Efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure on tertiary education in the EU

ANNEX : COUNTRY FICHE
LATVIA

Joint Report by the Economic Policy Committee (Quality of Public Finances) and the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs
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Brief characterization of the tertiary education system

1. Main features


Secondary education is required for the admission to studies in a higher education institution. All holders of certificates and diplomas of the general secondary education or vocational secondary education meet the general admission requirements. However, the higher education institutions are free to set specific admission requirements, e.g. additional subjects that need to be taken at the school level to qualify for admission to a particular programme.

Bachelor and master degrees are awarded in both – academic and professional higher education programmes. The objectives of academic higher education are to prepare graduates for an independent research, as well as to provide theoretical background for professional activities. Academic education programmes are implemented according to national standard of academic education. The objectives of professional higher education are to provide in-
depth knowledge in a particular field, preparing graduates for designing or improvement of systems, products and technologies, as well as to prepare them for creative, research and teaching activities in this field. Graduates of both types of the bachelor degree have access to master studies, graduates of the master degree – to doctoral studies. Studies in medicine, dentistry and pharmacy professional studies (5 and 6 year studies), are equal to the master degree and the graduates can continue their studies in doctoral level programmes. From January 1, 2000, a single type of doctoral degree is being awarded in Latvia. Doctoral degree is awarded after public defence of doctoral thesis and successfully passed exams in the chosen scientific discipline.

A 10-point grading system for knowledge assessment is used in higher education with 10 being the highest grade and 1 – the lowest. Latvian credit point is defined as a one-week full-time study workload. An average workload of a full-time study year in most higher education programmes is 40 credits. Latvian credit point system is compatible with ECTS. The number of ECTS credits is found by multiplying the number of Latvian credit points by a factor of 1.5.

Governance of the Higher Education System is administered at two levels – national and institutional. The Parliament (Saeima), the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministry of Education and Science are the main decision-making bodies at the national level. Management and administration of higher education institutions, according to principles of autonomy, is practically based on self-government with very little intervention by state institutions.


Main tendencies concerning higher education is to ensure a wide autonomy for the higher education institutions, at the same time requesting accountability for an efficient use of allocated state budget financing.
### 1/ TEACHING

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### 2/ RESEARCH

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<td>% of research done in cooperation with industry</td>
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### 3/ EXPLANATORY FACTORS FOUND RELEVANT FOR EFFICIENCY

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1 Statistical data from the Central Statistical Bureau of the Republic of Latvia and the Higher Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Science
## 4. EXPENDITURE

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<td>Total public expenditure on grants, loans, and other programmes to cover education and/or maintenance of students (universal programmes / by categories such as merit or socio-economic status) (Mill. LVL)</td>
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*Source: Eurostat, OECD, UOE and Member States.*

## 2. Structure of institutions and funding arrangements

### Description of institutions

There are 17 state-founded higher education institutions with the status of a derived public person, 2 state-founded higher education institutions (the Latvian Police Academy and the Latvian National Defence Academy), 18 state-founded colleges with the status of a state institution and 23 higher education institutions and colleges founded by private persons that are commercial companies or foundations.

State-founded higher education institutions – derived public persons – have been given autonomy by law, which includes drafting and approving their own budget. State-founded higher education institutions have freedom of action regarding income that is not the state grant. This income is not included in the state budget, can be kept in accounts of credit institutions and used for implementation of aims specified in the constitutions of higher education institutions.

The Law on Institutions of Higher Education is applicable to all higher education establishments in Latvia regardless of their founders, financing and specialization.
The system of higher education in Latvia is binary since the Law on Institutions of Higher Education sets a difference between academic and professional higher education but it is not strictly institutionalised. Universities and other institutions of higher education mostly run both academic and professional programmes. Three groups of programmes can be distinguished: academic programmes leading to academic degrees, professional programmes based upon a standard of the first academic degree thus making graduates eligible for further academic studies and the applied professional programmes oriented towards higher professional qualifications but not providing background for direct admission to further academic studies. Management and administration of higher education institutions, according to principles of autonomy, is practically based on self-government with very little intervention by state institutions.

Private higher education institutions function according the same regulations as the state establishments. They may compete with the state higher education institutions to receive the public funds to implement higher education programmes only if the state institutions do not provide these programmes or the state institutions do not have such capacity.

**Funding arrangements**

The financing system for higher education in Latvia has been widely debated in the last few years. The main reason for debates is the limited ability of the state budget to increase budgetary allocations according to the rapid increase of the number of study applicants. As a result, approximately one fourth of the total number of students is financed from the state budget; the remaining part of students is forced to pay their tuition fees themselves thus covering cost of studies in a private or state-founded higher education establishment.

According to the Law on Institutions of Higher Education the number of study vacancies paid from the state budget is annually declared by the Minister of Education and Science. The number of study places in commercial programs and also the amount of tuition fees to be paid is determined by each establishment individually depending on conditions of the establishment.

In total terms, financing of higher education comes from three sources – state budget, private funds (tuition fees) and other resources, which mostly consist of revenues of higher education establishments earned from scientific contracts, including international agreements and a wide range of commercial services.
**Ties to regional and local authorities, to business**

Co-operation with business and industry is on the basis of agreements in different fields such as funding of study programmes, providing with practice places, funding of infrastructure of universities etc.

The state-founded higher education institutions are encouraged to attract investments from private funds. Private funded study places in the state universities and other private funds are increasing for different reasons. Universities are free to use all private and public funds in accordance with the legislation in force.

Most of higher education institutions and especially regional universities are centres of knowledge and development of local and regional communities. Regional communities take part in funding of regional higher education institutions and collaborate with them in many different aspects.

Universities are involved in lifelong learning activities – according to the Law on Institutions of Higher Education they have to promote further education, to collaborate with foreign universities to promote students and staff exchange, etc.

**Level of pedagogical, scientific, and financial autonomy**

Higher education institutions have autonomy to own their buildings & equipment (excluded cases when owner of buildings is the state), borrow funds, spend budgets to achieve their objectives, set academic structure / course content, employ and dismiss academic staff (considering requirements for minimum qualifications have to be met), set salaries (considering minimum salaries settled by Government), decide size of student enrolment (for study places settled by state – in accordance to this number), decide level of tuition fees.

Universities are autonomous to engaging in research contracts, setting up incubation environments, offering tailor-made courses for specific audiences, patenting and licensing.

**3. Governance and regulatory framework**

Higher education institutions in Latvia enjoy a rather wide autonomy. Management and administration of higher education institutions, according to principles of autonomy, is practically based on self-government with very little intervention by state institutions. The most important principle of self-government is wide involvement of the staff and especially academic staff in addressing problems of the establishment and in decision making process. Main management and administration institutions – Constitutional Meeting, Senate and the Rector – are elected.
The Constitutional Meeting is the higher collegial management and decision making body that makes decision on the most important strategic development issues of the higher education institution. The Constitutional Meeting elects the Rector and the Senate. The Constitutional Meeting consists of internal representatives – academic staff – 60%, other staff – 20%, students – 20%.

The Senate is a collegial management and decision making body of the staff working at the establishment, at least 75% – academic staff, 20% – students. The Senate approves procedures and rules regulating all areas of work at higher education establishment (reviews and approves study programmes, establishes and liquidates structural units, etc.).

The Rector is the highest official in a higher education establishment implementing the general administration and representing the establishment without any special authorization. Rector is elected by the Constitutional Meeting for a term of not more than five years. The same person may not hold the office for more than two consecutive terms. The Cabinet of Ministers approves the elected Rector.

The heads of departments / deans are elected by the respective department or faculty. The academic staff is elected by the council of faculty with the exception of professors and associated professors which are elected by the council of professors of the respective branch.

Students have their self – government. The students’ self – government have their representatives in all main management and decision making bodies of the higher education institution. The students’ self – government representatives in the Constitutional Meeting, Senate and faculty council have rights to put a veto to all decisions concerning students’ interests.

The decisions on the distribution of funds, posts and other resources taken are made by the Senate.

Both the individual and the institutional academic freedom are protected by law. Students have rights to choose the higher education institution, to change programmes, to choose it in another higher education institution, to choose scientific themes etc. Academic staff has rights to choose teaching methods, scientific themes and methods etc.

4. System's strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- Territorial accessibility of higher education;
- Wide range of study programmes (~ 800 study programmes);
- Infrastructure (possibility to use ERDF funding);
- High motivation to study, which is facilitated by available study loans system.
Weaknesses:

- Balance of higher education institutions autonomy and accountability;
- State financing in higher education is decreased (economic crisis effect);
- Academic staff ageing.

Explanatory factors for efficiency

The Law on Institutions of Higher Education is applicable to all higher education establishments of Latvia regardless of their founders, financing and specialization.

1. Staff Policy

   1.1. Hiring/Firing

   All higher education institutions have autonomy to set academic structure, employ and dismiss academic staff, considering requirements for minimum qualifications have to be met (according to the Law on Institutions of Higher Education).

   Professors, associate professors and docents are elected in an open competition for a period of 6 years in accordance with criteria set by the Law on Institutions of Higher Education. The rector concludes an employment contract with them for the whole period.

   1.2. Wages

   All higher education institutions have the autonomy to set salaries (considering minimum salaries of academic staff settled by the Government).

2. Output flexibility

   2.1. Course content and exams

   All higher education institutions have the autonomy to set the course content and exams. To implement a study programme, the process of programme licensing has to be completed. During the licensing compliance with the criteria set in the Law on Institutions of Higher Education concerning the national standard of academic education, profession standards or vocational higher education national standard (number of credit points, their distribution between courses, practice etc.) is evaluated.
2.2. Offer of short studies and other diversifies studies

Latvia has a widely developed short study programme network (ISCED 5B) with the duration of 2 to 3 years. 158 programmes were implemented in 2008/2009 academic year with more than 21 000 students (~20% from students in bachelor studies and professional programmes). Apart from the programmes, leading to bachelor and master degrees, there are other types of professional higher education programmes.

- first-level professional higher education (university college) programmes comprise 80–120 (120–180 ECTS) credits and lead to the 4th level professional qualification. These programmes are targeted mainly to the labour market. Yet, the graduates of the first-level programmes can continue their studies in second-level professional programmes.
- second-level professional higher education programmes lead to the 5th level professional qualification. Such programmes can comprise either at least 40 (60 ECTS) credits for holders of the bachelor degree or at least 160 (240 ECTS) credits for secondary school leavers. In both cases programmes should include a practical placement of at least 26 (39 ECTS) credits and graduation examinations including thesis ≥10 (15 ECTS) credits. Graduates of programmes including 70 (105 ECTS) credits compulsory part of the bachelor programme, have access to master studies.

2.3. Student choice

In accordance with national standard of academic education and vocational higher education national standard a study programme consists of compulsory part, compulsory elective part and elective part.

The minimal number of credit points is set for courses of compulsory part and compulsory elective part that have to be acquired to receive a corresponding certificate. For example, the amount of credit points for an academic bachelor study programme is 120 to 160 that correspond to 180 to 240 ECTS, from which at least 50 credit points have to be acquired in the compulsory courses and 20 credit points in the compulsory elective courses.

Courses of the compulsory part are fixed and credit points have to be acquired for all of them. Students have an opportunity to choose and change courses or the compulsory elective part (offer of courses is wider than the number of credit points that have to be obtained), as well as to draw up and acquire free elective part of individual studies.

Higher education institutions accept students for part-time studies and separate programmes (usually higher level – master’s or vocational, if it is permitted with the issue of the licence) students with sufficient professional work experience.
Distance study programmes are not separately regulated by law in Latvia, but they can be considered as part of part-time studies that are implemented as distance learning.

In 2008/2009 academic year 36% percent of all persons enrolled in higher education were part-time students.

Considering the economical situation in Latvia and global economic recession, as well as the 15% increase of benchmarks till 2020 proposed by EC (current benchmark – 12.5% of adults participating in education and training processes), an adult education offer aimed at sustainable knowledge, skill and competence acquisition for work is planned as part of lifelong learning system priorities. This is to be achieved through vocational and higher education infrastructure and pedagogical capacity.

Latvia experienced an increase in adult participation in education to 7.1% in 2007 comparing to 6.9% in the previous year. However the progress is not sufficient in Latvia comparing to average level in the Europe.

The initiation of studies in subsequent study stages are possible if required examinations in previous stages of relevant study programmes have been passed or they are passed in a supplementary fashion in the relevant institution of higher education or college. If these requirements have been fulfilled and the institution of higher education or college has the relevant opportunities, it may not refuse to admit applicants to subsequent study stages.

2.4. Numerus clausus

There are no academic fields into which entry is restricted or rationed by national/regional regulations.

The number of state budget study places is limited, so higher education institutions have the right to set extra study places with a set study fee, if the respective higher education institution has the capacity to provide them.

2.5. Regional/ European/ global mobility

In the biggest higher education institutions in Riga (Latvian University, Riga Technical University) approximately 50% of first-year students enrolled in bachelor and professional study programmes have graduated from secondary education schools in Riga and its vicinity. In regional higher education institutions (Liepaja University, Ventspils University College, Vidzeme University College, Rezekne Higher School, Daugavpils University) 80-85% of first-year students are from the corresponding region.
Because of high living costs in Riga many students choose to study closer to the residence of their parents. EUROSTUDENT survey data from 2005 show that 53% of students in bachelor and professional study programmes live with their parents, 26% in student hostels, 21% rent or live in their own real estate property.

In accordance with the Law on Institutions of Higher Education a student has the right to choose the higher education institution and faculty, to change the study programme during studies to one in another higher education institution or faculty, to attend lectures in other higher education institutions and faculties.

In 2008/2009 academic year 1.3% of students had obtained the secondary education diploma in another EU Member State or outside of the EU.

Citizens of other EU Member States and their children have equal rights to obtain education in Latvia as citizens of the Republic of Latvia.

All students from other Member States are eligible to apply for diploma recognition. The average length of recognition is from 2 weeks to 1 month, in most complicated cases up to 4 month. The academic recognition is free of charge.

Teacher is a regulated profession in Latvia. Maximum duration for recognition is 4 months; the cost is 40 LVL without VAT. This procedure does not apply for persons where there are special agreements for teachers’ exchange. Researchers is not a regulated profession The average length of recognition for researchers is from 2 weeks to 1 month, in most complicated cases up to 4 month. The academic recognition is free of charge.

There are possibilities of exchange with institutions in other regions and Member States, if it is a state recognised and accredited institution. The recognition of study periods is decision of higher education institution.

3. Evaluation

3.1. Institutional evaluation

Work quality of scientific institutions is evaluated every 6 years in accordance with June 20, 2006 Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No.499 “Efficiency Evaluation Criteria of Scientific Institutions”. Evaluation is being carried out by forming an independent expert committee, in which also foreign experts can be invited. The committee performs the evaluation of institutions considering united state set criteria. Evaluation of scientific institutions is organized by the Latvian Science Council by selecting at least 3 experts from the Council’s expert data base. Only experts who are not engaged in
the same scientific institution or connected with it in another way are invited to participate in the evaluation.

Results of the evaluation of scientific institutions will be made public. Evaluation of work efficiency of scientific institutions in Latvia is planned in 2012. Work on the evaluation of scientific institutions is overseen by the Ministry of Education and Science.

**Evaluation of higher education institutions**

According to the Latvian legislation, state-recognized degrees/diplomas may be awarded upon completion of an accredited programme in an accredited higher education institution holding a state-approved *Satversme* (By-law) or college statute. Decisions on programme accreditation are taken by the Accreditation Board, while those on institutional accreditation – by the Higher Education Council.

Accreditation of higher education institutions takes place according to the Law on Institutions of Higher Education; Article 9 of which stipulates the general accreditation principles of higher education institutions. Only those higher educational institutions, who have received credence (been accredited) and which offer state accredited study programmes, have the right to issue certificates of higher education recognised by the state to its graduates. The accreditation proceeds in accordance with the regulations on accreditation approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. Study programmes are accredited once in six years or more rarely.

Certificates of higher educational institutions established by legal entities are recognised by the state and they receive the right to use the state crest of the Republic of Latvia on the certificates after the respective higher educational institution’s statute (*Satversme*) has been approved by the Cabinet of Ministers and the programme of studies has been accredited.

Requirements to the study programmes and higher education institutions, as well as the most important organisational aspects related to accreditation are reflected in the Accreditation Regulations for higher education institutions and higher education study programmes approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on October 3, 2006. Accreditation is a part of the higher education quality assurance system, which, together with self-evaluation and evaluation by outer experts, forms the main stages of a continuous quality assurance process.

The decision on accreditation is made by the Council for Higher Education (for higher education institutions' accreditation) or the Accreditation Commission set up by the Ministry for Education and Science (for accreditation of study programmes) after hearing the recommendations of the Evaluation Commission. The foreign members of the Evaluation Commission have to read the self-assessment report that should be handed over in Latvian and in English (or in some other foreign language) and go for a two day visit to the higher education institution to be accredited. Evaluation committees shall be made up by one expert
from Latvia and by at least two experts from EU, Estonia, Lithuania or another foreign country.

Public discussion of the preliminary report of the Evaluation Commission must be organized at the end of expert visit. The amended Evaluation Commission final report and all individual reports of experts are submitted to the Higher Education Council or Accreditation Commission, which decide about accreditation. All self evaluation reports and Evaluation Commission final reports are available at the Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre.

In order to organize the assessment a specific higher education establishment and study programme a non-profit organization "Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre Ltd." (HEQEC) in accordance with recommendations of the Council of Rectors as well as in compliance with the requirements of the European Union and in accordance with the recommendations of the respective institutions of the European Union shall form an Evaluation Commission with involvement of Latvian and foreign experts. The activities of the HEQEC are supervised by the five persons strong Board. One member is appointed by the Ministry, one by the University of Latvia and one by Riga Technical University, while two other members are elected by the meeting of the shareholders. The day-to-day activities of the HEQEC are entrusted to the Director elected by the meeting of the shareholders. Employees of the HEQEC are appointed by the order of the director.

4. Funding rules

4.1. Public funding

Public funding of HE

Instead of the historical system a united national system of normative funding of higher education from the state budget resources was introduced in 2002 to adjust and make more transparent this field and to harmonize the higher education with the needs of the development of society.

Allocating public funds to higher education institutions are formula based primarily on the number of state defined study vacancies and output of graduates.

The amount of public financing is determined on the basis of the state study vacancies identified for the respective higher education institution, base (reference) costs of a study vacancy and indexes of costs of education by subject fields and is allocated only to full time studies. According to the Law on Institutions of Higher Education the number of study vacancies paid from the state budget is annually declared by the Minister of Education and Science.
There are annual agreements on preparation of specialists and respective funding between the higher education institutions and the ministry, which are signed after the analysis of the results of previous agreements in the negotiation process between ministries and higher education institutions, taking into account the needs of the society and the amount of public funds to higher education for the next year.

**Public funding of research activities**

Financing for scientific activities consists of:

- Base financing, which is allocated for maintenance of scientific institute infrastructure and salaries according to the results achieved by the scientific institute in the previous year. The results are determined according to the elaborated criteria and evaluated each year.
- Open call project financing.

**4.2. Impact of quality assessments on funding**

State budget financing is allocated only for licensed and accredited study programmes.

**4.3. Private funding**

**4.3.1. Tuition fees and/or households**

In Latvia state budget financing is provided only for full-time studies in field of national importance and study programmes with high expenses like engineering, natural sciences, medicine etc. 27% of students are studying in state budget financed study places. 73% of students pay study fees themselves. Social sciences and all part-time study programmes require a fee, because expenses are less.

Income from study fees in 2008 comprised 27% of all income of higher education institutions.

**4.3.2. Business, other**

Other incomes comprise approximately 10-12% of all income of higher education institutions. These include income from rent, donations and contributions, income from student hostels etc.

For several years the Ministry of Education and Science implements a market-oriented study programme. A scientific institute together with businessmen implement this project to solve problems defined by the businessmen. Total financing for this project in 2009 is 438 000 Ls.
4.3.3. Grants/loans

Student social support

Student social support includes different direct (scholarships, credits) and indirect (discounts for public transport) financial support, which the state grants to the students for obtaining a certain academic degree, scientific degree or a higher professional education qualification.

Scholarships are mainly paid from state budget grants, but some higher education students receive local government scholarships or scholarships from special funds, which can also be founded by higher education institutions.

Credits are given from credit institution resources with a state guarantee.

Discounts for public transport are covered by state budget grants, if regional, long-distance buses, electric trains and diesel-engine trains are used, and by local government budget grants, if city public transport is used.

Scholarships

Scholarships from state budget grants for obtaining a certain academic degree, scientific degree or a higher professional education qualification can be received by full-time students with grades not lower than 4, whose studies are paid by the state budget. Priority is given to students, who are disabled, orphans, from low-income families, from families with 3 or more children or students with children.

Minimal scholarship for full-time bachelor, professional higher education and master’s study programme students is 70 LVL per month.

Full-time doctoral students receive 80 LVL scholarships per month for the acquisition of the study programme and can apply for a 60 LVL scholarship per month for the support of creative work or research. The later is considered as a credit and has to be returned to the state budget, if the scholarship holder has not acquired a doctoral degree in 3 years after finishing the doctoral studies.

Students can be granted a raised scholarship for good and excellent examination results.

Loans

All students of state-founded or private higher education institutions can receive loans for provision of student’s social needs, which can be received only by full-time students (student
(study loan).

Loans are given and administered by credit institutions, which are determined by the results of proposed loan interest rate tender. If the interest rate is more than 5% then the borrower pays only 5% interest rate, but the rest is covered by state budget. Repayment of loans have to be started 12 months after graduation or 3 months after quitting studies. May 29, 2001, Regulations of the Cabinet of Minister No.220 “Procedures for the Allocation, Repayment and Cancellation of a Study Loan and Student Loan from the Resources of Credit Institutions with the Government Guarantee” also defines cases when loans can be fully or partially covered by the state budget.

**Discounts for public transport**

Full-time students of higher education institutions have the right to receive a 50% compensation for expenses connected with travelling during the academic year from student’s place of residence to the higher education institution or place of practice and back, as well as a 50% discount for city public transport.

**5. Impact on Employability**

At the end of 2008, 76 435 unemployed persons were registered in Latvia, from which 35 109 or 45.9% had obtained general education, 29 040 or 38% - vocational education and 9111 or 11.9% - higher education.

A way to enhance employability of graduates is through preparing professional standards and adjusting programmes to those standards. The Regulations on Accreditation state that any professional study programme (including professional bachelor and master programmes) is assessed in accordance with the profession standard. Profession standards in Latvia are developed by educators in co-operation with employers because profession standard is mandatory for a programme to be accredited, but more involvement from the employer side would be desirable.

Statistical data for graduates of all cycles is currently not available. However, the unemployment data of “fresh” graduates from higher education (measured by the State Employment Service in October of the year of graduation) has been only 1.3-1.5% of all graduates during 2005 till 2007, so there have been little measures for improvement.

Among the graduates with a bachelor degree the absolute numbers of unemployed where the biggest mostly in social science fields with some exceptions: economics, business administration, law (where a bachelor degree is not sufficient for the regulated law professions), teacher training and computer science. These fields have the biggest number of
graduates, but considering unemployment in proportion to all graduates the biggest part of unemployed are psychologists (around 5%).

The higher education institutions perform employers surveys at least before the end of accreditation period, but in some higher education institutions regularly on a yearly basis, establish career centres at higher education institutions, organize meetings of staff or students with employers, advertise possibilities for study practice on higher education institutions’ web pages, make long-term agreements with employers regarding practices and organize practices both in Latvia and, where possible, abroad.

6. Recent and planned reforms of the tertiary education system

6.1. Planned reforms (or reference to ongoing policy debate)

Draft “Higher Education Law” has been elaborated and been approved by the Saeima in the first reading on October 18, 2008. The Draft Law proposes the following new regulations:

- Set higher education definition with an emphasis on requirements for a person with higher education from the current knowledge society and knowledge economy. Correspondingly the higher education programme system has been simplified (by abandoning a division of academic and professional higher education programmes).
- Set precise higher education programme division in three cycles (in accordance with the Bologna Declaration on the guidelines of united European higher education area creation).
- Introduced a new definition for results to be achieved in higher education – higher education qualification. It is a degree or a short cycle higher education qualification that is awarded with a diploma by a higher education institution after a successful acquisition of a higher education programme.
- Fully implemented European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) by achieving a united study work result registration thereby ensuring a full alignment of the Latvian higher education system into the united European higher education area.
- Set scientific activity tasks for higher education institutions considering their affiliation to a certain higher education institution type.
- Set possibility of higher education institutions (including together with foreign higher education institutions) to form joint higher education programmes and to award joint higher education qualifications.
- Ensured wider possibilities for student mobility and a transition from one higher education institutions to another. For example, a person has a right to register in a higher education institution for the acquisition of separate study modules and courses. For the modules or courses acquired a certificate is awarded to the attendee that unmistakably identifies its receiver, the amount of work done and an evaluation of
study results. Persons with a corresponding previous education have the right to gather the amount of study work approved by the higher education institutions and inquire the higher education institution to evaluate eligibility to higher education programmes or their sections.

- Improved governing system of higher education institutions by widening possibilities for higher education institutions’ founders, society and employers to participate in decision making simultaneously widening effective guidance possibilities in the higher education institution.
- Set new state language regulation in the implementation of higher education programmes.
- Strengthened higher education qualifications whose range corresponds to two, rather than one higher education cycle (doctor, dentist, pharmacist or veterinary degrees).