, people who have earned a bachelor's degree with at least 160 credits, a second-level professional education or a master's degree in a nationally accredited study programme in social sciences or humanities will be admitted to the 60-credit format studies at the start of the 2020/2021 academic year.

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

Those who successfully complete the academic master's degree programme in communication studies earn a social science master's degree in communication studies (*Mg. soc. sc.*). This allows them to start a professional career in all areas of communication, including journalism, media work, public relations, advertising, corporate communication, communication management and strategic communication, digital communication, as well as research into communication processes. They can also continue their studies at the doctoral level. The knowledge that they have means that they can become directors, high-level managers and workers, instructors, consultants, experts or researchers.

The UL communication science master's degree programme is open to students who have a bachelor's degree, a second-level professional higher education (or a comparable higher education), and have passed the entrance exam in line with UL admission requirements.

The aim and objectives of the communication science master's degree programme and the knowledge, skills and competence gained by students conform to the 7th European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Structure level (Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 322, "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia," June 13, 2017), and that is the level of master's degree studies.

The aim of the communication science master's degree programme is to ensure that students gain in-depth knowledge about communication theories and methodologies, improve their skills related to communication research and method, develop their analytical and critical thinking and creativity, ensure competence in the area of communication studies and its practical areas – including journalism, media work, public relations, advertising, corporate communication, communication management and strategic communication, digital communication, as well as research into communication processes. Eight sequential, and interactive study programme objectives that supplement one another, have been defined in pursuit of this aim. The objectives are to define ways in which students can reach learning outcomes that are as high as possible. The objectives include ways of facilitating the knowledge of students, nurturing of research and analytical work, in-depth knowledge in the area of specialisation (media studies or business communication). The programme also helps students to develop their skills, competence and leadership in terms of the use of information and communication technologies and databases, data processing and analysis, presentations, pedagogic work and experts and leaders. This includes the use of knowledge and skills in various communication areas, including solutions to specific communication problems and the creation and facilitation of innovations. An important objective is to help students to develop their creative and critical thinking, analytical and argumentation skills, as well as responsibility about putting their knowledge to use and competently doing scientific work. The programme emphasizes the ability of master's degree students to do individual work by involving them in research projects that are organized by the Department of Communication Studies or the Advanced Social and Political Research Institute (ASPRI), Faculty of Social Sciences, UL or by groups of researchers that are led by professors. All of this ensures that the programme is moved toward a consolidated process – providing knowledge, developing skills, and shaping competence in accordance with present-day communication science trends, the development of the professional environment and communication technologies, as well as present-day labour market demands.

As the aim and objectives of the study process are pursued, specific learning outcomes must be ensured. The 13 learning outcomes that have been defined by the communication science master's study programme are divided up among knowledge, skills and competence. The outcomes mean that graduates of the programme have in-depth and expanded understanding about communication science (both its classical theories and its latest discoveries), are familiar with one

of the study programme's modules (business communication or media studies) in terms of their theories, latest ideas and practices, and are familiar with and understand the research methodologies and academic and professional ethics. This knowledge in the area of communication science creates foundations for creative and critical thinking, as well as successful work when various areas interact. Students learn skills such as making independent use of theories, methods and problem solutions related to communication science and other social sciences, engage in research work and/or highly qualified professional functions in the area of communication science, offer well-argued aspects of complicated and systemic communication science sector and professional issues, develop the latest theories and practical approaches and problem solutions, take responsibility for the results of group work, engage in business operations and create innovations in the area of communication. The in-depth and expanded knowledge in communication science and other areas of the social sciences, as well as the skills that are gained ensure high-level communication science specialists who have a great deal of competence. This competence is characterized by the ability to independently formulate and critically analyze complicated scientific and professional problems, justify decisions in the area of communication science, and conduct in-depth analysis of problems so as to make an investment in the creation of new knowledge in the communication science areas and other sectors of science. They can make an investment in the creation of new knowledge in the area of communication science and other areas of science, develop research or professional work methods, and understand and undertake ethical responsibility for scientific and/or professional activities (sometimes under unpredictable and complicated circumstances), and the possible influence that this has on society and the environment.

The learning outcomes in the communication science master's degree study programme (knowledge, skills, competence) are characterized by a component of interaction. For instance, in-depth and expanded knowledge in the field of communication science and other social sciences, as well as the related methodology, ensure skills in terms of engaging in research work or other highly qualified professional functions, also making use of communication science and other social science theories, methods and problem solution skills in the professional arena. This knowledge and these skills speak to the competence of graduates in independently formulating and critically analyzing complex problems, justify decisions in the area of communication science, conduct in-depth analysis of problems, and make an investment in the creation of new knowledge in communication science and other areas of science in terms of developing research or professional work methods. In-depth and expanded knowledge about academic and professional ethics and an understanding of these issues lay foundations for the results of personnel group work that result in competence in terms of understanding and undertaking ethical responsibility for scientific and/or professional work (sometimes under unpredictable and complicated circumstances) and the possible influence that this has on society and the environment.

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

**2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and**

**provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation.**

The study programme is planned in accordance with its aim, objectives and planned learning outcomes. The topics and content of study modules include a diverse range of topics about present-day communication science and professional areas such as strategical communication and leadership, the media ecosystem, digital communication, computer analysis of texts and data visualisation, multimedia products, the culture of organisations and communication.

The content of the courses is in line with important ideas in the relevant area of science. The content is updated each year, and the programme is regularly supplemented with new courses. This is because of the particularly rapid pace at which the field of communication is developing at this time. New communication technologies are appearing, there are trends of transformation in the sector, and the labour market has demands which encourage the inclusion of important courses in areas such as digital humanities and social sciences, computer analysis of texts and data visualisation, the media ecosystem, risks in the informative environment and media skills). The content of courses is regularly updated and enriches. Since the previous accreditation, several changes have been implemented to the programme (Table 42). These are the most important ones:

1) The study modules “Business Communication” and “State and Organisational Communication” have been merged into the study module “Business Communication,” while the study modules “Communication Science,” “Political Communication” and “Journalism” have been merged into the study module “Media Studies” so as to concentrate the intellectual and material resources of the programme.

2) Changes have been implemented in the mandatory section (Section A) of the programme by merging courses and including new ones so as to ensure the supplementation of the programme as fully and effectively as possible with the latest aspects of communication science, particularly in terms of the topic of digital communication. The study course “Communication Theory, Models and Practice,” for example, represents a merger of the study courses “Media Theories and “Theories of Persuasive Communication,” along with several new courses – “Network Theories” and “Digital Humanities and Social Sciences.” The course “Linguistics and Communication,” in turn, has been moved from the electives to the mandatory section, because the meaning of language has increased in important communication processes such as understanding disinformation campaigns and media literacy.

3) The limited electives section (Section B) of the programme has new courses with content that depicts changes that have happened and are happening in the media environment, including digital communication, strategic business communication and leadership. Among the courses is “Media Ecosystem,” which includes the latest understandings about the media and their technologies. The course is included in a Latvian Science Council (LSC) project, “Latvia’s Media Ecology: Analysis of Changes Caused by the Fourth Industrial Revolution” (2019–2020) making use of new ideas that have been proposed and tested. The courses “Multimedia Practice” and “Computer Analysis of Text and Data Visualisation,” in turn allow students to learn the latest practical skills when it comes to organising media products and analysing media text. The updating of course content has also meant more precise names for the courses so as to include the latest ideas – “Organization Culture and Communication” (previously “Communication and Culture of Organisations”), “Evolution of Advertising: Analysis of Achievements and Products” (previously “Analysis of Advertising Practice: Analysis of 20th Century Achievements and Products”), “Strategic Communication and Leadership” (previously “Public Relations Theory and Practice,” and “Collective Memory and Communication”



(previously “Ritual Communication and Commemoration”).

4) The free electives section of the programme includes several new courses: “Risks Of Informative Space and Media Literacy,” “Gender Equality Communication and Practice,” “Theories of Information Seeking and Retrieval,” “Strategic Business Communication in Social Media,” “Genealogy of Film Images,” “Bibliophilia and Collections of Manuscripts,” and “Interdisciplinary Aspects of Theatre Criticism,” which offer knowledge about the newest aspects of business communication, the media and cultural communication. During the reporting period, the course “Management of Culture and Communication” has been included in the study programme, offering not just theoretical knowledge, but also an ability for students to develop their practical management skills and establish local and international grant proposal competence.

The aim of these changes is to help those who have earned a master’s degree in communication science to find a professional career that allows them to join the labour market more successfully.

*Table 42. Changes in the academic master’s degree study programme “Communication Science”.*

*See attached.*

The study plan covers two years (four academic semesters) for full-time regular studies and two-and-a-half years (five academic semesters) for full time correspondence studies, part time regular studies and part-time correspondence studies (see Appendix 25).

*Table 43. The structure of the master’s degree study programme in communication science*

Type of studies	Mandatory Section (Section A)	Elective Section (Section B)	Total (CP)
<b>80 credit format</b>			
Study courses	30	30	60
Master’s thesis	20		20
Total	50	30	80
<b>60 credit format</b>			
Study courses	30	10	40
Master’s thesis	20		20
Total	50	10	60

**Mandatory section (Section A) courses** are taken by all students in the programme to learn about modern theoretical approaches in the fields of communication science and social sciences, the development and current situation of the social sciences and its sectors, including communication science, issues in the communication sector, the methodologies of research work in the area of communication studies, as well as the basic principles and requirements for master’s theses and their role in academic studies and research. Much attention is devoted to in-depth studies of the latest academic and professional ideas. Section A courses ensure in-depth and expanded knowledge in the area of communication science, as well as skills and competence that are the foundation for writing the master’s thesis and for ongoing and independent competence in the area of communication. Section A courses ensure the achievement of the programme’s aim, as well as objectives 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8, and nearly all (except for the second one) learning outcomes.

The following courses offer in-depth knowledge about communication science and its context in other areas of science: “Communication Theory in the Context of Social Sciences” (4 CP), “Digital Humanities and Social Sciences” (4 CP), “Communication and Culture” (4 CP), “Communication Theory, Models and Practice” (4 CP), “Network Theories” (2 CP), “Linguistics and Communication” (2 CP), and “Critical Thinking in Higher and Further Education” (2 CP). Knowledge about scholarly research work, academic writing and theoretical and methodological approaches to communication

science research is provided by the courses “Research and Academic Writing” (4 CP), “Quantitative Methods in Communication Research” (2 CP), and “Qualitative Methods in Communication Research” (2 CP).

**The mandatory section** (Section A) of the study programme also includes the writing and defence of a **master’s thesis** (20 CP). The thesis represents independent and original research with elements of innovation. The thesis shows that the student has skills and competence in terms (1) doing independent research on the basis of the theoretical knowledge about communication science that has been learned; (2) making use of communication science research methodologies to correlate and systematise facts and data; (3) proposing and proving the relevant problem or hypothesis while justifying its timeliness and the utility of the solution; (4) working independently with academic literature; (5) presenting the scholarly work in literary language, with well-argued and formulated conclusions and research results; (6) preparing the research in accordance with academic work standards; (7) taking into account the ethics of scientific work; and (8) presenting the research as part of the defence of the thesis, with scientific and well-argued justification of conclusions and the defence of the student's views about the matter. Writing and defending the master’s thesis ensure achievement of programme aim and all programme objectives, as well as learning outcomes 1, 4, 7, 8, 10 and 13.

**Limited elective section** (Section B) has courses worth 30 credits (80 credit study format) or 10 credits (60 credit study format). These courses offer a chance to gain in-depth and expanded theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of communication science, as well as to develop professional and research skills and competence. Limited electives include (1) courses in the area of communication science in which business communication or media study problems are being tested; (2) theoretical courses that offer in-depth and expanded understanding of a specific topic and practices of communication science; and (3) courses which involve participation in scientific projects and independent research work.

The limited electives involve two areas or modules of specialisation: “Business Communication” and “Media Studies.” Students are required to earn at least 12 credits (60-credit format) or 8 credits (60-credit format) from the limited electives in relation to their area of specialisation.

Courses in the **“Business Communication”** module offer in-depth theoretical and practical knowledge and skills, as well as the development of research work talents and skills that are necessary for specialists and managers in the fields of corporate communication, strategic communication, public relations, communication management and leadership, advertising and other areas of business communication. Courses in the “Business Communication” module: “Business Communication” (4 CP), “Organization Culture and Communication” (4 CP), “Strategic Communication and Leadership” (4 CP), and “Evolution of Advertising: Analysis of Achievements and Products” (4 CP). The “Business Communication” module satisfies the programme aim, objectives 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8, and nearly all (except for the eighth one) learning outcomes.

Courses in the **“Media Studies”** module offer in-depth theoretical and practical knowledge and skills, as well as research work skills that are used by mass media directors, managers, editors and journalists in terms of examining and analysing media content, ethics, effects, audiences, etc. Courses in this area also offer knowledge about the most important twists and turns in terms of the role of the media and the present-day situation. Courses in the “Media Studies” module: “Media Ecology” (4 CP), “The Culture of Journalism” (4 CP), “Computer Analysis of Text and Data Visualisation” (4 CP), and “Multimedia Practice” (4 CP). The “Media Studies” module satisfies the programme’s aim, objectives 1, 2, 3 5 and 8, and all learning outcomes.

Courses ensure theoretical and practical knowledge in various areas of communication science, as well as in-depth familiarity with communication research methods and data analysis. Students gain

particular competence, knowledge and testing of newly create knowledge, as well as the unique opportunity of meeting and working together with researchers of distinction in the relevant area of science during lectures and seminars, because in terms of topics and content, these courses are in line with the scholarly work areas and topics of faculty members. Students can choose courses such as “Gender Equality Communication and Practice” (2 CP), “Theories of Information Seeking and Retrieval” (2 CP), “Strategic Business Communication in Social Media” (2 CP), “Management of Culture and Communication” (2 CP), “Genealogy of Film Images” (2 CP), “Bibliophilia and Collections of Manuscripts” (2 CP), “Interdisciplinary Aspects of Theatre Criticism” (2 CP), “Risks Of Informative Space and Media Literacy” (2 CP), “Collective Memory and Communication” (2 CP), and “Semiotics” (2 CP). These courses satisfy the programmes aim, objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8, and nearly all (except for the second one) learning outcomes. The courses are particularly important in achieving learning outcomes 1, 14, and 12.

The limited elective Section B part of the communication science master’s degree study programme also includes individual scholarly research work (publications, appearances at conferences), participation in international scientific projects or LSC, UL and/or Department of Communication Studies or the Advanced Social and Political Research Institute (ASPRI), Faculty of Social Sciences, UL, as well as preparation of research in the selected area of specialisations. Courses that are available to students: “Individual Research Project in Selected Area of Specialisation” (4 CP), “Research Project: Scholarly Practicum” (2 CP), “Academic Article: Academic Practice” (3 CP) and “Scholarly Report: Academic Practice” (2 CP). These courses help master’s degree students to prepare for their doctoral studies. The involvement of master’s degree students in research work is in line with the programme’s aim, helps to implement objectives 2, 4, 6, and 7, and particularly emphasise the achievement of learning outcomes 1, 3, 5 and 13.

Master’s degree students are involved in the bachelor’s programme in communication science. As part of the course “Research and Academic Writing” (4 CP), students each year serve as reviewers of annual papers written by bachelor’s degree students (reading them, writing reviews and then taking part in the defence process).

Master’s students also have every chance to become involved in the scientific life of the faculty. They regularly deliver papers at annual UL conference. In 2014, 15 master’s degree student studies were included in an international conference titled “Imants Ziedonis. Piederības meklējumi, brīvības treniņš”/“Imants Ziedonis: A Search for Belonging and Training of Freedom”. A compendium of conference papers under the same title included six scholarly papers by master's degree students. They also took part in the international conference “Aspazijai 150. Dzimumsocialitāte kultūras un varas mijattiecībās”/“150th Anniversary for Aspazija: Gender Sociality in Interaction Between Culture and Power” in 2015. One paper was included in the scholarly paper compendium “Aspazija un mūsdienas. Dzimums, nācija, radošie izaicinājumi” (“Aspazija and the Present Day: Gender, Nation, Creative Challenges”) (ed. Ausma Cimdīņa).

In 2015, master’s degree students took part in a scientific project that was focused on freedom of the press in Latvia. The publication “Press Freedom: Latvia: 10+1 Stories” was presented during UNESCO World Press Freedom Day in May 2015. The project received support from Latvia’s presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Latvian Foreign Ministry and the Latvian National Commission of UNESCO. The project also received official recognition from all of these institutions.

Master’s degree student Kristīne Antonova served as a scientific assistant in the LSC project “Latvia’s Media Ecology: Analysis of Changes Caused by the Fourth Industrial Revolution” (Izp-2018/2-0260). In partnership with Professor Emeritus Skaidrīte Lasmane, she wrote a high-level article, “Communication of Loneliness in Online Vlogs and their Moral Value,” as published in the

2019 book “Emotions and Loneliness in a Networked Society” (Palgrave Macmillan). There are also plans to involve master’s degree students in future projects. This encourages them to continue their studies at the doctoral level and to choose an academic career for themselves.

The communication science master’s degree programme also includes **additional courses** on civil protection and environmental protection. These courses are taken by students who have not taken them previously. “Civil Protection” and “Environment Protection” are courses that are aimed at ensuring a set of skills and attitudes among students about the civil defence system, the provision of first aid, and environmental problems. These courses help to reach the programme’s aim, as well as learning outcomes 4, 9 and 13.

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

Mapping of the courses that are included in the master’s degree programme in communication science demonstrates that the planned learning outcomes of the courses are linked to the overall learning outcomes of the study programme (Appendix 26). The mapping learning outcomes make it possible to conclude that the planned outcomes of the courses that are part of the programme fully conform to all achievable outcomes of the programme in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

Most of the courses are aimed at in-depth and expanded knowledge and understanding about communication science theories (both classical and contemporary), as well as the development of creative and critical thinking (learning outcome 1 and 4) that is appropriate for an academic master’s degree study programme format. Courses offer knowledge about social science theories, communication theories, concepts and models, cultural theories, media ecology (ecosystem) theories, business and strategic communication theories, network theories, new media theories, digital humanities and social science theories, critical thinking, sociolinguistic theories, etc. Mapping of the courses shows that the content of the programme is of an interdisciplinary nature and that it accents links among various areas of science (outcome 4). The courses demonstrate links between communication science and other sectors in the social sciences – sociology, political science, economics and entrepreneurship, library science and education science, as well as the humanities (theatre and cinema science, history, cultural studies, linguistics) and the natural sciences (computer science and informatics). Of importance are knowledge and understandings about methodologies in communication science, as well as academic and professional ethics (outcome 3). The programme also offers learning about qualitative and quantitative social science research methods, text computer analysis and data visualisation, as well as scientific work ethics. Practical courses deal with professional ethics and aspects of responsibility.

The “Business Communication” and “Media Studies” modules (16 credits in both cases) have courses that ensure the achievement of learning outcome 2, and they are also important in achieving learning outcomes 1, 4, 6, 7, 10 and 11. The content of these courses related to in-depth specialisation in one of the aforementioned areas, allowing students to learn how to engage in specialised research and to deal with specific professional problems, to offer well-argued and

critical analysis of issues in the area of specialisation, and to take decisions and undertake ethical responsibility.

The skills that are most highly developed by the study programme includes independent research work and/or highly qualified professional functions in the area of communication science (outcome 6). This shows that theoretical knowledge and methodologies are converted into practical skills in academia and in the professional environment of the relevant sector. Other defined skills are also a key part of the courses, and outcomes 5, 7 and 8 are achieved in more than one-half of them. Comparatively less attention in the courses is devoted to responsibility for personnel group work results, entrepreneurship and innovations in the area of communication (outcome 9), and that is why the development plan for information and communication sciences studies (Appendix 3) is discussed with particular attention, thus bringing up the need to develop communication innovative creation skills and competences.

The mapping of the study courses shows that in the area of shaping competence, learning outcomes 10 and 12 are the most important ones. Outcomes 11 and 13 are also achieved in nearly one-half of all study courses. The ability to independently formulate and critically analyse complex communication and professional problems and to make an investment in communication science and other areas of science so as to create new knowledge and to develop research and professional methods as a special role in the programme – all of these show that the communication science study programme is focused on the training of high-level specialists, managers and experts.

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

The study programme is aimed at achieving its aim and learning outcomes on the basis of a student-centred educational principle. Classes are taught in Latvian and, in the case of ones with eight credits, in English. The workload of students corresponds to 40 academic hours per credit. Studies are based on a student-centred process of teaching and learning. The mission is to involve students in the study process and in ways of improving it, to develop co-operation between faculty members and students, to ensure flexible forms of teaching and learning, to respect the composition of students are the diversity of their needs, to facilitate the readiness of students to do independent work, and to nurture mutual respect between students and faculty members.

The study programme involves a diversity of ways to learn and strengthen knowledge via introductory lectures, interactive lectures, summarising lectures, problem analysis lectures, role playing, field trips and activities in a different environment. Practitioners and professionals from various institutions, organisations and companies are asked to conduct individual lectures in various classes to ensure links between theory and practice. Practical assignments, seminars, individual, pair and group work, discussions and project development are broadly used, as are field trips to sectoral organisations. Employers are involved in the study courses in terms of conducting seminar activities, often in terms of visits to places of employment to exchange experiences, etc. this approach is used particularly extensively in courses related to the “Business Communication” and “Media Studies” modules, as well as in several limited elective theoretical courses (e.g.,

“Strategic Business Communication in Social Media”, “Management of Culture and Communication”). Another successful method is synthesis between individual and group work in that master’s degree students conduct individual problem analysis, prepare a thematic report and, during classes, discuss it in a group or present it to an audience. Also popular are seminars which involve practicums and courses that shape research work skills and competence in terms of analysing, discussing and reviewing work that has been done.

The study modules “Business Communication” and “Media Studies” emphasise theoretical knowledge, independent and regular examination of the latest academic literature, as well as individual research work. For in-depth consideration of some topics, guest lecturers and specialists from the relevant professional area are involved in the process.

The study process also ensures co-operation among study programmes at all levels. Doctoral students in the communication science programme present their research to an audience of master’s degree students. In recent years, for instance, doctoral student Oskars Gruziņš has delivered several lectures about the results and methodology of his doctoral thesis, as well as the study and research opportunities that are offered by the innovative Marie Skłodowska-Curie network programme in which Gruziņš takes part. Doctoral students also take part in reviewing master’s theses. In the “Research and Academic Writing” course, in turn, master’s degree students review the annual papers of bachelor’s degree students, examining their content, writing the reviews and taking part in the defence and grading process.

In order to facilitate the research competence of students, successive courses offer a chance to analyse and examine in detail the problems in the sector that are of interest to them. Students can choose one of the courses that are devoted to scientific work and to engage in an individual research project aimed at preparing a scholarly article or paper. The most talented and work-focused students can become involved in Department of Communication Studies or the ASPRI, Faculty of Social Sciences scientific projects. Seminars facilitate the ability of students to speak to others, present information and engage in logical, rational and well-argued discussions. Master’s degree students can take part in annual UL conferences and the ASPRI, Faculty of Social Sciences, UL conferences.

The study process is dominated by methods in which the work of students is important so as to achieve the outcomes of learning and strengthening knowledge, skills and competence. The study process involves teaching methods which facilitate the ability of students to deal with communication study assignments by dealing with real problems in the sector and by modelling situations.

During the study courses and examinations both oral, written and combined study and assessment methods are used. It is planned that the same study and assessment methods as in full time regular studies will be used in full time correspondence, part time regular and part time correspondence studies. In part time studies, more emphasis is placed on the student’s independent studies, while contact hours are mostly devoted to lectures and seminars.

The physical environment for studies has gradually changed. Several auditoriums can easily be adapted for group work and individual work, and students have access to digital technologies. Most instructors use methods that encourage students to take active participation with critical thinking and reflection. The E-study environment is used to facilitate independent studies. Each course has an E-study environment (Moodle) in which students have access to class materials, assignments, educational materials related to course topics, as well as study assignments such as tests, forums, seminars, conferences. The grades that are given to midterms and final exams are recorded in the system with explanations, and they are available to students in the E-study environment.

Master's degree students have access to consultations from all faculty members, as well as instructors from other study programmes at the Faculty of Social Sciences and other UL faculties so as to gain new knowledge, find impulses for research work, discuss issues, make more precise the assignments of the study course. E-mail is extensively used for consultations, as are new communication technologies. This process is used particularly actively when working on annual papers, scholarly projects and/or master's theses.

Writing the master's thesis is an individual process with independent work done by students. Of key importance in this process is a partnership between the student and his or her scientific supervisor. The design and methodological elements of the theses are evaluated in the course "Research and Academic Writing". The pace and results of the writing the master's thesis are evaluated in a pre-defence process during the last semester of studies. These intermediary phases in the master's thesis facilitate the quality of work, allow students to fix errors in a timely way, and to ensure that the schedule for writing the thesis is observed. Master's degree theses that are graded as "outstanding," "excellent" or "very good" can be presented at the annual UL conference, or at the international conference "Riga Readings in Social Sciences (RRSS)."

The student-centred approach also means regular updating of study programmes and courses, particularly focusing on sensible formulation of learning outcomes. Faculty members take into account recommendations from students about course content, the organisation of work, individual work and grading formats. This depicts the results of a dialogue between instructors and students. Clearly formulated learning outcomes encourage student understanding and co-responsibility for their studies, facilitates an understanding of the received evaluation and nurture self-evaluation skills. Instructors use methods that are in line with the study goals and planned learning outcomes in terms of testing forms and grading criteria. These are announced in advance, and students who register for courses can learn about the course offer and requirements before the first course begins. Faculty members encourage students to work independently, but also ensure leadership and support in the study process.

Particular attention is focused on diversity in the composition of students, e.g., respecting students who begin master's degree studies after a long interruption during which they have gained life and work experiences. The specific needs of students who have returned to Latvia from emigration are also taken into account (e.g., shortcomings in Latvian language skills), and all students receive support.

Student mobility (and the subsequent recognition of learning outcomes) is facilitated as part of the student-centred educational principles. Students are involved in research and social activities that are initiated by academic personnel, thus gaining meaningful experience in terms of putting their knowledge to practice. An internal quality assurance policy ensures that study programmes encourage students to become actively involved in improving the study process. There is a system whereby students can submit proposals and deal with complaints or student appeals. Improvements to the study process involve the results of study surveys about the programme and about individual courses, and these are also taken into account. Students are happy to express their recommendations on how to improve the study programme and process in conversations with instructors, programme directors and study methodologists.

Programme administrators work to encourage master's degree students to gain as much knowledge as possible and to overcome complications such as sickness or problems with content that are caused by an intensive workload at work. When necessary, an individual study plan is prepared for the whole programme or for separate courses. This is an important issue when students face crises at work, health problems or other complications that may encourage them to suspend their studies. A solution is often found to allow the master's degree student to continue studies in a format that is

appropriate for the situation. Administrators also offer support to students whose previous education has been in other areas of science and who require additional work to complete the study programme successfully. The primary method here involves additional consultations and individual work. Administrators also deal with problems that emerge among students or groups of students and faculty members. Here, the primary instruments are dialogue, compromise and confidentiality. A procedure to deal with differences of opinion between faculty members and students is enshrined in UL Instruction No 1/21, February 18, 2002, "The procedure for submitting and reviewing student proposals and complaints."

In accordance with Article 59.2 of the law on universities (studies outside of study programmes) and Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 36, January 10, 2012, each student can ensure that the knowledge and skills that have been gained through previous education or professional experience can be recognised as courses. In the communication science master's degree study programme, this can apply to no more than 24 credits (no more than 30% of the scope of the programme). Learning outcomes gained through professional experience can only be recognised for courses that provide practical knowledge, skills and competence. In such cases, the applicant must pass the exam that relates to the study course. Learning outcomes related to a previous education are recognised if they are at the level of a higher education and if they have been achieved in a professional ongoing education programme that leads to the fourth or fifth professional qualification level, in a separate study programme course or module which the person has participated in as a listener or a student, or in other extra-formal educational processes. In that case, the person must take the tests that apply to the relevant course. Students must take a test to evaluate achieved study results if the commission decides that the documents which the applicant has submitted as confirmation of achieved learning outcomes do not offer complete information about the applicant's knowledge, skills and competence.

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

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

Since June 2013, 110 master's theses have been written and defended in the communication science master's degree programme (Figure 10). In terms of themes, they cover a fairly broad range of communication science issues. Most of the research has been of an interdisciplinary nature.



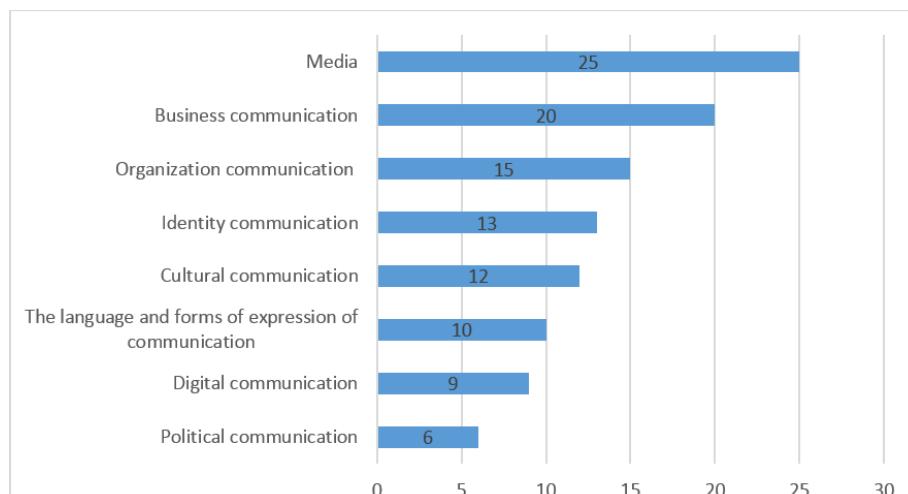


Figure 10. The number of master's theses in communication science (2013-2019).

In terms of theme, 23% of the defended master's theses have been focused on the media, 18% on business communication, 14% on organisational communication, 12% on identity communication, 11% on cultural communication, 9% on the language and forms of expression of communication, 8% on digital communication and 5% on political communication. Each of these topics has several sub-topics. For instance, among all of the theses, nine have analysed Internet news portals, seven have dealt with aspects of media history, five have looked at the traditional media, and four have reviewed issues related to media use and audiences. The proportion of theses that are devoted to digital communication has been increasing in recent years.

Topics for master's theses are influenced by the communication sectors, as well as aspects of national, social and economic life. In 2019, for instance, there were master's theses that dealt with the role of communication in facilitating zero-packaging shopping and waste recycling. The areas of scholarly work of faculty members are also of key importance when master's degree students choose topics for their theses. The results of implementation of a national research programme "National Identity," for instance, and as part of that the accumulated experience of and publications about identity research facilitated the popularity of identity communication topics, and identity theories and research methodologies often appeared in master's theses.

Master's theses also make use of communication science theories, as well as theoretical approaches from other social sciences and the humanities. The range of research methods is very broad. Students gain data by establishing sets of media and social network text examples, conducting interviews (including in-depth and oral history interviews), organising questionnaires, experiments and ethnographic observations, as well as other methods. The data are processed and analysed with social science quantitative and qualitative methods such as quantitative and/or qualitative content analysis, critical discourse analysis, narrative analysis, justified theories semantic differentials, semiotic analysis. Computer software such as SPSS and NVivo is used for data processing and analysis. It is expected that the use of these technologies will increase because since the beginning of the 2019/2020 academic year, there has been the course "Computer Analysis of Text and Data Visualisation."

Authors of master's theses have received grades ranging from "outstanding" (10) to "nearly average" (4) (Figure 11). The grade "outstanding" (10) was received by 10% of defended theses, "excellent" (9) by 21%, "very good" (8) by 28%, "good" (7) by 22%, "nearly good" (6) by 11%, "average" (5) by 3% and "almost average" (4) by 5% of defended theses.

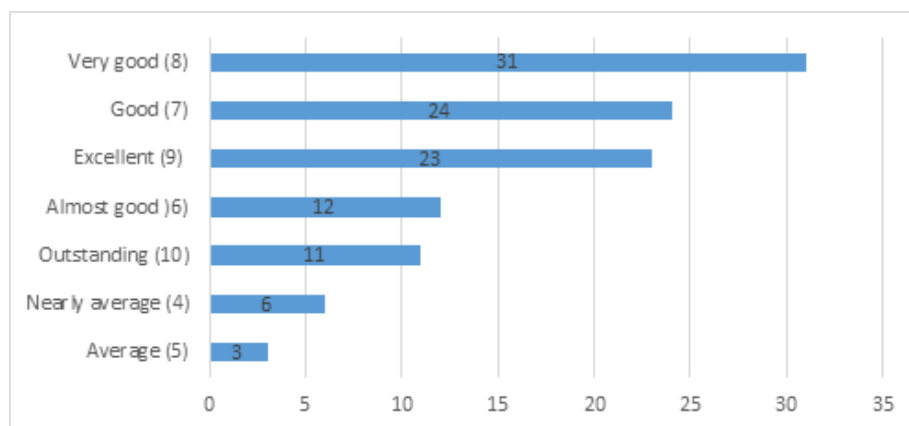


Figure 11. Grades given to communication science master's theses (number) (2013–2019).

## 2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

Students in the communication science master's degree programme are regularly surveyed via focus group interviews and informal, individual interviews. During the 2013/2014 and 2014/15 academic year, surveys were conducted at the conclusion of the first semester and the beginning of the third semester. The survey format was changed during the 2015/2016 academic year, and students filled out a UL questionnaire on the University of Latvia Information System (LUIS) about study courses at their conclusion. Graduates filled out a form about the study programme and the UL upon concluding their studies. Sadly, the new system was not fully operational during the first year, which meant that representative results were not extracted from the questionnaires. Representative results have been obtained since the 2016/2017 academic year.

Results from the surveys in 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 showed that students were quite satisfied with the quality of instructors and the studies – an average between 7.3 and 8.8 on a 10-point scale. The results of the surveys were analysed and taken into account when planning study courses.

Analysis of surveys conducted since the 2016/2017 academic year show that students have a high level of satisfaction about the courses that are on offer. They appreciate both academic and practical courses. Course content is of great importance in terms of the knowledge that is provided, not least in terms of scientific and practical issues. The personality of the instructor is important in terms of the ability to provide materials and to demonstrate intellect. Also of importance is the attitude of instructors toward students, which requires the skills of co-operation and dialogue. The evaluations of study courses reflect the current replacement of generations in the faculty. Students very much appreciated the involvement of guest lecturers, both scholars and professionals, in the study process. In those cases, where the course evaluation was between 4 and 5 points, discussions were held with the students and the faculty member to find out what the problem was and to find a solution.

Criticisms from students applied to the fact that some limited electives are taught only once per two years, which has been the case because of the need to consolidate the financial resources of the study programme. Students do not always manage to find the best choices for their development and professional interests during the first semester of their studies. Students would

also like to see a broader range of electives, and this has led the faculty to design new courses. The next proposal from students has to do with the desire to gain more practical knowledge and skills that can immediately be put to use at work. The solution is a series of practical courses in the programme, including “Multimedia Practice” and “Computer Analysis of Texts and Data Visualisation.” The course “Management of Culture and Communication” particularly focuses on grant proposal writing skills. The courses “Business Communication,” “Organization Culture and Communication,” “Strategic Communication and Leadership” and “The Culture of Journalism” have been updated with the latest issues related to practices in the relevant sectors. In recent years, students have also called in the surveys for a great emphasis on digital communication, and the response has been to assign more importance in programme planning and course content to issues related to the digital environment. During the 2017/2018 academic years, for instances, the courses “Network Theories” and “Theories of Information Seeking and Retrieval” were included in the programme. “Digital Humanities and Social Sciences” was first offered in the 2018/2019 academic year, and “Computer Analysis of Text and Data Visualisation” followed in the 2019/2020 academic year. Relations between humans and technologies are discussed in the course “Media Ecosystem.”

### **The results of graduate surveys**

Graduates of the master’s degree programme in communication science have, since 2016, filled out a questionnaire on the LUIS system, thus helping to create data about various aspects of the UL, the Faculty of Social Sciences and the programme. Graduates have praised material and technical support for the studies (auditoriums, educational resources, databases, library resources, etc.). Graduates are also pleased about the planned move to the UL Academic Centre House of Letters, which will offer a modern study environment. The work of study methodologists is also praised, as are the competences and favour of faculty members, partnerships with the academic advisor for the master’s thesis, as well as responsiveness from study methodologists. Graduates admit that the studies developed their research work and improved their work with information (evaluating, analysing and systematising it). They also gained language use, work organisation and public appearance skills. All of these elements of the programme were rated with 6 points or more on a scale of 0-7.

Former students have said that it would have been worthwhile to take courses that offer practical skills that can be put to immediate use at work. The description of the programme has already noted that on the basis of these survey results, new courses have been included in the programme and the content of courses has been updated. Surveys show that in general terms, students are satisfied with their studies at the UL communication science master’s degree programme. Trends in the survey results suggest that the content of the programme is gradually becoming more and more in line with the interests and demands of the students.

Master’s degree students emphasise the large workload that they face, because it is often quite complicated to merge a job with studies. The surveys show that all students have jobs, which means that they study after they finish their working hours. The need to earn a living while merging work and studies is a serious problem when it comes to master’s degree studies.

### **The results of employer surveys**

The master’s degree programme in communication science regularly partners with employers who take part in the programme as instructors and guest lecturers. Employers also attend public events that are organised by the Faculty of Social Sciences, UL. Frequent and partly structured interviews with employers show that those who earn a master’s degree in communication science are quite highly appreciated because of the contribution that their knowledge can give to the media, public relations, corporate communication and advertising companies, government institutions, educational institutions and elsewhere.

In 2019, a survey was conducted among employers who have hired master's degree students from the communication science programme, and the results show that approximately 90% of master's degree recipients work specifically in the area of communication (journalism, media administration, corporative communication, public relations, advertising, internal and external communication for organisations, digital communication, etc.). Few graduates of the master's degree programme in communication science have jobs that has nothing to do with the knowledge that they gained during their studies. The conclusion must be that a master's degree in communication science leads to successful professional careers. Most graduates of the programme hold middle-range or higher-level management positions, and some of them are employers themselves. The academic knowledge, analytical skills and competence which they have gained during their studies are a key factor in facilitating their professional careers.

Employers admit that graduates and students of the communication science master's degree programme demonstrate a high level of theoretical and practical preparedness. They can justify their views in a well-argued and convincing manner, and they can present ideas and choices in a convincing way, as well. Extensive knowledge in the area of communication science very much helps to come up with new ideas, as does knowledge from other areas such as sociology, philosophy, culture and semiotics. Several employers noted that graduates of the communication science master's degree programme can discuss in a constructive way, reflect in a logical way, and strategically forecast several steps in advance – something that is uncommon in creative work. Students and graduates have very good communication skills. They work well with others in terms of launching successful dialogue and working in a team. Graduates of the communication science master's degree programme also tend to have a fairly high level of ambitions, independence and the desire to take the initiative. They have typical leadership qualities and skills. They also take an innovative approach to formats and ideas, and they can quickly adapt to changes, find solutions to problems and be durable when it comes to stress. Employers say that graduates of this programme typically have a desire to grow professionally and to continue their education.

Employers say that they have good partnership opportunities at the UL, though they would particularly like to expand their partnership with the communication science master's degree programme with an eye toward sectoral research and the need to involve students even more intensively in organising various events.

The fact that graduates of the communication science master's degree programme have successfully integrated into the labour market and the positive references among employers about their high level of erudition confirm that the knowledge and qualifications that are offered by the UL programme are in line with labour market demands.

## **2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.**

Partnership agreements have been concluded under the auspices of the Erasmus programme on the exchange of master's degree students with several other universities in Europe (see Appendix 6). The conclusion and renewal of agreements with other universities represents sustainable co-operation in the area of studies and research. Faculty members establish contacts with foreign colleagues and work together on joint projects. In some cases, agreements are concluded at the initiative of students who have special motivations related to education and experience. There is an

increasing interest in foreign exchange programmes among master's degree students, and there is a competition over who gets to attend such programmes. Sadly, many students who do very well in academic work do not take advantage of this opportunity, because they merge studies with work and cannot take an entire semester off from work.

During the reporting period, 13 master's degree students have been enrolled in foreign universities under the Erasmus program (see Table 44), while the UL has hosted 17 master's degree students in communication science from foreign universities. See Appendix 8.

Table 44. The mobility of communication science master's degree programme students

Academic year	Universities involved in exchange programmes
2019/2020	University of Porto (Portugal), Oslo Metropolitan University (Norway), University of Mannheim (Germany)
2018/2019	Radboud University (Netherlands)
2017/2018	University of Aarhus (Denmark)
2016/2017	Sassari University (Italy), University of Turin (Italy), University of Southern Denmark (Denmark)
2015/2016	–
2014/2015	San Antonio Catholic University (Spain), University of Aarhus (Denmark), University of Pisa (Italy)
2013/2014	University of Osnabruck (Germany), University of Turin (Italy)

Students very much appreciate the opportunity to study abroad, praising the international and diverse study environment, the approach of universities toward the inclusion of technologies in the teaching process, and the deeply specialised content of certain study courses. Particular praise is given to studies at the University of Aarhus and the University of Radboud.

Courses taken at accredited or state-owned higher education institutions abroad are included in the student's academic obligations in accordance with Decision No 190, December 29, 2008, "The Procedure for Recognising Courses at the University of Latvia." The UL fully recognises courses that have been taken in study programmes that are based on intergovernmental or inter-university agreements or international educational programmes, with the student having reached written agreement in advance with the study programme director. The scope and content of these courses must be in line with the study programme's aim, objectives, content and planned learning outcomes. During the reporting period, the recognition of courses that have been taken at foreign universities by students from the communication science master's degree programme has been successful. Students plan such processes well in advance, earn the necessary 20 credits, and have courses that are compared to Section A and Section B courses.

### III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

**3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.**

The communication science master's degree programme is implemented by the UL Faculty of Social Sciences. See Chapter 3 of Section II about the faculty's resources and financing.

Of key importance for the master's degree programme are libraries and databases which are listed in Chapter 3 of Section II. At this level of studies, of particular value is access to the databases of international scholarly journals (*JSTOR*, *SAGE*, *Journals Online*, *Taylor & Francis Social Science & Humanities Library*), as well as E-books (*Dawsonera*, *EBSCO eBook Collection*). Since 2017, there has been access to a research method database, *SAGE Research Methods*, which is used intensively during studies and for the purpose of writing the master's thesis. The independent work of master's degree students and the process of writing their theses are very much facilitated by the *Primo Discovery* search programme, which was introduced in 2016. The content of the work of the master's degree programme is also influenced positively by the latest literature from communication science – scientific monographs, textbooks, handbooks, methodological publications, etc., which are regularly procured by the Library of Faculty of Social Sciences, UL. Information about the specialised publications that are available for the programme can be found in Table 37.

Master's degree students use specialised social science data processing software SPSS and NVivo in their studies and when writing their theses. The Faculty of Social Sciences has licenses with respect to this software, which is accessible at the faculty's computer classrooms and library.

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

## **III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)**

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

A cornerstone for the programme is a group of highly qualified faculty members. There has been a replacement of generations during the reporting period, as some faculty members who have been part of the programme since the very beginning have retired. The nucleus of the faculty members at this time is made up of people who have earned their doctorate during the past 10 years at the UL communication science doctoral programme, some other UL programme or at other universities. Dr Zane Radzobe joined the programme as an assistant professor in 2015/2016 along with Dr Olga Kazaka and Dr Jānis Oga. Dr Marita Zitmane offered several new courses. In 2016/2017, Dr Laura Ardava-Āboliņa taught the course "Media Theories." In subsequent years, the team was joined by Dr Sanita Reinsone and Dr Klinta Ločmele.

The Department of Communication Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences is the main employer for

most faculty members. The programme also involves highly qualified instructors from other faculties such as Professor Ina Druviete and Professor Zanda Rubene, along with faculty members from other departments of Faculty of Social Sciences – Professor Viesturs Zanders, Associate Professor Baiba Holma and Assistant Professor Mareks Niklass, as well as a leading researcher at the ASPRI, Dr Visvaldis Valtenbergs. The course “Digital Humanities and Social Sciences” involves Dr Sanita Reinsone-Bērziņa, a leading researcher at the UL Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art and its Digital Humanities Science Group, Anda Baklāne, curator of the Digital Research Centre, Latvian National Library and Jānis Kreicbergs, a project director in the field of digital services. The data visualisation course “Computer Analysis of Texts and Data Visualisation” is taught by Asnāte Rībena, who is a specialist at the Latvian National Library and the editor of illustrations for the National Encyclopaedia.

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

The communication science master's study programme is based on highly qualified academic personnel, including professors Ina Druviete, Zanda Rubene, Viesturs Zanders, Vita Zelče un asociētā profesore Baiba Holma. They are all well-known and highly rated specialists in Latvia. This satisfies the requirements of Article 55.3 of the [Law on Higher Education Institutions](#) – “No fewer than five professors and associate professors who have been elected to academic posts at the relevant university must take part in the mandatory and limited elective sections of academic study programmes.” Also involved in the programme are assistant professors Viktors Freibergs, Laura Ardava-Āboliņa, Olga Kazaka, Zane Radzobe and Marita Zitmane, as well as leading researcher Visvaldis Valtenbergs. Of importance in the programme are lecturers with doctorates such as Klinta Ločmele, Jānis Oga and Sanita Reinsone-Bērziņa. Several lecturers (Anda Baklāne, Lolita Stašāne) are planning to defend their dissertations in the near future. Several lecturers have teaching experience from bachelor's programmes at the UL or other higher education institutions in Latvia. They have also been successful participants in Latvian and international scientific projects. Lecturers in the programme work hand in hand with professors, associate professors and assistant professors who offer consultations and advice about how best to do the work. A comparatively large proportion of assistant professors in the programme testifies to a successful replacement of generations among faculty members and about the programme's qualitative growth perspectives and sustainability.

*Table 45. Qualifications of faculty members in the communication science master's degree programme*

Qualification	2013/2014		2014/2015		2015/2016		2016/2017		2017/2018		2018/2019	
	num- ber	~%	num- ber	~%	num- ber	~%	num- ber	~%	num- ber	~%	num- ber	~%
Professors	3	25	2	17	3	23	3	21	3	20	3	16
Associate professors	2	17	2	17	2	15	1	7	2	13	2	11
Assistant professors	3	25	3	25	3	23	5	35	6	40	6	32
Lectors (Dr.)			1	8	2	15	2	14	1	7	2	11
Lectors (Mg. soc. sc.)	1	8	1	8	1	8	1	7	1	7	5	25
Leading researchers	1	8	1	8	1	8	1	7	2	13	1	5
Researchers	2	17	2	17	1	8	1	7	-	-	-	
Total	12	100	12	100	13	100	14	100	15	100	19	100

**4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).**

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

**4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.**

All faculty members in the communication science master's degree programme are involved in scholarly research (see Chapter 4 of Section II). This work is targeted toward the main research areas of the ASPRI, Faculty of Social Sciences, UL. During the reporting period, faculty members have taken part in several UL, national and international projects, including the prestigious "Horizon2020" and EU-FP7 initiative projects, National Research Programme projects, and LSC



fundamental and applies research projects. While this report was being prepared, several open bids for tender for project participation that involve faculty members have been pending.

The knowledge that is created and tested during research projects are included in the study programme by establishing new courses and updating the content of others. The “National Identity” research programme's project “Social Memory and Identity of Latvia,”, for instance, had results that were integrated into the course “Collective Memory and Communication” (formerly “Ritual Communication and Commemoration”). The content was also used in the project “Living Together with Difficult Memories and Diverse Identities” (ERA.NET RUS Plus-S&T, EU FP7 Initiatives Project). The content is also included in the course “Communication Theory in the Context of Social Sciences.”

The project “Children Born of War – Past, Present, Future (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Innovative Training Networks, H2020-MSCA-ITN-2014) yielded knowledge about the oral history method and the relevant ethical issues for the course “Qualitative Methods in Communication Research.”

The LSC fundamental and applies research programme's project “Latvia's Media Ecology: Analysis of Changes Caused by the Fourth Industrial Revolution” had results that are the foundation for the course “Media Ecosystem.” The plan is to also integrate elements from the LSC fundamental and applies research programme's project “Jeopardizing Democracy through Disinformation and Conspiracies: Reconsidering Experience of Latvia,” which will begin in 2020 with the participation of several faculty members from the programme.

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

The foundation for the communication science master's degree study programme is the Department of Communication Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences. Faculty members include Prof Vita Zelče, Assistant Prof Laura Ardava-Āboliņa, Assistant Prof Viktors Freibergs, Assistant Prof Olga Kazaka, Assistant Prof Zane Radzobe, Assistant Prof Marita Zitmane, lector Lolita Stašāne and lector Roberts Vīksne. A partner for the Department of Communication Studies in terms of the study and research programme is the Department of Information and Library Studies. Faculty members from the department – Professor Viesturs Zanders and Associate Professor Baiba Holma – take part in the master's degree programme in communication science. Representatives of both departments work together on the Communication Science Study Council. Another major partner is the ASPRI, Faculty of Social Sciences, UL. Faculty members from both departments are senior researchers, researchers or assistance in the institute's projects. Leading researcher Visvaldis Valtensbergs teaches classes in the communication science master's degree programme.

Also involved in the communication science master's degree programme are researchers from other UL faculties (the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Art) and scientific institutes (the Institute for Literature, Folklore and Art). These are people who facilitate co-operation and exchanges of opinions among faculty members and enrich the intellectual environment of the study process. Also of importance in the programme is the Latvian National Library, which offers experts in the areas of the humanities and social sciences who teach some of

the courses in the programme.

Of key importance in the programme are faculty members who are also recognised in the professional environment. Assistant Prof Olga Kazaka, for instance, is also a businesswoman and a practitioner in corporative communication. She is the co-owner and director of the A.W. Olsen & Partners communication agency, which has received prestigious awards such as the IPRA Golden World Awards, the European Excellence Award, the Baltic PR Awards and the Baltic Communication Awards. The Latvian Association of Public Relations Professionals has given an award to Olga Kazaka for her investment in developing the field of public relations. Lector Lolita Stašāne is an experienced business and corporate communication specialist. She merges her work at the UL with her job as communication director for Swedbank. Businessman and Mansards Publishing House editor-in-chief Jānis Oga is also involved in the programme. The books that his publishing house releases are often bestsellers which have received prestigious prizes from the sector. The involvement of these outstanding professionals helps to enrich the knowledge of other faculty members who thus gain a broader sense of the business environment.

Faculty members work together at scholarly conferences, department and study programme council meetings, evaluation of new courses, visits to inspect lectures delivered by others, consultations from more experienced colleagues to younger colleagues, various formal and informal events, exchange-of-ideas seminars and workshops, mutual links, and activities on social networks.

The Faculty of Social Sciences plans to move to the UL Academic Centre in 2023/2024, thus improving, intensifying and making more everyday the contacts and co-operation of faculty members who are currently scattered among various UL buildings. Being in the Academic Centre will also facilitate co-operation with the Latvian National Library and the change to use its modern infrastructure.

Lectures and seminars at the communication science master's degree programme involve 10-25 students. In some cases such as practical assignments, work is organised in smaller groups, seeking to monitor the development of skills of each student in courses such as "Multimedia Practice" and "Computer Analysis of Text and Data Visualisation." Scholarly research work courses involve individual co-operation between the student and the faculty member ("Individual Research Project in Selected Area of Specialisation", "Academic Article: Academic Practice" and "Scholarly Report: Academic Practice"). The course "Research Project: Scholarly Practicum" involves small groups of two to seven students.

Individual co-operation is also seen in the relationship between the faculty member who is the academic advisor and the master's degree student who is writing the thesis and is preparing for its defence. One faculty member advises 1-3 master's theses, and the recommendation is that no faculty member take on more than five master's theses in a single academic year.

During the 2019/2020 academic year, the numerical relationship formula between elected faculty members at the Department of Communication Studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences and all students was 8:30, or 3.75 students per instructor.

The co-operation between faculty members and students in the communication science master's degree programme ensure interactive relations between instructors and master's degree students which are based on the principles of a student-centred education.

# Annexes

<b>III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme</b>		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	Appendix 24.pdf	24.pielikums.pdf
<b>III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof</b>		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	Appendix 27.pdf	27.pielikums.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (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	Appendix 26.pdf	26.pielikums.pdf
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	Appendix 25.pdf	25.pielikums.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Appendix 39.D.pdf	39.D pielikums.pdf
<b>Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments</b>		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	Appendix 33.pdf	33.pielikums.pdf
<b>Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments</b>		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	Appendix 11.D.pdf	11.D.pielikums.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	Appendix 10.4.pdf	10.4. pielikums.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under <a href="http://www.europass.lv">www.europass.lv</a> ), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.		

If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	Appendix 10.2.D.pdf	10.2.D pielikums.pdf
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	Appendix 36.D.pdf	36.D.pielikums.pdf
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	Appendix 34.D.pdf	34.D pielikums.pdf

# Librarian Science and Information

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Librarian Science and Information</i>
Education classification code	<i>45322</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic master study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Daina</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Pakalna</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>daina.pakalna@lu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Docente, Dr. philol.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	<i>26790847</i>
Goal of the study programme	<i>To educate highly qualified information specialists to work at libraries and other information institutions with competence in the management of information resources, information services and information technologies, as well as to encourage students to become involved in scholarly research work.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<i>1. To use a student-centred approach by providing courses that reflect the latest trends in library science, information science, archive science and book science,</i> <i>2. To facilitate the ability of students to understand and critically analyse theories from library science, information science and related fields,</i> <i>3. To develop the research skills of students</i>

Results of the study programme	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A demonstration of in-depth theoretical knowledge in library science, information science and book science, with extensive abilities to orient in the theories of the relevant sub-field and in the latest scientific ideas;</li> <li>2. An understanding of informational processes in society and the related informational activities;</li> <li>3. A familiarity with the main concepts of data processing;</li> <li>4. A familiarity with the work of information institutions and the relative normative regulations;</li> <li>5. An explanation of the role of good governance and quality control in the work of present-day information institutions;</li> <li>6. The use of critical thinking and a scientific approach toward problem resolution.</li> </ol> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Independent use of theories and methods in research work;</li> <li>8. An appreciation of information resources, their usability and their appropriateness for various age groups;</li> <li>9. A sense of responsibility in doing individual or group work;</li> <li>10. Identification of problems, then researching and resolving them;</li> <li>11. The ability to take decisions and to work under complicated circumstances while offering innovative solutions.</li> </ol> <p><b>Competence</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Independent research in library science, information science or book science;</li> <li>13. Analysis of the latest ICT solutions and introduction of same in information management;</li> <li>14. Organisation of a user-focused information and service system and maintenance of same.</li> </ol>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	Master's thesis

## Study programme forms

### 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)	A bachelor's degree or second-level professional higher education, or a comparable higher education.
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	Master of social science in library science and information
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

**Places of implementation**

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

**Part time studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian**

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>A bachelor's degree or second-level professional higher education, or a comparable higher education.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of social science in library science and information</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

**Places of implementation**

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

**Part time extramural studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian**

Study type and form	<i>Part time extramural studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>A bachelor's degree or second-level professional higher education, or a comparable higher education.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of social science in library science and information</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

**Places of implementation**

Place name	City	Address
University of Latvia	RĪGA	RAIŅA BULVĀRIS 19, RĪGA, LV-1050

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

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

#### Parameters of the study programme “Library Science and Information”

Title of the study programme	<b>Bibliotēkzinātne un informācija</b>	
Title of the study programme in English	<b>Library Science and Information</b>	
Code of the study programme according to the Latvian Education Classification	45322	
Field of science (refer to doctoral study programmes)		
Type and level of study programme	Academic master's degree study programme	
Qualification level to be achieved (NQF / EQF)	7th level	
Volume of study programme (CP, ECTS recommended)	80 CP/120 ECTS	
Implementation mode/form, type, duration (if less than a year, in months) and language of implementation		
full-time regular studies	2 years	Latvian
part time regular studies	2.5 years	Latvian
part time correspondence studies	2.5 years	Latvian
Programme director	<i>Dr. philol.</i> , Assistant Professor Daina Pakalna	



Admission requirements	<p>A bachelor's degree or second-level professional higher education, or a comparable higher education.</p> <p><i>Admission is on a competitive basis:</i></p> <p>An entrance exam; applicants who have earned a bachelor's degree in library science and information from the UL can take part in the competition with this evaluation calculation formula: average weighted grade + total or average grade on the final exam</p> <p><i>Additional requirement:</i> CV</p> <p><i>Advantages:</i> The right to register for the programme outside of the competition rests with students who, during the previous academic year, took the UL bachelor's programme "Information Management" and had an average weighted grade in bachelor's studies no lower than 8 and a grade on the bachelor's thesis no lower than 9 (excellent).</p>
Degree to be awarded, professional qualifications or degree and professional qualifications	A social science master's degree in library science and information
Aim of the study programme	To educate highly qualified information specialists to work at libraries and other information institutions with competence in the management of information resources, information services and information technologies, as well as to encourage students to become involved in scholarly research work.
Objectives of the study programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To use a student-centred approach by providing courses that reflect the latest trends in library science, information science, archive science and book science,</li> <li>2. To facilitate the ability of students to understand and critically analyse theories from library science, information science and related fields,</li> <li>3. To develop the research skills of students</li> </ol>

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Learning outcomes to be achieved

### **Knowledge**

1. A demonstration of in-depth theoretical knowledge in library science, information science and book science, with extensive abilities to orient in the theories of the relevant sub-field and in the latest scientific ideas;
2. An understanding of informational processes in society and the related informational activities;
3. A familiarity with the main concepts of data processing;
4. A familiarity with the work of information institutions and the relative normative regulations;
5. An explanation of the role of good governance and quality control in the work of present-day information institutions;
6. The use of critical thinking and a scientific approach toward problem resolution.

### **Skills**

7. Independent use of theories and methods in research work;
8. An appreciation of information resources, their usability and their appropriateness for various age groups;
9. A sense of responsibility in doing individual or group work;
10. Identification of problems, then researching and resolving them;
11. The ability to take decisions and to work under complicated circumstances while offering innovative solutions.

### **Competence**

12. Independent research in library science, information science or book science;
13. Analysis of the latest ICT solutions and introduction of same in information management;
14. Organisation of a user-focused information and service system and maintenance of same.

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The final examination at the end of the study programme

### **Master's thesis**

**1.2. Analysis and assessment of the statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting**

**the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down in the different study forms, types, and languages.**

The number of students during the reporting period has been between 19 and 24. The number of students admitted for first-year studies each year has been fairly comparable. The programme has few students who pay their own tuition (Appendix 20).

During the last few years, the trend has been that approximately one-half of the students who are admitted to the first year of the master's programme are graduates of the bachelor's degree programme "Information Management." They are mostly graduates with a high grade for their thesis and a high average grade. The second part of the first-year students have completed a different study programme (usually they have studied philology or one of the social sciences) and work at an information institution, most often a library. These students are highly motivated and begin their studies with a clearly known research area for their master's thesis (most often suggested by their employers).

Each year, a few students drop out, most often during the first semester. There have been discussions with all students who are planning to stop their studies, but only in one case did the faculty succeed in convincing the student to take a sabbatical, as opposed to ending the process altogether. There have been various reasons for this, and the one that is mentioned most often has been an inability to merge full time work with studies. During entrance discussions, everyone is informed about the list of classes, but often the burden of studies and work has proven to be unbearable. In some cases, students have changed jobs, and the new employer has not supported their master's degree studies. Others have cited health problems, a change in residence, or various personal reasons.

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

The aim and objectives, knowledge, skills and competence of the master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" are in line with the seventh level of Latvia's qualifications framework structure (NQF/EQF) (Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 322, "Regulations on Latvia's Education Classification"). After successful studies and the defence of a master's thesis, students earn a master's degree in library science and information.

The master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" conforms to the higher education cycle final requirement descriptions which apply to master's degree programmes (the 7th level of the NQF/EQF). Students gain in-depth knowledge and understanding in library science, information science, archive science and book science, and they are well-oriented in the theories of the sub-field of this area of science, as well as the latest scientific ideas. The programme ensures that students can make independent use of the theories and methods that they have learned in terms of solving problems and engaging in research by integrating knowledge from various areas. Graduates can critically evaluate information resources, organise user-oriented information systems and take decisions in complicated situations so as to propose creative and innovative solutions.

The programme also ensures the right to study at the third cycle – the doctoral study programme in communication science.

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

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

The master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" conforms to Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 240, "Regulations on the State Academic Education Standard," May 13, 2014. The programme ensures knowledge, skills and competence referred to in the 7th level of Latvia's education qualification framework structure.

The scope of the master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" is 80 credits (120 ECTS). It involves full-time studies for four semesters or part time or part time regular studies for five semesters.

The programme has a **mandatory section** (50 credits, of which 20 relate to writing and defending the master's thesis) and a section of limited electives (with courses worth 40 credits, of which students must earn 30 credits). The fourth semester is fully devoted to the master's thesis.

The mandatory section represents 62.5% of the total scope of the programme, and those courses must be taken by all students. These courses ensure in-depth learning about theoretical knowledge and research skills, as well as the development of skills in the areas of library science, information science and book science.

The master's thesis is a mandatory final exam for the University of Latvia's master's degree programme in library science and information. The thesis involves independent research by the student to confirm that he or she has learned theoretical and practical knowledge and methodological skills in library science, information science and book science. Master's theses must include elements of innovation.

The limited electives represent 37.5% of the programme. There are courses worth 40 credits, and students must earn 30 credits from this section.

After the accreditation, there are plans to conduct fairly substantial changes in the programme to supplement it with topics and courses that are important for the sector. Other courses will be eliminated from the programme (Table 38).

*Table 38. Changes to the master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" after the accreditation of the programme*

Courses for the next accreditation period	Credits	Courses eliminated from the programme	Credits
KomZ5164 Collection Management and Research Methods of Collections	4	KomZ5090 Collection Management	2
VadZ5134 Personnel Management	4	VadZ5134 Management	4
SDSK5034 Records and Archives Management II	4	SDSK5056 Quality Management Systems at Libraries	2
Soci5066 Latvian Social Security System in International Perspective	2	KomZ5094 Bibliography Theories	2
SDSK5148 Information Systems Management	2	SDSK5049 Management of Information Systems	4
Soci5019 Biographical Method in Human and Social Sciences	2	DatZ5050 Establishment and Management of Web Systems	4
SDSK5137 Digital Humanities and Social Sciences	4	SDSK5052 Digital libraries	2
SDSK6045 Computer Analysis of Text and Data Visualization	4	DatZ5051 Metadata	2

The content of the programme is based on several national planning documents, including the National Development Plan 2014-2020 and the Fundamental Positions for Cultural Policy 2014-2020, “Creative Latvia” (see: [https://www.km.gov.lv/uploads/ckeditor/files/KM\\_dokumenti/Radosa\\_Latvija.pdf](https://www.km.gov.lv/uploads/ckeditor/files/KM_dokumenti/Radosa_Latvija.pdf)) The “Creative Latvia” document emphasises the need for the development of research and an interdisciplinary cultural education programme that could be taken by people who work at information institutions.

The new National Development Plan 2021-2027 (see: [https://www.pkc.gov.lv/modules/nap/modules/nap\\_aside\\_navigation/assets/NAP2027\\_kodols\\_piedavajums.pdf](https://www.pkc.gov.lv/modules/nap/modules/nap_aside_navigation/assets/NAP2027_kodols_piedavajums.pdf)) lists the digital economy and an increase in human capital as priorities. Latvia’s national strategic development document “Latvia’s Sustainable Development Strategy Through 2030” (see: <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/view.do?id=3323>) lists the preservation of the country’s cultural space as one of the priorities.

The national policy document “Fundamental Positions for the Development of the Information Society (2014-2020)” (see: [www.varam.gov.lv/in\\_site/tools/download.php?file=files/text/](http://www.varam.gov.lv/in_site/tools/download.php?file=files/text/)) cites the development of the cultural space as the top priority. This document also emphasises the importance of digitalisation of cultural heritage.

Given these developmental priorities, a new module will be offered – “Digital Humanities and Social Sciences,” which will consist of two four-credit courses.

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

The content of the programme was mapped so as to determine links and compatibility among the programme’s aim and achievable learning outcomes (see Appendix 22).

The results of this process show that courses in the programme mostly include an understanding about informational processes in society and the related activities (eight of the mandatory courses and 12 of the limited electives). The programme also ensures in-depth knowledge in the areas of library science, information science, archive science and book science (eight of the mandatory courses and 11 of the limited electives). Of great importance to information specialists are critical thinking and a scientific approach when dealing with problems (concepts that are supported by 19 of the courses), as well as an ability to take decisions and operate under complex circumstances so as to offer innovative solutions (support from 13 courses).

This means that the achievable results of the courses are in line with the achievable results of the programme in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

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

The study process is based on a student-centred process of teaching and learning. The process uses a diverse range of methods, including lectures, seminars, practical activities, field trips, independent work, discussions, problem analysis, role playing, co-operative learning methods (group work), tests, papers, etc.

One of the forms of work is lectures during which UL faculty members and guest lecturers introduce the issues of the course and discuss theoretical issues. The proportion of lectures is tending to decline, because the E-course environment can contain teaching materials for independent studies. Guest lecturers who are professionals from the sector are often invited to offer individual lectures in many courses to allow students to gain a broader sense of the true situation in information institutions. Foreign guest lecturers who visit the university as part of the ERASMUS programme also deliver lectures, and students are invited to attend those.

Seminars are one of the most creative and research-independence forms of study, and students prepare for those individually or in groups. Seminars are used for in-depth discussions about theoretical issues and debatable problems.

Practical skills in working with information systems, extracting and processing systems and designing databases are developed via practical activities in a computer classroom. Independent analytical abilities in relation to theoretical literature, in turn, are facilitated by papers which students present and discuss during group sessions.

It is planned that the same methods as in full time regular studies will be used in part time regular studies and part time correspondence studies. In part time studies, more emphasis is placed on the student's independent studies, while contact hours are mostly devoted to lectures and seminars.

### **The grading system**

The grading system is in line with the UL study course test organisation regulations. Grades are assigned on a 10-point scale. Midterm exams and tests are used as methods for inter-result

examinations at lectures and seminars, thus encouraging students to study independently all semester along. This also makes it possible to examine the knowledge of students and evaluate their ability to analyse the materials that are at hand. Students can find all of their grades in the E-course system. Grades from midterm exams must make up at least 50% of the final grade for the course.

Each course ends with a written or oral final. Master's degree students conduct individual research in partnership with their academic advisor. The University of Latvia Faculty of Social Sciences has methodological instructions which go into great detail about the requirements and evaluation criteria of theses and final papers.

The master's thesis is prepared in several phases. Students choose the topic during the first semester. The course "Research methods" helps students to prepare and present their research analysis and master's thesis programme. These are rated with a grade. During the third semester and before the submission of the first draft of the thesis, there is pre-defence, after which students receive recommendations on improvements.

This multi-step system helps to preserve motivation and the regularity of the work. The grading system is the same for full time regular, part time regular and part time correspondence studies.

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

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

The concluding paper in the academic master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" is the master's thesis. During the reporting period from 2013/2014 until 2018/2019, 55 students defended their master's theses (Table 39). The average grade was 8.1, and the highest average grade was in 2018 – 8.7.

Each year, students are presented with a list of recommended topics that come from faculty members and employers. In 19 cases, the topics were proposed by employers (mostly libraries). Because most of the students in the master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" work for libraries, the selected topics were linked to the issues of the specific libraries and their operations.

In terms of thematic groups, the largest number of written and defended theses related to "Library work and personnel" (12 theses), "Local studies" (10 theses), "Book science and publishing" (7 theses), "The architecture and organisation of information" (7 theses) and "Reading habits" (6 theses).

Table 39. Topics and grades of master's theses.

Please see attached.

## **2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.**

### **Student surveys about courses**

At the end of each semester, students are given the opportunity to access the Information System of UL (LUIS) system and to evaluate each courses that they have taken. The Likert scale is used, asking students to record their level of agreement with 11 claims, rating each one on a seven-point scale. One option is to respond "I do not know." "7" is the highest rating. At the end of each semester, the programme director informs all students about this opportunity, but students have not been very active in evaluating the courses that they have taken. The situation improved in the 2016/2017 academic year, because that was the first year that the survey had to be taken mandatorily before the student could register for the next semester.

Generally speaking, the evaluations from students have been most positive. No course has a rating below 5 points, while the average evaluation during all academic years has been above 6 points (6.1 to 6.53).

In Part A, the most highly rated courses were "Research Methods" (an average rating of 6.67), "Management" (an average rating of 6.62), and "Normative Basis of Libraries and Information" (6.62). Among Part B courses, the highest rating applied to "Library Science, Bibliographic and Information Terminology" (an average rating of 6.72), "Quality Management Systems at Libraries" (an average rating of 6.63), "Digital Libraries" (an average rating of 6.56), and "Theories of Information Seeking and Retrieval" (an average rating of 6.56).

Students can also write down comments or recommendations for each course. Here are some of the positive comments that were made in relation to the courses that attracted the highest rating:

- The teacher is competent
- An interesting and exciting teaching style
- Seminars allow me to express my views and to engage in a discussion
- There are guest lecturers who are experts in their area
- Practical assignments that help with the course materials
- Balance between theory and practice
- Lots of examples from real life
- The use of various methods
- Well-planned activities
- The course related to my master's thesis
- Field trips
- The teacher is a professional in his area
- A creative approach

There were comparatively fewer critical comments and recommendations:

- Not enough time for the course, too much of a burden
- Clearer requirements for seminar work



- More explanations about grades
- The need for more diverse teaching methods
- Fewer lecture-type activities.

In November 2017, the faculty organised a **focus group discussion with first-year master's degree students** to discuss the study process and its content. Asked **why they chose the programme**, the respondents gave these as their main reasons:

- Interest in the programme
- Request from employer (for those already working)
- To compete in the labour market
- The desire to continue studies immediately after finishing the bachelor's programme
- An opportunity to get a tuition waiver.

Most students work in the sector, while others work in other areas, but nevertheless in jobs that relate to information processing. Two students said that they looked for work at a library, but there were no vacancies, so they found different jobs. Asked whether the skills that they learn are useful at work, all of the students confirmed that yes, they are useful even if they work in other areas than memory institutions. The programme allows them to learn about all kinds of information-related activities, and those are useful not just at memory institutions but at virtually any place of employment.

Asked about **desirable changes in the programme**, students said that they wanted more practical activities, that there would truly be free choices with respect to Section B courses, as opposed to courses which had to be chosen because they were offered, as well as more field trips. Other students said that teachers from other departments were less interested in doing well in terms of teaching their subject area. As was the case in the LUIS survey, students said that it is hard to finish course work in just two months, because it is hard to study all the materials and to do the work. Students also called for more seminars and discussions where they could express their views. There were also suggestions to introduce part time studies at the master's degree level.

The main recommendations when it came to the quality of studies was to reconsider the schedule of lectures and to announce changes in a timely manner. Students called for less work and more things to do in the auditorium, where questions could immediately be asked. They also want a greater balance between theory and practice.

### **Graduate surveys about the programme**

Graduates can fill out a questionnaire in the LUIS system to provide their views about the programme. The survey uses the Likert scale with respect to 52 questions about the study environment, personnel, the library, knowledge and skills that the graduate had learned, his or her experience with work during their study period, as well as necessary improvements to the programme. The results that can be analysed only began in the spring semester of 2015, however, because prior to that insufficient numbers of students filled out the questionnaire.

When asked about **the study environment and personnel**, graduates were most satisfied with the competence of teachers (an average rating of 6.7 out of 7). They also assessed study courses (6.7), the favourable attitude of teachers (6.7), as well as the availability of databases and library resources (6.4). The lowest ratings related to the planning of activities (4.9) and technical support for facilities (5.1).

### **Knowledge and skill outcomes during the study process**

Students were most satisfied with research skills (an average rating of 6.7 out of 7), their ability to work with information (6.6), good theoretical knowledge (6.6), and satisfaction with the programme

that they chose (6.6).

The lowest ratings related to the ability to debate and express views (4.9), as well as written language skills (5).

The highest level of agreement in the survey related to the claims that "I work in accordance with my education" (an average rating of 6.9 of 7), "In future I plan to work in accordance with my education (6.8), and "My job duties are in line with my education" (6.5). The lowest level of agreement related to the claim that work was not a problem during the study process (an average of 3.8 of 7).

### **A survey of graduates**

(A questionnaire and a set of interviews with graduates from 2013–2018)

In the spring of 2019, the director of the master's study programme, Docent Pakalna, advised student Dinija Marta Einiša, who wrote her bachelor's thesis on the topic "The Professional Careers of 2013–2018 Graduates of the Master's Degree Programme in Library Science and Information." (Einiša, D. M. (2019). *Maģistra studiju programmas "Bibliotēkzinātne un informācija" 2013.–2018. gada absolventu profesionālās karjeras (Bakalaura darbs)*. Einiša used a questionnaire to survey 40 young specialists who were graduates of the programme, as well as four interviews.

The results of the research showed that all of the surveyed graduates had jobs (though four women were on child-rearing leave at the time of the survey). 83% of the respondents worked at libraries or in an area that was closely linked to the sector. One graduate had worked for libraries, but at the time of the survey was working for the Latvian Patent Board. In an interview, she declared that " *[..] it is not written in stone that graduates of the programme must only work at libraries. The experience that we gain is very useful and all-encompassing to work at any company or institution which requires information management, processing and consultations. The experience works everywhere! It is also true that the Patent Board has a library, and most of my colleagues have an education specifically in the area of library and information science.*"

Graduates who were not working in the library sector reported that they chose a different job because of comparatively low salaries in the library sector or a better-paid and interesting job offer. Two graduates said that they had looked for work at libraries, but there were no vacancies, and so they went to work elsewhere. Asked about their job duties, graduates most often mentioned client services and consultations (10 respondents), development and management of activities or projects (10 respondents), and work with bibliographic resources and information systems (7 respondents). Most of the master's degree programme graduates said that after earning the degree, they were offered a higher-ranking position with a higher salary. 95% of respondents agreed that a master's degree ensures broader opportunities in the labour market. 92% of graduates, in turn, agreed or partly agreed with the claim that they were satisfied with their education.

At the end of the questionnaire there was a question about improvements that are necessary in the programme. The most frequently mentioned thought was that the programme must try to preserve a balance between theory and practice, bring in more guest lecturers from the profession, go on more field trips, and offer a look at other sectors and processes in society.

The results of the survey show that graduates of the master's degree programme in library science and information mostly work in areas which relate to their studies – libraries or other institutions where the work has to do with information processing. In general terms, they are satisfied with their education, which has helped them to put together a successful professional career.

### **Surveys of employers from the sector**

Several research projects were organised during the reporting period to learn about the views of employees and employers in the sector about competences that are important therein, as well as about the timeliness of the programme that is offered by the Department of Information and Library Studies and changes that are needed therein.

In January and February 2016, the **Delphi method** was used to determine which competences are important in the labour market, because the method makes it possible to learn about and compare the views of experts. The Department of Information and Library Studies asked experts to discuss the competences of a librarian in a modern library so as to supplement the study programmes with new courses and important topics.

The first round of the survey involved a questionnaire with five groups of competences, and it was distributed to 82 selected experts from various libraries. Respondents were asked to rate each competence on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 referring to a very important competence and 5 referring to a totally unimportant one. Experts were also asked whether the competence should be learned at an educational institution or as part of continuing education. The initial list was incomplete so experts were asked at the end of each section to write down which other competences might be important.

45 experts responded to the first invitation, and 98 supplements to the additional list of competences were received. The Latvian National Library was most active, submitting 48 supplements, with school libraries submitting 22 supplements. The Delphi methodology meant that the recommendations from the experts were correlated without much editing and then used for a new questionnaire that was sent on February 1 to all of the experts who had filled out the first-round questionnaire. Once again they were asked to add new competences. This time, the researchers received 30 questionnaires, but only one expert had added a competence.

Among general competitions, experts declared the most important ones to be time and work planning, communications skills, critical thinking and teamwork skills. In the section on "Information resource management," the most important competences were "assembling a collection," "use of information systems" and "valuating the quality of sources of information." Under "Information institution management," the most important competences included work planning, familiarity with norms in the sector, and the ability to ensure publicity. In the section on "Information service management," the most important ones were the provision of services to various user groups, effective communication and responses to requests for information. The fewest supplements from experts were in the last section, "Technologies," where experts declared the most important competences to be the use of various equipment and Internet technologies, as well as various search programmes and the ability to develop content for Internet Websites.

The Delphi method research results were sent to all of the experts, and a presentation about the results was prepared for the UL's 74th scholarly conference for the Library science and information science section on February 18, 2016. The section also organised a focus group discussion for professionals from the sector. They were informed about the research results and asked to express their views about the importance of the competences that were discussed therein. The results were also presented to all faculty members in the Department of Information and Library Studies, and they compared the results to the content of their courses. Some courses such as "Digital Libraries," "Research methods," and "Theoretical Concepts of Reading" were supplemented with new topics.

Another **focus group discussion** was organised on November 23, 2017, this time to learn the views of employers about the content of the bachelor's and master's degree programmes. Participants were representatives of employers and the sector's professional organisations (the Latvian Association of Librarians and the Latvian Association of Academic Libraries), as well as faculty members from the Department of Information and Library Studies. All invited participants

receive information in advance about the bachelor's and master's degree study programmes and the content of the relevant courses.

At the beginning of the discussion, participants were asked to name two or three competences that are currently the most important for employees of the sector. As the most important ones, participants cited the ability to communicate, the ability to teach, media skills and information skills, creativity, the ability to be aware of sources of information from various areas, an understanding of the information needs of users, user-oriented information services, data design and analysis, the ability to think in a structured and critical manner, design thinking and data analysis.

Experts evaluated both programmes and suggested specific topics and courses which could supplement it. With respect to the master's degree programme, the recommendation was to add courses that relate to data processing and visualisation, as well as courses about timely processes in society. Another recommendation was to shift the course "Collection Management" from Section B to Section A.

### **Conclusions about using the research results to improve the programme**

All of the surveys, discussions and results were discussed at meetings of the Department of Information and Library Studies with an eye toward which recommendations or specific competences should be included in the bachelor's or master's degree programme. On the basis of the recommendation to offer a broader look at processes in the local community and society, it was decided that the "Library Science and Information" master's degree programme would be supplemented with several new courses such as "Latvian Social Security System in International Perspective" and "Biographical Method in Human and Social Sciences." The rapid development of data science led the department to offer new master's degree courses on "Digital Humanities and Social Sciences" and "Computer Analysis of Text and Data Visualization."

Because one of the most important competences to be named in the Delfi method study and in the focus groups for experts was assembling and researching collections, a new course, "Collection Management and Research Methods of Collections" (4 credits), was added to the curriculum.

## **2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.**

Very few students in the master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" have expressed an interest at spending time as students at other universities. There are two primary reasons for this. First of all, nearly all students in the master's degree programme have full time jobs. In the ERASMUS programme, this opportunity is only open to second-year students, but during the second year, students must work intensively on their master's thesis. During the reporting period, two students spent the fall semester of the 2019/2020 academic year at the Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest (Appendix 8).

## **III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)**

**3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.**

The master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" is implemented at the UL Faculty of Social Sciences. Its resources and support are discussed in Chapter 3 of Section II.

Many courses in the master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" relate to information technologies, and so some classes are taught in computer classrooms. The Faculty of Social Sciences has two such rooms with 75 workstations. The Department of Information and Library Studies has established a good partnership with the Latvian National Library, and some classes are taught there, and pre-defence of master's theses also takes place at the library.

The programme makes use of the resources of the UL Library (see Chapter 3 of Section II). The collection of the UL Library has 36,985 publications that relate to the master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" and have been assembled between January 1, 2010, and May 24, 2019 (Tables 40 and 41)

*Table 40. Print publications related to the master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" at the UL Library (copies).*

<b>"Library Science and Information"</b> <b>(In the collection of the UL Library)</b>						
<b>Printed resources (copies)</b>			<b>By language (copies)</b>			
Books	Periodicals	Other	Latvian	English	Russian	Other
23 003	12 460	1522	15 003	6 411	10 140	5 431
<b>Total: 36 985 copies</b>						

*Table 41. Print publications related to the master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" at the FSS, UL Library (copies).*

<b>"Library Science and Information"</b> <b>(In the collection of the Faculty of Social Sciences, UL library)</b>						
<b>Printed resources (copies)</b>			<b>By language (copies)</b>			
Books	Periodicals	Other	Latvian	English	Russian	Other
11 263	783	332	3 286	8 661	273	158
<b>Total: 12 378 copies</b>						

Of particular importance for the master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" is the *Dawsonera* database, which is an E-book platform that provides access to E-books from various areas of science that have been purchased by the UL Library. These are books from the world's leading publishing houses, including Blackwell Publishing, Cambridge University Press, Springer Verlag, John Wiley & Sons, Inc, etc. Also importance is the *ProQuest Ebook Academic Complete E-book platform*, which offers access to nearly 160,000 publications from the world's leading publishers such as McGraw-Hill Education, Bloomsbury Publishing, Princeton University Press,

Emerald Publishing Limited, IOS Press, Indiana University Press, etc.

In overall terms, the collection at the UL Library conforms to the implementation of the “Library Science and Information” programme and to the development of scholarly research, because the collection is supplemented with the most importation information resources each year, doing so in line with the informational needs of academic personnel and students.

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

### **III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)**

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

After accreditation, the master’s degree programme “Library Science and Information” will have 16 teachers, among whom eight are full time employees of the University of Latvia. Nine of the teachers hold a doctorate, one is a doctoral student, and the other five are professionals from the sector with a master’s degree. Five of the teachers are professors and associate professors, two are assistant professors, two are lecturers, and seven are guest lecturers.

There have been changes in the composition of the faculty during the reporting period. Lecturer Vineta Gerkena and Assistant Professor Līga Krūmiņa retired from the Department of Information and Library Studies, while Professor Inta Brikše and lecturer Iveta Kalniņa passed away prematurely.

During the 2017/2018 academic year, doctoral student Liene Viļuma joined the department as a full-time lecturer, while during the 2018/2019 academic year, Sandra Cīrule became an acting lecturer.

The problem is that there is little rejuvenation of the academic personnel, because low salaries, doubts about the future and very limited career growth opportunities mean that young people are not much interested in doctoral studies and an academic career. After doctoral studies and the defence of her dissertation, Aiga Grēniņa became a full-time employee of the Department of Information and Library Studies in the 2015/2016 academic year. As part of the “Library Science and Information” master’s degree programme, she developed and, for one year, successfully taught the course “Theoretical Concepts of Reading.” Still, a job offers from the National Library of Latvia proved to be more tempting than remaining at the University of Latvia.

Another problem is convincing highly qualified professionals from the sector to become guest lecturers. One reason is that they are busy at work, but the other is the pittance that the Faculty of Social Sciences pays to such guest lecturers.

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

The master's degree programme "Library Science and Information" has 16 faculty members, among whom eight hold a doctorate, one is a doctorate candidate and one is a doctoral student in communication science. Seven faculty members are senior professionals from the library and archive sector, representing the National Library of Latvia, the National Archive of Latvia and the Latvian Personnel Administration Association. In terms of academic posts, the faculty includes two professors, three associate professors, one assistant professor, two lecturers and eight guest lecturers. This satisfies the requirements of Article 55.3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions – "No fewer than five professors and associate professors who have been elected to academic posts at the relevant university must take part in the mandatory and limited elective sections of academic study programmes" (See <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=37967>).

Faculty members from the programme are active members of professional associations, organisations and working groups so as to maintain links to the professional environment and to keep up with all issues in the sector. Professor Viesturs Zanders, for instance, is a member of the National Encyclopaedia sector editorial board and chairman of the Scientific Council of the National Library of Latvia. Assistant professor Daina Pakalna is a member of the Council of Latvian Libraries and takes part in the work of the Information and Documentation Terminology Subcommittee of the Latvian Academy of Science's Terminology Commission, as well as the standardisation technical committee "Museum, archive and library operations." Associate professor Baiba Bela is a member of the Latvian Association of Sociologists, the Latvian Association of Anthropologists and the Latvian Association of Oral History Researches "Life Stories." Associate professor Baiba Holma, in turn, is a member of the Library Accreditation Commission.

**4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).**

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

**4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.**

Faculty members of the "Library Science and Information" programme have taken part in international and national-level research. Associate professor Baiba Holma, Assistant Professor Daina Pakalna and Assistant Professor Līga Krūmiņa, for instance, were participants in the European Social Fund project "Innovative Diagnostic Instruments for Regional Development" in 2014 and 2015. The results of this project and the experience gained in the research are used in the courses "Research Methods" and "Theories of Information Seeking and Retrieval."

Associate Professor Baiba Holma and Assistant Professor Daina Pakalna participated in the research of the Human Development Report "Mastery of Life and Information Literacy." The results are used to supplement the content of several study courses ("Research Methods," "Theories of Information Seeking and Retrieval" and "Theories of Information Science and Library Science").

Associate professor Baiba Holma has served as a senior researcher in international ESF education research projects as part of the OECD PIAAC project and an international project (Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway) "Educators and Innovators in Libraries." Project experience and research results are used to enrich the study courses "Theories of Information Seeking and Retrieval" and "Theories of Information Science and Library Science."

Professor Viesturs Zanders, Associate Professor Baiba Holma, Assistant Professor Daina Pakalna, Assistant professor Līga Krūmiņa and lecturer Baiba Mūze took part in the national research programme "National Identity" from 2010 until 2014. The results of the research have been used to supplement the content of the study courses "Research Methods," "The Actual Discourses of Book Science," "Bibliophilia and Collections of Manuscripts" and "Theories of Information Seeking and Retrieval."

Lecturer and Ph.D. student Liene Viļuma conducted a research on the usability of websites as part of her doctoral thesis. The obtained theoretical knowledge and research results were included in the study course "Theoretical Concepts of Data Processing."

The experience from these research projects is regularly used to supplement study courses with new topics and data.

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

With an eye toward preventing duplication of effort in terms of topics, practical work and field trips,



all new courses are discussed at meetings of the Department of Information and Library Studies, which are held once per month.

There were 19 students in the 2019 fall semester. The process involves nine teachers, five of whom are full time employees of the University of Latvia, three are guest lecturers, and one is a guest lecturer from the University of Tallinn, who teaches a course that is part of the European Social Fund project “Rejuvenation and Improved Competences among Academic Personnel at the University of Latvia,” SAM 8.2.2. Strengthening the strategic specialisation of academic staff at higher education institutions during the first round.

# Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	Appendix 20 BibIMSP_Student.pdf	20.pielikums.pdf
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	Appendix 23.pdf	23.pielikums.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (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	Appendix 22 BibZMSP_Kartejums.pdf	22.pielikums BibZ_MSP_Kartejums.pdf
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	Appendix 21 BibIMSP_Plan.pdf	21.pielikums.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Appendix 39.C.pdf	39.C pielikums.pdf
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	Appendix 33.C.pdf	33.C pielikums.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	Appendix 11.C.pdf	11.C pielikums.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	Appendix 10.4.pdf	10.4. pielikums.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under <a href="http://www.europass.lv">www.europass.lv</a> ), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.		
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	Appendix 10.2.C.pdf	10.2.C pielikums.pdf
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	Appendix 36.C.pdf	36.C pielikums.pdf
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	Appendix 34.C.pdf	34.C pielikums.pdf