

Organisation of the education system in

Latvia

2009/2010

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1. Political, Social and Economic Background and Trends

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1.1. Historical Overview

Latvia proclaimed independence shortly after the end of World War I – on November 18, 1918. Its first legislative institution, the People's Council, was established, as a result of an agreement among eight democratic political parties and in cooperation with a representative of Latgale (one of the four historical regions of Latvia) Land Council.

The Constitutional Assembly was Latvia's first elected legislative body which drafted the basic law of the state — the *Satversme* — as well as other laws.

The international community recognized Latvia's independence on January 26, 1921. In this year Latvia also became a member of the League of Nations and fully participated in the activities of democratic nations. During the time Latvia became known worldwide as a country that cared for the rights of minorities.

Because of the world economic crises there was a growing dissatisfaction among the population at the beginning of 1930s. Coup d'etat took place in Riga on May 15, 1934. The activities of the Parliament (the *Saeima*) and all the political parties were suspended.

Rapid economic growth took place in the second half of 1930s, due to which Latvia reached one of the highest living standards in Europe. Because of improving living standards the Latvian society did not much oppose the authoritarian rule of the Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis.

Latvia enjoyed its sovereignty from 1918 to 1940.

After signing of the so-called "Molotov-Ribbentrop" pact on August 23, 1939, Latvia became a place of strategic interest to the USSR. In concordance with this secret agreement the Soviet army occupied Latvia in June 17, 1940. The newly elected Soviet marionette parliament voted to have Latvia become a part of the USSR. The sovietisation of Latvia was rapidly begun. Unlawful resolutions were adopted regarding the nationalization of land, buildings, banks, and various types of commercial and industrial enterprises. June 14, 1941, thousands (approximately 14,000) of Latvians were deported to Siberia in cattle cars, and most of them perished.

With the beginning of WWII, Latvia was taken by German occupation forces. During this time 90 percent of Latvia's Jewish population were murdered in Nazi concentration camps. In 1944, heavy fighting took place in Latvia between German and Soviet troops, the USSR gained the upper hand. During the course of the war, both occupying forces conscripted Latvians into their armies. Latvia's population perished not only on the battlefield. During the years of Nazi occupation special campaigns exterminated 18,000 Latvians, approximately 70,000 Jews and 2,000 Gypsies – in total about 90,000 people. In 1944, part of the Latvian territory once more came under Soviet occupation.

The post war Soviet occupation implemented repression and genocide against the Latvians. 120 000 Latvian inhabitants were imprisoned or deported to Soviet concentration (*GULAG*) camps. 130 000 took refuge from the Soviet army by fleeing to the West. On March 25, 1949, 43,000 rural residents were deported to Siberia in a sweeping repressive action.

An extensive Russification campaign began in Latvia; many administrative obstacles were implemented to hinder the use of the Latvian language. In the post war period Latvia was forced to adopt Soviet-farming methods, and the economic infrastructure developed in the 1920s and 1930s was purposefully destroyed. Rural areas were forced into collectivization.

However, Latvia had still maintained a well-developed infrastructure and educated specialists, therefore it was decided in Moscow that some of the Soviet Union's most advanced manufacturing factories were to be based in Latvia. Later, in order to run these factories, Russian workers were flooded into the country, their numbers noticeably decreasing the proportion of Latvian nationals. By the end of the 1980s, the Latvians comprised 50 percent of the population, although before World War II, the corresponding percentage was 75. Liberalization within the communist regime in the USSR began in the mid 1980s. In Latvia there immediately appeared a few mass socio-political organizations that made use of this opportunity and were for the reinstatement of national independence.

A notable step towards renewal of independence was taken on May 4, 1990. The Latvian SSR Supreme Council adopted a declaration restoring independence that included a transition period. On the August 21, 1991 parliament voted for an end to the transition period, thus restoring Latvia's pre-war independence. In September 1991, Latvian independence was recognized by the USSR.

Soon after reinstating independence, Latvia became a member of the United Nations. In 1992, Latvia became eligible for the International Monetary Fund. In 1994, Latvia took part in the NATO "Partnership for Peace" program as well as signed the free trade agreement with the European Union. Latvia became an associate member of Western European Union in 1994 and a member state of the European Council in 1995, and was the first of the Baltic States to be accepted into the World Trade Organization in 1998.

Last decade is characterized by the movement towards accession in the EU and NATO. Latvia became a full-fledged member state of both EU and NATO in May 2004. New policy document, Latvia's Foreign Policy Guidelines 2006-2010 was adopted setting out the country's international outlook, foreign policy interests, planned activities and expected results for next five years. It underlines such courses of action as advocacy of Latvian interests in the European Union, common development of EU policy and strengthening of national security. Several new aspects are included as well – strengthening of Latvian Diaspora and popularization of the country image.

Governmental changes after renewed independence

Elections of the 5th *Saeima* (the Parliament of Latvia) – the first after restoration of independence - were held on June 5 and 6, 1993. The 5th *Saeima* reinstated the *Satversme* and the 1925 Law on the Structure of the Cabinet of Ministers; it adopted the Citizenship Law and the Anti-Corruption Law, implemented local government reform, and ratified the agreement on the complete withdrawal of the Russian armed forces from Latvia.

The present 9th *Saeima* was elected in October 7, 2006. A total of 908, 979 eligible voters (60.98%) took part in the elections. Nineteen candidate lists were submitted, however, only 7 parties and associations of political parties passed the 5% vote threshold and won seats in the *Saeima*. Of the 100 elected deputies, 19 were women. The next elections of *Saeima* will take place in October 2010.

The removal of Russian armed forces (former USSR occupation forces) from Latvian territory was completed on August 31, 1994. The last remaining Russian military object in Latvia and the Baltic countries, the Skrunda radar station, ceased operations on August 31, 1998, and was turned over to the jurisdiction of Latvian authorities October 21, 1999.

In the period of Soviet rule local authorities did not in effect exist. Although the councils of representatives of the people were duly elected, they were in actual fact rigidly incorporated into the centralized system of state administration.

After the re-establishment of the independence in 1990, democratization and decentralization of the state administration system was carried out. It was closely tied in with the establishment and development of a system for local governance.

To ensure the efficiency of self-government, national administrative reforms are ongoing.

At the moment there are 26 regional governments and 527 local government bodies in Latvia, among them 7 cities of republican subordination, 53 cities, 35 counties (*novadi*) and 432 parishes (*pagasti*). The purpose of regional and local governments (*dome/padome*) is to work for the development of the area and planning and implementation of local social services, including education (provide educational possibilities for residents in the educational institutions of pre-primary, primary and secondary level, provide a managerial and financial help for interest and further education).

According to the Law on Administrative Territorial Reform the territorial reform of local governments will have been implemented by 2009. Its aim is to establish administrative territories (counties), which enable economic development and ensure qualitative services to their inhabitants. It is planned that local governments, which lack qualified specialists will be able to attract lawyers, economists, territory and development planners, project managers and social workers. This will help to improve the quality of services available to inhabitants in the fields of education, social service, culture, economics. (see also section **2.2.** .

The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

Law on Local Governments

The Constitution of Latvia

1.2. Main Executive and Legislative Bodies

Latvia is a democratic, parliamentary republic and the structure, authority and functioning of the public institutions of Latvia are set in the Constitution (*Satversme*) adopted on 1922. The people of Latvia hold the sovereign state power; they elect the parliament, the *Saeima*, the main legislative institution.

The people have the right to decide any publicly relevant issue in referendums except some issues specified by *Satversme*. The decision on dissolving the Parliament proposed by President of the State is also to be followed by a national referendum. The people have the exclusive right to take decisions on matters relating to the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, official language and the democratic public system of the state, as such matters shall be submitted to national referendum.

The Saeima (parliament), the State President and the Cabinet of Ministers are the highest authorities of state power according to the constitution.

People of Latvia elects the *Saeima* (Parliament),

Saeima elects the President of the state who chooses and invites the candidate to the post of Prime Minister to form the Cabinet of Ministers (Government) which subsequently shall obtain the vote of confidence at the *Saeima*.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

The Constitution of Latvia

1.2.1. Main Executive and Legislative Bodies. Saeima

Legislative power is in the hands of the parliament - the *Saeima* consisting of 100 (one hundred) deputies.

Parliamentary elections take place every 4 years. The *Saeima* is elected in general, direct and equal elections by secret ballot, based on proportional representation. To attain representation in the *Saeima*, a party must receive at least 5% voter support. Usually about 20 parties run in elections yet only 5-7 are represented in the *Saeima*.

All citizens of Latvia who enjoy full rights of citizenship and who have attained eighteen years of age on the election day, are entitled to vote.

Any citizen of Latvia, who enjoys full rights of citizenship and who is more than twenty-one year of age on the first day of elections may be elected to the *Saeima*. Members of the *Saeima* hold a special status and enjoy several advantages in the field of legal procedure, e.g. they shall not be arrested, nor shall their premises be searched, nor shall their personal liberty be restricted in any way as well as criminal prosecution may not be commenced and administrative fines may not be levied against them without the consent of the *Saeima*.

The electors may not appeal for cancelling the mandate of any individual member of the *Saeima*.

Legislative power and the right to take decisions concerning the national budget are vested in the *Saeima*. The *Saeima* also approves judges of courts of all the levels.

The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

The Constitution of Latvia

1.2.2. Main Executive and Legislative Bodies. Cabinet of Ministers

The Cabinet is composed of the Prime Minister and the Ministers chosen by the Prime Minister. The Cabinet of Ministers holds executive power. All administrative institutions of the State are under the authority of the Cabinet.

In order to fulfill their duties, the Prime Minister and other Ministers must have the confidence of the *Saeima* and they are also individually accountable to the *Saeima* for their actions. If the *Saeima* expresses no confidence in the Prime Minister, the entire Cabinet must resign. If there is an expression of mistrust in an individual Minister, then the Minister has to resign and another person be invited to replace them by the Prime Minister.

The Cabinet deliberates draft laws prepared by individual ministries as well as matters pertaining to the activities of more than one ministry, and issues of State policy raised by individual members of Cabinet.

Ministers, even if they are not members of the *Saeima*, and responsible government officials authorized by a minister, have the right to attend sittings of the *Saeima* and its committees and to submit additions and amendments to draft laws.

The Cabinet of Ministers has the right to submit draft laws to the *Saeima*. All matters that have not been decided by the *Saeima* are in the competence of the Cabinet of Ministers. During the time between sessions of the *Saeima* the Cabinet has the right, if necessary and if not able to postpone, to issue regulations that have the force of law but they cease to be in force unless submitted to the *Saeima* not later than three days after the next session of the *Saeima* has been convened. Such regulations may not amend the law regarding elections of the *Saeima*, laws governing the court system and court proceedings, the Budget and rights pertaining to the Budget, as well as laws adopted during the term of the current *Saeima*, and they may not pertain to amnesty, state taxes, customs duties, and loans.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

The Constitution of Latvia

1.2.3. Main Executive and Legislative Bodies. President

The *Saeima* elects the President for a term of four years by secret ballot with a majority of the votes of not less than fifty-one member of the *Saeima*. Any citizen who has attained the age of forty years may be elected President. A person with dual citizenship may not be elected President.

The same person must not hold office as President for more than two consecutive terms, that is, more than 8 years.

The President of Latvia does not have extensive state powers and the main function is that of state representation. The President represents the State in international relations, appoints the diplomatic representatives of Latvia, and also receives diplomatic representatives of other states. The President implements the decisions of the *Saeima* concerning the ratification of international agreements.

However, the President designates the Prime Minister, who appoints the ministers and proclaims laws passed by the *Saeima* and the President has the right to initiate legislation.

The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

1.2.4. Main Executive and Legislative Bodies. Court System

In Latvia, court cases are heard by district (city) courts, administrative courts, regional courts, and the Supreme Court. Everyone has the right to defend their rights and lawful interests in a fair court and everyone is innocent until their guilt has been established in accordance with law. Judges are independent and subject only to the law.

District and city courts

There are 34 district and city courts in Latvia, fulfilling the function of Court of First Instance.

Regional Courts

There are 6 regional courts in Latvia. These courts have been set up in four regions of Latvia and in the City of Rīga. They fulfil the function of Court of First Instance and Court of Appeal.

A new type of court, called **Administrative Court**, has been established and started to work in February, 2004. Its task is to perform control over the rule of law and validity of the administrative act issued by an institution or the actual conduct of an institution.

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is Supreme Court of Cassation and Appellate. The general meeting or the plenary meeting of the judges of the Supreme Court establishes departments of the Senate and Court Chambers of the Supreme Court.

Constitutional Court

It is not a part of the general court system; it is a special court reviewing the compliance of laws with the Constitution and the correspondence of legal issues in general to the acts with a higher legal force. It can declare laws or other enactments or parts thereof invalid.

Appointment of judges

All judges are appointed by the *Saeima* at the recommendation of the Minister of Justice (judges of the Supreme Court – at the recommendation of the Chairman of the Supreme Court). Only a citizen of Latvia – highly qualified and honest lawyer – may be appointed as a judge. The following requirements must be complied with for the appointment to the post of a district (city) court judge: citizen of the Republic of Latvia, command knowledge of the state language, a degree in law, at least 30 years of age, at least 5 years of in-service time in a legal profession, success at passing a special qualification exam. For the appointment to the post of judge at a regional court or the Supreme Court, a determined duration of in-service time at court of the previous level or as an attorney, prosecutor or a lecturer at the Department of Law at a higher

educational establishment is required. All the requirements concerning other judges with some exceptions apply also to the judges of the Constitutional Court.

Persons who are morally unfit to hold the post (have a criminal record, have had criminal charges brought against them or are under investigation; have participated in organizations hostile to the State of Latvia or banned in the Republic of Latvia) cannot be nominated as candidates to the post of a judge.

Constitutional Court

The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

On Judicial Power

The Constitution of Latvia

1.3. Religions

The Constitution of Latvia declares that the church is separated from the state, and everybody has the right to freedom of religion.

Historically, since the Reformation movement in the 16th century, the Lutheran church has played a leading role in Latvia. Today, there are around 25 religious confessions in Latvia, of which Evangelic Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox are the largest ones.

Churches and religious organizations are free to preach their doctrines and to perform rituals. The preaching of the doctrines of the churches and religious organizations and other ritual activities, as well as the places of worship may not be exploited for purposes contrary to the Constitution and laws. See section **1.7.** for data on the most popular confessions.

In Soviet times the churches were oppressed. Many priests were deported to Siberia and churches were declared state property. The teaching of religion was banned, persecuted and punished. Extensive atheist propaganda was developed by means of literature, press, radio, television, theatre and cinema.

Together with the nation's movement of independence came a "spiritual renaissance". Many priests took an active part in the movement of national liberation. The State returned the deprived buildings and property to churches, and assigned the force of law to marriages established in the church.

Today the teaching of religion as an optional subject alongside with ethics has been restored in public schools. Instruction in these schools is organized according to the programmes confirmed by the State Education Centre. Pupils are free to choose to study this subject, and are obligated to have an application from parents or guardians. Christian instruction and the study of ethics are financed from the state budget. See also section **4.10.**

Centre for Curriculum Development and Examination

Law on Religious Organizations

The Constitution of Latvia

1.4. Official and Minority Languages

Latvian is the official language in Latvia, states the Constitution and Language Law passed in 1989. The Latvian language belongs to the Baltic group of the Indo-European family of languages (Latvian is a non-Slavic and non-Germanic language). Its closest and only living relative is Lithuanian.

Latvia is divided into four historic regions – Kurzeme, Vidzeme, Zemgale and Latgale (though these regions are not used as sub-national governmental jurisdictions). Inhabitants of Latgale speak *latgaļu* language although linguists are still discussing whether it is a language or just a dialect.

The most common minority language is Russian, as there are many Russian-speaking people in Latvia, not only Russians, who constitute the second largest population group (after Latvians) - 28% - in the country (see also section [1.5.3.](#)).

The official language of instruction in public sector educational institutions is Latvian. However, minority education is one of the core issues due to ethnic composition of population and education is provided in other languages as well.

A wide network of state-financed minority schools (mostly with instruction in Russian) functions in Latvia. There are 224 minority schools providing general education in a minority language or bilingually. However, in many ways these schools are not typical national minority schools as they are attended not only by ethnic Russians but also many ethnic Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Poles, Germans, Jews and others. Instruction in these schools is partly in Russian, while informally pupils are encouraged to retain their own particular ethnic identity, national traditions and cultural heritage. In order to promote society integration and knowledge of the Latvian language, the reform of minority education has been carried out since 1999. As a result, a growing number of minority schools offer bilingual education (for more information on bilingual education see section [4.17.](#) and [5.20.](#)).

Education Law

Law on General Education

Model Programmes for Basic Education for Ethnic Minorities

Official Language Law

The Constitution of Latvia

1.5. Demographic Situation

Latvia is situated in the north-eastern Europe on the east coast of the Baltic Sea and borders with the two other Baltic States, Estonia and Lithuania, as well as with Russia and Belarus. The territory covers 64,600 sq. km, the length of its border on land is 1 862 km, and its sea boarder is 494 km long.

The demographic situation in Latvia over the recent years has been unfavourable, as since 1991 the natural growth of the population has been negative. The male/female ratio has not changed essentially over the last years and in 2009 comprised 46.1% and 53.9%, respectively. Moreover, in years to come, the population is expected to continue ageing (see section [1.7.](#) for statistics).

One of the major problems in Latvia is continuous unfavourable demographic situation. Various concepts and programmes touching this issue have been developed, but without considerable results. The insufficient financial support for families having babies was declared as one of the reasons for low birth rate. In 2004, two new regulations were adopted augmenting allowances for family with children and came into effect starting with January 1, 2005. The childbirth allowance is augmented substantially up to Ls 296 (covers the costs of layette) as well as the child care allowance. It is augmented considering parent's income before the child was born. According to the amendments in the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers, accepted in December, 2007, the child care allowance resembles the net salary of one of the parents. Up to these amendments it could not be over Ls 392.

During the period 1990-2007 the births declined from 37,918 to 23,273, while the deaths remained unchanged – close to 33,000 per year (33,042 in 2007). Infant mortality tends to decrease. In 1995 infant

mortality was 18.8 per 1,000 births, in 2007 it has come down to 8.7 due to the improvement of the health care system. Net vital statistics has an ever-increasing ratio in population decrease while migration impact declines.

Procedure for Awarding and Disbursing Birth Allowance

Regulations on the Amount of Child Care Allowance and Additional Payment to Child Care Allowance for Twins or Several Children Born in one Labour, its Revisions' and Awarding and Disbursing Procedure

1.5.1. Demographic Situation. Urbanization

Today the larger part of Latvian population, i.e. slightly more than one and a half million inhabitants resides in city areas. The proportion of country and city dwellers has remained practically unchanged during the last ten years.

Latvian cities and towns differ greatly in size. 15 cities have a population of over 10 000, the largest of these being Rīga (population 717,371), Daugavpils (105,958), and Liepāja (85,050). However the smallest Latvian towns are Durbe (440), Subate (900) and Pāvilosta (1,300). High population concentration in the capital is observed. At the beginning of 2007, the population in Rīga was close to 32% of the national population. It may be attributed to the lack of workplaces elsewhere in Latvia, especially in the countryside, and majority of students stay in the capital instead of returning to native country.

1.5.2. Demographic Situation. Migration

The massive migration from Russia and other Soviet Socialist Republics (Belarus, Ukraine, etc.) during the Soviet years substantially changed the ethnic composition of Latvia. The total number of Latvians declined from 77% of all residents in 1935 to 52% in 1989. Even during the last years before the collapse of the Soviet Union there was large-scale immigration to Latvia.

After the renewed independence of Latvia, the process of immigration was again regulated by state law, government regulations and state institutions; thus, immigration rapidly slowed down. The year 1992 marked a turning point when regulations were issued on how foreign nationals and stateless persons may enter and stay in Latvia.

215,000 people emigrated from Latvia in the 1990s. The number of Latvians in the population decreased by 16,000 during this period, but the number of non-Latvians decreased by 199,000.

During recent years, the number of immigrants augments each year while those emigrating are by 1000 more on the average. The data on long-term migration of Latvian population in 2005 show evidence of notable decrease trends in the rather high number of departures from Latvia to settle in other countries observed in early 1990s. In 2005, long-term international immigration to Latvia changed compared with 2003 – from 1364 to 1886; up by 38%. After joining the European Union, an increasing emigration in comparison to the previous years was observed in 2004 and 2005 due to higher numbers of inhabitants moving to other European countries for work. Long-term emigration abroad increased by 90% - from 2210 in 2003 to 4183 in 2007. Internal migration reached 55, 089 in 2005, thus its proportion in the total migration volume was 97%, while international migration constituted 3%.

1.5.3. Demographic Situation. National composition of population

Latvians (and Livs) are the indigenous people of Latvia, but there are many other ethnic groups living in Latvia, of which Russian minority is the largest one.

In the beginning of 2009, the ethnic distribution of Latvia's population was 59.3 % Latvians, 27.8 % Russians, 3.6 % Belorussians, 2.5 % Ukrainians, 2.4 % Poles, 1.3% Lithuanians and 0.4 % Jews and Roma. Germans, Estonians, Tatars and many other nationalities also live in Latvia.

Actually, the total number of national minorities is not particularly large in Latvia, and each minority group (except Russians) is relatively small. The biggest and most active communities in Latvia are Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, Jews and Gypsies. People of foreign descent mainly live in the seven major cities of Latvia: *Rīga, Daugavpils, Jelgava, Jūrmala, Liepāja, Ventspils, and Rēzekne*.

1.5.4. Demographic Situation. Life expectancy

The average life expectancy for newborns in 2008 was 72.6 years. The average life expectancy of men is lower than that of women in all countries; however, in Latvia the difference is particularly large. During the last ten years, the average life expectancy of male newborns has been constantly at least 10 years less than that of female neonates (in 2008, 67.2 and 77.9, respectively). The situation is aggravated by such unfavourable factors as alcoholism and unnatural death.

The average life expectancy also has territorial characteristics: in rural areas the life expectancy of both genders is lower than in urban areas - by three years for women and up to a year and a half for men. In part, these differences can be explained by the overall unfavourable social situation in countryside as well as the lower level and more complicated accessibility of medical assistance (see section [1.7.](#) for statistics).

To improve the life expectancy the national policy gets more focused on issues of health promotion and the quality of life.

1.6. Economic Situation

After restoring independence in Latvia, social and economical reforms were started with the goal to establish conditions for the development of market economy relations.

Reforms accomplished in Latvia and integration in the EU has left a positive effect on economic development. Rapid growth had been observed in Latvia during the period of 2005-2007, when GDP grew annually by 10.9% on average, but in 2007 – by 10%. The high growth rates were mainly ensured by the domestic demand. Both, private consumption and investment increased considerably. Increase of exports played a less significant role in the growth. Contribution of the net exports to the growth was negative.

Since 2007, the growth rates started to decrease and in the 2nd quarter of 2008 became negative. In 2009, as the financial problems in the world remained, the economic recession in Latvia continued. However, the statistical data shows that the economic recession in comparison with the beginning of 2009 is not as rapid and the situation is starting to improve. Since April, the manufacturing industry has started to stabilise. The production volumes have already been increasing over the recent months in the woodprocessing, chemical industry, metalworking, as well as in the production of paper, printing and publishing sectors. The exports have also increased slightly. In the 3rd quarter of 2009, in comparison with the 2nd quarter of 2009, it has increased by 1% (according to seasonally adjusted data). It is forecasted that, in general, a positive economic growth will resume in the mid-2010.

Currently both, the government and the entrepreneurs must purposefully transfer to a sustainable economic model where the main driving force is export. The first signs are showing that the situation is really improving in sectors where there are export opportunities. The expectations of the entrepreneurs in these sectors are also becoming more optimistic. In the sectors based on domestic demand, e.g., trade and construction, the decrease rates kept

growing in 2009, and the situation might stabilize only in 2010. However, with increased revenues from exports, the situation in the domestic market will also start to improve slowly. As a result, the economy will be based on the right foundations and the industry will become the driving force of growth. There are still many unused opportunities to increase the revenues from exports not only in the manufacturing industry, which forms a rather small share in Latvia's GDP, but also in the services sectors – information and communication technologies, transport and logistics, tourism and others.

In 2010, the main priorities of the economic policy are as follows: support to exports and microenterprises, as well as promotion of energy independence. This will be mainly achieved by implementing the economic recovery plan, by directing the EU Structural Funds financing towards the support for exports and by eliminating the bureaucratic obstacles for entrepreneurship.

Speaking about support of exports, the main task for 2010 is to implement in practice the medium-term economic recovery plan approved by the government in November 2009.

See subdivisions for more details.

Report on the Economic Development of Latvia

1.6.1. Economic Situation. Economic development

In 2009, with financial problems prevailing in the world, the economic recession continued in Latvia. During the first three quarters of 2009, GDP decreased by 18.6%. However, in comparison with the beginning of 2009, the decrease of economic activities has slowed down. Since the peak of Latvia's economy at the end of 2007, GDP has fallen by almost one fourth, and the economy is currently at the level of 2004–2005.

In 2008 and 2009, Latvia had the largest decrease of GDP in the whole EU. It is related to the high current account deficit of the balance of payments during the previous years of a rapid growth and therefore the increase of vulnerability of Latvia's economy. Due to decrease of financial inflow, there is a rapid decline of private consumption and investment, as well as substantial economic adjustments, which result in the improvement of the trade balance of goods and services along with the decline of economic activities upon decreasing domestic demand.

This is well reflected in the dynamics of the domestic demand which continues to decrease rapidly. In the 3rd quarter of 2009, domestic demand was by 29.3% lower than in the respective quarter of 2008.

Lack of financial resources in the private sector and decreased public investments are the main factors accountable for faster fall of investments in fixed assets which in the first three quarters of 2009 were by 37.4% lower than in the respective period of 2008.

With a significant decrease in the domestic demand, imports of goods and services are decreasing. In total, in the first three quarters of 2009, imports have decreased by 36.3% in comparison with the respective period of the previous year.

With gradual improvement of the economic situation in the majority of our main trade partner countries, exports have slightly increased. In the 3rd quarter of 2009, in comparison with the 2nd quarter of 2009, it has increased by 1%. However, in comparison with the 3rd quarter of 2008, exports have decreased by 14.7%.

Due to the fall of domestic demand, the external imbalance has shrunk. The large and constantly increasing current account deficit present in Latvia over several years started to decrease since the second half of 2007, and, since the beginning of 2009, there is a current account surplus in the balance of payments.

In the first nine months of 2009, in comparison with the respective period of the previous year, foreign trade deficit has decreased by almost 11 percentage points and was 7.5% of GDP, which was due to much faster decrease of imports than exports. In the first eleven months of 2009, exports and imports in current prices decreased by 25% and 42% respectively in comparison with the first eleven months of the previous year. It must be noted that since the 2nd quarter of 2009 a small increase of exports has been observed.

Since the 4th quarter of 2008, the outflow of private foreign capital has been observed. The negative effect of private capital outflow on the financial account situation is slightly decreased by long-term loans of the public sector.

In total, in the first three quarters of 2009, the decrease of output had been observed in all main sectors of the economy. Most significantly the economic activities decreased in construction, trade and manufacturing sectors.

Taking into account changes of GDP in the first three quarters of 2009 and the operative statistics of recent months, it is expected that the fall of economic activities in 2009 will be 18% as forecasted before.

Deflation is to be expected also in 2010, and during the year prices may decrease further by some percentage. In 2010, the overall price level will decrease mainly due to the weak demand related to lower income of population resulted from reduced wages in the public and private sectors, as well as due to higher unemployment. The situation in the global financial markets has negatively influenced the financial sector of Latvia. Due to the rise in the price for money resources, crediting has decreased, whereas the limited availability of money reduces household consumption and weakens the development capacity of businesses, as well as increases the necessity to generate savings.

The rapid fall of economic activities and decreased domestic demand have negative effect on the general budget revenues. The total tax revenues in the general government budget in 2009 were 1 663 million which is by 31.5% less than in 2008 and was mainly due to lower revenues from the value added tax and corporate income tax.

The fall in economic activities started to influence the employment indicators increasingly. According to the State Employment Agency's data, at the end of 2009, 179.2 thousand unemployed persons were registered which is 16% from the economically active population of the country. The most rapid increase of registered unemployment was observed at the end of 2008 and at the beginning of 2009.

Along with lower labour demand since the 4th quarter of 2008, the tendency of growing wages has stopped, and, since May 2009, a gradual decrease of average wages has been observed in the economy. In September 2009, the average monthly gross wage was LVL 433. In comparison with September 2008, it has decreased by 10.2%.

The recovery of Latvia's economy in the coming years will largely depend on how fast the global financial system and the main foreign trade partner countries will recover and how successfully Latvia will be able to compete in the open markets for goods and services.

The Ministry of Economics forecasts a decrease of GDP also in the first half of 2010, while its growth could resume in the 3rd quarter when GDP will not be decreasing anymore in comparison with the previous quarter (according to seasonally adjusted data). However, in comparison with the respective quarters of 2009, its level will be lower. In this case, in 2010, GDP will decrease by 3%.

Economic growth may revive in 2011, in the case if the global financial markets stabilise fully and crediting revives, which will give positive impetus to the local enterprises, as well as ensure a gradual increase of external demand in our goods and services export partner countries. Therefore, in 2011, a more rapid development of export oriented sectors can be expected. At the same time, domestic demand will be renewed, and it is forecasted that positive growth tendencies will be observed also in the domestic market oriented sectors. In 2011, it is forecasted that GDP will grow by 2 – 2.5%.

In general, the recovery of the labour market is expected later than the recovery of the economic growth since the latter will be based on growth of productivity, not on the number of employed persons.

Report on the Economic Development of Latvia

1.6.2. Economic Situation. Employment and Unemployment

The Cabinet of Ministers has determined that the minimum monthly wage is to be increased from LVL 160 to LVL 180 as from January, 2009.

The sharp slowdown of the economy has had a negative effect on the labour market. At the end of 2008 and particularly in the 1st half of 2009, the number of employed persons declined rapidly and the unemployment level rose. During the 3rd quarter of 2009, the employment and unemployment rates continued to deteriorate, yet, at a slower pace.

Over the year, the number of employed persons reduced by 15.8% (the 3rd quarter of 2009 in comparison with the 3rd quarter of the previous year, residents of 15–74 years of age) or by 178 thousand people. Accordingly, the employment rate fell, and, in the 3rd quarter of 2009, was only 59.8%, while it was 69% in the respective quarter of the previous year (residents of 15–64 years of age).

According to State Employment Agency data, at the end of 2009, 178.2 thousand unemployed persons were registered which is 15.9% from the economically active population of the country. In November 2009, Latvia had the highest unemployment rate in the EU (22.3% harmonised unemployment rate). It must be noted that a high level of the economic activity rate of the residents was still maintained, and it started to decline only in the 2nd quarter of 2009. In the 3rd quarter, it was only by 1.1% lower than the year before.

Although not as rapidly as in 2009, it is expected that also in 2010 the unemployment indicators will continue to deteriorate and the unemployment rate will continue to rise since the economic recession is still progressing.

For more statistics see section [1.7.](#)

[Report on the Economic Development of Latvia](#)

1.7. Statistics

All data from the official website of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia unless indicated otherwise. See subsections on population, economic activity, key indicators and religions for further details.

1.7.1. Population

POPULATION, thousands

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
I-XII	2399.2	2377.3	2364.3	2345.8	2331.5	2319.2	2306.4	2294.6	2281.3	2270.9	2261.2

AGE STRUCTURE OF POPULATION

	1989	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009
All inhabitants, Of whom at the age of:	100	100	100	100	100	100
0-14	21,4	17,9	14.3	14.0	13.8	13.7
15-59	61,2	61,0	64.4	65.3	65.6	66.2
60+	17,4	21,1	21.3	20.7	20.6	20.1

* Against the total number of the population (%)

NATURAL INCREASE OF POPULATION

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
I-XII	-13448	-11957	-13327	-12454	-11431	-11690	-11280	-10900	-9769	-7058

BIRTHS

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
I-XII	19396	20248	19664	20044	21006	20334	21497	22264	23273	23948

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH BY SEX

Years	Total	
	Males	Females
1995	60.8	73.1
1998	64.1	75.5
2000	64.9	76.0
2002	65.4	76.8
2003	65.9	76.9
2004	67.1	77.2
2005	65.6	77.4
2006	65.9	76.8
2007	65.8	76,5
2008	67.2	77.9

POPULATION DENSITY

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
I-XII	37.5	37.1	36.9	36.6	36.3	36.1	35.9	35.7	35.5	35.3	35,2	35.0

IMIGRATION

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
I-XII	3123	1813	1627	1443	1428	1364	1665	1886	2801	3541	3465

1.7.2. Economic activity of the population**AVERAGE NUMBER OF EMPLOYED PERSONS, thousands**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
I-XII	965.1	939	960	989	1006.9	1017.7	1036	1101.3	1130.8	1137.5	1124.1

UNEMPLOYED RATE,%

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
I-XII	9.2	9.1	7.8	7.7	8.5*	8.6	8.5	8.8	6.5	4.6	6.1	18.4

* The data source for the number of economically active populations has been changed. Since the beginning of 2002, the unemployment rate has been changed making use of economically active population aged 15 years up to the retirement age obtained during the Labour Force Survey. Formerly it was the number of economically active population aged 15 years and over

Source: State Employment Agency, December 2009

NUMBER OF REGISTERED UNEMPLOYED (ANNUAL AVERAGE)

	Unemployed persons registered with the State Employment Agency	Of which – long-term unemployed (over 1 year)	Registered unemployed persons receiving unemployment benefit
1995	83231	21242	27022
2000	93283	27046	39785
2005	78482	20581	37961
2006	68944	15917	34756
2007	52321	9393	33854

ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION, ANNUAL AVERAGE

	1997	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008
Economically active population, in thousands	1167	1100	1135	1126	1147	1168
Of which:						
Employed	990	941	1036	1047	1048	1124
Jobseekers	177	159	99	78.8	71	91.6
Jobseekers, per cent of economically active population	15.1	14.4	8.8	7.0	6.2	7.8

JOBSEEKERS BY ACTION TAKEN TO FIND A JOB, 2008

	Total	Males	Females
Jobseekers	100	100	100
contacted Employment state Agency or awaiting the results of it	21.2	17.2	26.1
contacted private employment services	6.9	6.8	7.2
regularly looked at job ads and placed ads in the press, etc.	88.4	85.8	91.5
checked with relatives, friends, acquaintances	95.5	96.3	94.4
checked with employers directly	78.1	77.3	79.0

KEY INDICATORS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 e
(growth against the preceding year, %)					
Gross domestic product	8.7	10.6	12.2	10.0	-4.6
Private consumption	9.5	11.2	21.2	14.8	-10.4
Public consumption	2.1	2.7	4.9	3.7	-1.1
Gross fixed capital formation	23.8	23.6	16.4	7.5	-13.6
Exports	9.4	20.3	6.5	10.0	-2.8
Imports	16.6	14.8	19.3	14.7	-13.4
Consumer prices	6.2	6.7	6.5	10.1	15.4

(in % of GDP, unless indicated otherwise)					
Central government budget fiscal balance	-1.0	-0.4	-0.2	0.1	-3.5
Central government debt	14.5	12.4	10.7	9.0	16.7
Current account balance	-12.8	-12.5	-22.5	-22.5	-14.0
Foreign direct investments (flows)	4.6	4.5	8.1	7.0	5.0
Employment rate	62.3	63.3	66.3	68.4	68.5
Unemployment rate (15-74 years)	10.4	8.7	6.8	6.0	7.3

e – estimation;

Source: Ministry of Economics, Report on the Economic Development of Latvia, December 2009

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT, at current prices, mln LVL

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
I-XII	4224.2	4750.8	5219.8	5758.3	6392.8	7421.3	8937.3	11264.7	14047.5	16274.5

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT, mln LVL, at constant prices of 2000

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
I-XII	4383.6	4750.8	5132.9	5465.1	5858.4	6364.6	7016.9	7881.2	8691.7	8296.1

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT PER CAPITA (at current prices) LVL

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
I-XII	1767.1	2002.0	2216.5	2462.3	2749.1	3209	3885.	4923	6176	7182

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT PER CAPITA (at constant prices of 2000) LVL

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
I-XII	1833.8	2002.0	2179.6	2336.9	2519.3	2752	3050	3444	3820	3661

GROSS NATIONAL INCOME, at current prices, mln LVL *

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
I-XII	4762.2	5255.9	5790.8	6384.7	7263.4	8944.6	10841.8	14291.1	16030.2

* Gross domestic product characterizes primary incomes from economic activity generated within the country, but **gross national product** consists of incomes owned by residents of the country. Gross national product is derived from the gross domestic product plus property income and compensation of employees minus property income and compensation of employees paid to other countries.

Most popular confessions

Confessions	Number of congregations				
	1995	2000	2004	2006	2007
1. Evangelical Lutherans	297	302	304	302	301
2. Roman Catholics	198	247	251	...	...
3. Russian Orthodox	108	112	118	119	119
4. Old Rite Orthodox	55	66	67	68	69
5. Baptists	79	87	93	93	93
6. Evangelical faith Christians and New Age *	-	16 (in total)	34 17	33 15	35 15
7. 7 th day Adventists	43	46	50	51	51

* In 2004, the congregations of Evangelical faith Christians were registered separately from the New Age congregations.

Board of Religious Affairs

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

2. General Organisation of the Education System and Administration of Education

Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

2.1. Historical Overview

The first school in Latvia belonged to the church and was opened in the beginning of the 13th century. The secular one – in the 14th century but the first Latvian school – in the 16th century. All-embracing school network was formed only in the 19th century thus ensuring high level of literacy. At the time the Latvian youth were educated also in the institutions of higher education. In 1861 Riga Polytechnicum was found which later served as basis for the establishment of the University of Latvia. In 1864 the first naval school with Latvian language of instruction was established. In 1870 the Baltic Teachers seminar in Rīga was opened.

After proclaiming the Republic of Latvia in 1918, the compulsory primary education (*sākumskola*) was introduced into practice. A vast network of secondary schools and trade schools functioned. In 1919 the University of Latvia, Latvian State Conservatoire and Latvian Academy of Arts was established.

During the years of Soviet occupation (1945-1990) the whole educational system was strictly centralized, supervised and controlled by the communist regime. Education was aimed at glorifying the Soviet Union and at the upbringing of pupils for the benefit of collective Soviet nation; the development of individual abilities was encouraged only if it had potential value for the Soviet system. Nevertheless, in difference from many other Soviet republics, in Latvia part of schools still managed to provide more or less nationally-oriented education in schools with Latvian language of instruction.

Reforms started after re-establishing independence led to transformation of the educational system. That has resulted in positive changes: de-politicization of education, creation of choice opportunities, liquidation of state monopoly of education and decentralization of education administration.

2.2. Ongoing Debates and Future Developments

The implementation of the planned territorial reform is expected to influence management and administration of education. Regarding the general organization and administration of the education system the aim of the reform is to create counties, which ensure competitive education and are able to attract qualified teachers and develop a better resource base. There is an Education Board in each county, therefore the number of institutions will increase and the organization of work and cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science should be changed as well as the system of transfer of financial resources. Moreover, the reform and possible models are still subjects of discussion. Currently the Ministry of Education and Science, its subordinate institutions and representatives of education boards are developing a model of the network of several education boards. It is planned that the new model of education boards shall come into force in school year 2009/2010.

In 2006, the National Development Plan 2007-2013 was adopted. It is a national mid-term planning document conveying the main directions of development and the main tasks of the state and society. Education and knowledge for the growth of economics and technological distinction is defined as the main strategic aim with the following priorities: a well-educated and creative individual, technological distinction and flexibility of enterprises, and research development. During this period it is necessary to achieve an important turn in education, science and industry, in order to establish a stable intellectual and material basis for gradual betterment of life quality in Latvia.

In order to optimize operation of the Ministry of Education and Science it was suggested to transmit part of ministry functions to subordinated institutions. In 2006, the legislation on the establishment of the Higher Education and Science Administration was adopted. Its aim is to separate the functions of state administration involving licensing higher education study programmes, maintaining registers of higher education institutions, scientific institutions, academic staff, diplomas etc. and organizing the development of professional standards, from those of policy-making and planning. It will make the fulfillment of these functions more operative and rational and will improve the work organization in the Ministry of Education and Science. It is expected the Administration will start operating in the middle of 2012.

The Policy Framework for the Development of Education for 2007-2013 were adopted in September, 2006. Taking into account the guidelines for society and education development defined both in European and national policy papers and the analysis of the results of the previous Concepts of Education Development 2002-2005, as well as recommendations from the involved bodies, it defines the main action course for the next seven years. Particular attention is paid to the quality of pre-primary and basic education, modernization of vocational education, raising competitiveness of higher education, improvement of teaching quality and implementation of lifelong learning.

In February, 2007 the national policy paper Basic Guidelines of Lifelong Learning Policy for 2007-2013 was approved. It plays an important role in promoting the development of a balanced and knowledge-based society, and its long-term aim is to ensure education (incl. in-service training, retraining) through entire life in accordance with people's interests and skills as well as regional needs for socio-economical development. In March 2007 the Ministry of Education developed an action programme for implementation of the Basic Guidelines of Lifelong Learning Policy, which is to be accepted by the Cabinet of Ministers. A supervision council has also been established. .

A significant decrease in the number of schools is observed in previous years due to the demographic situation. No positive tendencies in this respect are expected in the nearest future. As the number of pupils decreases, also the closure, merging and reorganization of schools is inevitable. In the last five years, the number of schools has been reduced by 60.

The success of the pilot project "Summer Work for Pupils" organized by the State Employment Agency in 2004, encouraged its continuation in 2005 and 2006. Its aim is to promote employment of pupils. The project planned to provide half of remuneration for the work to be paid by the employer and another half – from a state-provided project budget. The number of pupils participating in 2008 quadrupled in comparison with 2004 (3 200 and 12 000, respectively). Pupils were employed in trade, public catering, agriculture, health care and other areas. Due to the complicated economical situation in 2009, the Ministry of Welfare did not allocate funding for this project, but most municipalities provided their financial support for continuing the project.

The current economic crisis had immediate effects on education system of Latvia and was a catalyst for restructuring and optimization of school network. Situation of the state budget has forced the government to adopt unpopular measures to limit expenses for the remuneration of the employees of state and municipal institutions, as well as to merge institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Science.

In 2009, as a result of significant structural reforms implemented in the Ministry of Education and Science - the number of structural units was reduced by 40%, the number of employees by 30% (and salaries - by 37%), hereto 11 institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Science were merged creating two new institutions (State Education Centre and National Education Quality Service) and enlarging two existing institutions (State Language Agency and State Education Development Agency).

With the reorganization of the Ministry for Children and Family Affairs and Social Inclusion of the Republic of Latvia the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for youth policy. Already by the end of August 2009 the government approved The national programme for Youth policy 2009 - 2013.

In year 2009, collaboration and consultations with subject teachers and specialists were initiated in order to review and improve curriculum according to education objectives and pupil needs.

Measures for improvement of education quality and reducing bureaucratic barriers were carried out. For instance, teacher staff position lists in general education institutions have been abolished, the procedure of obtaining general and vocational education programme license has been altered and amendments have been made in the already licensed programmes, education and professional qualification requirements for teachers have been altered, the work load of pre-school teachers has been reduced from 36 hours per week to 30 hours, the procedure of licensing general education programmes and institutions has been simplified, the requirements for pupil transfer to next grade have been heightened and the number of state examinations has been reduced.

The main work objectives of the Ministry of Education and Science in year 2010 are to increase the efficiency of costs of general and vocational education in the context of quality and accessibility; to promote export capacity of Latvia's higher education and science, to popularize and strengthen national values.

Currently, debates have arisen about the proposition of children starting school at the age of 6, not 7 as it has been until. This proposition has been brought up, due to the fact that the majority of pupils graduate school at the age of 19 when they have already reached a lawful age and it is neither psychologically, nor socially or economically reasoned for pupils to still be learning at school, moreover pupils are maintained by parents and are in the zone of responsibility of school and guardians.

In order to lower the age at which pupils start schooling, it is necessary to reform and adjust both curriculum and methodology, taking into account the children's abilities at this early age. Therefore it is planned to revise and adjust curriculum for 1st – 6th grade. At present, the draft programme foresees several changes in the process of teaching, for instance, in the first semester there will be no such lessons as there are in school - the duration of time for intensive learning daily will last no longer than 30 min and these lessons will not exceed 18 per week. With the method of play children will be taught to read, write, count, add and subtract numbers from one till ten. In order to prepare for these changes teachers will undergo further education courses planned by the State Education Development Agency.

In order to organize the proceeding of state examinations more effectively, several novelties in the use of technologies have been initiated. For instance, the activity of the implemented project "National Testing Information System" of the Ministry of Education and Science was initiated to improve and accelerate the exchange of information between organizers of state examinations. This system foresees effective and remote on-line registration of pupils for centralized examinations.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

State Employment Agency

Basic Guidelines of Lifelong Learning Policy for 2007-2013

National Development Plan 2007-2013

National programme for Youth policy 2009 - 2013

Policy Framework for the Development of Education for 2007-2013

2.3. Fundamental Principles and Basic Legislation

Education has been the central priority since regaining independence. Human capital is an important asset of Latvia as a member state of the European Union and to compete in the global economy.

The constitution, *Satversme*, prescribes, that everyone has the right to education. The State shall ensure that everyone may acquire basic education without charge. Basic education is defined by the constitution to be compulsory.

The Education Law was passed on 1991, and was one of the first laws adopted upon the restoration of independence.

At the moment the legal basis for the educational system in Latvia is the Education Law (adopted in 1998), Law on General Education, Law on Professional Education, and Law on Higher Education Institutions.

The goal of the Education Law is to provide a possibility for every resident of Latvia to develop ones mental and physical potential, to become an independent personality, the member of the democratic state and society of Latvia.

According to the age and needs of the individual, educational system of Latvia provides a possibility:

- for moral, esthetical, intellectual and physical development;
- to gain skills and knowledge in humanities, social, nature and technical areas;
- to gain skills, knowledge and experience of attitude in order to take part in the life of society and state.

[Education Law](#)

[Law on General Education](#)

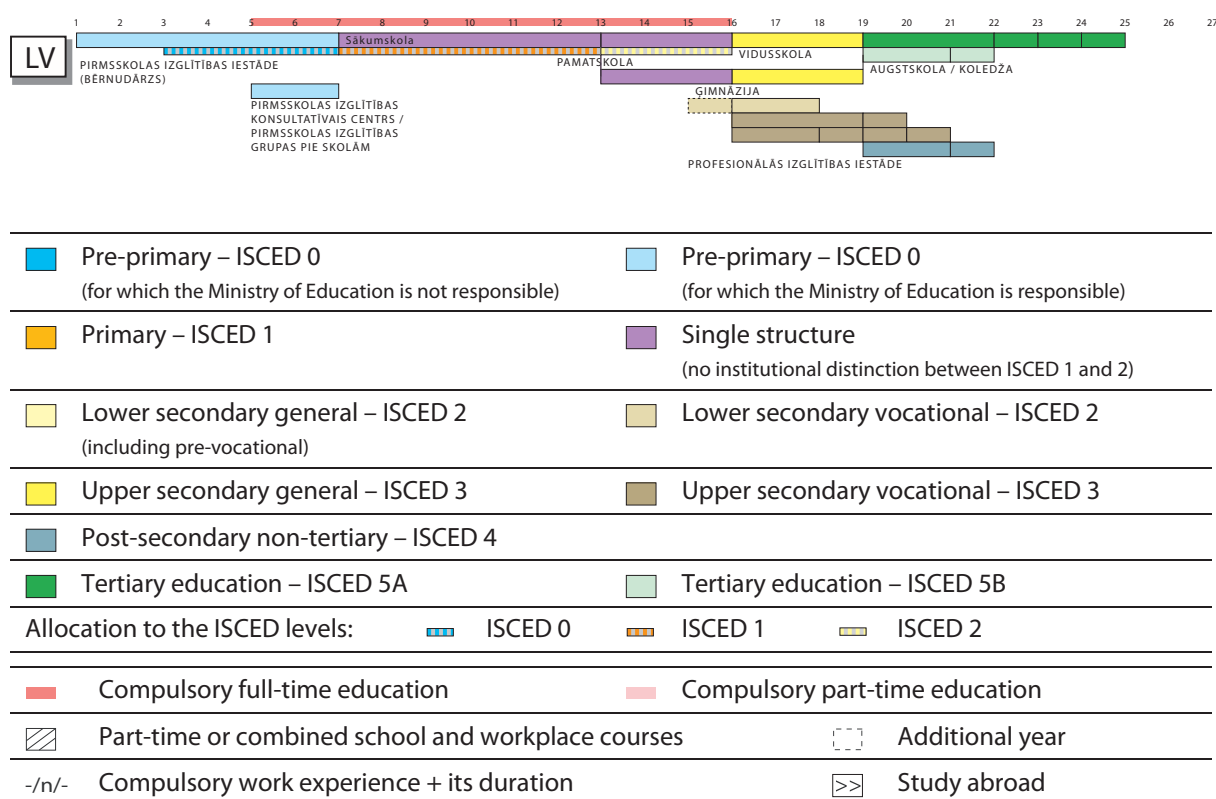
[Law on Higher Education Institutions](#)

[Law on Professional Education](#)

[The Constitution of Latvia](#)

2.4. General Structure and Defining Moments in Educational Guidance

Organisation of the education system in Latvia, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

Formal education includes pre-school, basic, secondary and higher education levels. Completion of these programmes is confirmed by the state recognized document on education and professional qualification.

The types of education in Latvia are:

- General education,
- Vocational education,
- Academic education.

The levels of education are:

- Pre-school education,
- Basic education,
- Secondary education,
- Higher education.

Levels of education according to International Standard Classification of Education ISCED (version of 1997) and according to Latvian classification of education levels and programmes (adopted in 2004, in accordance with ISCED-97)

ISCED	Level	Corresponding level of education and term in Latvian	Names of corresponding institutions
ISCED0	Pre-school education (pre-primary education)	Pirmsskolas izglītība	Pirmsskolas izglītības iestāde / Pirmsskolas izglītības konsultatīvais centrs / Pirmsskolas grupas pie skolām
ISCED1	First stage of basic education (primary education)	Pamatizglītības 1. posms	Sākumskola / Pamatskola
ISCED2A,2B	Second stage of basic education (general lower secondary education)	Pamatizglītības 2. posms, vispārējā izglītība	Pamatskola / Vidusskola / Ģimnāzija
ISCED2C	Second stage of basic education (vocational lower secondary education)	Pamatizglītības 2. posms, profesionālā izglītība	Profesionālās izglītības iestāde
ISCED3A, 3B	Secondary education (general upper secondary education)	Vidējā vispārējā izglītība	Vidusskola / Ģimnāzija / Profesionālās izglītības iestāde
ISCED3A,3C	Secondary education (vocational upper secondary education)	Vidējā profesionālā izglītība	Profesionālās izglītības iestāde
ISCED4B	Post secondary non-tertiary education	Vidējā profesionālā izglītība (vocational (upper) secondary education according to Latvian system)	Profesionālās izglītības iestāde
ISCED5A	First stage of tertiary education (University type)	Augstākā izglītība (universitātes izglītība)	Augstskola / Universitāte / Akadēmija / Institūts
ISCED5B	First stage of tertiary education (Non-university type)	Augstākā izglītība (neuniversitātes izglītība)	Koledža / Augstskola
ISCED6	Doctorate (Second stage of tertiary education)	Augstākā izglītība (universitātes izglītība)	Augstskola / Universitāte / Akadēmija

For detailed information on levels and types of education, see sections below.

The State Employment Agency, the Professional Career Counselling State Agency, National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance in Latvia and certain private enterprises provide professional guidance and counselling. For more information see section [5.18.](#) and section [6.16.](#)

Professional Career Counselling State Agency

Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance in Latvia

State Employment Agency

Regulations on the Education Classification of Latvia

2.5. Compulsory Education

Starting from the 1 September 2002 pre-school education is compulsory for 5 and 6 year olds. Basic compulsory education lasts 9 years from age 7 till 16. It is possible to start compulsory education a year earlier or later with the judgment of the medical commission and if the parents wish so. Acquirement of basic education is mandatory until age 18. Children who have reached the age of compulsory education are

accounted at the central level and their attendance of compulsory school is monitored through the Register of Residents, local governments, educational boards and educational institutions.

Parents are free to choose the school for a child, but everyone has rights to attend the school closest to his place of living. An establishment providing basic education programmes may not organize admission tests. In public sector schools the education is free of charge.

Institutions providing basic compulsory education are primary school *sākumskola* structure basic schools *pamatskola* and secondary schools *vidusskola*. It is possible to complete the basic education also in basic vocational schools, in the schools providing education for children with special needs, in evening or boarding schools, social or pedagogical correction schools or classes or other educational establishments providing basic education programmes.

Education Law

Law on General Education

2.6. General Administration

The Ministry of Education and Science is the central executive institution for education in Latvia, under the overall direction of Parliament and the Cabinet of Ministers and within the framework of Latvia's Constitution- *Satversme* - and laws.

Public pre-school institutions and schools providing general (basic and secondary) education are the responsibility of municipalities (cities or parishes (*pagasts*)) subject of supervision by the Ministry of Education and Science. The State (national) government is directly responsible for most public special schools (e.g., for children with special needs) and most public vocational and secondary vocational schools. Higher education institutions have substantial autonomy in governance.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

The Constitution of Latvia

2.6.1. General Administration at National Level

Saeima passes laws and enjoys specific powers pointed out in the laws. *Saeima* delegates concrete competence to other institutions, which participate in administration of the education system.

Cabinet of Ministers:

- determines the forms of state recognized documents on education, the criteria and the order of their dispensation;
- determines the order how the state finances the private education establishments;
- determines the order of study loans;
- determines the order for accounting children who have reached compulsory school age;
- affirms the constitutions of higher education institutions (except university type);
- founds state education institutions and education support institutions;
- determines the order of the registration and the accreditation of education institutions;

- determines the order of the school head attestation in state and municipality schools;
- determines the order and rules of the accreditation of higher educational institutions;
- determines the order of the licensing and the accreditation of educational programmes;
- approves the list of professions and posts for pedagogues;
- approves requirements (in conformity with professions) for necessary education and professional qualification for pedagogues;
- determines the order how the state organizes and finances publishing and purchasing of textbooks;
- determines the payment for pedagogues;
- determines the order of financing educational institutions, classes and boarding schools for people with special needs;
- determines the state unitary policy and strategy on education and presents the conception on development of education for the coming four years to parliament (for approval);
- determines national standards of education;
- determines the minimum of expenses for implementing education programmes for one pupil;
- determines the order how pupils are provided with preventive health care, first aid and security in the institution and its organized activities;
- determines the work load of pedagogues;
- determines the order of scholarship administration;
- determines the order of financing informal education;
- determines the order of organizing camps for children.

Ministry of Education and Science (MoES)

MoES consists of nine departments and six separate units, part of them responsible for definite spheres of education:

Administrative Department, Higher Education Department, Finance Department, Department of Information Technologies, Policy Co-ordination Department, Vocational Education and General Education Department, Sports Department, Structural Funds Department, Science, Technology and Innovation Department.

The six separate units are: Internal Audit Unit, Law Unit, Communication Unit, Internal Financial Mechanisms Unit, Staff Management Unit, State Language Policy Unit.

The following institutions are subordinated to the MoES: State Youth Initiative Centre, State Education Development Agency, State Education Centre, National Education Quality Service, State Language Agency, Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre, Academic Information Centre, Translation and Terminology Centre.

The Ministry of Education and Science:

- implements the state's unitary policy and strategy of education;
- develops drafts of regulatory enactments on education;
- establishes the registers of educational establishments, educational programmes and pedagogues;

- manages the licensing of educational programmes;
- manages the accreditation of educational programmes and institutions;
- organizes further education for pedagogues;
- develops state's standards in education;
- elaborates suggestions and submits the request for allocation of the state's budget to education, science, sport and activities of youth;
- controls the legitimate use of funds from state's budget in the supervised institutions;
- co-ordinates cooperation between state's educational institutions and other countries, and international organizations;
- develops precepts for educational programmes according to educational standards (except for higher education);
- develops exemplary regulations for educational and educational support institutions;
- fixes state's order for developing and publishing textbooks;
- determines and co-ordinates the acquirement of education for pedagogues;
- organizes assessment of professional qualifications for pedagogues and school heads;
- determines the order of state's examinations;
- develops and implements actions for improvement of teaching process;
- approves the regulations of colleges, state's educational and educational support institutions;
- employs directors of supervised institutions of the Ministry (except higher educational institutions);
- suggests the dismissal of school heads in schools belonging to municipalities.

Other Ministries

Other Ministries are competent to suggest the establishment, reorganization or liquidation of educational organizations. Ministries develop the content and standards for professional subjects and control the implementation of the standards in the supervised institutions. Ministries also control financial operations in the institutions they are obligated to supervise. However, the role of other ministries decreases, as transfer of education institutions under subordination of the Ministry of Education and Science is ongoing.

Academic Information Centre

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre

Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Ministry of Welfare of the Republic of Latvia

National Education Quality Service

Professional Career Counselling State Agency

Sports Administration of Ministry of Education and Science

State Education Centre

State Education Development Agency

State Language Agency

State Youth Initiative Centre

The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

Vocational Education Administration

2.6.2. General Administration at Regional Level

Heads of the cities, towns and parishes forms the regional governments in conformity with the Law on Local Governments.

Regional governments:

- are responsible for boarding schools, special education facilities, orphanages, vocational and professional educational institutions, extracurricular centers, except national or privately owned institutions.
- organize adult education, vocational guidance for children and youth, further education of teachers; coordinate the methodical work of teachers and questions on children protection in the area of education;
- develop and maintain the database of information on education.
- financially supports educational institutions under their supervision.

Municipal administration of education is organized through the Educational Boards of Municipalities. Regions or republican cities establish and finance these Boards, appoint the director in co-ordination with Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). Among the responsibilities of educational boards are to assist schools by providing teaching and methodological materials, organize education for adults, ensure possibilities for teachers to improve qualification. The most important functions are to implement the regional educational policy and allocate funds from the state budget to schools for salaries of pedagogical staff.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Law on Local Governments

2.6.3. General Administration at Local Level

Governments of cities, towns and parishes function at the local level.

Municipality is obligated to provide children residing in its territory with the possibility to acquire pre-school and basic education at the education institution, which is closest to the place of the residence. Municipalities are also obligated to provide youth with the opportunity to acquire secondary education, as well to provide possibilities to realize informal education, support extracurricular work and camps for children. Pupils have freedom to choose the school in another municipality apart from the one they live in. In these situations municipalities enter into the contract to make financial contribution for maintenance of educational institution that a pupil attends.

Local governments:

- establish, reorganize and close pre-school institutions, basic, secondary and vocational schools, in co-ordination with Ministry of Education and Science (MoES);

- provide children who have reached compulsory school age and reside in its administrative territory with places in pre-primary, basic and secondary schools;
- employ and dismiss the heads of institutions under their supervision, in co-ordination with MoES.
- establish the procedure for financing education institutions under their supervision from the budget of municipalities; in accordance with mutual agreements, participate in the financing of state education institutions, education institutions of other municipalities and private education institutions; distribute and allocate the financial means from the budget of the municipality to education institutions and control the rationality of expenditure;
- maintain the facilities of the schools under their supervision;
- guarantee the transfer of funds allocated from the state budget for teachers' salaries, the transfer of target grants and the state subsidies into the accounts of schools;
- provide financing for non-teaching staff of the schools;
- provide first aid and health preventive care for pupils;
- provide transportation to and from school if it is not possible to use public transportation.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

2.6.4. Educational Institutions, Administration, Management

Please refer to the subdivisions for more details.

2.6.4.1. Educational Institutions, Administration and Management at Pre-school Level

The head employed by the founder of pre-school institution runs the institution. The head hires the teaching and non-teaching staff, manages the financial resources, and ensures the implementation of regulatory enactments concerning education.

In every institution there may exist a board of a pre-school institution consisting of the head, the founder of the institution, representatives of pedagogues, parents, municipality, sponsors and primary school. The board of pre-school institution analyzes educational work, cooperates with the education institutions providing primary education and reviews suggestions of parents.

2.6.4.2. Educational Institutions, Administration and Management at Basic and Secondary Education Level

A school is independent in developing and implementing educational programs, staff hiring and school management. In particular, the school head (who is employed by the founder) of an educational institution hires the teaching and non-teaching staff, manages the financial resources, ensures the implementation of the regulatory enactments concerning education. The school head may hire deputy directors, who ensure qualitative organization of educating process.

The board of the school, which may consist of the school head, the founder of the institution, representatives of pedagogues, municipality, parents and pupils, also fulfils some administrative duties. The board of the school has a consultative function in the drafting of the school development plan; it works with organizing school social life activities; manages accounting of received donations, decides on the use of these funds.

2.6.4.3. Educational Institutions, Administration and Management at Higher Education Level

A higher educational institution is autonomous in regard to organizational procedure, implementation of the educational process, internal rules and regulations, hiring and discharge of educational and technical

personnel and distribution of allocated funding. Main administration units that represent and manage the work of the higher educational establishment – Constitutional (*Satversme*) Meeting, Senate and the Rector – are elected in the order determined in the constitution of the higher educational institution. The Cabinet of Ministers confirms rectors of higher educational institutions, the highest official in a higher education establishment implementing the general administrative management and representing the establishment without any special authorization.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

2.7. Internal and External Consultation

Consultations between various levels of education are followed out in the sittings of departments in the Ministry of Education and Science. Policy Coordination Department of the Ministry develops conceptions, plans strategically on issues of education, analyses information and provides coordination between regulations of various levels of education.

An important role in consultation of educational policy making also plays such state institutions as:

- Administration of Vocational Education - deals with the issues related to the content of vocational education and training.
- State Education Centre - works with development and improvement of the Curriculum and National Examination system.
- National Education Quality Service - participates in accreditation of schools and attestation of school heads, develops proposals on improvement of the work of schools.
- Council of Higher Education - influences policy on education. The *Saeima* confirms the Council of Higher Education of twelve members following the proposal of Minister of Education and Science. The delegates represent leaders of educational institutions, educational associations, Latvian Academy of Science, employers and a trade union of employees of education and science. The Council works out the national concept for the development of higher education and higher educational establishments, envisaging the development of both state-founded higher educational establishments and of those founded by legal entities, as well as promotes equal and harmonized development of all kinds of higher educational establishments and of higher academic education and of higher professional education; works out long term plans and proposals for development of education and research within the system of higher education; works out proposals to raise the quality of the research activities of higher educational establishments, the qualifications of the staff and of the study programmes; forecasts the number of students necessary for development of the state in general and works out proposals regarding the number of students financed from the state budget in each branch.

Council of Higher Education

Latvian Academy of Sciences

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

National Education Quality Service

State Education Centre

2.7.1. Internal Consultation

View exchange on educational issues is also in meetings and seminars for directors of regional school boards, schools heads and teachers.

Pedagogues in the regions and cities of Latvia form the methodical associations of certain subjects. They discuss development of educational programmes, teaching methods and objectives; work on unitary content of those state exams that are not yet centralized.

The Education Law states that pupils have the right to make proposals for the creation of self-governing bodies (i.e. pupil councils or pupil parliaments) at an educational institution and to participate in its work pursuant to its by-laws or constitution as well as the by-laws of the respective self-governing body. The school accreditation programme requires establishment of a pupil council. Normally, representatives of pupils from basic and secondary education are elected to the pupil council. The levels of involvement of these councils in decision-making inside and/or outside the school differ in each school. Many pupil councils have established collegial partnerships with their school head and school administration. Councils exist not only at school level but also at community and regional level in order to cooperate and develop joint projects.

According to the Law on General Education, a council of the education institution should exist in every school. The council may consist of representatives of teachers, the local authority, parents and pupils from all educational levels. The head of the education institution and the founder of the institution may participate, too. In the council, parent representatives have to be in majority, and the head of the council has to be a parent representative. The council of the education institution has an advisory status, but it usually also assumes certain decision-making functions.

For the development of higher education the Rectors' Council has been established. The Council coordinates educational activities in higher education institutions, promotes an active exchange of ideas and develops proposals for legislation on issues concerning higher education.

Students of higher educational institutions have their own Council of Students. It functions according to guidelines set and approved by the Senate of the institution. Councils of Students usually have an important role in deciding on various issues concerning academic life in a higher educational institution. In order to represent the rights and interests of students at national and international level, most Student Councils have joined Student Union of Latvia.

Latvian Rectors' Council

Student Union of Latvia

Education Law

2.7.2. Consultation involving Players in Society at large

- In 1993 the National Tripartite (employers, state and union organizations) Council for Co-operation (NTCC) began to function. The Ministries of Welfare, Economics, Finance, Justice, Agriculture, Education and Science and Environmental Protection and Regional Development represent the state. In 1999 the NTCC has established a sub-council - the Tripartite Council for Co-operation in Vocational Education whose mandate was expanded in 2000 with the establishment of the Tripartite Sub-council for Co-operation in Vocational Education and Employment. These organizations play a significant role in development of policy for vocational and professional education. They review drafts of state development plans, concepts and regulatory enactments concerning vocational education, human resource development and employment and draw up proposals for improvements; evaluate proposals and submit suggestions to state and non-government organizations about vocational education and employment.
- Trade union of employees of education and science of Latvia unites employees from the field of education. Aims of the trade union are not only protection of rights of teaching staff, but also - advantage development of education and science in Latvia.

- Parents are involved in the educational policy making of the school through the Board of school or non-governmental organizations representing views of parents. In some municipalities, parents have united with NGOs to devote their time to children and foster their well-being in the community and at regional and national level. Among the main aims of parent organisations is learning and setting an example of social and moral responsibility (e.g. through monitoring children's safety on the streets and in public places). However more often parental involvement in the school's activities is limited to attendance of parent gatherings and occasional financial support.

National Tripartite Co-operation Council

2.8. Methods of Financing Education

Costs for acquirement of pre-school, basic, secondary (general and vocational) education in institutions founded by the state or municipalities are covered from budgets of the state and municipalities. State education institutions are financed from the state budget in accordance with the annual State Budget Law, while municipal education institutions are financed from the municipal budgets. Private education institutions are financed by its founders, while the state and municipalities participate in financing if the school provides accredited basic and general secondary education programmes.

If a student transfers to school of another municipality, an interim settlement is made between the respective municipalities.

The funding model „money follows the child“ was introduced in school year 2009/2010 and the Ministry of Education and Science formed a work group that will analyze and assess the results of the introduced model and develop proposals for the further improvement of the model that could be introduced beginning with school year 2010/2011. The new established municipalities that after carrying into effect the national administrative reform were able to manage school network adjustment according to the number of pupils, demographic trends (in the past 10 years the number of pupils has decreased by 100 thousands) and new funding model are winners both in the context of education quality and insurance of competitive salaries. This is confirmed by the fact that from 2010 January 1st means that „follow the child“ teacher salaries to compare with the last 4 months of year 2009 will increase from average 460Ls to average 650Ls.

Funding from the central state budget is allotted annually and divided at the level of districts. There are often several municipalities in one district. If a student transfers within the district, there are no changes in financing. However, if he/she moves to another district, this affects calculation of finances for the next year (if a student transfers school in the middle of the school year, no changes are made as regards the current year).

Education institutions may receive extra finances from the following sources:

- Donations and sponsorship,
- Service provision,
- Other sources of income.

Costs for acquirement of higher education for a certain number of places every year is covered from the budget of the state. For the other places the institution is free to set the fee for education.

A significant project on the improvement of cost effectiveness and education quality financed by the World Bank started in 1999 and continued till the middle of 2004. Within the project impressive reconstruction of school buildings has been done. The project also supported development of the education standards, programmes, and examination system and school evaluation.

Latvia, as a new member state of the European Union is eligible for the financial support provided by Structural Funds. This support is also available for improvement and development of various, education-related aspects and issues through tender procedure.

2.8.1. Methods of Financing Education. Pre-school Education

Local governments own public pre-school education establishments. As founders they are responsible for the financing of education institutions (salaries of teachers, administrative and technical staff, learning materials, maintenance of buildings and utilities). State budget is provided for the salaries of teachers providing compulsory pre-school education for 5 and 6 year olds.

Parents make financial contributions to cover the cost of meals and a part of maintenance expenses.

2.8.2. Methods of Financing Education. Basic and Secondary Education

Local governments own schools of general education at both basic and secondary level. At these schools the wages for pedagogical staff are allocated from the state budget while the maintenance and utilities costs are covered through the local government budgets.

The state provides all necessary finances for schools established for children with special needs, boarding schools, schools and classes of social correction.

State gymnasiums receive extra finances because they also fulfil other functions in the field of teachers' further education and regional centre of methodology.

2.8.3. Methods of Financing Education. Vocational Education

The state directly supervises and provides funding for vocational schools, secondary vocational schools, and post secondary non-tertiary vocational schools. It is foreseen to pass vocational schools owned by the state to local governments after the regional reform is completed. So far as schools remain owned by the state, they are financed through the responsible ministries – Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Interior Affairs.

Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Ministry of Interior Affairs of the Republic of Latvia

2.8.4. Methods of Financing Education. Higher Education

During the Soviet period higher education was free of charge. Today the scarcity of budget resources and increasing number of those wishing to study results in state-supported and fee paying students in public higher education institutions.

Financial resources of state higher education establishments are funds from the basic state budget and income from other sources. Higher education establishments shall use this income according to the regulations on non-profit organizations. A higher education establishment has the right to accept and use donations and grants from banks, other credit organizations, grants and donations from legal entities, as well as individuals. The Senate of the higher education establishment determines the structure of the financial resources of a higher education establishment but an Audit commission shall control the execution of its budget. Once a year the Rector shall inform the Senate, the Minister of Education and Science and the Minister of the respective field or the founder of the respective institution about the use of the budget.

Higher education establishments founded by the state shall receive the following funding:

- from the state education budget - basic financing for the optimum number of lists of study programmes and the number of students covering resources to pay for public utilities, taxes, infrastructure maintenance, purchase of equipment and inventory, research and artistic creativity as well as salaries for the staff;

- from tuition fees, paid by the state or received as repayable or free loans which either have to be paid back or need not to be paid back according to the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers on financing studies;
- from financing intended for use on specific goals.

The number of students financed from the state budget in each of the higher educational establishments approves the Minister of Science and Education after the suggestion by the Council of Higher Education.

Tuition fees are charged to students who pass the entrance examinations or regular examinations but fail to be admitted to state-financed places.

There has been a long debate on tuition fees. Several times a proposal has been put forward that the system should be rearranged so that all students would pay tuition fees. The negative reaction of students and society so far has blocked this initiative.

Higher Education in Latvia

Council of Higher Education

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

2.9. Statistics

All data from the official website Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia and the Statistical Department of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia unless indicated otherwise.

2.9.1. Pre-school education

2008/2009	
Number of pre-school educational institutions	570
Number of pre-school groups at interest education establishments	24
Number of children in all pre-school institutions and groups	82 169
Language of instruction in pre school institutions, percent	%
Groups learning in Latvian	74
In Russian	22
In Polish	0,3
Latvian and Russian - bilingual	3
Latvian and Polish - bilingual	...
In English	...
Number of pedagogues	9298

2.9.2. General education – basic, secondary and special education

2008/2009	
General education institutions	948
Of which:	
General full-time schools	851
General evening schools	34
Special schools	63
Number of pupils in general education schools	249446
In general full time schools	236223
In general evening schools	13223
In special schools and classes	8760
Distribution according to education levels:	
First stage of basic education: 1 st -4 th class	75943
Second stage of basic education: 5 th -9 th class	111338
Secondary education: 10 th -12 th class	62165

Distribution of general full-time schools according to the language of instruction	2008/2009
Latvian	724
Latvian/Russian	81
Russian	135
Polish	1
Ukrainian	1
Byelorussian	1
English	1
Number of pupils according to the language of instruction	
Latvian	173712
Russian	61022
Latvian/Russian	27721
Polish	1073
Other languages: Ukrainian,	225
Byelorussian	95
English	96
Number of pedagogical staff in general education schools	23817

2.9.3. Vocational education

2008/2009	
Number of vocational education institutions	90
Under supervision of:	
Ministry of Education and Science	65
Ministry of Welfare	1
Ministry of Culture	14
Ministry of Interior Affairs	1
Municipal	5
Private	4

Number of pupils and students in vocational education institutions	38819
Of which in the following study fields, according to the National Classification of Education:	%
General education	0.9
Humanities and art	8.1
Social sciences, business and law	16.6
Natural sciences, mathematics and information technologies	6.2
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	42.6
Agriculture	2.6
Health and welfare	1.6
Services	21.2
Number of pedagogues working in vocational education institutions	4918

2.9.4. Higher education

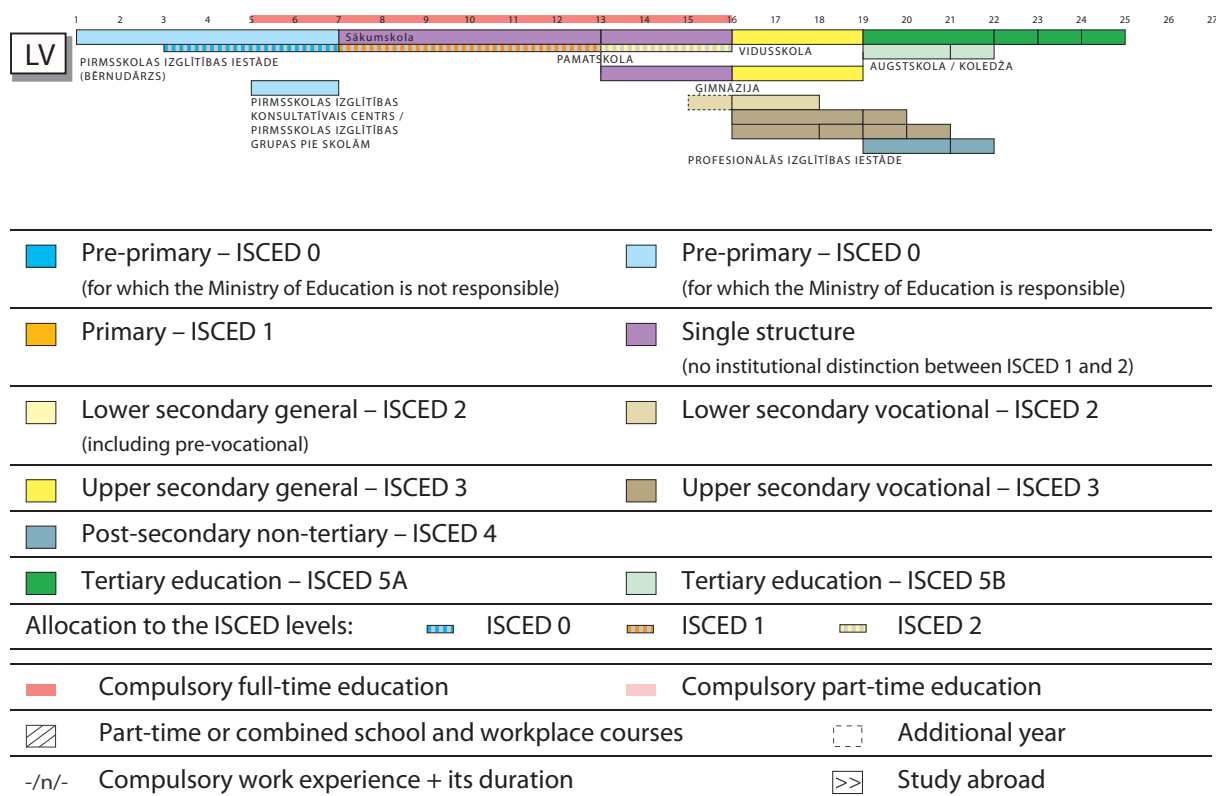
2009/2010	
Number of higher educational institutions	57
State owned institutions	36
Private	21
Number of students	112555
Students financed from the state and local government budget	34203

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

3. Pre-primary Education

Organisation of the education system in Latvia, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

In Latvia the term for education at ISCED 0 level is pre-school education *pirmsskolas izglītība*. Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

3.1. Historical Overview

The first pre-school education institutions for private childcare in Latvia were established around 1910. The opening of a pre-school was organized by national worker unions, Christian organizations and the state. The number of pre-school education institutions was growing rapidly and reached 97 in 1940. The state established pre-school education institutions for talented and gifted children in order to develop their talents starting from the age of two. Different theories supported the idea of the education for children at pre-school education institutions from the age of one. The necessity to educate parents was emphasized as well.

The number of pre-school education institutions increased considerably from 1950 to 1980. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the proclamation of the independent Republic of Latvia the number of pre-school education institutions decreased due to high costs of maintenance, declining birth rate and decreasing enrolment. The number of institutions was 1014 with 87803 fosterlings in 1991, and, respectively, 564 institution and 79253 fosterlings in year 2007.

The content of pre-school education is implemented by pre-school education institutions *pirmsskolas izglītības iestāde*, pre-school education group *pirmsskolas izglītības grupas pie skolām* as well as by families. If the family educates the child at home, it may receive methodological support at the consultative centres of pre-school education *pirmsskolas izglītības konsultatīvais centrs*.

The founders of pre-school education institutions are local governments (for public pre-schools) or physical or legal entities (for private pre-schools). The decision on foundation, reorganization and closing of the institution should be co-coordinated with the municipality's board of education and the Ministry of Education and Science.

In 2006, due to an increasing teacher shortage in pre-school education the amendments in the Education Law were made appointing primary school teachers as eligible to teach also in pre-school institutions.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Law on General Education

3.2. Ongoing Debates and Future Developments

In the middle of 1990s many pre-school institutions were liquidated due to decreasing birth-rate. It led to the difficulties to ensure a place in municipal pre-school institutions for all children. Families are obliged to queue up in order to enrol the child in a pre-school institution. It mostly concerns families living in Riga, and the municipality has introduced several initiatives to resolve or to facilitate the situation, like co-financing of private pre-school institutions, allocation of allowances and provision with day centres. At the end of 2006, several day centres were opened in Riga where parents may leave their children for a half day; also an allowance of Ls 50 is allocated to one of parents whose children are not enrolled in a pre-school institution, in order to employ a baby-sitter. In order to optimize the enrolment system of children to pre-school institutions in Riga municipality, a special centralized registration procedure is being planned. A special structural unit will be established where parents will be able to register their children and specify preferable institutions and the language of instruction.

In August 2008 to facilitate the development of existing pre-school education institutions and establishment of new institutions, the Cabinet of Ministers assigned the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government to prepare an action plan for the development of the network of pre-school education institutions corresponding to the needs of state inhabitants. The plan foresees the following tasks:

- development of the concept for the implementation of the principle "money follows the child". The Ministry of Education and Science assigned local municipalities to carry out virtual modeling of results of the introduction of such principal and it is planned to sum up and analyze these results in May 2009.
- analysis of the baby-sitting service development.
- development of a support programme facilitating the development of pre-school education network.
- Introduction of changes to legislation concerning hygiene norms, construction regulations, study loan cancellation for teachers at private pre-school education institutions

In October 2008 the Ministry of Education and Science has prepared draft amendments to the Education Law prescribing that private pre-school education institutions providing compulsory education for 5 and 6-year-old children shall receive state budget funds.

Although debates had arisen about abolishing mandatory 5 and 6 year old preparation for school due to the economic situation in state, in school year 2009/2010 the preparation for 5 and 6 year olds was financed from state budget and remained obligatory.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Education Law

Protection of the Rights of the Child Law

3.3. Specific Legislative Framework

Pre-school education in Latvia is a part of general education. The legal background for pre-school institutions is Education Law, Law on General Education, Models of Pre-school education programmes, other regulatory enactments as well as the regulation of the institution approved by the founder.

Education Law

Law on General Education

Model Programme for Pre-school Education

3.4. General Objectives

The main aim of pre-school education is to prepare children for basic education. Main goals of the curriculum of pre-school education are:

- to advance the development of mental, physical and social abilities and to establish the understanding of general processes of nature and society, to build up moral and ethical values.
- to ensure development of initiative and inquisitive, independent and creative activities;
- to develop communication and cooperation skills;
- to favour development of a harmonious personality of the child;
- to form the understanding of one's belonging to the State of Latvia and ensure possibility to learn about Latvia and values of democracy.

The educational programme of pre-school schooling covers:

- Personality development,
- Socio-affective and physical development,
- Development of intellectual skills,
- Development of creativity,
- Adaptation to school life,
- Practicing of the state language.

In 2005 the Ministry of Education and Science developed the document on the basic skills to be acquired by a preschooler before starting basic education in order to help pre-school teachers. The requirements have been defined in accordance with the main tasks of the pre-school education programme implementation, stated in the Pre-school education programme.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Model Programme for Pre-school Education

3.5. Geographical Accessibility

The local government must provide the opportunity for all children in the local area to be able to attend a pre-school institution if the parents wish so. In reality, it is hard to ensure due to the shortage of places in the pre-school institutions. It is a particularly live issue in Rīga, as also children living outside Rīga attend pre-school institutions in the capital. In 2004, the local government of Rīga developed unified terms of enrolment

in pre-school institutions requiring to provide a place in municipal pre-school institutions for children from Rīga in the first place, and then for the others. Thus, now there are two registration lists, for children from Rīga and for those living outside. Only if there are free places after all children from Rīga are enrolled, the enrolment from the second list is started.

Municipalities (may) establish pre-school institutions upon the request of parents of at least 10 children or 8 children with special needs living in the administrative territory of the respective municipality. Municipalities must provide a possibility to attend the nearest educational institution implementing a pre-school programme for all 5 and 6 year olds not attending pre-school institutions.

In rural areas the municipality also provides transport facilities. There are buses conveying children accompanied by an adult from home to the pre-school institution and back.

3.6. Admission Requirements and Choice of Institution/Centre

Pre-school institutions place children from age 1 to 7. It is possible to prolong or to reduce the acquirement of the programme depending on the state of health and psychological readiness according to parents' wish and family doctor's conclusion.

Attendance of a pre-school institution is optional for children aged 1 to 4 and mandatory for 5 and 6 year olds in order to prepare the latter for basic education, ensure early diagnostics of learning problems and give non-Latvian speaking children extra years to practice Latvian.

The enrolment of children into a pre-school institution is carried out in accordance with the application procedure defined by the founder of institution, usually in the order of submitted applications. Children are enrolled in the pre-school institution when parents submit all necessary documents and if there are accommodation capacity. Pre-school education institutions are prohibited to set up entrance tests. However, it is desirable to have basic skills on behaviour, hygiene and self-attendance, although the lack of these skills is not a reason for rejection.

Parents are free to choose pre-school institution for their children. However, in Rīga, a place in municipal pre-school institution first of all is provided for children from Rīga and then for the others. See also section [3.5](#).

All 5 and 6 year olds are admitted in compulsory pre-school education programmes on the application of parents.

Law on General Education

On the Enrollment for Compulsory Preparation of Five and Six Year Old Children for the Acquisition of Basic Education Programme

3.7. Financial Support for Pupils' Families

Public financial support for families with children appears as family allowances and tax relief.

- Family allowances are awarded to all families with children. The amount of family allowances depends on the number of children and child's order in the family. Family allowances are paid till a child reaches 15 years of age or maximum 20 years of age, if one still studies in school providing general education and is not married.
- Tax relief is general, independent, and not proportional to family income. This is a non-taxable fixed amount from income for every dependant child up to age 24, if the child till that age studies in a secondary vocational, post-secondary non tertiary or higher education institution. A dependant child is a person receiving education who does not have any income on his/her own (grants and loans there are not understood as income).

Public pre-school institutions require that parents make a financial contribution to cover the cost of meals and managing expenses, while access to educational activities is free of charge. However, municipalities may, and mostly in rural areas do reduce the cost for meals for children from low income families. On school transport facilities, please see section [3.5](#).

3.8. Age Levels and Grouping of Children

Children are organized in groups according to a school model (kids of the same age) or family model (kids of different age). There can be both or either one of the models even in a single pre-school institution. The head of a pre-school institution may organize grouping of children also by nationalities. It depends on the demands of parents.

The founder may open a play group as entity or component of institution, or an integrated group attended by both sound children and those with special needs, health or development impairments.

In order to reduce bureaucratic obstacles in 2009, the regulations on minimum and maximum number of educatees in class were abolished and its up to schools and municipalities to determine the number of educatees in class.

3.9. Organization of Time

The organization of year, week and day largely depends on the founder of a pre-school institution. However, there are common recommendations on the organization of educational part of a pre-school institution. The Standard of Pre-school Education Curricula states main guidelines on the organization of pre-school education defining that lesson must be organized every day, ensuring uniform (steady) study load per week.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Model Programme for Pre-school Education

3.9.1. Organization of the Year

Usually pre-school institutions operate all year round with a break during the summer holidays lasting one to two months (usually in July and August). Whether or not the institution is open during summer depends on the founder of the pre-school institution. However, on the request by parents, a possibility to attend the pre-school institution should be provided also during the summer break.

3.9.2. Weekly and Daily Timetable

Pre-schools that provide childcare full day usually are open daily from 7.30 am till 6 pm, except Saturdays and Sundays. In some pre-school institutions there are one or more twenty-four-hour groups; therefore it is possible to stay in the pre-school institution also at night.

3.10. Curriculum, Types of Activity, Number of Hours

Curricula of pre-school education issued by the Ministry of Education and Science set up the main guidelines for pre-school education contents. Every pre-school teacher is responsible for drawing the programme of activities for the particular group of children to comply with the individual development of children.

The programme of pre-school education includes getting acquainted with environment and social life, learning of the native and the state language and literature, establishment of mathematical notions. The list of subjects also includes drawing, needlework, construction, sports and music.

Besides learning, children also spend time outside taking walks and playing. Children in a full time pre-school are provided with meals during the day and a possibility to take a nap.

Duration of time for intensive learning, daily, is as follows:

- For children up to 2 years – 15 minutes;
- For 2-3 year olds – 25 minutes;
- For 3-4 year olds – 30 minutes;
- For 4-5 year olds – 45 minutes;
- For 5-7 year olds – 120 minutes.

Model Programme for Pre-school Education

3.11. Teaching Methods and Materials

Play is the basic method in pre-school education and development of pre-school age children. By play children learn about the world and environment, develop imagination, creativeness, face a wide range of emotional experience thus developing artistic taste and aesthetic feelings.

The other methods are: practical method, verbal method, modelling, and experiment. Teachers are free to choose from these methods, however, play is approved as the best one. Play is being kept as an integral part of childhood, giving children emotional comfort, feeling of freedom and security. Various play activities ensure children's physical, intellectual and emotional development. Therefore teachers are being encouraged to use play as the main teaching method.

The Ministry of Education and Science has adopted the Model Programme for Pre-school Education Programme. All provisions and guidelines stated in this document must be observed when pre-school institution develops its own educational programme. When preparing his own content of the programme the teacher has to provide achievement of aims and tasks specified in this document. There are various textbooks, handbooks and other materials on pre-school education recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science. However, the choice to use or not to use them depends on the pre-school institution and the particular teacher, and the schools do not receive those materials free of charge.

The Ministry only distributes some free teaching aids where experience and various advice is summarized, and teachers may create new ideas on a successful implementation of pre-school education programme.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Model Programme for Pre-school Education

3.12. Evaluation of Children

The pedagogue observes the child's progress and tells him or her personally about achievements emphasizing the positive things and encouraging improvement of skills. The pedagogue regularly consults parents on the child's development and gives recommendations on the education of the child to be provided in the family.

3.13. Support Facilities

Pre-schools provide first aid and health preventive care for all fosterlings, as for this purpose there is medical staff in every pre-school.

3.14. Private Sector Provision

Private persons or legal entities may establish, reorganize and close private education institutions. The rules of registration of an institution, accreditation of an institution, licensing, registration and accreditation of education programmes are the same as for public schools.

The founders of private education institutions provide financing for them. Private education institutions are free to set tuition fees.

Private pre-school education institutions do not receive any subsidies from the state. However, they are eligible to sign an agreement with local authorities on financial allocation if they wish to provide compulsory pre-school education for 5 and 6-year-old children. Several local governments co-finance private pre-school institutions by giving a definite sum of money per each child from the respective municipality attending the institution thus resolving, at least partly, the shortage of places in public pre-school institutions.

The International School of Latvia is a private education institution attended by foreigners (mainly children of foreign diplomats) as well as Latvians. The school provides educational programmes at pre-school, basic and secondary education level.

3.15. Organizational Variations and Alternative Structures

In public pre-school institutions the language of instruction is Latvian, Russian or another minority language. In the institutions where the language of instruction is other than Latvian, part of educational content is learned in Latvian, that is, the programme is implemented bilingually. It is important to develop the sense of belonging to Latvia within the children of national minorities. See also section [1.5](#), and [4.17](#).

Other pre-school service providers include day nurseries; playgroups and day care centres; also institutions of interest-related education provide activities for children under school age. Educational programmes should be coordinated with the Ministry of Education and Science.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

3.16. Statistics

All data from the Statistical Department of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia.

General information on pre-schools, 2008/09

Number of pre-school institutions	570
Enrolment in pre-school institutions	82169
Teaching staff	9298
Pupil - teacher ratio	9:1
Language of instruction in pre school institutions, percent	%
Groups learning in Latvian	74
In Russian	22
In Polish	0,3
Latvian and Russian - bilingual	3
Latvian and Polish - bilingual	...
In English	...

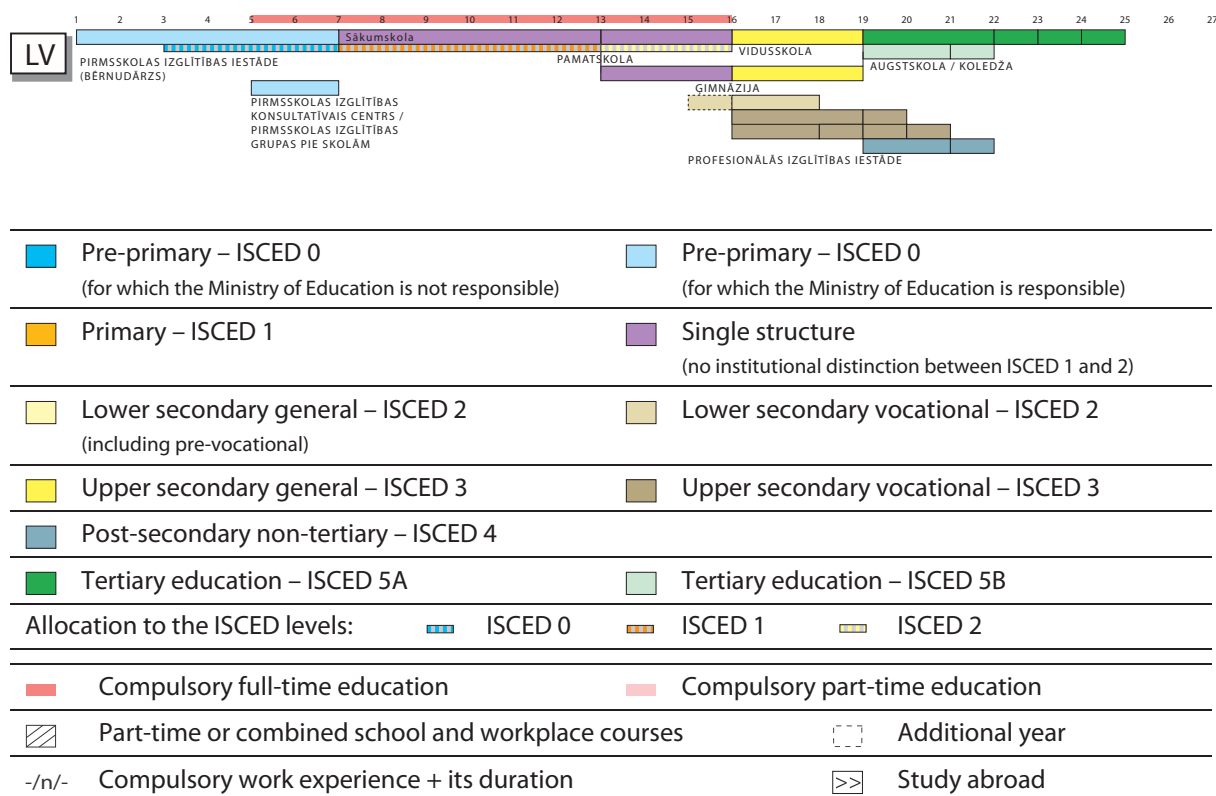
Pre-school institutions and groups at schools, public and private organisations by language of instruction, 2008/2009

Number of children in groups with Latvian as the language of instruction	Number of children in groups with Russian as the language of instruction	Number of children in mixed groups with Latvian and Russian as the language of instruction	Number of children in groups with Polish as the language of instruction
61 089	18 448	2 303	218

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

4. Single Structure Education

Organisation of the education system in Latvia, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

In Latvia the term for ISCED 1 and 2 levels is basic education. It is compulsory. Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

4.1. Historical Overview

Information on the first educational institutions in the territory of Latvia may be found in section **2.1.**

During the time of the first Republic of Latvia (1918-1940) compulsory basic education lasted 6 school years starting at the age of nine.

During the years of Soviet occupation (1945-1991) the length of compulsory education was 8 years starting at the age of seven.

Compulsory basic education pamatizglītība begins at seven years of age and lasts a total of nine years, consisting of 6 years of the first stage of basic education and 3 years of the second stage of basic education. Basic education is a single structure education level.

Institutions providing basic compulsory education are as follows:

- sākumskola (classes 1-4, 1-6; a partial basic education programme)
- pamatskola (classes 1-9; a full basic education programme)

It is possible to obtain the basic education also in basic vocational schools, in the schools providing education for children with special needs (see chapter **10.**), in evening or boarding schools, social or

pedagogical correction schools or classes or in other educational establishments providing basic education programmes (see section **4.17.**).

The development of the teaching content reform in general education has been one of the key tasks over the last years in Latvia. A number of new subject standards were developed in order to ensure a logical link between the subjects and acquiring core skills instead of overloading pupils with the factual material. The implementation of the new standards was started in September 1, 2005 and covered pupils of the 1st, 4th and 7th class.

Subsequently, in order to ensure successful implementation of curriculum reform, learning workload was augmented by two lessons reaching 22 lessons in the 1st class (in force since September 1, 2005) and by one lesson in the 2nd class reaching 23 lessons (in force since September 1, 2006).

4.2. Ongoing Debates and Future Developments

In order to ensure the quality of school education, it is planned to start public discussions about the length of the school year and its prolongation. The Ministry of Education and Science has been assigned the task to estimate the necessity of introducing such changes and find out pupils', parents', school administrations' opinion. The issues under consideration are the suitability of school premises for summer season, teaching methods in summer, organization of teachers' work in summer. It is also planned to start discussions about the length of lessons. At present the length of the lesson is 40 minutes, which is considered too little for carrying out qualitative work.

In 2008/2009 eight Roma teacher assistants started work at pre-school education institutions and inclusive education classes at primary and lower secondary education institutions. It is expected that Roma teacher assistants will help Roma children to integrate in pre-school and primary school environment as well as facilitate social involvement of the parents of Roma children.

In July 2008 regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers concerning computerisation of education institutions and development of e-services were drafted. The aim of computerization is to ensure general comprehensive and vocational education institutions with cost-effective, safe and reliable infrastructure which would facilitate more effective use of ICT in education process and thus improve the quality and effectiveness of education. It also has to be mentioned that the number of school using e-register has increased. At the end of school year 2008/2009 already 490 schools used electronic school management system "e – klase", besides approx 93 000 pupil school reports were prepared with "e-klase".

In September 2008 the approbation of State Examination Computerization System co financed by ERDF started. The system allowed to use on-line registration of pupils for centralized examinations from 2008/2009. In addition, with amendments in respective regulations state examinations that are not centralized can now be delivered to municipal education boards electronically with the use of ICT.

In the framework of Information and Communication Technology for Education Quality – a long-term complex general and vocational education development programme which main strategic aim is to improve effectiveness of education system and quality, as well as to promote development of creative and competitive personality with the use of ICT - the Ministry of Education and Science has began to implement two education informatisation projects in order to develop school portal "www.skolas.lv" and National Education Information System. Both projects will ensure more than 20 new e-services available cost free for pupils, teachers, parents and others involved in the education process and both projects are planned to introduce until the end of 2010.

The school portal will be developed as a single access point for teachers, pupils and parents to complete information about general and vocational education – education process, education opportunities, teacher training etc. It will improve the infrastructure of education ensuring entire information necessary in the

process of education (timetables, homework tasks and materials, class mate and teacher contact information, online examinations, online registration to education institutions etc).

In the framework of National Education Information System project it is planned to establish centralized education register, make centralized reports, give information to other public administration bodies; support of administration process, planning of education process and automation of teacher salary calculation. Thus the administration of information will be more effective.

In order for pupils in grades 7 to 9 to have an opportunity to study science and mathematics in a way which is attractive, related to the real life and involving use of modern teaching and learning methods, electronic study aids and possibilities provided by the e-learning environment, in December 2008 an agreement between the State Education Development Agency and the Centre for Curriculum Development and Examinations (since July 1, 2009 – State Education Development Agency) was concluded according to which the European Social Fund Project “Science and Mathematics” is implemented. The main objectives of the project are: to improve the curriculum of science and mathematics for grades 7 to 9 by emphasizing students’ scientific inquiry and their skills to apply the classroom-gained knowledge in real life situations, and to facilitate the use of information technologies during the teaching and learning process; to ensure methodological support for teachers and students in teaching-learning of science and mathematics in general education – to prepare various materials on the use of teaching and learning strategies, on assessment of students’ learning achievements, as well as diverse visual aids for teachers and students in printed and electronic form; to raise professional capacity of teachers of science and mathematics, as well as of field experts and pre-service teachers in their work with the contemporary curriculum and the devised teacher support materials; to raise students’ interest in science and mathematics by organizing extensive cooperation with universities, scientific institutions and entrepreneurs. In implementation of these changes the project team cooperates with schools, universities and entrepreneurs. This project will end in August 2011.

So far in several subjects of 4th grade pupil achievements were assessed without marks using descriptive assessment, but starting from 1st September 2010 it is planned to use only grading scale 1 – 10 in all subjects

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Regulations Governing National Assessment Procedures in Accredited Education Programmes

4.3. Specific Legislative Framework

Satversme (the Constitution) determines the right to education for everybody. The Law on Protection of the Child’s Rights determines equal rights and possibilities of all children to acquire education according to personal abilities. The Education Law and the Law on General Education defines different types and forms of general education (including basic education), management, compulsory school attendance, and also determines the types of general education institutions.

There are regulations governing curricula for schools providing basic and secondary education. At the central level curriculum is defined through the general national standard of basic education, standards and programmes of subjects, the programmes of education and the sample plan of timetable. These documents determine general aims of schooling, aims of each subject together with the description of content and time allocation.

Specific prescriptions regulate state tests during compulsory schooling and state tests and examinations at the end of compulsory education.

Each school, with the consent of the founder and in conformity with the Law on General Education, accepts its own Regulations. They declare the legal status, the founder, describe the organisation of educational

process and economic activities, aims and tasks of the school, implemented educational programmes as well as rights and duties of pupils and pedagogues.

Education Law

Law on General Education

Protection of the Rights of the Child Law

The Constitution of Latvia

4.4. General Objectives

Goals of compulsory education curriculum are:

- to provide pupils with basic knowledge and skills necessary for social and personal life;
- to generate background for further education;
- to favour harmonious development and growth of personality;
- to promote responsible attitude towards oneself, family, society, surrounding environment and the state.

The basic education curriculum should be implemented so that every pupil:

- acquires basic knowledge of language and mathematics;
- has understanding on general processes of nature and society, moral and ethical values;
- acquires knowledge and democratic values necessary for a citizen of Latvia;
- learns to study and adopts basic skills of using ICT;
- gains possibility to get experience of creative activities;
- acquires knowledge in Latvian, European and world culture heritage;
- learns communication and cooperation abilities.

4.5. Geographical Accessibility

The government and municipalities are responsible for maintaining various types of schools in all areas of the country to ensure the accessibility of education.

In Latvia, particularly in the capital Rīga, basic as well as secondary education programmes are often provided by one and the same school, called secondary school vidusskola . Therefore the pupil can complete basic education (classes 1-9) and secondary education (classes 10-12) in the same school.

Several municipalities provide transportation to and from school for pupils living in rural areas, if it is not possible to use public transportation.

There was a tendency under the previous regime to do away with small rural primary schools; some of them have been reopened since 1994. The maintenance of these is once again becoming problematic, as it is more expensive to operate small schools.

4.6. Admission Requirements and Choice of School

A basic education institution may not organize admission tests. However, gymnasiums and state gymnasiums may do it when enrolling pupils in the 7th, 8th or 9th class. In such a case, an authorization from the founder is necessary, and the admission test may not exceed the requirements defined in the National Standards of Compulsory Education.

The condition for enrolment in the 1st class is reaching the age of compulsory schooling. The Law on General Education states that children are obligated to start schooling in the calendar year when they attain 7 years of age. It is possible to start schooling a year earlier or later in line with the conclusion of the family doctor and if the parents wish so. In this situation health and psychological preparedness is taken into account.

Youngsters are subject to the obligation to attend school until they acquire basic education or reach 18 years of age. Children who have reached the age of compulsory education are accounted at the central level, and their attendance of compulsory school is monitored through the Register of Residents, local governments, educational boards and educational institutions.

Every municipality is obligated to provide a possibility to acquire basic education in the school closest to the dwelling-place for the children living in its administrative territory. Parents must enroll their children at the age of 7 in the school of their choice. The procedure is as follows: parents (guardians) notify the school that they want the child to attend. The founder sets the time and order of signing up for compulsory schooling. The school informs parents in writing within 10 days time, whether or not the child is admitted. If it is not possible to admit the child, the school head sends a motivated reply to parents and the copy of this document to the Board of Education, which further notifies parents about free places in other schools.

Freedom of educational choice exists at all levels of education. However, the choice is limited by factors like cost of transportation, living expenses and competition.

[Law on General Education](#)

[Regulations on the National Standard for Basic Education and Standards for Basic Education Subjects](#)

4.7. Financial Support for Pupils' Families

Public financial support for families with children appears in the form of family allowances and tax relief, see section [3.7](#).

In Latvia compulsory education is free of charge, that is, state and municipal basic education institutions may not require a fee for the acquirement of basic education programme. Besides, various kinds of transport support for pupils are provided, e.g. the possibility to buy a monthly ticket at a discount, or, in rural areas, they can receive reimbursement of 100% of transport costs to and from the school.

For several groups of children meals at school are provided for free, like those from large families, low income families as well as for orphans.

In 2008 the Cabinet of Ministers approved regulations on the allocation and use of state budget funds for catering of pupils at primary and lower secondary education institutions which foresee free lunches to all first year pupils in Latvia. Despite the economic crisis it is planned to allocate 1.2 million lats to ensure free lunches also to all second year pupils in Latvia from 2009.

[Regulations on the allocation and use of state budget funds for pupil catering at primary and lower secondary education institutions](#)

4.8. Age Levels and Grouping of Pupils

Basic (compulsory) education is a single structure and comprises classes 1-9. It is divided into 1st stage informally called also sākumskola and 2nd stage, informally - pamatskola though these titles basically mean the name of the institution providing this stage of education.

During the first stage most subjects are taught by teacher-generalist, who is replaced by subject specialists or semi-specialists for separate subject classes. Later, in the classes 5-9 a specialist subject teacher or semi-specialist teacher teaches each subject.

All pupils have a class teacher as their educational supervisor. The teacher monitors their progress, attendance and acts as an intermediary between the pupil and other teachers or the school authorities, as well as between the school and the family.

Classes are made up of pupils of the same age, except if a pupil has to repeat the year. In order to reduce bureaucratic obstacles in 2009, the regulations on minimum and maximum number of educatees in class were abolished and its up to schools and municipalities to determine the number of educatees in class.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

4.9. Organisation of School Time

The Law on General Education stipulates the length of the school year for compulsory education, see subdivisions for more details. The start and the end of school year for general education are determined centrally each year. Number of days in the school year may vary from year to year (The Cabinet of Ministers issues a regulation on this every year), it depends also on the class.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Law on General Education

4.9.1. Organization of the School Year

In Latvia, all education institutions are usually open all the year round. Someone from administration and a school person on duty is always present at school. Besides, school gym-hall is usually used also during summer holidays, and the school library may be of public character, particularly in rural area.

The start date generally is the 1st of September. Academic year lasts till the end of May, except for the 9th class, in which the final exams may be organized also in June.

The academic year lasts:

- for 1st class – 34 weeks,
- classes 2-8 – 35 weeks ,
- 9th class – 37 weeks.

An extension of the school year for classes 1-8 may be appointed if specific circumstances hindering educating process have arisen during the school year (e.g. – cold weather, strike, emergency situation in the school etc.). The decision has to be made by the founder.

The academic year consists of two semesters (September-December; January-May). Each year, the Cabinet of Ministers issues a regulation on holidays during the school year. Normally there are holidays in every season:

- Autumn holidays last one week,
- Christmas holidays last two weeks,

- Spring holidays last one week,
- Summer holidays last almost three months.

For the 1st class, the education institution, in agreement with the founder, may set an additional week of holidays in the second semester, usually in February.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

4.9.2. Weekly and Daily Timetable

Weekly and daily timetable in compulsory schooling is determined in the legislation. The school week lasts 5 days and lessons start between 8 and 9 am. The school day may not exceed:

- 5 lessons in classes 1 to 3;
- 6 lessons in classes 4 to 5;
- 7 lessons in classes 6 to 7;
- 8 lessons in classes 8 to 9.

The number of lessons for each subject is set in weekly periods; also minimum and maximum number of all lessons per week is set by legislation. Duration of lessons is either 40 or 45 minutes, it is upon the decision of the school head.

According to the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers the duration of the lunch break is 30 minutes.

Depending on the number of pupils, the education institution may organize two shifts. That means that one part of pupils come to school in the morning, others – in the afternoon. The second shift usually starts around 2 pm and lasts till approximately 6 pm.

There are many schools providing the so-called "prolonged day groups" where pupils usually complete homework and/or (may) stay longer after the lessons are over. Working hours for these groups are settled by the education institution. There are no prolonged day groups for those from the second shift. For the statistics see section [4.18.](#)

4.10. Curriculum, Subjects, Number of Hours

Programmes of education according to the legislation are developed by implementers and approved by the head of the school and its founder. However, schools may follow the sample plan of basic education issued by the Ministry of Education and Science concerning mandatory and optional subjects and time allocation for each of the subject. The currently operational curriculum was approved in 2006.

A programme of education reflects its aims and tasks, the content of education according to the national standard of compulsory education (*Valsts pamatizglītības standarts*) and its implementation plans. Basic education programmes should be licensed, and registered in the Register of Education programmes before they can be implemented in the school. The programme should be accredited within two years after its registration.

The management of school determines how much time should be allocated per subject and how subjects should be distributed over the week. However, this autonomy is limited due to the obligation to observe certain rules implementing curricula, such as the number of lessons for each subject as well as minimum and maximum number of all lessons per week.

In 2004 two new subjects, Ethics and Introduction to Christianity, were introduced. Parents have to choose one of these to be taught to their children from 1st to 3rd class.

In 2005 a new subject Social Sciences was introduced in the 1st, 4th and 7th class, and is taught in all 9 classes, see section [4.2](#).

The number of ICT subject lessons was enlarged providing three ICT lessons in the 5th, 6th and 7th class instead of one lesson in the 7th one as well as the number of Natural Sciences lessons was enlarged – from four in classes 1-4 to twelve in classes 1-6.

Also a new integrated subject of Social Sciences was introduced in all basic education classes (1-9). In this model four separate subjects (Ethics, Health Education, Introduction to Economics and Civics), are integrated into one subject. This will help pupils understand themselves and social processes, acquire cooperation skills, make decisions, argue etc. It will also annually devote several lessons to guidance-related themes thus improving guidance and counseling service.

After implementation of 3 year long pilot programme it is planned to introduce the History of Latvia as a separate subject for 6th – 9th grade from school year 2011/2012.

Latvian Language, Mathematics, Physical Education, Music, Visual Arts, Crafts and Social Sciences are taught all the nine years of compulsory education). Basics of Natural Sciences are taught in classes 1-6.

First foreign language begins in the 3rd, Literature, in the 4th, History and Second Foreign language, in the 6th, Geography and Biology, in the 7th, Physics and Chemistry – in the 8th.class. ICT is taught from the 5th to 7th class. If ICT equipment is available, schools can teach ICT in the 8th or 9th class as well.

English is mostly chosen as a first foreign language in Latvia. In the 6th class, a second foreign language should be offered. Foreign languages offered as compulsory subjects are English, German, French, and Russian. However, schools with emphasis on foreign languages start foreign language teaching earlier, even in the 1st class. Besides, pupils may often choose which language to study as a second foreign language, as several of those are offered by school; it is also possible to start learning even a third one in higher classes as an optional subject if the school can offer such a possibility.

There must be at least one more teaching period for all the grades every week called "class hour" (not included in the number of teaching periods in the table above), organized by class teacher (preceptor). Class hours are for discussing various themes like traffic safety, handling extreme situations, healthy lifestyle, professional guidance etc.

Pupils may attend 1-2 optional or individual/group lessons per week if they wish. Individual/group lessons are suggested for schools to use for:

- especially talented children,
- children who need additional consultation to acquire teaching material.

Several lessons of interest-related education may be also offered in educational institution, such as choir, dancing, sports, orchestra etc.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Regulations on the National Standard for Basic Education and Standards for Basic Education Subjects

4.11. Teaching Methods and Materials

Teachers have the right to choose their own methods of teaching, unless the school does not declare some particular theory as an educational basis, for example, there are several so-called Waldorf schools in Latvia. Methods depend on the number of pupils, intellectual level of pupils and equipment available to teachers. Teachers are free to choose textbooks from the list approved by the State Education Centre and Examinations. At present, teaching materials are available for all subjects of basic education. Teachers may

choose the book from which they will teach the subject. However, in May, the school principal must introduce parents to a list of books and other materials which will be used next year. It should be noted in the list whether a book will be available in school library or parents should buy it. Although schools receive the grant from the State for purchasing textbooks, it is small and does not cover all expenses necessary for ensuring teaching materials for all pupils.

Teaching work is organized in the form of a lesson. Selected methods should achieve activity and involvement of pupils, promote independent learning habits, and motivate pupils to become involved in curriculum development, changing the role of the teacher to that of observer, consultant and participant. Selection of teaching methods is also made with respect to the skills to be acquired by pupils.

Teaching methods most frequently used during lessons are as follows:

- narration;
- discussion;
- debate;
- individual work;
- group work;
- exercises;
- educational excursions;
- role-plays;
- heuristic teaching methods;
- problem situation methods;
- experiments;
- projects.

The maximum number of hours for homework is also stated - 6 hours per week. However, it is hard to observe this provision, as it is difficult to enumerate and estimate time necessary to do homework.

Starting with school year 1997/98, a project week was introduced in order to encourage pupils and teachers to use the method of project work. Previously the method was used occasionally depending on the readiness and wish of teachers and schools.

The necessity for project work was determined by:

- social demand: the necessity to co-operate in the process of work through formation of teams for fulfilment of tasks;
- necessity to gain experience of creative work;
- implementation of unconventional teaching methods, in order to develop teacher – pupil relations based on co-operation;
- increase of the activity of pupils with respect to acquisition of teaching contents, by encouraging co-operation among pupils;
- interrelation of learning motivation and active acquisition of learning skills; and
- possibility to change the conventional pattern of learning.

4.12. Pupil Assessment

Teachers in classrooms carry out continuous assessment on pupils' progress using a grading scale 1-10 and non-grade system (pass/fail or descriptive assessment). Descriptive assessment means that parents of pupils receive a short oral and written assessment report on pupils' progress, describing development of knowledge, skills, attitude towards learning and class participation.

The criteria building up the assessment of learning performance are as follows: the extent and quality of attained knowledge, learned skills, attitude toward learning process and dynamics of learning performance development.

Grading scale employed in Latvian schools

Mark	Explanation	Criteria
"10"	Outstanding	the knowledge and skills have been acquired at a level where the learning content is perceived, memorized, reproduced, understood and can be used independently for acquisition of new knowledge and solving of creative tasks;
"9"	Excellent	the pupil can solve various problems, substantiate his or her opinion by logical argument, perceive and explain regularities;
		the pupil can express independently his or her opinion, define evaluation criteria, anticipate consequences;
		the pupil is able to respect and value different views and encourages co-operation in solving educational problems.
"8"	Very good	the pupil can fully reproduce the educational content, understand it, perceive regularities and problems, differentiate between vitally important and insignificant matters;
		the pupil can use the knowledge and skills according to a model, analogy or in a familiar situation; can do standard and combined educational tasks;
"7"	Good	the pupil can express his or her personal attitude regarding the basic issues of educational content at a statement level;
"6"	Almost good	the pupil has acquired co-operation and communication skills.
"5"	Satisfactory	the pupil is familiar with the specified content of education, can differentiate between vitally important and insignificant issues, knows and can define concepts and basic laws, can formulate recognition rules, solves standard problems;
		the presentation of learning content is sufficiently clear and understandable;
		conventional cognition methods are used in learning, following the teacher's instructions;
"4"	Almost satisfactory	the pupil has acquired basic skills of communication and co-operation.
"3"	Poor	the pupil can only perceive and recognize the learning content, but the memorized and reproduced amount of the content to be acquired is insufficient (less than 50 %), the pupil can do only primitive tasks according to a model in a fairly familiar situation; only part of the tasks is done without mistakes;
"2"	Very poor	the pupil can present the learning content, but the presentation is difficult for the others to understand, vitally important issues are seldom differentiated from insignificant issues;
"1"	Very, very poor	co-operation skills are poorly developed.

Achievements of pupils are assessed without marks in the 1st class, i.e., by using a descriptive assessment. A grading scale 1-10 is used in the 2nd and 3rd class for all subjects except Native language, Mathematics,

Latvian Language for minority pupils and also Natural Sciences (in the 4th class), where the descriptive assessment is used.

In the classes 5-9 the grading scale 1 to 10 is used in all subjects.

At the end of the 3rd, 6th and 9th class pupils are obligated to pass centrally determined tests in certain subjects. The assessments of tests in the 3rd and 6th classes affect pupils' end-of-year evaluation, while that in the 9th class does not.

Pupils receive a school-report showing grades in every subject at the end of each semester. Pupils of the 9th class receive a school-report once a year – at the end of the first semester. The Ministry of Education and Science approves a sample of a school-report issued to pupils.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Regulations on National Standard for General Upper Secondary Education and Standards for Upper Secondary Education Subjects

4.13. Progression of Pupils

Usually progression to the next year is automatic. The school-report contains a decree of the head of the school on transferring to the next class. However, pupils who have not adequately mastered curriculum may be required to repeat the year. In order to decide about repeating the year, the board of teachers may set additional tests in no more than two subjects. Whether it is possible to repeat the year more than once is also upon the school board, there are no regulations regarding limits at national level.

In June 2007, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted amendments in the respective regulations prescribing that a pupil shall not move to the next class, if he/she has acquired an assessment lower than "4" in more than one subject in years 1 – 4 and more than two subjects in year 5 – 8.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

4.14. Certification

At the end of the 9th class pupils have to pass state examinations and tests in order to get a certificate on basic education apliecība par vispārējo pamatizglītību. Materials and a single order of examinations are developed by the State Education Centre. Tests may be organized in a written or combined (written and oral or practical part) form. Examinations may be organized in written, oral or combined form.

State examinations are in:

- Mathematics,
- Latvian (or other native) Language,
- Latvian Language (for those learning minority educational programmes),
- History (of Latvia and the World),
- Foreign Language.

Pupils that have received assessment in all subjects, state tests and examinations receive a certificate on basic education apliecība par vispārējo pamatizglītību and an achievement sheet. If a pupil does not receive assessment in one of subjects or in one of the final state test or examination, or has received a mark below 4 (see the grading scale 1-10 in section [4.12.](#)) in more than three of them, he or she receives a school report instead of the certificate on basic education. Such pupils have not completed basic education. In order to acquire basic education, the pupil may repeat the class at the same or another education institution, or may

complete a pedagogical correction programme. The latter, unlike the former, begins with the two month long adaptation period, when teachers determine pupils' level of knowledge in each subject. Pupils do not learn all subjects once more, only the not acquired ones.

The Ministry of Education and Science sets the dates for exams and tests. However, it is possible to postpone examinations and tests if the pupil falls ill or is studying abroad during the time of examinations.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

State Education Centre

4.15. Educational Guidance

Vocational guidance during basic education is available to all pupils. In most cases, choice of profession is one of the themes discussed in so-called class hour. Teacher may also invite representatives from the State Professional Career Counselling Agency (operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Welfare) offering various tests for detecting pupils' vocational aptitude, interests, preferences and abilities.

Greater attention to educational and vocational guidance is paid in the last classes of basic education like the 8th or the 9th. See also section **4.2.** on the role of the new Social Science subject in guidance and counselling services.

Besides, in the very organization of compulsory school an attempt is made to meet the needs and wishes of pupils. Assistance available to pupils includes several options:

- Schools may offer psychological support to pupils, pedagogues and parents (social pedagogues).
- Learning support is available for pupils with learning difficulties. Schools offer individual lessons or lessons for groups of children for this reason. Only pupils who wish to participate and have application from parents, attend these lessons.
- Schools provide first aid and health preventive care for pupils; inform the child's general practitioner about health problems.

Ministry of Welfare of the Republic of Latvia

Professional Career Counselling State Agency

4.16. Private Education

Accredited private schools providing basic education may receive funds from the state. This budget covers costs of teaching staff salaries. Private schools may sign an agreement with local authorities and receive financial means according to the determined costs for one pupil. These costs are determined centrally by the Cabinet of Ministers.

See also section **3.15.** on the private International School.

Private vocational basic schools may sign an agreement with the competent ministry about preparing specialists in a definite professional area. In this case institutions receive budget for this aim from the state.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

4.17. Organizational Variations and Alternative Structures

- Bilingual education. Implementation of bilingual education reform in Russian and other non-Latvian language schools started on September 1, 1999. In accordance with the Law on Education of the Republic of Latvia, all state and municipal general education schools started to implement the minority education

programme aiming at transforming all Russian language schools into bilingual schools. Transition gradually involves pupils of basic schools. Therefore, completion of the first step of the bilingual reform will take nine years. First-grade pupils who started in the 1999/00 school year will complete their bilingual nine-year basic education in the spring of 2008.

- The aim of bilingual education is to give all nine-year basic school graduates a good knowledge of both Latvian and their own native language. Bilingual education can be defined as an educational process in which pupils concurrently use two languages; hence, the other language (in this case, Latvian) changes its status from the object of learning to the tool of learning. Curriculum being developed according to the specifications and needs of each national minority, bilingual education gives national minority children the opportunity to acquire the Latvian language and culture without losing their sense of ethnic belonging.
- Four different models of basic minority education were prepared during the initial stage of bilingual education reform process. These four models had advisory status and determined the ways different variants of bilingual education could be implemented, depending on the choice of parents and pupils, their Latvian language proficiency and qualification of teachers. Schools were also allowed to implement their own licensed programmes. There has been an obvious increase in pupils' knowledge of the Latvian language during the implementation of bilingual education reform.
- Several educational institutions specializing in foreign languages teach several subjects in a foreign language, for example, Rīga French Lyceum (French), Āgenskalna Ģimnāzija (German).
- In the first four years of basic education there is a possibility for parents to organize learning at home if a child has difficulties to communicate with classmates, or is at bad health, or the school does not have a possibility to ensure the necessary specific learning conditions. At the end of each school year such a pupil has to pass a test in order to transfer to the next class.
- Boarding schools and custody places where children up to 18 years of age reside permanently should provide possibilities to acquire basic education. Children hospitalized for more than seven days also should receive tuition. Children staying at home because of sickness for more than 14 days are subject to schooling at home as well.
- It is possible to complete a basic educational programme and achieve the first Level of vocational qualification in basic vocational schools. Basic vocational education lasts maximum 2 years; pupils that have not completed basic education are accepted starting with the age of 15. Although the vocations acquired in these programmes are rather simple, this group of programmes is important to prevent social exclusion of young people. Completion of a basic vocational education programme leads to the certificate on basic vocational education apliecība par profesionālo pamatizglītību thus making youngsters eligible for further studies at secondary level.
- Persons who have passed the minimum permitted school-leaving age and have not acquired basic education may acquire basic education in the form of evening schools or distance learning, and graduate from school as external students.
- Schools may offer pedagogical correction programmes for pupils with development problems or inadequate social behaviour. The aim of these classes is to favour acquisition of compulsory education of all school age children according to their educational needs. Admission of pupils to these classes is coordinated with parents. In pedagogical correction classes the following pupils are admitted:
 - pupils who need more time to learn the programme of compulsory education, pupils that have rambled ("street children") and therefore not attended school for a longer period of school,
 - pupils without developed motivation to learn who therefore have not acquired education in step with their age,

- pupils who are disturbed to prepare home works and socialize because of malevolent environment in the family.
- All pupils in pedagogical correction classes have a prolonged school day to prepare home works, participate in groups of interest-related education and other activities.
- Schools may also provide interest-related education possibilities. Some vocational music and dance schools implement also full or partial basic education programme. However, at the level of basic education, it is usually interest-related education.

4.18. Statistics

All data from the official website of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia and Statistical Department of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia. unless indicated otherwise.

General information on schools providing compulsory education, 2008/09

Enrolment*	187 281
Certified 9 th class graduates	28 167
Number of teachers	20037
Pupil-teacher ratio	9.3:1

* excludes special schools and classes

Basic school graduates in 2008 in %

Graduates' choice	Total 100 %
Entered secondary schools (full-time)	62.7 %
Entered vocational schools	32.7%
Stopped learning	4.6%

Schools with two shifts, 2008

	Total
Number of schools	45
2 nd shift enrolment	5 897
% of total enrolment	2.4

Prolonged day groups in full time schools, 2008/09

	Total
Number of prolonged day groups	2 007
Enrolment in prolonged day groups	45 464

School attendance, at the beginning of school year*

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Classes 1-4	103359	92420	84351	78785	75690	75612	75943
Of which in the 1 st class	22427	20521	19539	18906	19597	20 472	19821
Classes 5-6	66428	62430	57435	50543	45596	41472	70866
Classes 7-9	108178	103952	101180	96279	88099	79675	47464

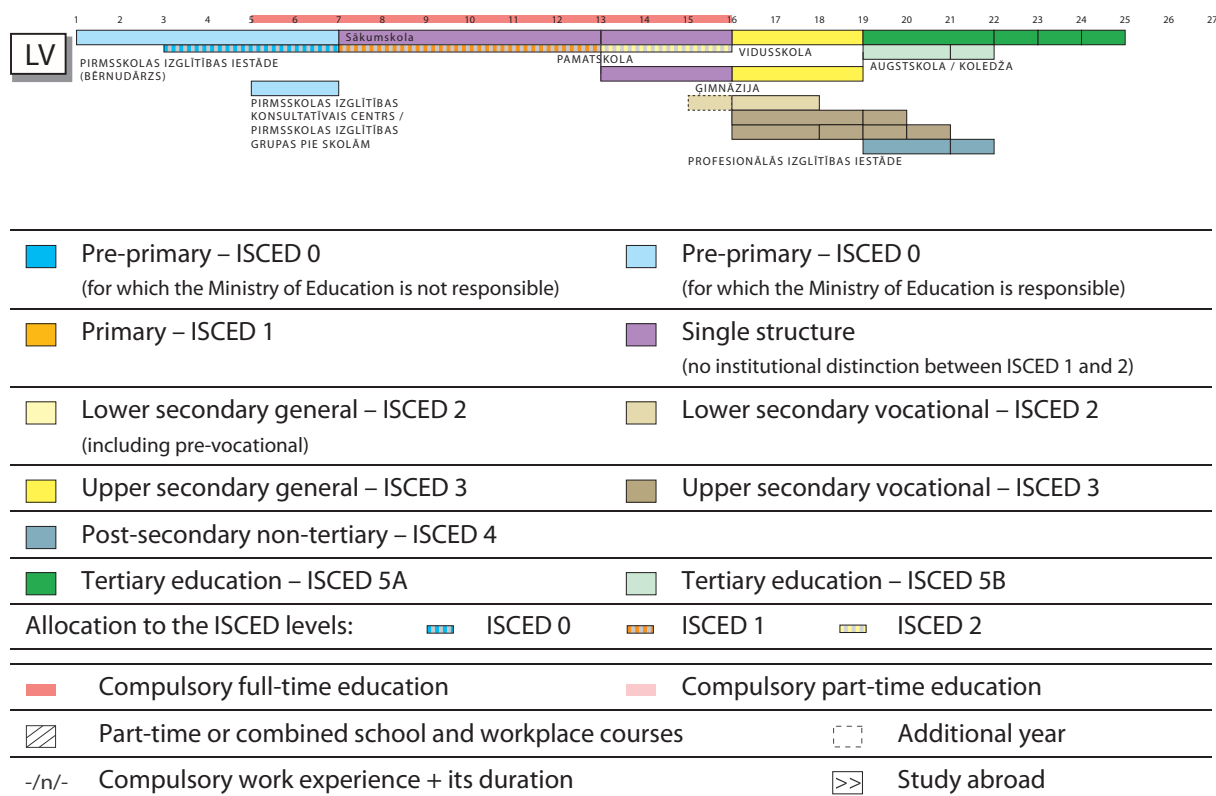
* Source: Ministry of Education and Science

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

5. Upper Secondary and Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary Education

Organisation of the education system in Latvia, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used. Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

5.1. Historical Overview

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Please refer to the subdivisions for more details.

5.1.1. Historical Overview. General secondary education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Please refer to the section [2.1.](#) n information on the first educational institutions in the territory of Latvia.

Before World War II general secondary education was offered by vidusskola or ģimnāzija and lasted five years.

After the incorporation of Latvia into the Soviet Union, two types of schools with different curricula and language of instruction existed in Latvia, namely, Latvian and Russian schools. The duration of schooling also differed. Secondary education in Russian lasted 2 years, in Latvian – 3 years. At that time secondary education – either general or vocational – was compulsory.

After the restoration of independence, in accordance with the new Education Law (1991) secondary education is not compulsory anymore. This regulation still is in force. General secondary education lasts 3 years, while secondary vocational programmes may vary from 3 to 4 years.

Education Law

5.1.2. Historical Overview. Vocational secondary education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Since Latvia was occupied and incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940, its educational system was changed for the Soviet one. The distribution of vocational education institutions and programmes was formed in accordance with the extremely centralized policy of the Soviet Union. Vocational schools were closely connected with big industrial enterprises and collective farming. The network of education institutions was characterized by a high level of specialization and a large number of small single-profile schools.

The collapse of centralized economy as well as other changes after 1990 influenced the very basis of vocational education. There was a sharp fall in the number of pupils in vocational education starting with restoration of independence up to 1996.

At the moment the number of pupils in vocational education institutions is stable, and a small increase is observed every year.

5.2. Ongoing Debates and Future Developments

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

A possibility to establish general secondary education as compulsory has been under debate for the last few years. Advocates of this idea underline its role in raising one's competitiveness and in reaching one of the general aims of the state, i.e. to develop a knowledge-based society.

In recent years, the necessity to prescribe examination in Mathematics as compulsory was underlined in order to ensure comprehensive knowledge for all pupils irrespective of the chosen profession, what would also grant their better competitiveness. Starting from 2009/2010 a centralized examination in Mathematics is compulsory at the end of secondary school, thereby final state test in Mathematics was cancelled. (see section [5.15](#) for explanation of centralized examination).

Starting from 2009/2010 it is planned to increase the number of general upper secondary education programmes which offer Physics, Chemistry and Biology as compulsory subjects as well as to ensure all pupils with possibilities to learn the subjects of the Arts area – Literature and upon the choice of education institution – Music or Visual Art.

Starting from 2009/2010 the Latvian language and Literature are introduced as separate subjects, emphasizing the importance of the Latvian language learning in general upper secondary education. The regulations foresee the introduction of the title of the subject - the History of Latvia and the World.

Instead of the History of Culture a new subject Culturology is to be introduced, which emphasizes cultural science not historical issues.

There are public debates concerning the use of pupil assessment 'tested/not tested' and 'no assessment', which was introduced in addition to a 10-point grading scale ten years ago. Education experts point out that the interpretations concerning the use of this assessment can differ at every education institution and it is not clear how it affects the final mark at the end of the term. It is planned that till the end of May 2009 the Ministry of Education and Science in collaboration with social partners will develop and submit to the

Cabinet of Ministers amendments to the Regulations on the National Standard for General Upper Secondary Education and Standards for Upper Secondary Education Subjects concerning pupil assessment.

The Ministry of Education and Science is going to introduce stricter requirements for progression of 11 and 12 year pupils and prescribe that only pupils whose assessment in all subjects is not lower than "4" shall move to the next class. Currently pupils shall not move to the next class if his/her assessment in more than two subjects is lower than "4" (see section 5.16. for more detailed information on progression of pupils). The Minister for education and Science has also introduced stricter requirements for enrolment in secondary education institutions.

In December 2008 the government decided to introduce changes in vocational education system and to close several education programmes. The grounds for such decision is the fact that these education programmes prepare specialists who are not demanded at labour market.

The Ministry of Education and Science continues development of the concept for raising the prestige of vocational education. The concept foresees significant changes in vocational education, its aim is to raise the attractiveness and availability of vocational education, facilitate collaboration between the state and employers. A group of experts at Latvian National Commission for UNESCO will prepare a report on the development of vocational education and its correspondence to the labour market. The experts also will give their opinion on the prestige of vocational education, its availability to inhabitants in the context of lifelong learning, the content of vocational education.

In December 2009, the Guidelines for Optimization of Vocational Education Institution Network for 2010 - 2015 were adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers that foresee further development of vocational education.

From current 59 vocational education institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science it is planned to preserve 31, including 11 competence centers, but 18 schools are planned to be brought under the supervision of municipalities where they would be merged with general education or interest related education institutions.

In school year 2009/2010 enrolment in vocational education institutions was optimised, thereby ensuring effective use of resources and granting access for more pupils to acquire a profession.

All vocational education institution pupils receive scholarship financed from EU Structural Funds.

Modern technologies are used in state examinations in vocational education - from December 2009 theoretical part of centralized qualification examinations for 6 qualifications is being taken electronically. In future, it is foreseen that the theoretical part of other qualification examinations will be taken electronically.

In further years, essential changes in the structure of vocational education are planned in order to increase the access to vocational education and competence of social partners. The structure will be divided into two stages each with different time of acquisition. After obtaining basic education pupils of vocational education institutions will be able to acquire first level vocational secondary education which lasts for 3 years. At the end of 3rd year pupils will take professional qualification examination in order to receive a certificate on first degree vocational secondary education and 3rd level initial vocational education. However, the access to higher education programmes will not be granted to holders of first level vocational secondary education certificate.

The length of second level vocational secondary education programmes will be 1 – 2 years after obtaining first level vocational secondary education or 4 years after obtaining basic education. At the end of this programme pupils will take centralized examinations in general education subjects and professional qualification examinations in order to receive certificate on second degree vocational secondary education qualification and initial vocational education qualification corresponding the 4th level of European qualification framework.

Further on, vocational education will be divided according to its main objectives into initial vocational education, pre-vocational education in music, arts and sports and adult vocational education. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Science is creating a national qualification system equating Latvia's 5 level professional qualification system to European 8 level structure.

Starting with school year 2009/2010 secondary school graduates are obligated to pass four centralized examinations – Latvian Language and Literature, Foreign Language, Mathematics and one subject upon students' choice.

In school year 2009/2010 first distance-learning general secondary school started its work - Rīga Distance-Learning General Secondary School offers general secondary extramural education programmes in form of distance learning. Its audience is any person who interrupted his/her acquisition of secondary education and is willing to resume schooling.

The Ministry of Education and Science has prepared draft amendments in the Vocational Education Law. These amendments will provide the possibility of acquiring professional qualification for those who have attained the necessary knowledge, skills and competence for his/her profession in non-formal education programmes. According to the developed bill individuals will have to obtain their professional competence assessment and take professional qualification examination in a non-formal education recognition institution in an order determined by the Cabinet of Ministers.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Guidelines for Optimization of Vocational Education Institution Network for 2010 - 2015

Regulations on National Standard for General Upper Secondary Education and Standards for Upper Secondary Education Subjects

5.3. Specific Legislative Framework

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Each school accepts its Regulations with the consent of the founder and in conformity with the Law on General Education. The Regulations defines the legal status, the founder, organization of educational process and economical activities, aims and tasks of school, educational programmes to be implemented as well as rights and duties of pupils and pedagogues.

Please refer to the subdivisions for national legislation on general secondary and vocational secondary education.

Law on General Education

5.3.1. Specific Legislative Framework. General Secondary Education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Acquirement of secondary education is determined by the Education Law and the Law on General Education. The national standard of general secondary education, subject standards, secondary education programmes, subject programmes and the sample plan of timetable regulate the curriculum. These documents determine general aims of schooling, aims of each subject together with the description of subject curriculum and time allocation.

Specific regulations prescribe the order of state test and examination system at the end of secondary schooling.

Education Law

Law on General Education

Regulations on National Standard for General Upper Secondary Education and Standards for Upper Secondary Education Subjects

5.3.2. Specific Legislative Framework. Vocational Secondary Education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

The Education Law regulates the status of vocational education profesionālā izglītība as well as determines rights and duties of the state, municipal governments, public organizations, professional corporations, private persons, educational institutions, parents and pupils.

The Law on Professional Education determines principles of organization, provision and qualification awards of vocational education; tasks, responsibilities of governmental institutions, education institutions, teachers and pupils; ways and means of acquiring vocational education; organization of the content of vocational education; and principles of financing.

Content of vocational education profesionālā izglītība and vocational secondary education profesionālā vidējā izglītība is regulated through:

- 1) national vocational education and vocational secondary education standard;
- 2) occupational standards;
- 3 vocational education and vocational secondary education programmes.

On the distinction between vocational education and vocational secondary education please refer to section **5.5.2.**

Vocational education development system programme 2003-2005 was adopted in September 4, 2003 with the aim to ensure access to vocational education and to promote its quality and cost efficiency thus creating a flexible vocational education system capable to adapt to the demands of market economy, to promote employment and preparation of competitive labour force.

Education Law

Law on Professional Education

Regulations on the National Vocational Education and Vocational (Upper) Secondary Education Standard

5.4. General Objectives

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

5.4.1. General Objectives. General Secondary Education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

The National Standard for General Secondary Education determines the goals common for all general secondary education curricula:

- to provide pupils with knowledge and skills enabling them to prepare for further education;
- to encourage the development of their personality and of their physical and mental capacities, and to develop their understanding of health as a condition for the quality of life;

- to encourage the development of positive, critical and socially active attitude, and to develop understanding of rights and obligations of Latvian citizens;
- to develop the ability to study independently and improve knowledge as well as create motivation for lifelong learning and a purposeful career.

In September 2008 the Cabinet of Ministers approved "Regulations on National Standard for General Upper Secondary Education and Standards for Upper Secondary Education Subjects". The regulations foresee gradual transition to modernized curriculum in general upper secondary education beginning from 2008/2009. New standards become effective in the following subjects: Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Sciences, Mathematics, Sports and Foreign languages. For other subjects the standards will become effective in 2009/2010.

[Regulations on National Standard for General Upper Secondary Education and Standards for Upper Secondary Education Subjects](#)

5.4.2. General Objectives. Vocational Secondary Education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

The main aims and objectives of vocational and vocational secondary education are as follows:

- to prepare the pupil for working in a certain profession, promoting his development as an open, responsible and creative personality;
- to advantage the acquirement of skills and knowledge for gaining the second or third level of professional qualification;
- to promote a positive attitude towards other people and the state, favour self-confidence and ability to undertake responsibilities of the Latvian citizen;
- to motivate the pupil for professional development and further education, and provide the possibility to prepare for continuation of education in the level of higher professional education.

5.5. Types of Institution

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

In Latvia, secondary education is provided in general and vocational branches and on a full-time or part-time basis, so pupils may choose the most suitable institution for secondary schooling. Pupil completes the whole secondary schooling in a single institution, unless he/she decides to change school or is obliged to interrupt instruction. Please refer to the subdivisions for institutions providing general secondary and vocational secondary education.

Besides, institutions vary also depending on the language of instruction. Schools offer instruction in Latvian and Russian. Within the educational reform, instruction in Latvian in secondary schooling, both general and vocational, is gradually increasing. For more information on the reform of minority schools regarding the language of instruction and bilingual education see section [1.4.](#) and [5.20.](#)

5.5.1. Types of Institution. General Secondary Education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Institutions providing general secondary education programmes are as follows:

- vidusskola (classes 10-12) – general secondary school

- ģimnāzija (classes 10-12) – gymnasium; may also provide partial basic education programme, that is, last classes of basic education (classes 7-9)
- vakara (maiņas) vidusskola (classes 10-12) – evening school; offers evening classes

General secondary schools offering full-time education programmes, may offer evening classes as well.

5.5.2. Types of Institution. Vocational Education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Vocational education can be obtained in various types of vocational education institutions. The names of institutions depend on the level of education and the type and characteristics of the programmes offered:

- arodskola - vocational school; offers part of secondary education, and its completion does not entitle to continue studies in a higher education institution (unfinished basic education may also be completed in some vocational schools in pedagogical correction programmes)
- profesionālā vidusskola/ amatniecības vidusskola - vocational secondary school; completion entitles to continue studies in a higher education institution.

5.6. Geographical Accessibility

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

See section [4.5.](#) on state and municipality obligations in ensuring accessibility of education.

The existing network of general and vocational schools was basically formed under the Soviet regime, and thus reflects the needs of that period – a mandatory secondary education with emphasis on producing a qualified labour force for work in industry and agriculture. Major changes have occurred in this organizational system since 1991; some vocational schools have merged, some have closed; some new schools of general education are opened in Rīga, the capital of Latvia.

Pupils receive free transportation to and from a school if it is not possible to use public transport.

5.7. Admission Requirements and Choice of School

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Everyone who has completed basic education has the right to enter general and/or vocational secondary education without age limit. Graduates of vocational education are free to apply for vocational secondary education programme. A certificate of basic education apliecība par vispārējo pamatizglītību and an achievement sheet is necessary for admission in both general secondary and vocational secondary educational institution. In the latter pupil may be enrolled also if he/she has completed vocational basic education profesionālā pamatizglītība or vocational education programme arodizglītība. As regards vocational education, it is open to everybody without previous education requirements, however not before the year in which one reaches the age of 15.

Pupils are free to apply for admission to the preferred school. Each school (with the consent of the founder) is allowed to define its own admission criteria. This applies also to the institutions providing secondary vocational and post-secondary vocational programmes. Usually enrolment at a vocational education institution is carried out through competition, based on the subject assessment in previous education documents. However, several groups of pupils are enrolled out of competition, such as children with special needs, orphans and children without parents support.

When admitting students into secondary education programmes, schools are free to hold entrance examinations according to basic compulsory education standard, except in those subjects for which students have received basic compulsory education certificate.

The decision on admission into a secondary school should be made within 5 working days after entrance examination. If the pupil is not admitted, he can require an extract from the protocol of the secondary school examination pointing out the results of examination.

5.8. Registration and/or Tuition Fees

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

In Latvia, general and vocational secondary education in public sector schools is free of charge, there are neither registration nor tuition fees. However, several schools have established support foundations, therefore legal and physical persons, pupils, parents and graduates may donate on an optional basis to the respective school.

Vocational secondary institution may also organize pay groups, usually in two cases: if the offered study programme is not financed by the state, and if demand exceeds supply, that is, the number of people wishing to study in the particular programme exceeds the number of state-financed places. The Ministry of Education and Science and line ministries determine the number of state-financed places in public and private accredited vocational education programmes.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

5.9. Financial Support for Pupils

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Public financial support for families with children is related also to pupils of secondary education, and appears as family allowances and tax relief, see section [3.7](#). See section [4.7](#), on provided support for pupils of general secondary education regarding transport and feeding.

The following support is provided for pupils studying in vocational schools:

- Every full-time pupil in a state or municipal vocational education institution profesionālās izglītības iestāde, receives a monthly scholarship together with partial compensation of transportation costs from the state budget. Monthly scholarship may not be smaller than family allowance. In some cases, an educational institution may also allocate an increased or extraordinary scholarship, which does not exceed a quintuple amount of the minimum monthly scholarship.
- Pupils may live in dormitories.
- Acquirement of vocational education and professional qualification is covered from the state budget for children with special needs (if they are in special education or social or pedagogical correction institution) and convicts (if they are in prison).

Regulations on Scholarships

5.10. Age Levels and Grouping of Pupils

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

In both general and vocational secondary education, all pupils have a class teacher as their educational supervisor. The teacher assists with making study plans, monitors their attendance and acts as an

intermediary between the pupil and other teachers or the school authorities, as well as between the school and the family.

The class (group) size may differ in several subjects, where more individual approach is used in teaching, like in foreign languages. Usually the class (group) is divided in two or three groups in order to pay the necessary attention to everyone. In vocational programmes, the group is divided also during the field practice.

Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

5.10.1. Age Levels and Grouping of Pupils. General Secondary Education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

General secondary education lasts three years. A general secondary school includes classes 10, 11 and 12. Classes are made up of pupils of the same age, except if a pupil has to repeat a year. In general, the age of pupils is 16-19 years.

In order to reduce bureaucratic obstacles in 2009, the regulations on minimum and maximum number of educatees in class were abolished and its up to schools and municipalities to determine the number of educatees in class.

5.10.2. Age Levels and Grouping of Pupils. Vocational Secondary Education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Vocational education programmes *arodizglītības programmas* last two or three years. Most of the students in vocational schools are aged 15-18.

Vocational secondary education programmes *profesionālās vidējās izglītības programmas* last three to four years; if one studies after acquirement of vocational education *arodizglītība*, vocational secondary education may be completed in one or two years. The age range is from 16 up to 20.

There are no classes like in general secondary schools. Pupils are divided in the 1st year, 2nd year etc. students like in higher educational institutions. The founder (Ministry of Education and Science or municipality), in co-ordination with the Cooperation Council of Professional Education, sets the minimal number of students per group in order to start implementation of education programmes financed by state and municipalities. Usually there are 25 students per group.

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5.11. Specialization of Studies

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

5.11.1. Specialization of Studies. General Secondary Education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

General secondary schools may offer programmes of the following 4 types of educational areas:

- general education programmes with no emphasis on any particular subject group;
- humanitarian and social programmes with emphasis on languages and social sciences;
- mathematics, natural sciences and technology;

- vocationally oriented subjects (like music, sport, economics; do not lead to professional qualification).

5.11.2. Specialization of Studies. Vocational Secondary Education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Fields of studies in vocational educational institutions profesionālās izglītības iestādes according to the National Classification of Education may cover:

- general education,
- humanities and art,
- social sciences, business and law,
- physical sciences, mathematics and IT
- engineering and manufacturing,
- agriculture,
- health and welfare,
- services (for example, personal services, such as hotel, restaurant, beauty treatment etc., transport services, environmental protection and civil and military defence).

It is possible to acquire about 220 specialties in vocational education institutions of Latvia. If a student decides to change specialisation, he/she may meet a necessity to start studies anew, as subjects may differ essentially (however, those of general education may be included). Each case is considered and addressed individually.

Regulations on the Education Classification of Latvia

5.12. Organization of School Time

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

5.12.1. Organization of the School Year

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Information on the school year and its organization (a starting date and regulation on holidays) in secondary education does not differ from that on basic education, see section **4.9.1.**

There are differences regarding the length of the school year. In general secondary education, for classes 10 and 11 the school year lasts 35 weeks, but for 12th class – 38 weeks.

In vocational secondary education, the regular school year lasts 40 weeks. It is longer because of the field practice, and may differ depending on the particular vocational education programme. Therefore, also the length of summer holidays is shorter for students of vocational education.

An extension of the school year for classes 10 and 11 may be appointed, if specific circumstances hindering education process have arisen during the school year (e.g. – cold weather, strike, emergency situation in school, etc.). The decision has to be made by the founder.

5.12.2. Weekly and Daily Timetable

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

The school week in general as well as in vocational secondary schools lasts 5 days. The school day may contain a maximum of 8 lessons. The duration of lessons is either 40 or 45 minutes, it is upon the decision of the school head.

In general secondary schools study load for classes 10-12 may not exceed 36 lessons (teaching lessons) per week. The minimum study load of pupil in general secondary programme is 3150 lessons, maximum – 3780 lessons. Pupils choose courses from the subjects offered by the school so that the total number of lessons during three years of studies stays within the named limits.

In vocational secondary schools, total number of lessons per week is 36 (for students under the age of 18) and 40 hours (starting from age of 18). The minimum study load in vocational secondary programmes is 5760 lessons (for programmes which are started after the completion of basic education) or 3120 lessons (for programmes which are started after the completion of secondary education).

5.13. Curriculum, Subjects, Number of Hours

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

The Ministry of Education and Science develops a sample plan of mandatory and optional subjects, and optimum time allocation for subjects. Education programmes are developed by persons/institutions implementing it in accordance with the existing regulation and approved by the school head and the founder of the school. An education programme reflects its aims and tasks, the content of education according to national standards, plans of implementation. Each secondary education programme should be licensed, accredited and registered in the Register of Education Programmes before it can be implemented in the school.

Eight subjects are compulsory for all general education programmes: Latvian language and literature, first foreign language, second foreign language, mathematics, history, sports, basics of business economics and applied informatics. Each of the educational direction includes group of specific compulsory subjects. About 25% of the total study workload is left to free choice of pupils and the school.

Teaching work is organized in the form of lesson. Maximum learning load per week and the length of a lesson is determined in the Law on General Education, see section **5.12.2.**

The content of vocational and vocational secondary education consists of the following elements:

- theory – the content of general and (or) vocational education and subjects in conformity with the educational programme;
- practice – practical and laboratory works, manual training and practice for qualification.

Ratio of theory and practice

	Theory	Practice
Vocational programmes	35%	65%
Vocational secondary programmes	50%	50%

Note: Admissible indention-5 %

Compulsory subjects include:

- Languages and communicative sciences:

- Latvian
- Foreign language(s)
- Mathematics, natural and technical sciences:
 - Mathematics
 - Applied Informatics
- Social sciences and culture education:
 - History
 - Basics of business
- Sports

Educational institutions should provide also optional subjects in each above-mentioned educational area. All educational programmes in the respective subjects should include themes on health education, environment education, education of the work safety and the state defence.

Vocational education standards and vocational secondary education standards and the respective educational programmes determine subjects, practical lessons and the content of qualification practice.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Law on General Education

Regulations on National Standard for General Upper Secondary Education and Standards for Upper Secondary Education Subjects

Regulations on the National Vocational Education and Vocational (Upper) Secondary Education Standard

5.14. Teaching Methods and Materials

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

The State Education Standards determine the common direction and methodological approach to teaching and learning strategies. It is further specified in the education standards for subjects. Detailed lists of teaching methods to be used in teaching in the particular classes and particular subjects are found in the subject curricula. The teacher may choose a particular methodology, if he himself prepares the curriculum of the subject.

Selection of teaching methods is also made with respect to the skills that must be acquired by the pupils.

The teaching methods most frequently used during lessons are the same as those used in basic education, see section **4.11.**

Also teachers of the vocational and vocational secondary schools are free to choose the teaching methods and teaching materials to achieve the aims and tasks pointed out in the educational programme. In teaching general and specialized subjects the methods include individual work, group work, projects, laboratory works, exercises, discussions and practice within enterprises.

The provisions and general situation regarding the use of teaching materials are the same as those in basic education, see section **4.11.**

There are several subjects, where a wide supply of teaching materials such as books, exercise-books and audio-visual materials are available, particularly for foreign languages. For these subjects, pupils usually must buy the respective materials as well as various exercise-books.

[Regulations on National Standard for General Upper Secondary Education and Standards for Upper Secondary Education Subjects](#)

[Regulations on the National Vocational Education and Vocational \(Upper\) Secondary Education Standard](#)

5.15. Pupil Assessment

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

The principle of variety is used as a measure to assess study achievements, such as written, oral and integrated tests, evaluation of individual and group work, and different test works such as diagnostic tests, project works and examinations. A 10-point grading scale (see explanation in the section [4.12.](#) is used to evaluate educational achievements of pupils in secondary education (classes 10-12).

Pupils receive a school-report showing grades in every subject at the end of each semester. Pupils of the 12th class receive the school- report once a year – at the end of the first school term. The Ministry of Education and Science approves a sample of a school-report to be issued to pupils.

In the centralized examinations (i.e. examinations are developed and evaluated at national, not school level) of general secondary education, another system of evaluation is used. The educational achievements of pupils are evaluated at six levels (A, B, C, D, E, F levels, where A is the top level and F is the lowest level). The levels of evaluation at the foreign language examination are determined according to the recommendations of the Council of Europe. In other subjects the Ministry of Education and Science works out the levels of evaluation.

In vocational secondary education, a 10-point grading scale is used to evaluate educational achievements in subjects, practical lessons as well as the final state examinations:

- High level of acquired skills and knowledge: outstanding – "10", excellent – "9";
- Optimum level of acquired skills and knowledge: very good – "8", good – "7", almost good – "6";
- Medium level of acquired skills and knowledge: satisfactory – "5", almost satisfactory – "4";
- Low level of acquired skills and knowledge: poor – "3", very poor – "2", very, very poor – "1".

Practice for qualification and tests assigned in the educational programme are evaluated with "pass" or "fail".

State examinations take place at the end of vocational and vocational secondary education. For more information on examinations see section [5.17.2.](#) Qualification examinations are centralized and should be taken in the state language.

[Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia](#)

[Regulations on National Standard for General Upper Secondary Education and Standards for Upper Secondary Education Subjects](#)

5.16. Progression of Pupils

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Usually progression to the next year is automatic. However, pupils who have not acquired an adequate mastery of the curriculum at the end of the year may be required to repeat the year. The procedure is the

same as in basic education, see section [4.13](#). In June 2007 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted amendments in the respective regulations prescribing that a pupil shall not move to the next class if his/her assessment in more than two subjects is lower than "4". Since approximately 13% of pupils enrolled in 10th grade fail to acquire secondary education due to their low educational achievements or dropout, in order to increase the requirements of general secondary education, in June 2009 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted amendments in the respective regulations prescribing that a pupil shall not move to the next class if his/her assessment in any subject is lower than "4".

As regards vocational education, progression to the next year is automatic if the student has fulfilled all the requirements set by the educational programme. There is no repetition of the year foreseen because of the special status of vocational education - the organization of the vocational education acquirement is like the one in higher educational institutions, where there is a possibility either to fulfil the requirement of the year (with the chance to leave some un-passed courses to next year) or to leave the school.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Regulations on Compulsory Requirements for Enrolment and Transfer of Educatees to next class in the General Education Institutions (except Boarding-schools and Special Education Institutions)

5.17. Certification

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

5.17.1. Certification. General Secondary Education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

At the end of secondary school one has to complete and receive assessment in all courses prescribed by the chosen programme and to pass final state examinations. There are at least five examinations and no more than four tests in compulsory subjects. State examinations in Mathematics, the Latvian language and literature are compulsory, another one - in the compulsory subject in compliance with the direction of the educational programme, one exam is chosen by the pupil, and the school determines another one in subject where the study load has been not less than 105 teaching lessons.

The final examinations of the secondary school are gradually transformed to centralized examinations (see section [5.15](#) for explanation). Although it was planned to introduce it for all subjects in order to facilitate entering higher educational institutions, it is now decided to decrease their number (for example, examinations in History of Culture, Basics of Economics, Geography and Natural Sciences are not centralized anymore), as it caused a prolongation of correction and assessment of examination works as well as late issuing of certificates thus impeding submission of documents in certain higher education institutions abroad.

In 2003, the system of education qualification was changed. So far, a diploma on secondary education was handed out also to pupils who did not receive assessment or received unsatisfactory note in one or two subjects or state examinations. Now, amendments of the Law on General Education state that if a pupil has not received assessment in one of the subjects (a yearly mark) or in one of the state examinations, or has received a mark below "4" (see the 10-grade scale in Section [4.12](#) in more than two of them, he/she receives only a school-report. The diploma of general secondary education *atēstāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību* is handed out only to graduates who have received assessment in all compulsory subjects (the mark must be "4" or higher; an assessment below "4" can be maximum in two subjects) as well as have successfully passed all compulsory state examinations which, at the same time, serve as the criteria for enrolment in a higher education institution.

Along with a diploma on general secondary education an achievement sheet, where final marks in all subjects and state exams are noted, is also issued. For statistics see section **5.21**.

Amendments in legislation regarding state examinations in vocational secondary education were made and will take effect from September, 2008. They specify the education programmes covered (programmes offered after the completion of basic education) and subjects in which examinations shall be taken (the Latvian Language and Literature, First Foreign Language, Mathematics and one subject upon students' choice).

[Law on General Education](#)

[Regulations on the National Vocational Education and Vocational \(Upper\) Secondary Education Standard](#)

5.17.2. Certification. Vocational Secondary Education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Students have to complete and receive the assessment (not less than "4" - almost satisfactory) in all courses, practical lessons and the practice for qualification prescribed by the chosen programme, as well to pass state examinations in order to finish vocational schools or vocational secondary schools. The mark received in the qualification examination should not be less than "5" (satisfactory) both for vocational secondary school and vocational school students. If the student accomplishes all requirements of the educational programme, but fails to pass the qualification examination, he may receive only an achievement sheet.

State Examinations in Vocational schools and Vocational secondary schools

Vocational school	Vocational secondary school
Qualification examination	Qualification examination and 4 examinations in subjects determined by the educational programme (the same centralized examinations as in general secondary schools). See section 5.2 , on amendments made in legislation.

Qualification examination consists of two parts: test on theory and tests of practical knowledge. The Professional Education Administration (established by the Ministry of Education and Science) organizes the development of examinations on theoretical knowledge and their assessment in professional associations.

Students receive a certificate on vocational education *atēstāts par arodizglītību* or a diploma on vocational secondary education *diploms par profesionālo vidējo izglītību* on the completion of accredited educational programmes together with an achievement sheet *sekmju izraksts*. A certificate on professional qualification *profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecība* confirms the received professional qualification *profesionālā kvalifikācija*.

[Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia](#)

[National Education Quality Service](#)

[On the Order of Issuing State-Recognized Documents Confirming Vocational Education and Professional Qualification and Documents Confirming Acquirement of Part of the Accredited Vocational Education Programme](#)

5.18. Educational/Vocational Guidance, Education/Employment Links

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

Career guidance and information on tertiary education is available to all pupils. There are also various kinds of assistance available, such as psychological support, health care and interest-related education, see section **4.15**. Educational, vocational and career guidance for young people is provided by the State Professional Career Counselling Agency and the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance. Students in the 9th class most often wish to receive information on education institutions and professions, but 12th class students want to learn about higher education institutions and the labour market. The types of assistance most often sought for and provided by the State Professional Career Counselling Agency are the following:

- consultations on education and career choice - selection of the most suitable field of activity based on the assessment of customer interests and aptitudes;
- information on the opportunities of acquiring a chosen profession in various education institutions;
- acquisition of a structured profile of interests and abilities helping to make a conscious independent career choice;
- evaluation of levels of professional qualities important to a certain profession and suitability of the customer for that profession;
- psychological support;
- consultations on different career paths and development of action plans.

A wide range of information on education is available at the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science), which collects, produces and disseminates information about education and training opportunities in Latvia and other European countries at different levels and types of education. It organises information meetings with pupils and their parents, produces and distributes printed materials and promotes cooperation between various actors in the field of education guidance and counselling at national and international level.

General secondary schools provide pupils with information about further studies. Since the aim of secondary education is to provide the pupil with necessary skills and knowledge to continue education, usually there are no other measures taken at the school level to facilitate young people's access to the labour market. However, some secondary schools provide a work shadowing experience in order to help pupils to gain first-hand knowledge of the world of work, and organize pupil enterprises in collaboration with Junior Achievement.

The Policy Framework for the Development of Education 2007 – 2013 (see section **2.2.**) foresees the development of the national data base on education possibilities in Latvia. Besides career consultant training programmes as further education modules have been developed for actually working teachers.

Various educational institutions participate in annual exhibitions organized all around offering information about the education possibilities they provide. Information about educational institutions can be found in the annual publication "Where to study further" as well as in other newspapers or periodicals.

Higher education institutions host Open Houses every spring to provide students with the information on studies.

As regards vocational secondary education, practical lessons take place in school workshops and in the real work environment in enterprises. Local municipalities cooperate with organizations of employers to provide pupils with placements in enterprises in order to guarantee the possibility of practice during the studies. A subcouncil of the National Tripartite Co-operation Council, the Tripartite Council of Professional Education and Employment, is an advisory council developing suggestions for the state policy and strategy in the area of vocational education and employment. Representatives of employers are involved in the development of occupational standards and participate in the commission of qualification examinations.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

National Tripartite Co-operation Council

Professional Career Counselling State Agency

Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance in Latvia

5.19. Private Education

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

All information on private education in basic education refers also to secondary education. See section [4.16.](#)

5.20. Organisational Variations and Alternative Structures

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

In Latvia, there are a number of bilingual schools providing secondary education. According to the Education Law, the so-called proportion 60:40 in secondary education was introduced starting with 2004. This means teaching 60 % of subjects in Latvian and 40 % in a minority language. Some problems were discovered during the implementation process like an insufficient knowledge of the state language among teachers and lack of adequate teaching aids (see section [4.17.](#) for more information). Usually secondary schools provide both basic and secondary education programmes.

Persons, who have not acquired general secondary education or left secondary school without a diploma, may acquire it in evening schools (see section [5.5.1.](#)) or in the form of distance learning, and graduate from school as external students.

For talented children it is possible to study also in specialized secondary schools where the general education programme is provided along that of vocationally oriented specialized education – like secondary schools of music, art and choreography. Graduates of these schools may continue their education in higher education institutions of the respective field.

On international school see section [3.14.](#)

Education Law

5.21. Statistics

In Latvia, for ISCED 3 level the term "secondary education" is used.

All data from the official website of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia and the Statistical Department of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia.

General information on schools providing general secondary education, 2008/2009

Number of institutions	377
Of which full time schools	343
Evening schools	34
Enrolment* (classes 10-12), total:	62165
Of which: Full day schools	51191
Evening schools	10974
Dropouts in full-time schools	1747**
Pupils repeating the year in full-time schools	244
Certificated 12 th class graduates	17215
Uncertificated 12 th class graduates	167
Number of teachers	6658
Pupil-teacher ratio	9.3:1

* excludes special schools and classes

** in academic year 2006/2007

General information on vocational and secondary vocational schools, 2008/2009

Number of institutions	90
<i>Of which private institutions</i>	4
Enrolment	38 819
Dropout	6 011
Graduates	8 911
Teaching staff	4 918
Pupil-teacher ratio	7.9:1

Secondary school graduates in 2008 in %

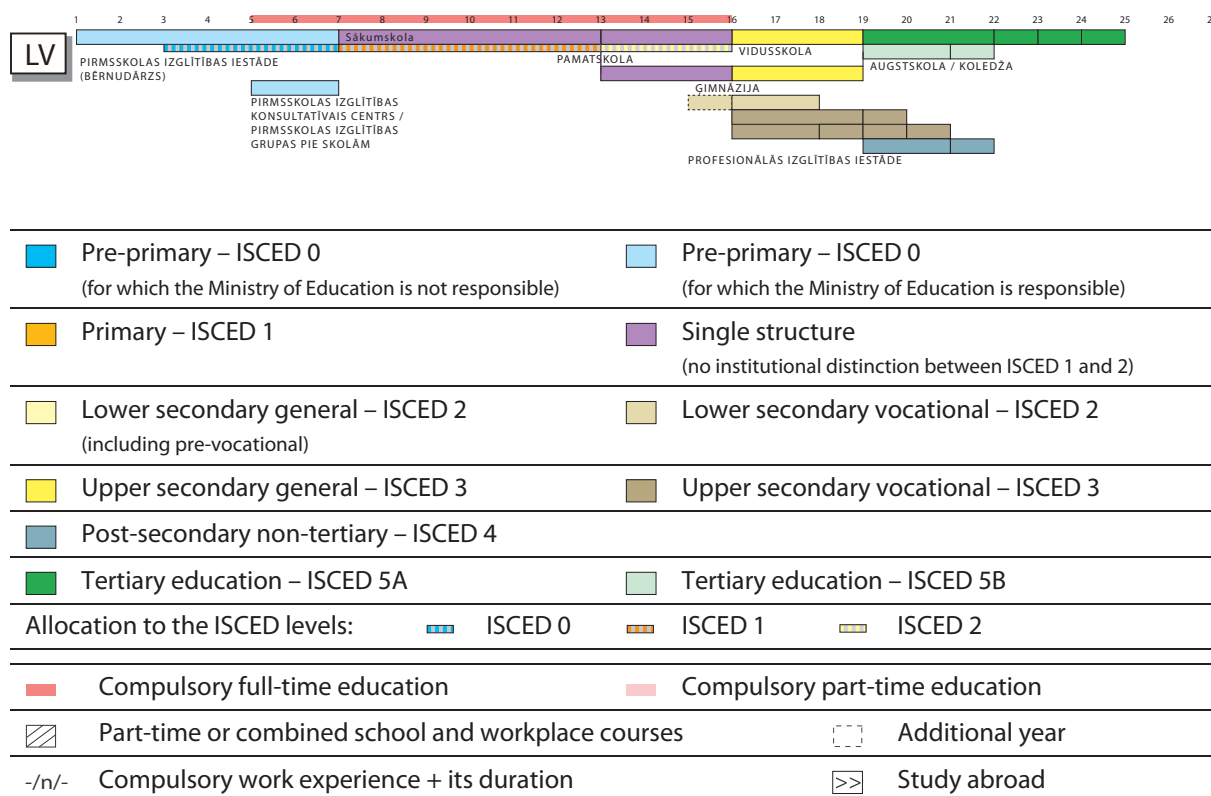
Graduates' choice	Total 100 %
Entered higher education institutions and colleges	75 %
Entered vocational schools	2.8 %
Discontinue studying	22.2 %

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

6. Tertiary Education

Organisation of the education system in Latvia, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

6.1. Historical Overview

All-embracing school network in the territory of the present Latvia was formed in the 19th century; and at the same time the first higher educational institution was established. In 1862, Riga Polytechnic Institute was founded later serving as the basis for the establishment of the University of Latvia in 1919, when also the Latvian State Conservatoire and the Latvian Academy of Arts were established. During the years of occupation higher education institutions and their research centres continued to function, and much attention and resources was devoted to the development of science.

Reforms started in 1991 providing autonomy of higher education institutions. The new Education Law introduced Bachelor and Master degrees as well as professional study programmes instead of 5-year diploma studies; the new regulation also opened opportunities to establish private higher educational institutions. The Law on Higher Education Institutions adopted in 1995 introduced a higher education quality assurance system in Latvia as well as rules for recognition of foreign qualifications.

In Latvia, higher education institutions offer higher academic education (ISCED-97, level 5A) and higher professional education (ISCED-97, level 5B and 5A) as well as postgraduate level studies (ISCED-97, level 6).

[Education Law](#)

[Law on Higher Education Institutions](#)

6.1.1. Historical Overview. Academic Tertiary Education and Professional Tertiary Education

There is a wide network of higher education institutions in Latvia. Universities, academies, other types of HEI and colleges are located throughout Latvia, but mainly in the capital Rīga. The basic network remains as it was under the Soviet regime. Since 1991, most newly established universities have been private ones located mainly in Rīga although several have been established outside the capital to make higher education more accessible to rural students.

In the recent years Latvia, pursuant to Bologna declaration titled "The European Higher Education Area" adopted on 19 June 1999 has been carrying out approximation of academic and professional higher education. A uniform system of degrees is being established for ensuring the possibility of a transfer from higher academic education to higher professional education, and vice versa.

6.1.2. Historical Overview. Postgraduate Level

For a long while, doctoral studies were devised for working out doctor's dissertation, but today they include advanced studies of the subject and examination. According to the 1998 amendments to the Law on Scientific Activities (null and void since adoption of the new Scientific Activities Law in 2005), the former two-tier doctoral degree system has been changed to a one-tier system. The second-level doctoral degree *habilitāts doktors* is not any more awarded since January 1, 2000, and since that date the holders of the degree *habilitāts doktors* have the same rights as the holders of the degree *doktors*.

Scientific Activities Law

6.2. Ongoing Debates and Future Developments

In Latvia, the transition to a two-cycle higher education system consisting of undergraduate and postgraduate studies in order to implement the provisions of the Bologna declaration and to make acquisition of higher education more effective, comparable and competitive has been finished. The two cycle model, "3+2", corresponds to three years of bachelor and two years of master studies. There are already a significant number of higher education institutions providing bachelor programmes of three years duration. It promotes faster joining in labour market, more intensive studies, lower expenses and better comparability of acquired degrees. Higher education institutions are free to choose which of the two cycle models (3+2 or 4+2) to adopt.

In order to improve academism of studies, it is planned to introduce a requirement for a definite proportion of academic staff to hold doctor's degree – in academies (*akadēmija*) the required proportion would be least 30%, while in other higher education institutions *augstskola* - at least 20%. This requirement will come into effect in July, 2010. See section **6.5.** on the proportion of academic staff holding doctor's degree in universities.

In the recent years, the work on a draft Law on Higher Education has been ongoing. The new draft law was developed in September, 2006 and is still widely discussed among policy makers, involved bodies and general public. The law was sent for adoption to Parliament, approved in the 1st reading at the end of the year 2008 and is expected to be adopted in 2009. The new law will strengthen the role of Latvian higher education within the European higher education system, autonomy of higher education institutions and their responsibility for learning outcomes. It intends to make study process more attractive (academic freedom, three-cycle structure, ECTS, lifelong learning, detailed description of study fee terms). The draft eliminates the current division in academic and professional study programmes as well as improves higher education funding mechanisms. Cooperation between higher education and employers will also be strengthened.

In order to ensure the training of new graduates for the needs of the national economy the Ministry of Education and Science has developed a model of study programmes in higher education facilitating the country's development. The main issue under concern is the allocation of budget subsidised places according to industries. The model was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers in the beginning of 2009.

In the last three years the state budget financing of higher education institutions and their autonomy have been growing constantly. From the year 2009 higher education institutions will have greater autonomy in managing their funds, however this period will also have an impact on higher education institutions due to worsening economic situation and limited funding from state budget.

The current economic crisis had immediate effects on higher education in Latvia. In 2009 higher education funding from the state budget has been cut for 48% in 2009 and it is additionally planned to cut it for another 31% in 2010. 2009 cuts for research are above 50%. In response to the crisis the new priorities of higher education policy are: (1) to increase efficient and appropriate use of state budget funds by higher education institutions; (2) to increase competitiveness of HEI's by re-structuring resources and improving study programmes offered; (3) to promote export capacity of Latvia's higher education services.

Due to economical situation from academic year 2009/2010 students are conferred scholarships considering not only their marks but social security as well.

The Cabinet of Ministers has adopted amendments in the regulations of state financing of higher education institutions prescribing that not only human resource capacity but also performance will be taken into account when allocating state budget funding for the provision of science development.

It is also planned to facilitate mobility between the Baltic States in the field of higher education and mutual cooperation in the area of the evaluation of the quality of higher education. It is foreseen to develop joint programmes in higher education involving academic staff from the Baltic States.

In order to improve information system in national research institutions and higher education institutions and to join the united European academic network, the Ministry of Education and Science receiving financial support provided by European Regional Development Fund will build a next generation data transmission network to provide research work. In the framework of this project it is planned to obtain equipment and to install connections ensuring user access to network, create connection to European and international academic networks and global internet for academic and research purposes, obtain software for research work and mobility, as well as modernize existing research data centers and establish new research centers. The main objective of this project is to improve Latvia's current field of science and to provide opportunities of scientists to participate in processes of European and world science, as well as to provide wholesome use of potential in development of national interests and economics.

In April, 2009 Association of Latvia's Universities was established with main objective to promote the development of higher education and science. Its task is to take care of its member common interest representation in national and municipal institutions, especially in the process of making decisions regarding higher education and science development, as well as to represent Association in international level.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

6.3. Specific Legislative Framework

Satversme (the Constitution) of Latvia declares the right to education for every resident of Latvia. International agreements and the Law on Higher Education Institutions determine persons who have the right to study in a higher education institution.

The Law on Higher Education Institutions sets the relations between state and higher education institutions as well as regulations for opening, closing and reorganization of institution, institutional governance and staff selection. The Law establishes academic freedom, rights and duties of academic personnel and students,

determines the procedure of obtaining academic degrees and professional qualifications, the basic requirements for the study programmes, financing of studies, assessment and accreditation of study programmes and institutions. Please see section **6.2.** on the draft Law on Higher Education. Other regulatory enactments apply to costs of one person in higher education per year, grants and loans offered to students and system of loan clearance.

The Constitution (*Satversme*) of a higher education institution (developed and approved by Constituent Assembly (*Satversmes sapulce*) - representatives of academic staff, students and other groups of employees) is the main legal act regulating its activities. The *Satversme* establishes the name of the institution, address, legal status, the name of the founder and its address, objectives and spheres of activities, procedure of acceptance of the *Satversme* and its amendments, rights, duties and tasks of representative, management and decision maker institutions, composition and establishment, return or appointment of these institutions, term of office, displacement procedure, establishment, reorganization, closing of institutions' subdivisions, branches and enterprises. The procedure of acceptance of internal rules, reorganization and liquidation procedure of the higher education institution should be also determined in the *Satversme* of each institution.

In general, the *Saeima* approves constitutions of state-founded higher education institutions, while the Cabinet of Ministers approves those of other institutions as well as bylaws of colleges.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

Education Law

Law on Higher Education Institutions

The Constitution of Latvia

6.4. General Objectives

Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

6.4.1. General Objectives. Professional Tertiary Education

The strategic objectives of first-level professional higher education are:

- to prepare a person for work in a certain profession promoting one's development as an open, responsible and creative personality;
- to advance the acquirement of skills and knowledge for gaining the fourth-level professional qualification;
- to motivate one for further education and provide the possibility to prepare for continuation of education in the second-level of professional higher education.

The strategic objectives of second-level professional higher education are to provide professional studies corresponding to economic, cultural and social needs of the state. The main aims are:

- to educate specialists of fifth-level professional qualification in the fields necessary to national economy and state security, favour competitiveness in the changing social-economic conditions and in international labour market;
- to implement acquirement of knowledge characteristic to each field enabling to develop new or improve existing systems, products and technologies and prepare for research, pedagogical and creative work.

Regulations on the National Standard of First-Level Professional Higher Education Programmes

Regulations on the National Standard of Second-Level Professional Higher Education Programmes

6.4.2. General Objectives. Academic Tertiary education

The strategic objective of academic higher education is to provide acquirement of theoretical knowledge and research skills, preparing for independent scientific research activities in the chosen field of science. The main aim of Bachelor study programmes is to provide students with scientific background for professional activities. Studies should favour the development of scientific analysis capacity and skills to solve problems independently.

The aim of Master study programmes is to prepare students for activities of independent scientific research; the main task – to promote the use of theoretical knowledge and research skills.

Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education

6.4.3. General Objectives. Postgraduate level

The objective of doctoral studies programmes is to obtain an internationally recognized doctoral degree in a branch of science and to acquire principles of research organization and management.

6.5. Types of Institutions

In Latvia, tertiary education is provided by:

- university type institutions,
- non-university type institutions,
- colleges.

The Law on Higher Education Institutions distinguishes university-type and non-university-type institutions. While non-university-type institutions run professional programmes, universities often offer both academic and professional programmes. The law defines four determinant criteria for a university status:

- 1) implementation of bachelor, master and doctor study programmes; assertion of doctoral thesis occurs annually,
- 2) at least half of persons elected in academic posts hold a doctor's degree,
- 3) issues scientific publications and
- 4) establishes scientific institutions or units in the main scientific disciplines corresponding to the implemented study programmes.

See also section **6.2.** on the requirement regarding the proportion of academic staff holding doctor's degree in non-university type institutions.

Colleges may function under higher educational institutions and also as independent institutions. Colleges provide first-level higher professional education considered as the first phase of the second-level professional higher education programmes offered by a higher education institution.

There are public and private (i.e. established by legal persons as defined by the legislation) higher education institutions. See section **2.6.4.** on management of private institutions.

The size of institutions differs substantially. There is a higher education institution with a number of students as small as 30, while the biggest university had enrolment of around 22 000 students in 2008. See statistics for comprehensive data, [6.19](#).

[Law on Higher Education Institutions](#)

6.6. Admission Requirements

Every person who holds the citizenship of Latvia, or who has the passport of a non-citizen of Latvia, as well as persons who have permanent residence permission, have the right to study in a higher educational institution, if they possess a document certifying a completed secondary education. There are no age restrictions for acquiring higher education.

If international agreements do not state otherwise, admission of foreigners in higher education institutions of Latvia is possible taking into account that:

- the certificate on secondary education should correspond to the standards of Latvia,
- knowledge tested in an ordinary manner should correspond to the admission provisions in the respective institution,
- foreigners should know the language of instruction well,
- tuition fee is paid according to the contract between the foreigner and the higher education institution.

For citizens of the European Union member states and their children acquiring education in Latvia the tuition fee is specified and covered according to the same procedures as for Latvian citizens.

Admission to the study programme is regulated through admission provisions issued by the Cabinet of Ministers and higher education institutions. There, the procedures of application and competition, entrance examinations (if prescribed), registration and matriculation are stipulated. The size of student population is influenced by government procurement, and a maximum number of study places is determined by individual institutions, which, in turn, depends on the supply and demand of specialists of each study field.

The admission to the study programme is organized according to the principles of competition.

All higher education institutions and colleges enrol students on the basis of the results of centralized examinations (at least in two subjects as determined by each higher education institution) passed at the end of secondary education. They are organized according to a uniform methodology, applying identical requirements and held at the same time in all secondary education institutions. There are, however, categories of persons who are allowed not to pass centralized examinations – those having completed secondary education till 2004 or abroad as well as persons with special educational needs. Admission procedure for such persons is developed by the higher education institution and approved by the Council of Higher Education.

Although the main criterion are the results of centralized examinations, higher education institutions may still organize one or several additional entrance examinations, aptitude tests or a competition with an emphasis on subjects pertinent to the chosen programme. The standards required for the entrance examinations correspond to secondary education programme.

Although the main document on completed education entitling to enter a higher education institution is that of secondary education, required prior education may differ depending on the level of higher education.

The access to first-level professional higher education programmes (college programmes) and Bachelor programmes (academic) is granted to holders of secondary education certificates.

For the admission to second-level professional higher education programmes (Professional higher education Bachelor study programmes, Professional higher education Master study programmes, Professional higher education study programmes), there are three possibilities:

- a certificate on general secondary education is required if the second-level professional higher education programme is offered in one cycle as an integrated Bachelor programme,
- a diploma on first-level professional higher education is required if the programme is offered in the second cycle of professional higher education,
- only candidates with Bachelor degree or at least four-year studies leading to professional qualification are eligible to second-level professional higher education programmes offered as Master or Professional (higher level of studies after an academic degree) programmes.

The prerequisite for the admission to a Master programme (academic studies) is a Bachelor degree in the same or related field of science.

The access to doctoral studies is granted to holders of Masters' degree (both academic or professional) or an equivalent.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

Council of Higher Education

Education Law

Law on Higher Education Institutions

Regulations on the National Standard of First-Level Professional Higher Education Programmes

Regulations on the National Standard of Second-Level Professional Higher Education Programmes

Regulations on the Requirements, Criterion and Procedure for Enrolment in Study Programmes

6.7. Registration and/or Tuition Fees

Registration fee is stipulated by all higher education institutions, its amount depends on the institution and varies from 5 to 20 *lats* (LVL) (extra payment may be required if a person submits documents for several programmes).

In Latvia, higher education may be acquired for state budget resources or for individual payment. The number of places in study programmes subsidized by the state is decided every year at central level by the Ministry of Education and Science. In the last years, in accordance with the demands of labour market and priorities defined in the long-term strategy of economy of Latvia, the number of places subsidized by the state has been increased in areas of natural sciences, mathematics and engineering. Institutions are free to set tuition fees for the other places. The size of tuition fees varies quite considerably from one institution or study programme to other. However, in accordance with the Regulations on Compulsory Provisions to be Included in the Study Agreement the fee for the programme in total shall be specified in the agreement thus preventing the possible increase of the fee during studies.

Payment is made to the corresponding higher education institution.

The system of financing higher education in Latvia has been widely debated in the last few years. The main reason for debates is the situation when with the massive increase in the number of study applicants the ability of state budget to accordingly increase budgetary allocations is on the whole rather limited. As a result, approximately one fourth of the total number of students is financed from the state budget; the remaining part of students must pay tuition fees themselves.

Recently, higher education institutions have started to implement the so-called rotation principle. Rotation is a possibility to transfer from a tuition fee paid place to a study place financed from the state budget, and is held as annual competition. Usually students with higher marks get the right to study in a state-financed place. Each institution develops its own regulations concerning rotation.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Regulations on Compulsory Provisions to be Included in the Study Agreement

6.8. Financial Support for Students

Students are provided financial support in the form of scholarships, grants and loans (see section **6.2.** on recent changes) as well as indirectly by discount of travelling costs in public transport.

Students in state-financed places of educational institutions studying in post-secondary vocational or higher educational programmes receive a monthly scholarship for personal expenses paid from state budget subsidies. The only aspect considered in conferring the scholarships is the student's marks.

Loans may be received by students who study in the institutions offering accredited higher education programmes. These are paid by banks while the state guarantees these loans. The total amount of money devoted for loans is set in the state budget and the bank allocating loans is chosen annually via auction. In order to receive a loan a warrantor is demanded. Since 2009 warrantors can be persons who receive study or student loans themselves or persons who receive or repay these or other loans as long as his/her incomes are adequate – monthly loan repayments should not exceed 40% of monthly income. New arrangements foresee an opportunity to warrant for more than one student as long as the monthly incomes of the warrantor reach national minimum wage multiplied by number of warrantees.

There are two kinds of loans - one to cover tuition fees (study loan) and other to cover living expenses (student loan). A study loan may be received by students of private higher education institutions or by students who pay their tuition fees in state institutions irrespective of the study form (full-time, part-time, distance learning). A student loan may be given to all students who study full-time in any higher education institution of Latvia. Every year the list of professions is issued by the Cabinet of Ministers for which the study loan can be covered from the state budget. For every year of employment at a state or municipal institution, the amount of the repayable loan may be reduced by 10% (if such an institution is mentioned in the respective list approved by the Cabinet of Ministers).

If the student has a job, every year he may apply for income tax reduction from a certain sum of income, and get this money back from the state budget.

Some exemptions exist regarding registration and/or tuition fees as well as requirements for credit, e.g. orphans (up to 24) do not need to find a warrantor in order to receive credit, and they receive a 100% guarantee by the state.

Dormitories are available close to the chosen higher education institution for students whose actual place of residence is too far to travel.

Procedure of Allocation, Discharge and Repayment of Study Loan and Student's Loan from Credit Institution's Funds with the State Guarantee

Regulations on Scholarships

6.9. Organization of the Academic Year

The organization of academic year depends on each institution.

Academic year is usually divided in two semesters altogether lasting ten months and starting in the beginning of September and ending at the end of June; January and June are devoted to taking semesters' examinations. Recently, another system of examination has been introduced by some institutions that when a course (subject) does not last till the end of semester the examination is held shortly after the course is completed, even in the middle of a semester.

There are Christmas and Easter holidays for students during the year. A summer break lasts at least 8 weeks.

See also section [6.11](#).

6.10. Branches of Study, Specialization

According to thematic groups of education determined in the National Classification of Education and the Law on Higher Education Institutions, education programmes are available in the following study fields:

- Education,
- Humanities and Arts,
- Social Sciences, Business and Law
- Natural Sciences, Mathematics and IT,
- Engineering, Production and Construction,
- Agriculture,
- Health and Welfare,
- Services (for example, personal services, such as hotel, restaurant, beauty treatment etc., transport services, environmental protection and civil and military defence).

In accordance with the completed study programme, academic Bachelor degree is awarded in the following groups of sciences:

- Education;
- Humanities and Arts;
- Social Sciences;
- Natural Sciences;
- Engineering Sciences;
- Agricultural Sciences;
- Health Sciences;
- Environmental Sciences.

Academic Bachelor degree allows continuing studies in the same or a related branch of science in Master programme.

The doctoral programmes are offered in the following fields:

- Social Sciences and Law;
- Humanities and Arts
- Natural Sciences;

- Technical Sciences;
- Medicine.

A transfer to another branch of studies during studies is possible; the conditions depend on the study programme and the institution.

Higher academic education programmes last three or four years for Bachelor degree, one or two years - for Master degree; scientific activities lasts three or four years for doctoral studies.

Professional higher education is divided into first and second-level professional higher education. First-level professional higher education programmes (short - cycle programmes) allow gaining fourth-level professional qualification and last two or three years. Second-level professional higher education programmes are aimed at fifth-level professional qualification and last at least four years, except programmes implemented after completion of the shorter college programmes.

Part-time studies are usually slightly longer (for half a year or one year) than full time studies.

[Law on Higher Education Institutions](#)

[Regulations on the Education Classification of Latvia](#)

[Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education](#)

6.11. Curriculum

Higher education institutions may independently determine the timetable for students. The capacity of studies is measured in credit points (credits). Latvian credit point is defined as a full-time weekly study load. Latvian credit point system is compatible with ECTS and is used for both accumulation and transfer since its implementation. The number of ECTS credits is found by multiplying the number of Latvian credit points by a factor of 1.5.

In Latvia, one credit corresponds to 40 academic hours (one study week) of which up to 50% are expected to be contact hours. The nominal study year comprises forty credits.

Full-time studies correspond to 40 credit points in an academic year and at least 40 academic hours a week.

Part-time studies correspond to less than 40 credit points in an academic year and less than 40 academic hours a week.

An academic hour is a unit of study time lasting 45 minutes. A contact hour is a direct interface between students and academic staff lasting one academic hour.

State or municipal education institutions provide education in the state language (Latvian). There are three cases, when it is, however, possible to use foreign languages (the first two refer to the use of official languages of the European Union, and the last one, to any foreign language):

- in study programmes acquired by foreign students in Latvia, and study programmes implemented within the scope of co-operation provided for in European Union programmes and international agreements;
- it is rather common to invite a guest lecturer from a cooperation university of another country to deliver a lecture, or to offer several courses in foreign language taught by local teaching staff. In such a case, it may not exceed one-fifth of the credit point amount of a study programme (in this part final and state examinations, as well as the writing of qualification, bachelor and masters thesis may not be included).
- in study programmes where implementation in foreign languages is necessary for the achievement of their aims, for example for language and cultural studies or language programmes.

In Latvia, higher education institutions have a significant degree of autonomy, which affects inter alia the curricula. Institutions have the right to determine the content and form of their education programmes themselves. However, a higher education institution has to receive a licence from the Ministry of Education and Science for each particular study programme. Licensing is a kind of preliminary quality assurance, in that within three years after getting a licence, a higher education institution has to submit the study programme for accreditation (see also chapter 9).

In professional higher education, the content of study courses and placement is determined by the respective professional standards. See the subdivisions for more details.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Procedure for Licensing Higher Education Study Programmes

6.11.1. Curriculum. Professional Tertiary Education

The total duration of the acquirement of a professional qualification is at least four years.

The amount of the first-level professional higher education programmes (short-cycle programmes) is from 80 to 120 credit points. Study courses (lectures, seminars, laboratory and practical works, consultations, independent studies) compose at least 56 credit points but do not exceed 75 % of the full extent of the programme. Internship composes at least 16 credit points, qualification thesis – at least 8 credit points. Independent work of students should form 35-40% of the total programme study load.

Professional higher education Bachelor study programmes (second-level professional higher education programmes) last at least 160 credit points. The structure of study programmes consists of study courses, internship outside educational institution and state examinations including development and defence of Bachelor or Diploma thesis. At least 30% of study courses should be practically taught. During studies the student develops and defends at least three study works.

The amount of professional higher education master study programmes (second-level professional higher education programmes) is at least 40 credit points. Study courses include approbation of recent accomplishments in theory and practise of the study field, courses on management, research work, pedagogy and psychology. Internship and state examinations involving the development and defence of Master or Diploma thesis are also a part of compulsory study content.

Education Law

Regulations on the National Standard of First-Level Professional Higher Education Programmes

Regulations on the National Standard of Second-Level Professional Higher Education Programmes

6.11.2. Curriculum. Academic Tertiary Education

The amount of full-time and part-time Bachelor study programmes is from 120 to 160 credit points including at least 10 credit points for Bachelor thesis. Full-time studies last from six to eight semesters.

The study programme is divided into compulsory (at least 50 credit points), restricted optional (at least 20 credit points) and optional courses.

The compulsory content includes principles, structure and methodology (at least 25 credit points), history of development and recent problems (at least 10 credit points) in the field or sub-field of science as well as its profile and interdisciplinary issues (at least 15 credit points).

No more than six mandatory courses are prescribed at the same time.

The amount of Master study programmes is 80 credit points including at least 20 credit points for Master thesis. The compulsory content of Master programmes includes research on theoretical conclusions (at least 30 credit points) of the respective area in the field or sub-field of science and approbation of theoretical conclusions (at least 15 credit points) currently important in the field or sub field of science.

No more than six mandatory courses are prescribed at the same time.

Education Law

Law on Higher Education Institutions

Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education

6.11.3. Curriculum. Postgraduate level

The amount of full-time Doctoral programme is from 120-160 credit points (of which 40-60 credit points are awarded for teaching a certain number of courses). Doctoral study programme contains also the list of compulsory and optional subjects and corresponding number of credit points. The rest of the content of doctoral studies includes independent research with the aim to obtain original and verified results in the corresponding branch. The student, after consultations with scientific advisor and professor of the corresponding branch, works out an individual plan for the whole period of doctoral studies.

Doctoral students must carry out well-documented studies of practical application of the latest research methods in the corresponding branch; studies of current IT methods, research planning, data processing and presentation; comprehensive studies of theoretical disciplines of the corresponding branch; mastering of lecturing and project management skills by participating in Bachelor and Master programme as well as research projects implementation; reporting in international seminars, conferences, schools; in-service training in other universities completed by publication of joint results; independent presentation of research results and their submission for publication in research editions.

Regulations for Doctoral Studies in Universities

Scientific Activities Law

6.12. Teaching Methods

Teaching methods are chosen by academic staff of the institution, depending on the type of studies and specifics of individual courses.

Teaching is structured by discipline, and the main teaching methods are lectures and seminars. Lectures are held for larger groups of students, and involve little student activity, whereas seminars are based on active participation and performance. Other teaching methods include exercises, consultations, seminar papers and reports, practical work, internships, individual studies, projects, laboratory works, and colloquia; in arts – individual training lessons.

Various teaching materials may be used in teaching and learning process, their choice is upon the lecturer, and students themselves may choose supplementary reading.

Recent developments in the sector indicate increased use of various e-learning methods, but mostly as addition to traditional methods. As addition to traditional methods, developments in sector indicate increased use of various e-learning methods. For instance, since 2009 Stockholm School of Economics in Riga is the first higher education institution in Baltic States that offers online lectures where the audience (students and previously registered users) can send their questions to lecturer during internet broadcasting.

The main method used in doctoral studies is consultation with scientific research adviser.

6.13. Student Assessment

The main principles of student evaluation in higher education (both academic and professional) are as follows:

- principle of mandatory evaluation – it is necessary to acquire positive assessment on the content of programme;
- different methods are used to determine assessment (the main forms are tests and examinations);
- adequacy of evaluation: students are given a possibility to prove their analytical, creative skills and acquired knowledge.

10-scale grading system is used to evaluate academic performance on all levels of higher education:

- Very high level (outstanding – 10, excellent – 9);
- High level (very good – 8, good – 7);
- Medium level (almost good – 6, satisfactory – 5, almost satisfactory – 4);
- Low level (a negative assessment: poor – 3, very poor – 2, very, very poor – 1).
- The lowest "pass" grade is 4 – "almost satisfactory".
- "Pass" and "Not pass" are used for assessing tests and internship.

The main form of evaluation is end-of-semester examinations, when students receive credit points for every course and get their internship assessed with "pass" or at least 4 in 10-scale grading system. However, continuous evaluation during the semester may be carried out by lecturers as well.

Assessment in doctoral programmes varies. Professors of the corresponding branch and the scientific advisor monitor academic progress. The student reports about the results of his/her studies and research biannually participating in research seminars and conference organised in the corresponding branch where a special decision is made about the conformity of results with the individual study programme. The decision is documented and submitted to the programme director.

[Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education](#)

[Regulations on the National Standard of First-Level Professional Higher Education Programmes](#)

[Regulations on the National Standard of Second-Level Professional Higher Education Programmes](#)

6.14. Progression of Students

Progression to the next year is automatic if the student has fulfilled all requirements set by the study programme. Scholarships and part of transportation costs are provided from the state budget in state-subsidised places, therefore the organisation of higher education demands either fulfilment of semester requirements (with the chance to leave some not-passed courses to next semesters) or to leave studies. Higher education institutions have introduced possibility to re-register for the same study semester, but it is possible only for the students, who pay for their studies themselves. There are no regulations regarding the number of times the student can attempt to pass an examination, but a mechanism has been developed by several institutions to raise students' motivation – an extra payment must be made in order to pass an examination repeatedly.

It is possible to interrupt studies for a short period of time. Each higher education institution defines provisions regarding the length of study break, possible reasons, procedure etc.

[Law on Higher Education Institutions](#)

6.15. Certification

A state-recognized diploma is issued to persons who have completed accredited study programmes. Only accredited higher education institutions providing state-accredited study programmes have the right to issue state-recognised diplomas.

In conformity with a state-accredited study programme it is possible to receive:

- academic education resulting in the following degrees:
 - Bachelor (academic degree),
 - Master (academic degree),
 - Doctor (scientific degree);
- fourth and fifth-level professional qualification and the following professional degrees:
 - Bachelor,
 - Master

Diploma Supplement is issued to each graduate (except those of doctoral programmes) automatically and free of charge. This diploma supplement follows the model developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES and covers information regarding the nature, level, context and status of the pursued and completed studies. The supplement is issued in Latvian and English, and its purpose is to promote international transparency and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications.

[Law on Higher Education Institutions](#)

[On The Order of Issuing State-Recognised Qualifications Confirming Education and Scientific Degree](#)

6.15.1. Certification. Professional Tertiary Education

Students of first-level professional higher education programmes (college programmes) pass state qualification examination at the end of studies. Part of state qualification examination is presentation of a qualification thesis. Graduates receive a diploma on first-level professional higher education if the programme is completed, a state qualification examination is passed and the assessment of the qualification examination is at least 5 (almost satisfactory). A certificate on professional qualification *profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecība* verifying fourth-level professional qualification is also granted to the graduate.

Students of second-level professional higher education programmes (*Profesionālās augstākās izglītības Bakalaura studiju programmas, Profesionālās augstākās izglītības Maģistra studiju programma, Profesionālās augstākās izglītības studiju programmas*) also pass final examinations at the end of studies. Part of final examinations is the development and presentation of Bachelor, Master or Diploma thesis. Graduates receive:

- after professional higher education Bachelor study programmes – a diploma certifying the Professional Bachelor degree and fifth-level professional qualification;
- after professional higher education Master study programmes – a diploma certifying the professional Master degree; graduates with previous academic education also obtain fifth-level professional qualification;

- after professional higher education study programmes – fifth-level professional qualification.

The Diploma Supplement is also issued; see also section **6.15.**

[Education Law](#)

[Law on Higher Education Institutions](#)

[Law on Professional Education](#)

[On The Order of Issuing State-Recognised Qualifications Confirming Education and Scientific Degree](#)

[Regulations on the National Standard of First-Level Professional Higher Education Programmes](#)

[Regulations on the National Standard of Second-Level Professional Higher Education Programmes](#)

6.15.2. Certification. Academic Tertiary Education

Students pass final examinations at the end of academic Bachelor or Master study programmes. Part of final examinations comprises the development and presentation of a Bachelor or Master thesis. Graduates receive a diploma certifying Bachelor's or Master's degree and a Diploma Supplement, see also section **6.15.**

[Law on Higher Education Institutions](#)

[On The Order of Issuing State-Recognised Qualifications Confirming Education and Scientific Degree](#)

6.15.3. Certification. Postgraduate level

The degree *Doktors* internationally recognized as PhD can be conferred only after fulfillment of requirements for doctoral study programme and public defence of doctoral thesis. Doctoral thesis may consist of a dissertation, or also of a group of thematic papers or a monograph. A foreign expert is involved in the evaluation of thesis. A person who has obtained the scientific degree, receives a Doctor's diploma.

[On The Order of Issuing State-Recognised Qualifications Confirming Education and Scientific Degree](#)

[On the Procedure and Criteria for Awarding a Scientific Doctor's Degree \(Promotion\)](#)

6.16. Educational/Vocational Guidance, Education/Employment Links

Students may seek assistance and advice concerning study process in counselling centres of higher education institutions and administrative units of the respective faculty. In the recent years the issue of guidance services has gained more importance. Several higher education institutions offer a wide range of services, not only career counselling, but also training on how to apply for a job consisting of general information, information on vacancies, and supplementary training.

In Latvia students have taken initiative to run Career Days in order to learn about their potential employers, exchange information between students and companies, learn how to present oneself in labour market and investigate what kind of skills and knowledge employers want to see in their future employees.

Some smaller higher education institutions provide students with internship placements; however, it is difficult to administer such placements in institutions with thousands of students.

[Law on Higher Education Institutions](#)

6.17. Private Education

The rules of registration and accreditation of an institution, licensing, registration and accreditation of study programmes are the same for public and private higher educational institutions. Private higher education institutions may offer education not only in the state language (Latvian) but also in other languages.

Private institutions may sign agreements with the Ministry of Education and Science, or other ministries or state institutions about training of certain specialists and thus receive funding from state budget.

Full-time students from private (state-accredited) higher education institutions may apply for loans to cover living costs - "student loans". Loans to cover tuition fees are offered also for part-time students in private higher educational institutions.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

The Procedure for State Financing of Basic, Secondary and Higher Education Programmes Implemented by Private Education Institutions

6.18. Organisational Variations, Alternative Structures

Higher education institutions offer the following forms of studies: full-time, part-time and distance studies. The latter can be described as an extramural method for acquiring education, which is characterised by specially structured educational materials, individual speed of learning, and specially organised evaluation of educational achievement as well as utilisation of various technical and electronic means of communication.

Many higher education institutions try providing their students with opportunities to benefit from the co-operation among different higher education institutions in the country e.g., by signing bilateral agreements. They allow students to use resources and intellectual potential of both (or several) higher education institutions, to master courses offered by other institutions, and ensure its recognition. However, from the legal standpoint it is still difficult to formally award joint or double degrees.

6.19. Statistics

All data from the official website of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia and the official website of the Ministry of Education and Science..

Higher Education Institutions and Colleges

	2009/10
Total Number of Institutions	57
State higher education institutions	18
State colleges	18
Private higher education institutions (established by legal persons)	13
Private colleges	8
Total Enrolment	
State higher education institutions and state colleges	62 855
Higher education institutions and colleges established by legal persons	31 182
Total Number of New Enrolees	31 356
State higher education institutions	15 077
Private higher education institutions (established by legal persons)	4 634
State colleges	3 066
Private colleges	1 594
Total Number of Graduates	26 007
State higher education institutions and state colleges	11 407
Private higher education institutions and colleges (established by legal persons)	3 404

	Enrolment	Studies financed from public budget
Higher education institutions and colleges 2009/10	112555	34203
Under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science	61281	26038
University of Latvia	20500	6690
Rīga Technical University	15715	7999
Daugavpils University	3651	1871
Liepāja University	2659	1011
Latvian Academy of Sports Education	1407	653
Rīga Higher School of Pedagogics and School Management	3649	631
Rēzekne Higher Education Institution	2642	1321
Latvian Maritime Academy	920	335
The Ventspils College	900	658
Vidzeme College of Higher Education	1394	531
BA School of Business and Finance	1805	18
Stockholm School of Economics in Riga	428	138
Colleges		
Rīga Construction College	595	308
Rīga Technical College	741	519
Rīga Business College	271	153
Olaine Mechanics and Technology College	138	138
Liepāja Maritime College	683	117
Jēkabpils Agribusiness College	317	179
Liepāja Medical College	200	200
Malnava College	215	118
P.Stradiņš Health College of	868	868
Rīga Medical College	473	473
Rīga 1. Medical Collage	478	478
Daugavpils Medical College	216	216
Red Cross College of P. Stradin's University	416	415
Under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture	2508	1596
Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music	512	417
Latvian Academy of Arts	682	659
Latvia Academy of Culture	629	319
Colleges		
Latvian Culture College	685	201
Under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture	6900	3082
Latvia University of Agriculture	6900	3082
Under the supervision of the Ministry of Welfare	273	232
College of Social Integration State Agency	273	232
Under the supervision of the Ministry of Health	4662	2386

Rīga Stradiņa University	4662	2386
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Under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior Affairs	1791	565
Police Academy of Latvia	1626	400
Colleges		
State Border Guarding College	92	92
Fire Security and Civil Defences Technical College	73	73
Under the supervision of the Ministry of Defence	7	7
Latvian National Academy of Defence	7	7
Private higher education institutions (established by legal persons)	34560	25
Rīga Aeronautical Institute	927	-
Baltic International Academy	5703	-
International Institute of Practical Psychology	540	-
Institute of Social Technologies	865	-
Rīga Graduate School of Law	81	10
Rīga International School of Economics and Business Administration	3940	5
Latvian Christian Academy	416	-
School of Business Administration "Turība"	6468	10
Higher School of Social Work and Social Pedagogy "Attīstība"	800	-
Higher School for Economics and Culture	1574	-
Information Systems Management Institute	2827	-
Higher School of Psychology	758	-
Transport and Telecommunications Institute	4033	-
Graduate Institute of Religious Science affiliated with the Pontifical Lateran University	122	-
Theological Institute of Rīga affiliated with the Pontifical Lateran University	16	-
Colleges		
Law College	1568	-
Alberta College	631	-
College of Accounting and Finance	773	-
College of Business Administration	1384	-
Latvian Business college	857	-
College of Cosmetology	148	-
Career Growth Collage	54	-
Christian Leadership Collage	75	-

Number of students by the field of studies, school year 2009/10

Enrolment	
	112555
Education and education sciences	9191
Humanities and art	9446
Social sciences, business and law	57683
Natural sciences, mathematics and IT	6486
Engineering and construction	13534
Agriculture	1182
Health and welfare	9174
Services	5859

Level of higher education	Number of students
Second-level professional higher education programmes	10567
Bachelor study programmes	24181
Master study programmes	5776
First-level professional higher education programmes	51232
Doctoral studies	2152

Academic Staff

Total academic staff at primary employment	4741
Professors, associate professors	1212
Docenti	1081
Lecturers and assistants	1568
Researches and leading researchers	880

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

7. Continuing Education and Training for Young School Leavers and Adults

Further education *tālākizglītība* is a continuation of a previously acquired education and improvement of professional skills in conformity with the requirements of the specific profession.

In Latvia, continuing adult education and training is provided in two ways:

- as general adult education for unqualified young people/adults;
- as continuing vocational training for already qualified young people/adults.

Comprehensive information regarding various types of vocational training is available in the Country Monograph on Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services in Latvia (<http://www.ENIC/en/Ino/default.htm>).

Adult education is a multifarious process ensuring the development of personality and capacity to compete in the labour market during lifetime. It is a part of the lifelong learning process.

Adult education is part of Latvian education system determined by social economical needs of the state and regions, demographic situation, and needs, interests and abilities of inhabitants.

In Latvian adult education system the adult is defined as a person who has reached the age of 15.

Education Law

7.1. Historical Overview

Adult education in Latvia has a rich history beginning as early as the 17th-18th century with the start of home studies. In 1869, the Riga Latvian Association established the Commission of Knowledge which set forth the guidelines for higher education in Latvia. By the late 19th and early 20th century there was numerous private educational facilities, classes, evening courses, self-study groups, series of lectures, discussion groups and question-answer evenings. During the academic year 1909/10 there were 308 private educational facilities and classes in Latvia.

However, it was not until Latvia was independent when a true effort was made to create guidelines for adult education programmes. During this time, development of education system along with self-study and continuing education all became a priority.

In 1919–1920 national requests for education were satisfied by various courses and lectures organised by the government.

Colleges and universities, which through gradual regional development became the centres of adult education, laid a permanent foundation for adult education. Classes at these centres usually took place in the evening, were open to anyone 16 years of age or older and had no requirements concerning previous education. These institutions were instrumental in familiarizing the nation with many scientists, writers, poets, artists and musicians. During this period there was a tremendous movement in Latvia to actively involve every citizen in community activities and cultural projects.

Upon the occupation of Latvia in 1940, the national universities were closed, and adult education was deleted from the overall education programme.

In the late 1950s Soviet national universities were established, but they were more concerned with politicizing than re-establishing education guidelines.

In 1991, it became imperative to re-establish adult education as a viable type of education. In 1993, the Latvian Adult Education Association (LAEA) was established. It is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation uniting adult education providers, and its aim is to promote development of non-formal adult education systems and to participate in lifelong learning policy making.

LAEA has created a co-operation network of adult education providers from all towns and districts of Latvia (see below); it organises various activities on local and national level, prepares trainers, elaborates and approves training programmes, materials and methodologies.

LAEA has been a member of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) since 1995 when it joined the European Prison Education Association and European Adult Education Research Association (ESREA) in 1997.

27 Adult Education Centres were opened following the Recommendation of the Cabinet of Ministers "Model Regulations on Adult Education centres" in 1995. The centres are institutions founded and run by local governments that oversee and coordinate adult education in each respective town or region. The main purpose of the centres is to coordinate adult education in the region, compile information about adult educational opportunities and assure its availability and dissemination. Today, the LAEA unites 75 adult education providers of Latvia.

In order to popularize lifelong learning the Ministry of Education and Science has applied for and received a grant of the European Commission 'Establishment and Implementation of National Lifelong Learning Strategies – Education and Training 2010". It is planned to facilitate lifelong learning by organizing various promoting events and to hold a conference "Lifelong learning Strategy, its Challenges and Solutions.'

Latvian Adult Education Association

7.2. Ongoing Debates and Future Developments

Latvian adult education system is decentralized and is under supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES). The advantage of decentralization is that the adult education system tends to be as close to the learner as possible in order to meet his/her desires in the most accessible way. On the other hand, local affiliation of adult education activities requires additional accreditation procedures for adult education programmes to be introduced in each region separately. It is needed to organize regional lifelong learning centres.

The existing education legislation is oriented mainly around formal education. Therefore a separate adult education law is needed for setting out standards and principles linked with various adult education opportunities, its access, and quality. The Law might state education options and financing sources, specify legislative measures of lifelong learning and coordinate those with regulatory enactments in other areas. A well-coordinated adult education will ensure its systematic, independent and sustainable development.

In 2008, in order to consolidate adult education system with the existing system of education in Latvia, on the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) amendments to the Education Law were made defining adult education as a constituent part of lifelong education system in Latvia.

The main challenges in the present day situation of adult education are: introduction of ICT, educational facilities, accessibility to all, diversity of offer, surveys of demand. Each of these challenges has been taken into account in the policy-making process. Their implementation needs a wide scope of resources and joint actions in many fields. ICT and accessibility of education for all may be advanced by help of an overall computerisation of the country.

It is necessary to improve adult education opportunities. The economic development necessitates a growing demand for qualified labour force across all sectors. This increases the need to draw up modular programmes

for education at all levels both for full-time studies and part-time studies, including distance education. In the next years several steps for action have been planned:

- provision of a coordinated support by the employers and the State to the development of adult education programmes, especially in the context of balanced territorial development;
- promotion of the participation of higher and vocational education institutions in the development of further education by offering further education and in-training service programmes and getting involved in the training of the unemployed;
- creation of a system of credits and its introduction in those programmes providing for their compatibility with the academic credit transfer system;
- drawing up guidelines for evaluating the performance of evening (shift) schools;
- making proposals for a more extensive involvement of employers in the financing of further education ("Concepts of Education Development"- MES Draft Document).

It is necessary to improve access to vocational education. Influenced by social and economic factors, students mainly choose vocational schools situated near their homes but not always providing them with education suitable for their abilities and needs. A great proportion of those educated at vocational schools come from indigent and socially disadvantaged families. Access to vocational education is restricted by the number of places financed from state budget and inadequate facilities of educational institutions. A significant impediment for those who start attending vocational schools is their poor level of general knowledge that hinders the acquisition of professional qualification. Therefore pedagogical and methodological approach to vocational education of young adults is an issue to be addressed in the next two years.

The following tasks are to be dealt within the coming four years:

- to increase the role of social partners in order to promote their participation in determining state procurement for vocational education corresponding to territorial demand;
- to introduce more widely professional education programmes involving pedagogical correction for the students whose level of previous knowledge is poor;
- to carry out occupational and career guidance measures at education institutions and types.

It is needed to make improvements for specific target groups: socially vulnerable groups that need special protection and attentions, ethnic minorities, in particular Roma, unemployed, disabled and handicapped, people with health impairments, elderly and below poverty rate, people in custody; immigrants, asylum seekers.

It is needed to promote integration of learners with special needs in general, vocational, higher and interest-related education programmes. Education system provides opportunities also to persons with special needs, including people with movement disorders. Two education institutions have been adapted for learners with movement disorders. In Latvia mainstreaming of learners with special needs in ordinary education institutions have not been a wide-spread practice, but it is to be gradually developed.

The plan for the following 4 years is as follows:

- to train educators in general education, vocational education, career guidance and interest-related education and students of pedagogical universities for work with all special needs age groups;
- to begin restructuring special education institutions into integrative education institutions;
- to continue technical adaptation of education institutions including those of interest-related education, to serve needs of learners with movement disorders;

- to facilitate access to higher education programmes, including distance education programmes for learners with movement disorders.

In order to promote the accessibility of lifelong learning for employees, the Ministry of Welfare with the support of European Social Fund will offer an opportunity for employees of private establishments to receive coupon for acquiring professional education. In the framework of lifelong learning activities employees will be able to acquire education till one year by using a coupon which amount depending on training type will be 150, 200 or 250Ls. So employees will have the opportunity to master foreign language, acquire computer skills or other abilities necessary in the labour market and directed to professional knowledge improvement. Preference for the participation in this activity will be given to employees subject to unemployment risk.

Latvian Adult Education Association

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

7.3. Specific Legislative Framework

Satversme (the constitution) of Latvia declares the right to education for every resident of Latvia. The legal basis is the Education Law (1998) defining adult education as a constituent part of lifelong education system in Latvia and basic national policy papers - Latvian Long-term Economical Strategy, National Development Plan, The Model for the Development of Latvia: People First, Latvian National Lisbon Programme for the years 2005-2008, Basic Standpoints on Lifelong Learning 2007-2013 (see also section **2.2.** defining the target groups of adult education - unemployed, youth, persons with special needs, women, retirees, families, and professionals of different occupations.

According to the established educational system in Latvia, the supervising authority for adult education is Ministry of Education and Science (MES). The main institutions responsible for implementation of provisions relating adult education are the Ministry of Education and Science as regards general education, and the Ministry of Welfare regarding training of unemployed and job seekers. Both ministries share the responsibility of providing career information, guidance and counselling services.

The system of adult education extends over to other sectors as envisaged by the Education Law (Article 17) stating that "regional municipalities shall organize adult education". Regional municipalities are responsible for organizing adult education within its territory.

Formal education programmes including basic, secondary and higher education is regulated through specific laws (Law on General Education, Law on Professional Education, and Law on Higher Education Institutions) and regulations. The Education Law regulates informal education programmes.

In 2003 Latvian Adult Education Association, together with the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments and the Ministry of Education and Science, elaborated a procedure for licensing non-formal education programmes in local municipalities. Although this procedure has a recommending nature, majority of local municipalities follow it.

Adult education is also regulated by the Law on Support for Unemployed and Job Seekers, aiming to develop the support system for the unemployed and job seekers, to help them return or enter the labour market. The State Employment Agency (an institution under the authority of the Ministry of Welfare) deals with vocational training for changing qualification and improvement of professional skills. It provides also guidance and counselling services for the unemployed including such aspects as psychological consultations, vocational guidance legal advice etc.

Guidance and counselling services are also provided by the Professional Career Counselling State Agency (operates under supervision of the Ministry of Welfare) and the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (operates under supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science).

The Professional Career Counselling State Agency provides guidance and counselling services for private persons (mainly for pupils at compulsory education, students at vocational and higher education, the unemployed, and employed wishing another qualification) through its 23 regional offices, compiles and disseminates educational and occupational information, develops guidance strategies and methodology, needs analyses and training for guidance counsellors.

The National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG) provides a regular information exchange with vocational guidance institutions and other NRCVGs in Europe about the education system, vocational qualifications and labour market in Latvia; collects, produces and disseminates information about education and training opportunities in Latvia, EU, EEA member states and associated CEE countries at different levels and types of education including organisation of information meetings with students and their parents; produces and distributes printed materials; promotes cooperation between various actors in the field of guidance and counselling at national and transnational level; contributes to the development of the Euroguidance network through the implementation of communication, information and support activities, disseminates innovative guidance projects developed under *Leonardo da Vinci* and any other Community programme or initiative

Some guidance is also provided by Youth Interest Centres and Adult and Further Education Centres, but this provision is mostly informal and offered by non-specialist staff, while counsellors of the Professional Career Counselling State Agency have undergone a specialized in-service training. On counselling and guidance services see also sections [4.15](#), [5.18](#), and [6.16](#).

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Ministry of Welfare of the Republic of Latvia

Professional Career Counselling State Agency

Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance in Latvia

State Employment Agency

Basic Guidelines of Lifelong Learning Policy for 2007-2013

Education Law

Latvian Lisbon Programme for the years 2005 - 2008

Latvian Long - Term Economical Strategy

Law on General Education

Law on Higher Education Institutions

Law on Professional Education

Law on Support for Unemployed and Jobseekers

National Development Plan 2007-2013

The Constitution of Latvia

The Growth Model of Latvia: People First

7.4. General Objectives

The main goal of continuing adult education is to provide individuals with the opportunity to complement education based on their needs and interests irrespective to previous education and age, to supplement

inadequate previous education and knowledge due to social and economic changes, to resolve questions of social adaptation and integration.

Training for the unemployed is the most essential active employment initiative for the improvement of employability and quicker reinsertion into the labour market.

7.5. Types of Institution

Within the framework of the educational system, adult education extends over basic and secondary, higher, professional, vocational, interest and special education. It provides formal, non-formal, in-formal, full time and part-time, centralized and regionally/locally centred educational and learning opportunities. By location, it is usually linked to the existing infrastructure of education institutions.

General and basic adult education for unqualified young people/adults are provided by evening and evening-shift schools vakara (maĩņas) vidusskola offering basic and general secondary education for persons who have not graduated school and want to continue their studies after being out of education system. Some evening schools have started to provide general education and correspondence courses only for adults. There are morning shift and evening shift learning groups. The age of students is different. It is possible to combine work with studies which is very important for the economical stability of students. In order to get a secondary education qualification it is compulsory to pass centralized examinations.

The role of universities and higher educational institutions is becoming more and more important in offering lifelong learning opportunities for adults, they offer in-service and continued qualification courses and programmes in their premises. Distance learning facilities are offered for part-time students (University of Latvia, University of Latvia, University of Agriculture. There are lifelong learning centres in regional universities and higher educational institutions. In Liepāja Pedagogical Academy, Ventspils University, Vidzeme University, University of Agriculture there are adult education centres offering a large variety of non-formal education programmes for adult learners.

Premises of schools are often used for adult education by agreement of school administration and local authorities.

Besides, various adult education programmes are offered by:

- local municipalities, adult training centres established by municipalities at regional and local level (Jelgava Adult learning Centre with a good learning environment), libraries, clubs, NGOs, associations;
- professional associations, for example, the Latvian Chamber of Crafts, the Latvian Union of Doctors, etc.;
- ministries and organizations under their authority, such as the Teacher Training Centre of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Medical Professional Education Centre of the Ministry of Welfare, etc.; for additional information on Teacher Training see section **8.1.**
- folk schools and other institutions providing interest-related education. Folk schools are operating mostly in rural regions with the goal of providing rural residents with a well-rounded education. The folk schools try to continue the traditions established in the period of the first Republic, i.e. the development of civic education.

Functions of adult education at a much broader scale cover vocational, in-service training for business or sectoral needs. Large state-owned and private companies have training centres (e.g., The National Bank, Latvian Mobile Telephone, Lattelecom, The Latvian Railway, The Latvian Postal Service, large trade centres etc.). These centres have regular education programmes for the employees of companies.

The specific needs and requirements of individuals are taken care of by a network of private and non-governmental educational institutions and undertakings that are run on private funding and some of the are profit-oriented.

7.6. Geographical Accessibility

Formal adult education (general, professional and higher education) programmes are usually provided in the respective education institutions, see sections [4.5.](#) and [5.6.](#) for information on geographical accessibility. There is a comprehensive network of evening schools in Latvia.

A considerable proportion of formal continuing education is training and re-qualification of the unemployed and job seekers. The network of the State Employment Agency branches ensures its accessibility throughout Latvia.

The Education Law states that the organization of adult education at regional level is the responsibility of respective municipalities. The Latvian Association of Adult Education has created a wide co-operation network of adult education providers from all towns and districts of Latvia currently uniting 75 institutions.

Latvian Adult Education Association

State Employment Agency

Education Law

7.7. Admission Requirements

In order to complete unfinished basic or general secondary education, a person must enter an evening school. There are no age restrictions, but one must possess either a certificate on basic education (if wishing to start the acquirement of general secondary education) or a school report with the statement on transfer to the next class (in case of unfinished basic or general secondary education).

The rights to acquire vocational training or re-qualification provided by the State Employment Agency are given to the unemployed, who cannot find a job because of the lack of professional competence or cannot find a job in previously acquired profession or occupation or have lost their professional skills.

Adult education is open to every person at least 15 years of age all life long irrespective of previous education. There are several professions involving regular continuing education in order to maintain and/or improve professionalism such as doctors, teachers and civil servants. Academic or job-related formal adult education programmes require previous education or qualification.

State Employment Agency

7.8. Registration and/or Tuition Fees

Acquirement of basic or general secondary education is free of charge, also in evening (shift) schools.

According to the data provided by the Latvian Adult Education Association (LAEA), adult education is financed by:

- payments made by training participants – persons who are aware that additional knowledge will help them maintain their employment or favour their career;
- employer contributions – made by those enterprises who consider training as a tool for improving competitiveness, predominantly, these are enterprises who employ over 50 persons as well as those founded through foreign investment;

- non-governmental organisations – interested in education of their members or of society as a whole;
- municipalities – support training serving local needs; some municipalities earmark a certain percentage of their income for adult training;
- the government – finances adult training in two ways: through the State Employment Agency (SEA) training for the unemployed and through the institutions under the authority of various ministries responsible for continuing training of persons employed in certain sectors.

Latvian Adult Education Association

State Employment Agency

Education Law

7.9. Financial Support for Learners

The Education Law states five sources for the financing of adult education:

- state or municipal budget,
- resources of employers,
- resources of participants,
- donations and grants,
- other resources.

Training, re-qualification or improvement of professional skills for the unemployed is paid by the state. Training of the unemployed who have attained the age of 18, is paid from the special budget of employment, but for those younger than 18, from the funding of vocational education.

The underlying principle is sharing. Except for several high priority programmes that have been free of charge because of the social and/or political urgency of the issue (e.g., the implementation of the Language Law at language courses by NALLT), the cost of the project is seldom financed by one source alone. Usually there are two or more donors (state and European Union, state and a company, state and an individual) that participate on negotiated terms.

The assistance of foreign bilateral/multilateral donors to adult education has been significant since the mid 1990s and ever increasing. The main source of foreign investment in adult education support and development programmes comes from EU through European Structural Funds.

On the state level, a coordinated support system for the education mobility exists within EU education programmes.

7.10. Main Areas of Specialization

Adult education may be offered as formal formālā izglītība or non-formal neformālā izglītība education.

Formal education covers the acquisition of basic and secondary education in evening, distance or external forms; it also includes education towards an academic degree and/or qualification. On educational directions of secondary education programmes see section [5.11.1.](#) as regards specialization in higher education, see section [6.10.](#)

Formal education also includes training and retraining for the unemployed. In Latvia, these activities are organized by the State Employment Agency (SEA). Educational programmes are selected in accordance with

the demand for certain professionals, and education institutions (executors of public procurement) are selected in a tender procedure for state funding of training and retraining courses for the unemployed.

The State language law has its implications for adult education - it requires knowledge of the official language for civil servants and a number of other professions. To meet this requirement a broad and successful project under the auspices of the UNDP was launched in 1996. The National Agency for Latvian Language Training (NALLT) provides Latvian language courses free of charge to representatives of those professional groups that are at a higher risk of losing their jobs due to insufficient Latvian language skills, such as railway workers, employees of the Ministry of Interior Affairs and associated institutions – police force, border guards, and medical staff, army recruits. NALLT, in cooperation with SEA, provides language courses for those people undergoing training for a new occupation requiring Latvian language skills. NALLT provides methodology training for Latvian language and bilingual curriculum teachers.

Non-formal education is aimed at self-advancement of personality, creativity, initiative and a sense of social responsibility. The aim of non-formal education is also to increase the amount of knowledge, skills and abilities useful for everyday life. Studies are carried out in the form of courses, study circles or any other suitable form. Non-formal education for young people is provided also by the state and municipalities, for example, interest-related education in sports, music, civics, arts etc.

Ministry of Interior Affairs of the Republic of Latvia

State Employment Agency

The National Agency of Latvian Language Training

Education Law

7.11. Teaching Methods

Evening schools providing basic or general secondary education employ the same teaching methods as in mainstream (ordinary) schools, see section [5.14](#). The difference is in the number of lessons; it reaches 28 per week in evening schools. However, considering the particularity of evening classes, students master part of the learning content alone.

Pedagogical work in adult education is based on andragogy methods. Andragogy makes the following assumptions about the design of learning for adults proposing they:

- need to know why they want to learn something;
- need to learn experientially;
- approach learning as a problem-solving, and
- learn best when the topic is of immediate value.

In practical terms, andragogy means that instruction for adults needs to focus more on the process and less on the taught content. Strategies such as case studies, role-playing, simulations, and self-evaluation are most useful. Instructors adopt a role of facilitators or resources rather than lecturers or mark distributors.

Andragogy in Action

7.12. Trainers

There are no special additional requirements for being a teacher in an evening school, information of the Chapter [8](#). "Teachers and Education Staff" apply also to them.

Only qualified persons with theoretical and practical knowledge of the respective subject may be engaged as trainers in adult education.

Lately, the preparing of multipliers as trainers in continuing education is becoming popular. There are no regulations at national level stating the training and qualification of multipliers. They are prepared in special in-service courses, and a certificate is handed out after their completion. It is a part of adult education.

The following institutions have regular further education programmes for adult education facilitators and educators:

- State Education Centre
- Latvian Adult Education Association.

7.13. Learner Assessment/ Progression

Formal adult education is evaluated according to a the 10-point grading scale like for other target groups in the respective levels of education, the criteria and methods on evaluation are defined in the state standards of education, see sections [4.12.](#) [5.15.](#) and [6.13.](#) on assessment and sections [4.13.](#) [5.16.](#) [6.14.](#) on progression.

The providers of non-formal adult education programmes work out provisions of evaluation.

Education Law

7.14. Certification

On the completion of a formal continuing education course an official state recognized qualification is awarded. Qualification and certificates awarded after completion of the specific education level are equivalent to those awarded to pupils or students in the respective level of education. Adults receive state-acknowledged documents on education only if the educational institutions and programmes are accredited by the state. See also sections [4.14.](#) [5.17.](#) and [6.15.](#)

In the education programmes organized by the State Employment Agency (SEA) it is possible to acquire:

- second-level vocational qualification – completed basic education is a requirement to enrol in this programme;
- third-level vocational qualification – the requirement is a completed vocational secondary education or general secondary education.

Actualization of vocational education and vocational training programmes do not grant a qualification, as these programmes are oriented towards the unemployed who have completed some level of vocational education.

Non-formal adult education programmes may provide students with a certificate on completion of the respective programme.

Legally accepted and officially recognized certificates are issued by institutions and authorities that have special accreditation and that have been registered in MES as education providers. The procedure of accreditation of educational institutions and organizations is in the competence of MES that has introduced regulations on the procedures and prerequisites of programme accreditation.

Courses offering at least 160 hours of learning are certified at MES and are accepted all over the country. Courses of less than 160 hours of learning offered by private sector or municipal education providers must be accredited in the municipality where they are planned to be implemented.

The system of certification in adult education is in the process of development. The criteria, maintenance of standards and identification of levels are a few of the complex tasks involved in this, taking into consideration the diverse forms of non-formal education and adult learning.

There are two authorities that have established a stable testing system. These are the Board of Attestation (within MES) which is responsible for the testing of the level of the linguistic competence in the Latvian (official) language, and the Board of Naturalization (within Ministry of Interior). Their functions are limited to assessing results rather than to learning or teaching. However, their mandate is important for keeping up the quality requirements and assessment benchmarks for the adult education.

State Employment Agency

Education Law

7.15. Education/Employment Links

See sections [4.15.](#) [5.18.](#) [6.16.](#) on services regarding education/employment guidance.

The main information, guidance and counselling provider for adults is the Professional Career Counselling State Agency (for more information see section [5.18.](#)

The State Employment Agency (SEA) is an institution where education and employment links are the closest. First, when choosing the educational programmes, it takes into account indications of the employers on what kind of specialists is lacking. Secondly, the SEA works with all sectors – the unemployed, job seekers and employers. It not only provides information on available courses and job vacancies, but also organizes various active labour market measures: occupational training, retraining and up-grading qualifications; paid temporary public work, measures to increase competitiveness; measures for specific groups or persons (in particular for those at the age 15-25, disabled persons, women after maternity leave, persons within 5 years before retirement age, long-term unemployed, etc. It also issues licenses to companies working in the area of employment provision.

There are institutions and organisations where a special employee or even a separate unit is responsible for the training of employees and organises continuing education or in-service training.

SEA collaborates with different educational institutions as educational service providers. SEA buys education services from private education centres, municipalities, universities and higher education institutions, evening (shift) schools, public adult education centres.

State Employment Agency

Professional Career Counselling State Agency

7.16. Private Education

See sections [4.16.](#) and [6.17.](#) on formal private education institutions.

A private adult education institution may implement adult education programmes only after receiving a license from the respective municipality. It may also define a tuition fee unless it has won a tender for public procurement; then it does not have the right to collect any fees from trainees. All public and private institutions willing to implement educational programmes must observe the same regulations.

Education Law

7.17. Statistics

Types of groups participating in Latvian language training organized by NALLT, 2009

Group	Number of courses	Number of learners
Parents and teachers of minority pupils	49	916

Source: The National Agency for Latvian Language Training, 2009

Activities of the State Employment Agency, 2009

	Total number
People in various training courses (professional training, new qualification and education)	2093
People granted a temporary public work	9983
People in programmes for competitiveness raising	70747
People in programmes for target risk groups	1136

Note: one may be involved into several activities or several times in the same activity.

Source: The State Employment Agency, 2009

Population by labour status and additional education, 2008		
	Population (thsd)	%
Population - total	1 796.4	100.0
Participated in courses, seminars or training	46.1	2.6
..to receive or improve knowledge for a job	32.5	70.4
Did not participate in additional training	1 750.2	97.4
Economically active population		
TOTAL	1 215.8	100.0
Participated in courses, seminars or training	38.8	3.2
..to receive or improve knowledge for a job	30.2	78.0
Did not participate in additional training	1 177.0	96.8
..employed		
TOTAL	1 124.1	100.0
Participated in courses, seminars or training	36.2	3.2
..to receive or improve knowledge for a job	28.7	79.5
Did not participate in additional training	1 087.9	96.8
...employees		
TOTAL	1 011.2	100.0

Participated in courses, seminars or training	32.9	3.3
..to receive or improve knowledge for a job	25.9	78.8
Did not participate in additional training	978.2	96.7
...self-employed (employers, self-employed, unpaid family workers)		
TOTAL	1 011.2	100.0
Participated in courses, seminars or training	32.9	3.3
..to receive or improve knowledge for a job	25.9	78.8
Did not participate in additional training	978.2	96.7
...self-employed (employers, self-employed, unpaid family workers)		
TOTAL	112.9	100.0
Participated in courses, seminars or training	3.3	2.9
..to receive or improve knowledge for a job	2.8	86.7
Did not participate in additional training	109.6	97.1
..unemployed		
TOTAL	91.6	100.0
Participated in courses, seminars or training	2.6	2.8
..to receive or improve knowledge for a job	...	...
Did not participate in additional training	89.1	97.2
Economically inactive population		
TOTAL	580.6	100.0
Participated in courses, seminars or training	7.4	1.3
..to receive or improve knowledge for a job	...	...
Did not participate in additional training	573.2	98.7

Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

Population participation in Lifelong learning during last 4 weeks in breakdown by level of education and sex aged 25 – 64 years, 2008

	Females	Males	Females and males
TOTAL	9.0	4.3	6.8
Higher education	12.7	7.8	10.9
Vocational education and professional secondary education	7.7	3.8	5.7
General secondary education	-	-	-
Basic education	2.3	0.9	1.5
Less than basic education	1.6	0.4	0.9

Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

Participation of the Unemployed in Education Activities, 2008

	Number of unemployed	Long-term unemployed	Youth at the age of		Disabled people	Released from custody	Persons after child-care period	Unemployed at pre-retirement age ¹⁾	
			15-17	18-24				female	male

Settled into a permanent job	54188	7168	114	8772	1605	251	1591	1835	1497
Have started professional training to recycle into work, to improving professional skills	2093	205	17	484	125	2	210	40	27
Have graduated professional training	2024	449	25	447	110	4	127	47	29
Fixed up after professional training, recycling activities, in-service training	1846	935	7	317	88	3	52	41	19
Involved in paid temporary employment	9983	4688	32	508	492	17	101	892	808
Involved in activities to improve skills of competitiveness ²⁾	70747	3078	271	10150	3416	204	4068	3628	2723
hereof:									
- involved in modular training programmes	6426	788	10	747	416	9	350	309	111
-involved in activities for persons at definite age – fixed up entering into a contract of determined work period	1136	328	3	151	494	2	19	87	86
hereof:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
- subsidized employment activities	72	18	1	14	35	0	4	7	5
- activities for unfavourable employees	611	207	2	93	9	1	11	53	43
- activities for disabled people	453	103	0	44	450	1	4	27	38
- activities co-financed by ESF grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Involved in complex support activities	10	0	0	2	10	0	0	0	0
Involved in the activity „Job Probation”	625	117	16	166	25	1	21	22	11
Have started training at work	78	8	0	25	0	0	2	2	3
Involved in activities to promote business or self-employment	93	24	0	10	4	0	1	3	1

¹⁾ Persons at the age not more than 5 years before retirement.

²⁾ One unemployed has participated in more than one activity during a year

Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia.

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

State Employment Agency

The National Agency of Latvian Language Training

8. Teachers and Education Staff

Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

8.1. Initial Training of Teachers

School teachers in Latvia are trained at university tertiary level. There are two groups of programmes providing teacher training, academic and professional; thus initial teacher training is provided in the following programmes:

- second level professional higher study programmes (integrated Bachelor programme),
- academic study programmes in pedagogy followed by professional higher study programme,
- first level professional higher study programmes.

All teachers to be qualified to work in a school must undergo study programmes leading not only to higher pedagogical education but also to a teacher qualification in the respective level of education. Besides, most programmes prepare teachers of certain subjects. See also section **8.1.6.** Thus, completion of a certain kind of programme entitles to teach the respective subject at the respective level of education. There are exemptions - pre-school teachers and teachers of the first stage of basic education (classes 1-4) receive a teacher qualification in the respective level of education, and are entitled to teach most of subjects.

8.1.1. Historical Overview

In 1940 Latvia was occupied and incorporated into the Soviet Union. Its educational system was then adapted to the Soviet model. Higher education used to be 4-5 years in duration and led to a diploma in a given specialty. In line with the tradition of Soviet centralism, the programmes followed a strict and uniform model.

One of the first Laws adopted upon the restoration of independence was Law on Education (1991). It introduced a number of substantial changes. The Law provided autonomy to institutions of higher education, introduced Bachelor and Master level as well as professional study programmes instead of the 4-5 year diploma studies. These changes affected also initial teacher training.

Until 1994 initial teacher training could be acquired at the University of Latvia or pedagogic higher educational institutions, teachers' institutes in Rīga and Rēzekne, and at specialized secondary level institutions. Secondary professional education was offered in teachers' institutes and specialised pedagogical secondary schools.

Today, the situation has changed. Teacher Institutes have been converted into higher education institutions, thus all future teachers acquire higher education complying with the qualification requirements.

Education Law of the Republic of Latvia (null and void from 01.06.1999.)

8.1.2. Ongoing Debates and Future Developments

At present, the reform induced by the Bologna Process regarding the issue of teacher training, is under consideration. Today, academic bachelor in pedagogy does not entitle to teach in school; in addition, also a professional teacher qualification is necessary. The idea is to approximate academic and professional programmes of teacher training till 2010, to reduce the programmes of academic bachelor in pedagogy and to increase the number of professional programmes.

bachelor in pedagogy and to increase the number of professional programmes.

Recently, an increasing teacher shortage is observed, and various measures have been considered to resolve the problem. Thus, the passed Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers were made to change teacher qualification requirements, see section **8.2.5.1.** for details. Another idea is to provide a certain number of students in teacher education programmes with a higher state grant on the condition they work at schools for a definite period of time. In February 2008 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted regulations on the supplementary activity of the operational programme "Human Resources and Employment" prescribing the order according to which teachers of priority subjects at ISCED 2, 3 (chemistry, biology, physics, natural science, mathematics, computer sciences and foreign languages – official languages of the European Union) can apply for special grants starting with 2008. The amount of this grant is LVL 65 – 150. The total funding of ESF for this activity is LVL 11.24 million, and it is expected that 2400 teachers will be able to apply for it.

In 2008 a national initiative 'Mission Possible' was launched and successfully continues. Its aim is to facilitate the quality of education in Latvia and to attract talented higher education graduates to schools. The length of the programme is 2 years during which higher school graduates work as teachers, undergo special teacher training and receive a special grant in addition to teacher salary.

Education Law

8.1.3. Specific Legislative Framework

Regulations on education and professional qualification required for teachers (2000) set forth the guidelines on what programmes should be acquired to be qualified for a teacher position. Though all higher educational institutions are autonomous (as regards curriculum, forms of studies etc.), programmes should be designed in compliance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions as well as with standards of academic education or standards of second level professional higher education.

The Ministry of Education and Science shall control the implementation of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and implement the state policy in the field of higher education. The interests of higher educational institutions in the *Saeima* and the Cabinet of Ministers are represented by the Minister of Education and Science.

The standard of teacher profession was approved in 2004 to ensure that programmes are harmonized with the reform of curriculum gradually implemented since 2005. The standard states teachers obligations and tasks as well as the necessary skills and knowledge of this profession.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

Law on Higher Education Institutions

Regulations on the Requirements for Teacher Training and Professional Qualifications

The Standard of Teacher Profession

8.1.4. Institutions, Level and Models of Training

Institutions responsible for initial teacher training are the following: higher education institutions, the Ministry of Education and Science and the National Education Quality Service.

School teachers in Latvia are trained at university tertiary level in accordance with the consecutive or the concurrent model. There are two groups of programmes – academic programmes and professional programmes.

Academic higher education is divided into two stages. Bachelor degree is awarded after the first stage, Master degree – after the second stage. Bachelor degree programmes in Latvia last 3 or 4 years. Master degree programmes usually last 2 years, and the Master degree gives access to doctoral studies.

Professional higher education in Latvia is organised in two levels – first and second. Teacher training is mostly provided by the so-called second-level higher professional education programmes, but there are also some first-level programmes providing only a professional qualification and giving no access to Master studies.

The group of professional programmes at higher education institutions includes:

- 1-2 year programmes after Bachelor studies leading to higher professional pedagogical education (consecutive model);
- professional study programmes with integrated Bachelor study programmes of 4 or 5 years duration (concurrent model).

The Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers prescribe that a person is entitled to work as a teacher after completing a 4 year study programme and acquiring teacher qualification.

The mentioned study programmes open the possibility to enter a Master programme.

All these programmes coexist, though the concurrent model is followed most frequently.

In Latvia, practical placements at school are a compulsory part of initial training of the teachers. This part corresponds to 39 credit points out of 240 (in accordance with the ECTS). However, the existing practice of placements period cannot be regarded as final "on the job" qualifying phase. In Latvia, a student acquires teacher qualification and is entitled to work as a teacher instantly after the completion of initial training programme, and there is no other transition period required in order to become fully qualified for teaching profession.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

National Education Quality Service

Law on Higher Education Institutions

8.1.5. Admission Requirements

General admission to higher education applies also for entering teacher training programmes. See section **6.6.**

Although the main access requirement is holding a general secondary education certificate (with marks in subjects relevant to the programme), the training institution, depending on the course or area of specialization, establishes methods of selection and has the right to state additional admission requirements. Recently, practical selection procedures to state-financed study places are based on the results of centralized examinations passed at the end of secondary education, but may also include competitive entrance examinations and (or) a ranking according to the marks in secondary education certificate. The latter can be accompanied by an interview. There are no requirements relating to the place of residence or age.

Thus, access to initial teacher training in the case of concurrent model does not differ from access to other university level courses or areas of specialization.

In the case of consecutive model the admission procedure for teacher training programmes for the holders of Bachelor degree usually includes discussion of an essay written by the applicant on the topic of his/ her further studies and/or an interview. No previous work experience is required.

A person that aims to acquire another teacher qualification and has previously already acquired qualification (1,5 - 2 year programme) can start to study at a second level professional higher education programme. In

this case, the number of credit points of pedagogical practical work can be diminished or the previous time spent for professional improvement can be acknowledged as well.

8.1.6. Curriculum, Special Skills, Specialization

The general structure of pedagogical education consists of four parts:

- Pedagogy and psychology,
- Content of specific subject/s to be taught in school and methodology of teaching,
- Pedagogical practice and development of the qualification thesis,
- General education courses like languages, ICT, arts, physical education.

The actual structure and specification of the content of pedagogical part is one of the most difficult areas in teacher training. It is a field that varies considerably from one educational institution to another.

Seen as a whole, pedagogical part of teacher training consists of two components, theoretical and practical. The theoretical component consists of several disciplines to complete obtaining a certain number of credits.

Nowadays subjects to be studied have become more variegated. Courses orienting the students towards ties between education and philosophy both in synchronic and diachronic aspect have been introduced. The following subjects have been introduced in the recent years: Philosophy of Upbringing; Introduction to Philosophy of Education; Philosophical, Psychological and Legal Aspects of Education; Environment etc.

The content of courses on the history of pedagogy has become broader and more detailed. Among the new courses there are branches of pedagogical practice in the world, historical comparative analysis of the concept of pedagogy, etc.

Several courses of alternative pedagogy have been included in the subjects taught: the pedagogical system of M.Montessori, Waldorf schools, the pedagogical system of S.Frenet, etc.

Broadening and differentiating of the syllabus of general pedagogy course embrace comparative pedagogy, pedagogical communication, mutual influence, family, pre-school, primary school, and ecology and health education.

Pedagogical study programmes are closely related to the actual pedagogical process. Courses like applied pedagogy, educational technologies, didactics of individual subjects have been introduced. More attention is being paid to the perfection of pedagogical skills.

Contact classes may take 50% of the mentioned curriculum, while the rest is to be devoted to independent studies as required by course syllabi. At least 30% of study courses should be implemented practically.

Specialization of subject teachers includes:

- courses on the standards of subjects to be taught: 150 credits,
- professional study courses: 50 credits.

Computer science is mandatory for all students. Areas of management/administration, aspects of behaviour management/school discipline, integration of pupils with special needs, work with multicultural groups of pupils are offered in compulsory courses or core curriculum options of initial teacher training. For example, in various higher education institutions it is possible to acquire the qualification of a special education teacher. In that case, in addition to higher professional education and teacher qualification of an education level, pedagogues obtain also the qualification in a specific special education area. All pedagogy students have to acquire knowledge in psychology, special pedagogy and medicine in order to integrate children with special needs into mainstream schools.

Pre-school, basic and secondary education teachers are trained alike, except that they study courses of definite subject standards for a definite level of education.

Teachers trained to work at a certain level of education are not qualified to teach in other educational levels with an exception of specialist teachers of art subjects (music, painting etc), sports subjects, foreign languages and Latvian language and literature, who are entitled to teach the respective subject at all levels of education.

Regulations on the National Standard of Second-Level Professional Higher Education Programmes

8.1.7. Evaluation, Certificates

On student evaluation see section **6.13.**

On certification see section **6.15.**

After completing a definite qualification programme a teacher qualification in a certain subject(s) at the respective level of education is acquired.

The qualification of special education teacher or the qualification of teacher speech therapist is acquired at a separate programme. This qualification license to work at all education levels.

8.1.8. Alternative Training Pathways

Apart from concurrent and consecutive models for initial teacher training, the necessary teacher training may be provided through professional further education, that includes both second level professional study programmes, both the teacher in-service training programmes (72 hours). This option is possible if a person already has a teacher qualification and wishes to work in another education level or to teach another subject. See also section **8.2.1.** for information on historical development of in-service training.

8.2. Conditions of Service of Teachers

The institutions responsible for decision-making concerning the conditions of service for teachers are: the Ministry of Education and Science, municipalities and education institutions.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

8.2.1. Historical Overview

The Republic of Latvia was proclaimed on 18 November 1918. The new state faced many problems, one of them being the formation of a new system of education. On 8 December 1918 the Law "On Education Institutions in Latvia" was adopted. Its proclaimed compulsory education (for all citizens aged 6-16 years) was not implemented in life until much later due to the lack of resources and teachers. Also, the law said nothing about teacher training, their salaries and pensions. On 1 April 1921 the Law "On Compulsory School Teacher Wages" came into effect. Teacher salaries were equal to those of civil servants. The *Saeima* adopted the Law "On Teacher Pensions" on 1 March 1925.

At the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s the world's economic crisis affected Latvia as well. The number of the unemployed increased, the living standards of the population decreased. In 1931 during the 21st Conference of the Teacher Union of Latvia teachers demanded the increase in salaries.

On 18 July 1934 a new Law "On Popular Education" came into effect altering rights and duties of school directors and teachers. All teachers, school directors as well as candidates for positions were registered at the Ministry of Education. Financial supporters of schools could select candidates for the position of a head of a compulsory or non-compulsory education institution but only the Ministry of Education appointed them to the position.

Teachers had to be citizens of Latvia with relevant general and pedagogic education, at least 20 years old. Persons with education acquired at the Teacher Institute or similar education institution who had been on pedagogic placement as determined by law, were admitted to be primary school teachers enjoying full rights. Teachers who had reached 65 years of age could continue working at school only with the permission of the Ministry of Education.

Amendments to the law concerning teacher salaries in 1935, stipulated that teachers at schools financed by rural local authorities receive their salary together with family allowance from the state, but teachers in compulsory education institutions financed by town local authorities received half of the salary and family allowance from the state and the other half- from the local authority of the respective town. The financial supporters of education institutions had to provide a flat with heating and light to teachers deducting 1/12 from their salaries. Teachers could get land for use as well - in rural schools from 0.5 to 2 ha, but in town schools - from 0.05 to 0.4 ha. According to the new law, the location of school was not taken into account when calculating salaries for teachers. Salaries were calculated on the basis of same category, irrespective of the school being located in Rīga, another town or the countryside.

Economic status of teachers improved during the second half of the 1930s, mostly due to stabilisation of national economy, but also because of the concern of the Government in the general level of education among population. Teacher salaries were raised and their work conditions improved. From the present point of view, teachers received decent salaries, and their prestige in the society was high enough.

50 years of the Soviet occupation followed. Teacher posts were distributed centrally. Teachers were able to choose the post in a certain city or town according to their grades in a higher education institution. It was a common practice to provide teachers with accommodation.

After the re-establishment of an independent state, the work conditions of teachers gradually deteriorated, due to the changing economy system. If in the beginning of the 1990s the position of teacher was still considered a good job for receiving a steady salary, then after ten years teacher salaries were left far behind the average salary level in the country.

Today due to low salaries and lack of other types of support many teachers leave for private sector, and it happens that new graduates do not even start working at school. However, since 2000 the salaries of teachers have been gradually increasing. See also section **8.2.11.** on remuneration of teachers.

The role of in-service training was appreciated also in the past. In the 1920s-30s the Policy of Education and Science of Latvia stipulated that after graduation from Teacher Institutes the young teachers participate in complementary training courses lasting one year. In 1939 the Teacher Society of Latvia was established with the Occupation Chamber of Latvia. It encouraged and stimulated teachers and helped them work more creatively.

Until the beginning of the 1990s, professional development of teachers, school principals and methodology experts was provided centrally by Rīga Teacher In-Service Training Institute. Each teacher was provided with in-service training once every 5 years amounting to 72-120 hours. Courses were planned according to a five-year plan produced by regional methodology experts and stating how many teachers would attend the specific courses per year.

About one third of curriculum were devoted to political, pedagogic and psychological issues each. During the attendance a course paper had to be produced and a test passed. At the beginning of the 1990s reorganisation of further education was started. The Training Institute was closed and instead the Education Development Institute established partially taking over the functions of further teacher education, however, further education was not organised centrally. Later this Institute was re-organised into the Teacher Education Support Centre which is now located within the State Education Centre.

Starting from 1993, further education programmes for teachers participate in a competition for state financing. The aim is to emphasize state priorities in further education and a rational use of state budget funds allocated for further education.

State Education Centre

The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

8.2.2. Ongoing Debates and Future Developments

In 2007 in order to facilitate coherent action in the field of education the Ministry of Education and Science organized regional conferences of the heads of general and vocational education institutions and teachers. The conferences were devoted to issues proposed by teachers, viz.: teacher salaries and work quality; teacher support through the European Structural Funds; correspondence of education to the labour market; National Standard for General Upper Secondary Education; collaboration between school and family.

Teacher salaries are being increased annually in accordance with the reform initiated in 2000. The minimum salary for a qualified teacher has risen for 50 % in the time period from 2000 to 2004. In 2005, the Programme for Increasing Remuneration of Teachers 2006-2010 was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. Its aim is to ensure a continuous increase of teacher salaries to approximate them with the mean rate of teacher salaries in European Union countries. It entails changing the teacher wage rate attraction to the average wage in the public sector, instead of its attraction to the minimum wage which has been a reference point up to now, serving as a basis before applying a definite coefficient. The first step toward its achievement is amendments made at the end of 2006 stating that a teacher's salary should not be lower than the one fixed in the salary rise schedule for the respective period as approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. Since September 2007 two additionally paid working hours of teacher's weekly load have to be dedicated to individual work with pupils, besides native and foreign language, literature, mathematics, science, physics, chemistry, biology, geography and history teachers receive additional remuneration for written work marking. The next step is to foresee remuneration for preparation for lessons. Since September, 2008 teachers are paid for two hours (pre-school teachers - three hours) for preparation for lessons.

In October, 2007 the development of a differentiated career structure model was started as a pilot project, which is scheduled to complete in August 2008. According to the model teachers are divided into 5 qualification levels: junior teacher, teacher, senior teacher, teacher expert at local level, teacher expert at state level. 19 qualification criteria and 4 competence areas have been developed. The approbation consists of two stages. On voluntary basis teachers participate in this project by developing one element of the structure e.g. teacher's self-evaluation, tasks for pupil evaluation, lesson observation and evaluation, development of teaching and methodological materials or participating in the approbation of the whole differentiated career structure, which includes evaluation of the teacher's work quality (description of qualification levels, evaluation criteria, teacher's portfolio, evaluation procedure). About 1408 teachers from 192 schools are participating in the approbation of the structure.

In order to facilitate daily teaching work and to promote learning progress, it is planned to introduce a post of teacher's assistant in basic education till 6th grade at general education programmes or 9th grade at programmes with pedagogical correction starting with school year 2010/11. Assistants will work in remedial classes with pupils having difficulties and help teachers during lessons.

In July 2009 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted new regulations on the remuneration of teachers so that with the school year 2009/2010 the salaries of teachers could be reduced for 30% per teaching rate. In order to ensure the salary for one rate the number of work places for teachers has been reduced significantly increasing the pupils per teacher ratio. At the same time, the Ministry of Education and Science has planned several support measures for teachers, e.g. additional grants for natural science and foreign language teachers.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Programme for Increasing Remuneration of Teachers (except pre-school teachers not employed in preparing 5 and 6-year-olds for school) 2006-2010

8.2.3. Specific Legislative Framework

The Education Law, the Labour Protection Law and the Labour Law as well as a number of regulations issued by the Cabinet of Ministers determine conditions of service for teachers.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

Education Law

Labour Law

Labour Protection Law

8.2.4. Planning Policy

The Ministry of Education and Science is directly involved in developing planning policy. Various statistical data and analysis of labour market provided by the departments of the ministry and other competent institutions are taken into account. The planning policy is regular, as the number of all study places (thus also places in pedagogical programmes) financed from state budget is stated annually by the Minister after consultation with the Council of Higher Education. It observes trends in demographic situation like birth rate and migration as the planning policy is closely linked to the teacher/pupil ratio, and follows also other movements within the teacher profession like retirement and transfer to non-teaching posts in order to plan the demand and supply of teachers in the future.

Council of Higher Education

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

8.2.5. Entry to the Profession

The open recruitment procedure is used in Latvia. See the subdivisions for details.

8.2.5.1. Entry to the Profession. General Education

Schools are responsible for the recruitment of teachers and play a direct role in the selection process; they publicize vacant posts, review applications and select candidates. Often school heads place announcements in local, regional or central newspapers as well as in the specialized newspaper for teachers "*Izglītība un kultūra*" (Education and Culture). Besides, a common practice is that the school head keeps in direct contact with teacher education institutions and places announcements directly at the institutions. The portal www.eskola.lv also contains information about the teacher vacancies.

In order to have access to profession, general education teachers must have the required education and a teacher qualification in the respective level of education. Starting with 2003/04, only teachers with higher education are entitled to work in schools thus only teachers with academic degree in pedagogy or higher professional qualifications obtained at levels ISCED 5B or 5A are employed. Various possibilities are provided for the teachers who, in accordance with these provisions, are not entitled to teach, to acquire the necessary qualification through in-service training, e.g. general secondary school teachers may work also if they have obtained academic education in the respective field of science and a teacher's qualification, or have started its acquisition within two years after they started to work as teachers. The latter option was introduced in order to enlarge competition as well as to fill vacancies in the teaching of certain subjects due to the ageing

of teaching staff. Taking into account the lack of pre-primary school teachers, the recent amendments also prescribe primary school teachers as eligible to teach in pre-primary institutions.

The employment status of teachers is contractual. According to the labour law, schools must sign permanent contracts with teachers.

The Education Law states who may not work as teachers:

- a person who has been punished for an intentional crime and has not been rehabilitated;
- a person whose capacity to act is limited in accordance with procedures prescribed in regulatory enactments;
- in educational institutions established by the State or local governments – a person who does not have a document (issued in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Cabinet of Ministers) attesting to the command of the official language at the highest level except for academic staff of higher education institutions, namely, citizens of other states and stateless persons who are participating in the implementation of particular educational programmes on the basis of an international agreement as well as educators working at educational institutions or their branches founded by foreign states;
- a person who has been deprived, by a court decision, of parental authority.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

Education Law

Labour Law

8.2.5.2. Entry to the Profession. Tertiary Education

The main selection criteria for the posts of academic staff are education and experience. The following education is required for the posts:

- professor - the Doctor degree and at least 3 years of experience in a post of associated professor,
- associated professor - the Doctor degree,
- assistant professor (*docents*) – the Doctor degree,
- lecturer - the degree of Doctor or Master,
- assistant - the degree of Doctor or Master,
- academic staff of professional programmes – because of the necessity to acquire practical skills and knowledge, positions of *docents*, lecturers and assistants can be taken by persons with higher education without an academic degree on the condition of having a sufficient practical experience in the work related to the subject to be taught.

The amendments in the Law of Higher Education Institutions (adopted in August 2005)– introduce the so-called "basic election places" of the academic staff in order to prevent their working in basic staff positions in several HEIs and to promote attraction of Doctoral degree holders to higher education institutions thus developing scientific activity there. However, it does not exclude the possibility to work in several higher education institutions.

The employment contract with the professor, associated professor, assistant professor, lecturer and assistant elected in an academic post is signed by the rector for a period of 6 years. The contract may be prolonged.

Law on Higher Education Institutions

8.2.6. Professional Status

In Latvia, teachers do not have a civil servant status. They are contracted on a permanent basis. Employment conditions are included in the Education Law, the contract and the collective agreement if there is such. Teacher contracts are based on the general employment legislation. The definition of professional standards in terms of teaching content and methodology (knowledge, skills and expertise that teachers are expected to acquire and apply in their work) is stated in the legislation and in schools' own regulations.

However, general responsibilities of educators are prescribed by the law and are as follows:

- to participate creatively and responsibly in the implementation of the relevant educational programme;
- to raise upright and honourable people, patriots of Latvia;
- to constantly improve their education and professional skill;
- to conform with the norms of pedagogical professional ethics;
- to ensure that educatees have the opportunity to exercise their rights at an educational institution;
- to observe the rights of a child; and
- to implement an education programme in co-operation with the family of the educatee.

The Ministry of Education and Science has accepted the basic rules of teacher's professional ethics: professionalism, fellowship, liberty, responsibility, justice, fairness, dignity and self-esteem, sensitivity.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Education Law

8.2.7. Replacement Measures

Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

8.2.7.1. Replacement Measures. General Education

School head has discretion in determining how to organize replacement. Usually school heads rely on the existing teaching staff for replacement purposes.

To cover absent colleagues the workload of teachers is increased, and they receive overtime pay. There are no national regulations relating the maximum period when a teacher may be obliged to replace an absent colleague. In case of necessity the transfer to another teaching post may be organized as well, see the section

8.2.14.

In times of teacher shortage emergency measures include the use of existing resources, fully qualified teachers over retirement age, and teachers unqualified for the subject or education level concerned, as well as students undergoing teacher training may also be eligible in emergency situations of teacher shortage (Education Law prescribes that a person that is currently acquiring teacher qualification may work as a teacher); see section 8.2.5.1.

8.2.7.2. Replacement Measures. Tertiary Education

In the time of temporary absence of a professor (maximum two years), an associate professor can be appointed to fill a professor's position, an assistant professor (*docents*) can fill an associate professor's position, a lecturer or an assistant with a doctor's degree can fill a *docent's* position. Replacement is approved by a rector's resolution.

Besides, when a higher education institution has a fully or temporarily vacant staff position, its Senate may also decide not to announce a competition, and to employ a guest professor, a guest assistant professor (*docents*) or a guest lecturer, respectively. The period of such an employment may not be longer than two years. Guest professors, assistant professors (*docenti*) and lecturers shall have the same rights, obligations and remuneration as professors, associate professors, assistant professors (*docenti*) and lecturers, but they may not participate in the work of elected administrative institutions.

8.2.8. Supporting Measures for Teachers

So far, there was no support system worked out by the government to assist teachers who quite often are exposed to stressful situations arising from excessive workload or necessity to deal with particular needs of pupils. At present, an official decision is taken to introduce the post of teacher assistant, for more information, see section **8.2.2**. Support personnel is education psychologist, logopede, special teacher. The teaching process proceeds with collaboration.

Teacher in-service training (36 hours per 3 years) is financed from the state budget.

The schools themselves have admitted the necessity for support for teachers working with heterogeneous groups of pupils, and try to have two teachers working in the so-called "correction" classes. Also, in order to facilitate teacher's work, in the first three years classes usually are divided in halves in mathematics and language classes. Later this division is preserved only in foreign language classes. However, the classes can be divided only if the number of learners exceeds 25.

8.2.9. Evaluation of Teachers

The evaluation of teacher work is carried out during school accreditation and the school head is certified once in six years⁹.

A teacher career development system is being formed, the salary will depend from the quality of teacher work.

They do not get a separate report influencing their career. However, the procedure of appraising the merit/performance of individual teachers can be considered as a kind of evaluation. Teacher salaries may be increased also on the basis of their merit, if their work is considered of exceptional quality or value. The school head determines the order how extra finances from the salary fund of pedagogues is used. The performance of teachers is appraised following a favourable report from the school head or the report of a specially constituted committee, or the report from the commission affirmed by the school head. The procedure of appraising the merit/performance of individual teachers is initiated either by school heads or other institutions or persons.

8.2.10. In-service Training

In-service training is compulsory in Latvia for teachers (including school heads and their deputies) at all education levels, but the results do not reflect in teacher salaries. The aims of in-service training are to ensure the necessary teacher qualification, to conform to the necessities of society and to promote the growth of pedagogues as creative personalities. Curriculum includes development of specific subjects and subject teaching, cooperation with pupils and parents, and creative processes in education work.

In general, teachers themselves are responsible for acquiring the necessary in-service training. A general education teacher has a duty of further education of at least 36 programme hours in three years. Besides, teacher has the right to use 30 calendar days during a 3-year period for professional development, including improvement of competences, his basic salary being retained.

Training may be provided by education institutions, institutions or enterprises belonging to the state or municipalities, non-governmental institutions or private providers that are registered in the register of education institutions.

As regards in-service training of teachers working at tertiary level within the period of six years after the election to the academic post, one of the following in-service training programme has to be completed once in a period: innovations in higher education system, didactics of higher education or management of educational work.

8.2.11. Salaries

Teacher salaries are based on seniority, level of education and work load. There are three grades of seniority: less than 5 years, 5 to 10 years and more than 10 years. Minimum teacher salary is fixed in the salary rise schedule for the respective period as approved by the Cabinet of Ministers.

Salaries are payable on a monthly basis and the number of salaries payable per year is 12. Salaries are fixed for the whole country and the basic salary is the same, irrespective of the contract. Government regulations set out that teacher salary be gradually increased. See also the section **8.2.2.**

In Latvia advancement in the salary scale depends on the length of service. Experience in other areas is also taken into account when determining seniority if before other posts the person has worked as a teacher. In seniority the time worked in the following posts is counted:

- Director of municipal educational board,
- State inspector of education,
- Regional (city) inspector for protection of child's rights,
- Elected post, official in civil service or a similar post in education administration or trade union institutions of education employees, if before these posts at least a month is served in teacher profession and this service is proceeded without interruption,
- For vocational education and special subject teachers – time worked in companies, institutions and organizations in a specialization that corresponds to the profile of the subject.

When determining seniority, a temporary break in teaching time is taken into account (for example, maternity leave, longer sickness, military service). In order to have a whole year accounted for in the length of service, the teacher must have worked at least 240 pedagogical hours per calendar year.

Teacher salaries may be increased also on the basis of merit, if their work is considered of exceptional quality or worth. See section **8.2.9.** In Latvia there are no geographic zone-differentiated remunerations. However, some local municipalities allocate certain amounts of living allowances. Sometimes such allowances are entered in collective work agreements.

Teachers working in state gymnasiums receive a premium of 10% from monthly salary of the post.

Teachers working with pupils with special needs at general primary and secondary schools receive a premium of 10% from monthly salary of the post.

In case teachers change the employer (for example, moving to a school in another regional or local municipality) they maintain the salary level they have reached as a result of their former professional experience.

As concerns non-wage benefits, often municipalities try to support teachers financially and allocate certain sums of money as an additional payment for a definite qualification.

Municipalities or the school may offer health-related benefits, which are entered in the collective work agreement, regulations of the school or in a particular contract. Thus some local municipalities (e.g. in Rīga a couple of times during a year) have allotted up to 50 percent of additional payment to teacher salaries. These municipalities also cover health insurance policies for teachers.

The municipality or the school may offer accommodation-based benefits to help cover the costs for an apartment or daily transport expenses.

Teachers can enjoy also other kinds of benefits offered either by local municipalities or schools. They are free or reduced price canteen service, reduced price purchase of books or office equipment for personal use, free use of office equipment (telephones, faxes, computers, etc) within schools. In most cases local authorities are responsible for administering such benefits. All teachers, irrespective of whether they have a permanent or temporary contract, or work on less than a full-time basis are entitled to these benefits.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

Education Law

Regulations on Teachers Salaries

8.2.12. Working Time and Holidays

Teacher working hours are regulated in legislation concerning education and science as well as in employment legislation. In terms of these requirements teacher's workload includes only teaching time; the basic teaching load for pre-school teachers is 36 teaching periods, for general school teachers - 21 teaching period per week. As regards tertiary education, workload is calculated per year and reaches 600-1000 periods. However, the mentioned workloads reflect the number of lessons spent in class with pupils/students, and the time spent in preparing for lessons is not included. The general rule of labour legislation on 40-hours working week applies also to teaching staff. It is planned to make changes in estimating the workload of teachers introducing a 40 hours working week like for all other employees. These 40-hours would include hours for correction of written works, consultations and preparation for lessons

The number of days in school year may vary from year to year (Ministry of Education and Science issues regulations on this every year); it also depends on the class. The starting date is the first day of school (usually the first, second or third of September), the end date – the last day of school. The number of days in a school year for the 1st class is 170, 2nd to 8th, 10th and 11th classes – 170 days and in the 9th class - 185 days, 12th class – 190 days.

An employment contract sets forward general and educational duties of teachers, which fall under several categories:

- teaching – giving lessons, planning and preparing lessons, marking and correcting class and home work, learner assessment and report writing; school management (including teamwork) – preparation of timetables, preparation and development of curriculum, preparation and development of timetable, working with other teachers on organisation, implementation and follow-up of cross-curricular activities;
- supervision of and activities with learners outside classroom – implementing policies with regard to learner discipline, supervision of learners at lunchtime, the midday break and breaks between lessons, organization of school trips;
- in-service training and professional development;
- miscellaneous – participation in representative bodies (teacher councils, trade unions, didactic subject groups, methodological unions of subject teachers, participation in parent-teacher meetings).

The parties may freely agree on the proportion of working time to be allotted to these duties, however, it is usually fixed whether a person is engaged as full-time or part-time employee.

The teacher has the right to receive 8 weeks long paid annual leave, up to 12 weeks long paid creative leave and up to 24 weeks long unpaid creative leave if one has a contract for working out teaching materials.

The academic staff of higher education institutions has the right to an annual paid leave of eight weeks, and every six years - to a paid sabbatical leave of six calendar months for research or scientific work outside the regular place of employment. In addition, they have the right to receive a one-off paid study leave for the completion of doctor's thesis (3 months). Professors, associated professors and assistant professors are entitled to demand unpaid leave up to 24 months in order to work as guest professors in other higher education institutions.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Law on Higher Education Institutions

8.2.13. Promotion, Advancement

Teachers within teacher profession are not given special promotion possibilities. If they wish, teachers can apply for posts in education-related fields like the State Inspection of Education or the Ministry Education and Science, but this option is not seen as a promotion within teacher profession. Becoming an educational methodology expert might be considered to be a promotion, as usually the best teachers get the post of a regional methodology expert.

In 2007 the development of a differentiated career structure model was started as a pilot project. (see also section [8.2.2.](#))

Teachers may make an individual application if they want to participate in different work groups, expert commissions, and consultative boards and test development teams at the State Education Centre (see also section [2.7.](#), or participate in international projects.

Schools nominate teachers for inclusion in the teams for correction of centralized examinations. Teachers are remunerated for these activities.

On tertiary level, an academic career to a great extent depends on oneself, as requirements for different posts of academic staff differs (higher academic degree, longer work experience, more scientific work etc. is required in order to apply to higher academic posts).

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

National Education Quality Service

State Education Centre

8.2.14. Transfers

There is no rotation or transfer system of teaching staff developed in Latvia.

If there is a necessity to transfer the teacher to a different teaching post in order to implement curriculum, the school head has the right to perform such a transfer in accordance with the current needs and on the same teaching level in accordance with the teacher's qualification.

As regards tertiary level, professors, associate professors and assistant professors (*docenti*) at one time of election have the right to demand unpaid leave for up to 24 months in order to work as guest professors or lecturers in other higher educational institutions.

8.2.15. Dismissal

Teachers have the right to terminate their contract by giving a notice in writing on the termination of the contract one month in advance if a shorter period is not determined in the contract. Teachers are free to look for other jobs any time and are responsible for their own career.

Employer may terminate contract only if the reasons for termination are related to inadequate behaviour or insufficient pedagogical skills, or if the school is being liquidated.

8.2.16. Retirement and Pensions

Official retirement age in Latvia both for women and men is 62 years.

The number of years in service (as a teacher or any other occupation) and the amount of salary is taken into account determining the amount of pension.

8.3. School Administrative and/or Management Staff

On general matters relating to the management and administration of schools, see section [2.6.4.](#)

The names of posts of education institution heads are as follows:

- in pre-school institutions - the Head;
- in basic and secondary schools – the Director;
- in higher education institutions – the Rector.

The head/director/rector is the main administrative person of education institution. He is responsible for the operation and results of the institution, implementation of education legislation, and effective usage of various resources. However, there is other administrative staff (like assistant directors in schools; pro-rector, executive director and dean in higher education institutions) providing assistance in administration and management of the school.

The head of institution decides singly how to utilize intellectual, financial and material resources of education institution and determines salaries of school staff to be no less than fixed by the Cabinet of Ministers.

He is obliged to ensure the establishment of institution's self-government, if it is proposed by pupils, their parents or teachers.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

Education Law

Law on Higher Education Institutions

8.3.1. Requirements for Appointment as a School Head

Any person with appropriate education and professional qualification may work as head of education institution. In the case of basic and general secondary education institutions, one must have higher pedagogical education, or higher and pedagogical education. It is also possible to have higher education and be still acquiring pedagogical education.

The head of pre-school education institution is required to have a degree in higher education in pedagogy and a pre-school teacher qualification.

Rector is the highest official of higher education institution must implement its general administration and may represent it without special authorisation. The Rector must be elected by the a Satversme Meeting of

higher education institution for a term not exceeding five years but no more than twice in succession, and be approved in the office by the Cabinet of Ministers. A professor may be elected as the rector of a university-type institution. As regards non-university type institutions, it may be a professor or a person holding doctoral degree.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

Education Law

Law on Higher Education Institutions

8.3.2. Conditions of Service

Recruitment, also firing, of school heads is the responsibility of municipality. The amount of pedagogical work for school heads and their assistants is reduced and may not exceed 12 teaching periods per week (approximately one half of a teacher workload). Heads of schools are submitted to regular certification in which professional qualification and conformity to the post are assessed as well as the rank of professional qualification is appointed. Attestation takes place at least once per 6 years. Attestation commission analyses and evaluates:

- work in school management,
- education and work experience (from documents),
- initiatives to continue education and professional skills,
- suitability for the post in accordance with characteristics of professional qualification category.

Other conditions are similar to those of the teachers, see section **8.2.**

8.4. Staff involved in Monitoring Educational Quality

In Latvia, administrative supervision and control in the field of education is ensured by the State Inspection of Education – an institution supervised by the Ministry of Education and Science. Officials of inspection control observation of education-related regulatory enactments in education institutions, conformity of education process with regulatory enactments and process of state examinations. All education institutions fixed in the Register of Educational institutions are under control of the inspection.

National Education Quality Service is responsible for accreditation of general basic and secondary education institutions and certification of school heads.

During accreditation also education quality is assessed, see chapter **9.** of general and vocational education programmes and institutions.

The State inspection has the right to suggest inflicting demerit to school heads or pedagogues and to break labour contract in the case of offence stated in regulatory enactments. Under certain circumstances the inspection is competent to inflict an administrative penalty.

The State Inspection has the same competence in supervising higher educational institutions, except for accreditation of education programmes and institutions.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

National Education Quality Service

8.4.1. Requirements for Appointment as an Inspector

In Latvia, inspectors have a civil servant status; therefore all formal mandatory requirements for civil servants apply also to the post of inspector (see below). Besides, the State Inspection of Education defines other requirements such as higher education, work experience in teaching and school management. In addition, knowledge of foreign language(s) is an advantage. There are no differences in requirements concerning different levels of education; also the length of the experience necessary is not determined.

The State Civil Service Law states that one may apply for a civil service position if he/she:

- is a citizen of the Republic of Latvia;
- is fluent in the Latvian language;
- has higher education;
- has not reached the age of retirement determined by the law;
- has not been convicted of deliberate criminal offences, or has been rehabilitated, or for whom the conviction has been set aside or extinguished;
- has not been dismissed from a civil service position by a court judgment in a criminal matter;
- has not been found as lacking capacity to act in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the law;
- is not or has not been in a permanent staff position in the State security service, intelligence or counter-intelligence service of the U.S.S.R., the Latvian SSR or some foreign state;
- is not or has not been a participant in organisations prohibited by the law or by an adjudication of a court; and
- is not a relative (a person who is married to, or in kinship or affinity of the first degree with, or a brother or sister) of the head of an institution or a direct supervisor. The Cabinet may determine exceptional cases if a relevant institution cannot otherwise ensure the fulfilling of prescribed functions.

As civil servants, inspectors have the right and they are obliged to master training programmes offered by the School of Public Administration, which co-ordinates and ensures the process of civil servant training.

No later than three weeks before the expiry of probation term (usually 6 months) of a candidate appointed to a civil service position for the first time, his or her suitability for the work in the civil service shall be assessed. In the case of positive assessment, the head of the institution shall propose to the Administration that the status of civil servant be granted to the candidate. If the assessment is negative, the head of an institution must dismiss the candidate from the civil service position because of his or her failure to pass probation.

National Education Quality Service

State Civil Service Law

8.4.2. Conditions of Service

The activities of the inspector are defined by the description of the post, and the rights and obligations are stated also in the Education Law and the statute of the State Inspection of Education. As the inspectors have a civil servant status, alongside general labour legislation, also the provisions of the State Civil Service Law relating to employment relationships apply to the Inspection officials. The staff of State Inspection of Education is submitted to the principle of rotation. However, it does not refer to the transfers of inspectors, but its monitoring areas. In accordance with the head's order, inspector of the respective area may be replaced by another one.

National Education Quality Service

Education Law

State Civil Service Law

8.5. Educational Staff responsible for Support and Guidance

See subdivisions for details. On general matters relating to the organization and duties of school counselling services, see sections **4.15**, **5.18**, and **6.16**.

8.5.1. Educational Staff responsible for Support and Guidance. Pre-school Education

Education specialist on teaching methods provides teachers with methodological support and advice.

8.5.2. Educational Staff responsible for Support and Guidance. General Education

In addition to information under heading **8.5.1**, there are also:

- psychologist assists pupils, teachers and parents who need psychological support and advice;
- career adviser provides vocational and educational guidance to pupils
- social teacher ensures implementation of events aimed at protection of children rights and acts as a mediator between the school and municipality..

8.6. Other Educational Staff or Staff working with Schools

Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

8.6.1. Other Educational Staff or Staff working with Schools. Pre-school Education

- Health care nurse provides first aid and health preventive care for children, informs the child's general practitioner about health problems;
- speech therapist provides with assistance and advice on problems related to speech;
- specialist teachers provide interest-related education, e.g. dance, music and sports classes.
- Babysitter – helps pre-school teachers.

8.6.2. Other Educational Staff or Staff working with Schools. General Education

In addition to information under heading **8.6.1**, there are also:

- speech therapist provides assistance and advice on problems related to speech and literacy;
- social pedagogue analyses educational problems of pupils and teachers as well as families and pupils, ensuring through counselling and support that education is properly and successfully conducted;
- librarian.

8.6.3. Other Educational Staff or Staff working with Schools. Tertiary Education

Librarian.

8.7. Statistics

All data from the official website Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia and the Statistical Department of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia unless indicated otherwise.

General schools: Teaching staff, 2008/09

	Number of schools	Teaching staff (including multiple jobholders)
Total	982	33321
Of which:		
General full-time schools	948	26695
Pre-schools	570	953
Basic	463	6646
Secondary	377	20049
Special	63	2818
Of the number of full-time general schools, private schools	31	768
Of the total number of schools, boarding schools		
Of which:		801
Basic	18	479
Secondary	12	332
	6	
Evening (shift) schools	34	944

	Teaching staff in total	Of which females
Pre-school institutions	8211	8173
General full-time schools	26695	25942
Of which classes:		
1 – 4	6646	902
5 – 9	13391	8830
10 – 12	6658	16210
Evening schools	944	828
Vocational schools	4918	3469
Higher education institutions and colleges	5360	3005

* Excluding pre-school groups at general schools and interest education institutions

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

9. Evaluation of Educational Institutions and the Education System

Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

9.1. Historical Overview

There had been no system for education system evaluation in Latvia till the independence was regained in 1990. There had been episodic evaluations of the quality of pupils' knowledge in several schools or regions, but not on a state level. In 2000 an Education System Improvement Project (ESIP) was established by the World Bank and the Government of Latvia, and within it a School Evaluation Sub-component was set up in order to develop a new system of school evaluation. Its main tasks were to develop a model of self-evaluation for schools, to disseminate methods of self-improvement on national level, to produce a handbook for schools and to review the process of external evaluation. The project was successful and at present, the evaluation of schools and programmes and certification of school heads occurs in accordance with the methodology developed. The ESIP completed its activity in 2004.

In 1994, the Quality Assessment Centre for Higher Education was established as the body implementing the requirements of the Declaration on Co-operation in the area of quality assurance of higher education in the Baltic states. Its main task is to organize the quality assessment process and co-ordinate accreditation of programmes and higher education institutions. The first assessment and accreditation of a study programme and a higher education institution were made in 1996, and the first accreditation round was completed in 2002.

Since the August 2005 (when the State Agency for Quality Evaluation in General Education was established) the accreditation of education institutions and programmes and certification of school heads is carried out according to the School Operation Evaluation Methodology approved by Ministry of Education and Science and based on the methodology developed by the Education System Improvement Project.

National Education Quality Service (since 2009, National Education Quality Service) ensures objective and comprehensive procedure for quality evaluation in general education by organising accreditation of general education institutions and programmes as well as certification of school heads of public basic and secondary education institutions.

Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre

National Education Quality Service

9.2. Ongoing Debates and Future Developments

In 2009, to decrease bureaucracy in education process amendments were made in respective regulations – licenses are issued for an indefinite period of time, in this way schools are able to begin to implement an education programme but the quality of programme implementation is being evaluated at least once in 6 years – in the process of school accreditation.

Yet accreditation costs were set by Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre board decision because the Centre provides technical support in the process of accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes under contract and the State Audit Office indicated the necessity to develop a Pricelist approved by the Cabinet of Ministers.

So in order to introduce more rational and transparent payment system providing higher education institutions and their implemented programmes for assessment necessary activities, including information

gathering, maintenance of corresponding data base, its update and assessment of necessary expert work, the Ministry of Education and Science has developed regulations of Cabinet of Ministers – Regulations on the Pricelist of the Paid Services Offered by the Ministry of Education and Science.

National Education Quality Service

Regulations on the Proceedure for Licensing General and Vocational Education Programmes

9.3. Administrative and Legislative Framework

The legislation on the state level includes three general education quality evaluation aspects: accreditation of education programmes and institutions, and certification of school heads.

9.3.1. Administrative and Legislative Framework. General Basic and Secondary Education

The Education Law, the Law of General Education and the Law on Vocational Education stipulate that general and vocational education schools and the respective education programmes are accredited. Accreditation procedure is determined by the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers. Organisation and management of accreditations and certification of school heads is the responsibility of the National Education Quality Service. Accreditation of educational institutions and programmes and certification of school heads are carried out together.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

National Education Quality Service

Education Law

Law on General Education

Law on Professional Education

Regulations On Accreditation of General Education Programmes and Institutions as well as Certification of Heads of General Basic and Secondary Education Institutions, Established by the State or Local Municipalities

9.3.2. Administrative and Legislative Framework. Tertiary Education

As regards evaluation of higher education, the Higher Education Quality Assessment Centre (organises whole process) and the Council of Higher Education (makes decisions on accreditation of establishments, see also the section **2.7.** as well as Accreditation Commission (makes decisions on accreditation of study programmes) are elements of the system of quality assessment in higher education along with the Ministry of Education and Science which supervises and is responsible for the whole accreditation process. The Law on Higher Education Institutions stipulates general accreditation principles of a higher education institution and a study programme. Only those higher education 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. The procedure of accreditation is established in the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 821 "On the Procedure for accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, Colleges and Study Programmes" approved on October 3, 2006.

Council of Higher Education

Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Education Law

Law on Higher Education Institutions

On the Procedure for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, Colleges and Study Programmes

9.4. Evaluation of Schools/Institutions

In Latvia assessment of the quality of school performance takes place during accreditation process. The Education Law determines that all educational institutions, except those which implement only interest-related education programmes (realisation of the individual educational needs and desires of a person regardless of age and previously acquired education), shall be accredited. Accreditation shall be carried out within five years starting with the first day of activity by the education institution.

Besides, each education or study programme (a school or a higher education institution develops one or more education programmes) shall be accredited as well. It must be done within two years from the day of the programme's start, and not less than once in six years. A higher education institution or a college may be accredited only if more than 50% of its study programmes are accredited. Normally, accreditation granted for a higher education institution is permanent, while that of a study programme - 6 years.

Also the head of a basic or secondary educational institution founded by the state or a local government shall be professionally evaluated (see also sections **8.2.9.** and **8.4.**).

The accreditation of institutions and education programmes and school head attestation should be done in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Cabinet of Ministers. Educational institutions have to prepare an internal evaluation report and a development plan, which are taken into account during external evaluation.

During external evaluation of schools teaching of each subject in total is evaluated. Thus, a kind of assessment of teachers is also carried out although their individual work is not evaluated.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

Education Law

On the Procedure for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, Colleges and Study Programmes

Regulations On Accreditation of General Education Programmes and Institutions as well as Certification of Heads of General Basic and Secondary Education Institutions, Established by the State or Local Municipalities

9.4.1. Internal Evaluation

See subdivisions for details.

9.4.1.1. Internal Evaluation. Basic and Secondary Education

A system of self-evaluation has been developed largely on the basis of the School Evaluation and Development Planning Handbook which encouraged schools to involve into this process. Today, internal evaluation is closely linked with external evaluation and serves as its basis, as well as the school operation self – evaluation and external evaluation is carried out under the same criteria.

9.4.1.2. Internal Evaluation. Tertiary Education

A self-assessment report of a higher education institution is a necessary pre-condition and the first step of an accreditation of the institution itself and any of its study programmes. The report contains description and assessment of study programmes or their elements, evaluation of their organization and practical implementation, comparison with other similar programmes in Latvia or any of the EU member states, qualitative and quantitative profile of academic staff and other aspects. Representatives of administration,

academic staff and students are involved in the preparation of a self-assessment report. The report should be submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science in Latvian and English.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

9.4.2. External Evaluation

In Latvia, external evaluation is part of accreditation process both in general and higher education. See subsections for more information.

9.4.2.1. External Evaluation. Basic and Secondary Education

The external evaluation is carried out by expert teams, affirmed by the Ministry of Education and Science. Expert team consists of a team leader and 4 experts who have completed further education programme for experts in the following areas: principles of external evaluation, work organisation, evaluation criteria, evaluation levels, its descriptions and application in evaluation, evaluation methods, process of external evaluation, and development of report. Usually, experts are chosen from school administrators and lecturers of higher education institutions.

The process of expert work could be divided in three parts: verification of school documentation; participating in lessons to observe teaching and learning process and questioning of pupils, teachers and parents, as well as interviews with the founder of school, school board, parents and teachers.

During external evaluation seven fields of school work are evaluated: the curriculum, teaching and learning, pupil achievement, support for pupils, school environment, school resources, work organisation, management and quality assurance.

The regulations cover the list of criteria (22) to be used by the expert team when evaluating operation of an educational institution: accordance with legislation, teaching quality, learning quality, career guidance provisions, premises and equipment, staff qualification, institutional self-evaluation, development plan etc.

At the end, the expert team prepares evaluation report and recommends to accredit the institution/programme or certify the school head or to refuse the accreditation/certification. This recommendation has an advisory character. It is submitted to the Commission of Accreditation of General Education and Certification of School Heads (henceforth – the Commission) which accepts the recommendation by majority of votes.

The official decision on accreditation/certification or its refusal is made by the Ministry of Education and Science on the basis of recommendation of the Commission. Institutions and programmes are accredited for 6 years. If the school head is not certificated, the certification is managed simultaneously with the school accreditation. School head is certificated once. There is no re-certification.

Before certification, school head shall complete either a further education programme "Management of General Education Institution" or an accredited study programme covering the following themes: objectives of education system, legislation, management of educational process, education quality, institutional development assessment, communication psychology, staff management, employment relationships, documentation, and labour protection and safety of pupils.

During certification, professional qualification of the school head is evaluated.

If the Ministry of Education and Science decides to refuse accreditation of a programme or institution, it may:

- suggest to nullify the licence allowing to implement the respective programme;
- propose to the founder to reorganize or to close the educational institution;
- suggest to the founder to give a notice to the school head.

If the Ministry of Education and Science decides not to certify the school head, it may suggest to the founder to give him/her a notice.

Schools are also externally evaluated by other inspections in areas like health protection, fire prevention etc.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Regulations On Accreditation of General Education Programmes and Institutions as well as Certification of Heads of General Basic and Secondary Education Institutions, Established by the State or Local Municipalities

9.4.2.2. External Evaluation. Tertiary Education

There are two types of accreditation – that of higher education institutions and that of study programmes. Accreditation of higher education institutions practically means inspecting work organization and quality of resources in institutions. Organization of higher education institutions and their structural units, quality of studies and efficiency of the use of resources is evaluated. A positive outcome provides the institution with the right to issue diplomas recognized by the state. A higher education institution or a college may be accredited only if more than 50 percent of education programmes implemented by the institution are accredited. Hence, a strong relation between accreditation of institutions and programmes appears. A study programme may be submitted for accreditation within two years after getting a licence for its implementation.

A full accreditation cycle consists of several phases. Firstly, a self-assessment report must be prepared on the institution or the respective study programme (see section **9.4.1.2.** . Then experts evaluate the self-assessment report and other documents, and real conditions of work at the institution and may request additional information if necessary. The minimum number of Commission members is three including at least one foreign expert (with the exception of first level professional higher education (college programmes), for the evaluation of which all experts may be from Latvia). The commission draws a common statement as well as individual opinions consisting of its assessment on the institution's self-assessment report, surveys of opinions of students, graduates and employers, expert opinions and results of expert visits. Subsequently, the prepared opinions are presented to the Accreditation Commission set up by the Ministry of Education and Science (in the case of accreditation of a study programme) or the Council of Higher Education (in the case of higher education institution accreditation), which make the decision on accreditation. The decision may be passed in three different ways:

- a positive accreditation (normally, accreditation period of a study programme is for 6 years, for a higher education institution – permanently);
- if substantial shortcomings are found in the process of assessment of a higher education institution or study programme, it shall be temporary accredited for 2 years;
- a refusal.

The Council of Higher Education or the Accreditation Commission may decide to refuse accreditation if one of the following reasons is established:

- submitted documents do not comply with the requirements of laws and other legal enactments;
- qualifications of academic staff are insufficient;
- premises do not correspond to standards advanced for higher education institution;
- the higher education institution has no study laboratories available for students to master contemporary technologies.

If the accreditation is refused, a higher education institution or college may submit a re-application for accreditation not earlier than after 6 and not later than after 12 months.

The final phase is maintenance and upgrading of the quality of studies, and institutions have an obligation to prepare annual self-assessment reports on every study programme. The decision on the duration of the next accreditation period is based on the results of these reports.

Council of Higher Education

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Law on Higher Education Institutions

On the Procedure for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, Colleges and Study Programmes

9.5. Evaluation of the Education System

The accreditation and certification results are summarized in a commission report. It portrays the information about the results of school documentation verification, participating in lessons, questioning and interviews with pupils, parents and teachers, as well as the submitted content of self – evaluation. The report of expert commission indicates the schools achievements or strong sides that reflects the positive course of school operation and adds recommendations for further operation.

The information obtained by evaluation of school operation quality gives the possibility to:

- o evaluate the efficiency of school operation in general;
- o evaluate the quality of education process in general and in different subjects separately;
- o to establish the strong points of school operation (also lacks, imperfections, as well as to clarify the their reasons);
- o give certain useful recommendations for plans of school development and operation improvement.

The school operation quality evaluation results can be summarized, accumulated and popularize the good practice in school operation. In September 2008, the State Agency for Quality Evaluation in General Education (since 2009, National Education Quality Service) corresponding its function began to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the school quality evaluation end report. Its aim is to gain information about the accredited educational institution accomplishments in improving the education quality, as well as to gather information about the problems that influence the school operation quality and that are possible to solve at state and local level.

The centrally set and centrally marked 9th and 12th class examination results are analysed and their results published so they can be used to evaluate education system by comparing pupil achievements and assessing the education standard.

In order to guarantee a mutual accordance of standards and the quality of education a unitary system of state examinations was established. State examinations are organized by the State Education Centre. Besides, the achievements in the 3rd and 6th classes are diagnosed and tested in the state language, the study language and Mathematics. On the 9th class state examinations see section **4.11.** on the 12th class state examinations see section **5.17.1.**

A unitary state test system in general education is one of the components of education quality evaluation mechanism providing:

- a unitary system for preparing and evaluation of tests and results,
- a system for processing state-determined tests in different education stages,
- unity of testing process in every school of Latvia,

- unity of test correction.

State Education Centre

9.6. Education Research linked to Evaluation of Education System

Both basic and applied education research is essential for the evaluation of education quality. The role of forecast and comparative research (international comparative research included) in education research is increasing, together with a more efficient application of results in the process of developing policies in the field of education. It gives an opportunity to research coherence between studies at schools and objectives of standards in all levels of education as well as between education and state economy. The research also reflects the impact of curriculum and educational methods on the level of pupil achievements.

Researches are carried out by universities and research institutions or project groups established for that purpose, also including those established by non-governmental organizations.

The International Evaluation Association (IEA) organizes the largest programmes of comparative research of educational quality.

Since 1992 Latvia has joined the following projects of IEA: Reading Literacy Study (RLS), Computers in Education Study (COMPED), Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Foreign Language Research.

To form and analyze tendencies of education development, Latvia will continue to participate in international research, to determine the dynamics of system changes and to work out proposals for the improvement of curriculum and quality of education.

The Ministry of Education and Science orders research in the following areas: bilingual education and minority languages; pre-school, basic and secondary, professional and higher education; youth activities in leisure time; sports education; teachers; education and labour market.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

9.7. Statistics

Accredited higher education programmes by time period (as of January 2010):

Type of education programme	Accredited for 2 years	Accredited for 6 years
First-level professional higher education programmes (college programmes)	9	144
Second-level professional higher education programmes	2	57
Professional higher education programmes (Bachelor's degree)	16	160
Professional higher education programmes (Master degree)	3	101
Bachelor programmes (academic education)	4	107
Master programmes (academic education)	5	112
Doctoral programmes	4	77
Professional higher education programmes	-	37
Total	43	795

Source: Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre

Accreditation of education institutions and programmes and certification of school heads in basic education and general secondary education institutions, 2008

	Number
Accredited education institutions	92
Accredited education programmes	405
Certified school heads	37

Source: State Agency for Quality Evaluation in General Education

Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre

National Education Quality Service

State Education Centre

10. Special Educational Support

Special education is general education adapted for persons with special needs, health and development impairments. Special education provides additional support for pupils by adapting curriculum, school environment, by using special technical devices and materials to ensure educational opportunities appropriate for pupil's health condition, abilities and level of development. Special education in Latvia creates actual opportunities and conditions for persons with special needs to acquire education corresponding to their health condition, abilities and the level of development at any education institution, at the same time providing pedagogical, psychological and medical treatment, preparing these persons for work and life in society.

Special education in Latvia refers only to children with functional or developmental disabilities. Gifted children, children with immigrant background, children from ethnic minorities or from disadvantaged background do not fall in special education category if they don't have the above mentioned disabilities.

Children with special educational needs (learning disabilities, language disabilities or physical and mental disabilities) may attend either a separate pre-school educational institution (groups) or integrated groups in a regular pre-school institution. Integrated groups may be attended by children with mild mental and physical disabilities, if the help of all necessary specialists is provided and appropriate programme of education can be implemented in the educational institution.

Pupils with special needs may acquire special basic education, general basic or secondary education and vocational education in special schools or sanatorium boarding schools, sanatorium schools, rehabilitation or development centres, general or vocational education institutions, at home or medical treatment institutions.

Education Law

Law on General Education

10.1. Historical Overview

In Latvia the idea of special education was developed only at the end of the 19th century, when upbringing and teaching children with development problems became topical. At the beginning of the 19th century deaf-mute children were taught in Riga. At first there were small private schools established by German teachers or organizations. The Literary Practical Citizen Society of Germany covered maintenance costs of such schools until World War I. As the first teachers were Germans, teaching was done in German. The school was open to different nationalities. From 1870 to 1875 two other schools for deaf-mute children were opened with Latvian language of instruction. Mostly writing, drawing, language, religion and some occupations were taught. Principals and teachers were educated in Germany, Switzerland, France and St. Petersburg.

In Latvia rehabilitation and education of blind people started during the second half of the 19th century. In 1872 a school for blind children was opened in Riga. In 1877 it was renamed the Institute for the Blind. The Institute worked according to the curriculum of German folk schools and paid much attention to music and job training.

Education of mentally retarded children started only in the first quarter of the 20th century. Government tried to provide education for all children after World War I.

A school for blind children operated in Riga during the interim-war period. The school had neither curriculum, nor textbooks. Pupils used their notes made in relief print.

The length of education at a special school was 6-7 years. During the interim-war period children with speech problems were neglected. Up to the 1950s, special education was almost exclusively provided at facilities for deaf, blind, or mentally retarded children; behavioural problems and developmental disabilities were ignored until the 1970s.

In order to give access to lifelong learning opportunities to adults with disabilities two Education and Training Centres (so called Rehabilitation Centres) were established in the early 1990ies. The main objective of these centres is to provide and develop rehabilitation possibilities for people with disabilities, giving them opportunities to acquire a suitable qualification for occupation. The Centres provide various services for people with special needs to facilitate their successful integration into the labour market in accordance with the requirements regarding their specific health condition, general skills and abilities.

Recently, the change to integrative model has started. A respective legislation has been adopted and serious work has been done so that schools may adapt for providing education for pupils with special needs in mainstream education institutions.

In 2005, Latvia joined the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE) in order to promote and improve the integration of children with special needs within the mainstream education system and to provide accessibility to the information on the methodology of special education aggregated in European countries. Latvia wishes to participate in the projects coordinated by the Agency, related to problem solving in special education, emigrant education and children with special needs education as well as to ensure the dissemination of information available at the agency to education institutions and others concerned in Latvia.

10.2. Ongoing Debates and Future Developments

In 2009 the Centre has planned to begin a European Social Fund project under the activity of Operational programme Human Resources and Development included in the National Strategic Reference Framework of Latvia 2007-2013. The project aims to establish special education research centres in three teacher training universities of Latvia. These centres will develop methodical and diagnostic materials for special education teachers and act as consultancy services for teachers and parents.

Inclusive education issues in Latvia are topical for more than 10 years. Every year in April the Global Action Week „Education for All” is held in Latvia. In 2008 the theme for discussions was „Quality Education to End Exclusion”. During the Global Action Week of 2009 pre-school education issues will be on the agenda.

Association “Ideju Forums” with the support of Soros Foundation – Latvia and in collaboration with National Centre for Special Education implemented a project within which support measures for pupils with special needs and their teachers were introduced. From school year 2009/2010 62 special schools and mainstream schools with integrated pupils with special needs were provided with modern teaching material resources – recommended school literature in audio format. Pupils and their teachers will be able to access a digital library with over 350 national and foreign author literal works. During the process of implementation of this project information will be gathered on the use of new education support measures and a survey will be carried out to gain information about the reading process among pupils with special needs.

Development Programme Human Resources and Employment

Statute of the National Centre for Special Education

10.3. Definition and Diagnosis of the Target Group(s)

There are 8 kinds of special education groups organized accordingly to the person's health or development problems.

- Children with learning disabilities attend special education institutions or general education institutions. Relevant treatment cures the inadequacy of children's intellectual capacities to their age and if it helps, children may continue learning in ordinary schools.
- Children with mental health disorders attend sanatoriums at boarding schools or general education institutions and learn on the basis of curriculum for general education institutions. These children are treated individually to avoid mental overwork and are provided with necessary conditions for recovery, an adequate regime of work and rest, also medical and psychological assistance is provided, if required.
- Children with vision impairment attend special boarding schools, development centres for children with poor eyesight or blind children, or general education institutions. Special educators, who develop school tasks and methods preserving eyesight and compensating eyesight problems, perform educational, psychological and medical control of such children.
- Children with hearing impairment attend special boarding schools or general education institutions. The task of special educators is to make children acquire the contents of the given subject and to overcome deviations appearing in the thinking process of such pupils.
- Children with physical disabilities or children with primary damages of support and motion apparatus (cerebral origin), or who have distinct scoliosis, attend sanatorium boarding schools and special schools, rehabilitation centres or general education institutions. Together with movement problems, cerebral palsy includes deviations in mental and speech development. The task of educators is to correct such deviations.
- Children with language disabilities attend speech therapy schools or general education institutions. Children with serious speech problems attend speech therapy schools. The task of a speech therapist is to prepare children for studies in general education institutions.
- Children with chronic health disorders attend sanatorium boarding schools or general education institutions. Children who have tuberculosis, asthma or other respiratory diseases, digestion problems may attend sanatorium boarding schools and receive the necessary medical assistance.
- Children with mental development disabilities attend special or general education institutions. When educating such children, educators take into account three levels of mental retardation: minor, medium or severe mental retardation, or several severe development impairments.

The National and Municipal Pedagogical and Medical Commissions are the authorities competent to diagnose children's need for special education provision, to define special conditions necessary for teaching and learning as well as provide information about schools implementing appropriate education programme.

[Regulations on Enrolment of Students in Boarding Schools, Special Schools and Special Groups of Pre-school Education al Institution and their withdrawal from Special Schools and Special Groups of Pre-school Education al Institutions](#)

[Regulations on the Responsibilities of National Pedagogical and Medical Commission and Municipal Pedagogical and Medical Commissions](#)

10.4. Financial Support for Pupils' Families

Handicapped children receive disability pension larger than the family allowance. However, not every pupil with special needs is a disabled person, and those without such a status receive ordinary allowances, see section [3.7](#). The amount of invalidity pension depends on the disability group.

Several groups of disabled persons and their companions have the right to use public transportation free of charge.

Special boarding-schools are financed from state budget, covering also meals of learners.

10.5. Special Provision within Mainstream Education

Students who have obtained a statement from the National or the Municipal Pedagogical and Medical Commission about appropriate special education programme can attend a mainstream school if the school has licensed the necessary special education programme and is appropriately accommodated.

A pupil will be admitted to an ordinary, general class, or to a separate class for certain categories of pupils recognized as having special educational needs. They correspond to eight target groups and are as follows: learners with visual impairment, learners with hearing impairment, learners with mental disabilities, learners with physical disabilities; learners with chronic health disorders, learners with language disabilities; learners with mental health disorders; and learners with learning disabilities.

Besides, all special education institutions of Latvia are extending their functions and cooperation with general education institutions and vocational training schools. The Activity Programme for the integration of children with special needs in general education institutions envisages the establishment of Development Centres and integrated school network all over the country.

Together with general education institutions, educators and medical staff of Development Centres check and diagnose children, determine children's education and development problems and possible ways of special assistance, apply and develop new methodical and teaching aids, plan classes and events, develop individual curricula, consolidate information about children's development and health condition, organize seminars and courses for general education institution educators and children's parents.

Integrated schools provide individual education programmes for children with special needs; organize education in compliance with the requirements of the respective special education programme and the regulations of the institution, taking into account the following main principles of activities:

- content of education is practical;
- comprehensive work aimed at checking and rehabilitation of pupils;
- cooperation of educators, tutors and children's parents in order to develop individual education programmes, create favourable environment, compensation of development problems thus giving the best possible value to the child's life and development, allowing him/her to work and participate in social life;
- formation of vocational skills that would allow pupils to compete in labour market after the completion of school;
- formation of a data basis and consolidate information about children's development and health condition;
- preparation of educators, medical staff, children's parents and other pupils for the integration of children with special needs in school life;
- adaptation of school facilities to suit the needs of children having serious physical disability;
- cooperation with special education development centres.

Children that are inmates of a hospital more than two weeks should also receive tuition. Children who cannot attend school because of illness more than a month receive home education.

Education Law

Regulations on Arranging Tuition outside Educational Institution for Students Who Suffer from Long Term Illness

Regulations on Criteria and Procedures for Awarding the Status of Special Education Development Centre to a Special Education Institution.

10.5.1. Specific Legislative Framework

Satversme (the Constitution) determines the right to education for every resident of Latvia. The Law on Protection on Child's Rights determines equal rights and possibilities of all children to acquire education according to personal abilities. See section [4.3.](#) on legislation referring to any form or level of education (those concerning curricula, state examinations, individual school regulations etc.) also to that of special education. The basic principles of special education are stated in the Education Law, and the Law on General Education. The adaptation of mainstream schools to special needs is determined by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers (21 October, 2003 Regulations on the suitability of basic and secondary education institutions for special education purposes) and is ongoing.

There are also a number of different legal documents stating the requirements for teacher qualifications, education content, premises, equipment, methodological support etc. Special education programme models contain the aims and tasks of special education, curriculum implementation plans, principles of pupil evaluation etc. A regulatory enactment on necessary equipment and facilities was also adopted.

The Cabinet regulations envisage 10% additional payment for appropriately qualified teachers who work with special needs students integrated into mainstream schools.

The Ministry of Education and Science also adopted the Model Regulations of Teacher Assistant's Work in 2003, while the Model Regulations of Teacher-Speech Therapist's work in General Education Institutions and the Model Regulations of Special Education Teacher's work were affirmed in 2004. These model regulations define the main tasks, rights and obligations of teachers and assistants working with children with special needs. For more information see sections [10.5.3.](#) and [10.6.8.](#)

In 2008 Ministry of Education and Science started to develop new job responsibility descriptions for special education teachers in special schools and for special educators in mainstream schools.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Law on General Education

Model Programmes for Special Basic Education

Model Regulations of Special Education Teacher's work

Model Regulations of Teacher Assistant's Work

Model Regulations of Teacher-Speech Therapist's work in General Education Institutions

Protection of the Rights of the Child Law

Regulations on Teachers Salaries

Regulations on the Provision of General Basic Education and General Secondary Education Institutions in Conformity with Special Needs

The Constitution of Latvia

10.5.2. General Objectives

The emphasis of special education is on making it possible for the child to develop and live usefully in society. The state should provide opportunities to acquire general education and vocational training for persons with special needs taking into account their health condition and their level of physical and mental development.

Goals of the curriculum of special compulsory basic education are the same as for mainstream compulsory basic education, see section **4.4.**

For the implementation of goals, the task of special education is:

- to provide possibilities to persons with special needs to acquire knowledge in general study subjects, living and working skills by focusing on the practical aspect of education,
- to perform control, treatment, corrective measures and rehabilitation of pupils at education institutions,
- to encourage the development of individual abilities thus compensating mental and physical development problems so that persons themselves could continue education and acquire professional working skills in compliance with their abilities, and work and participate in social life.

Regulations on National Standard for General Upper Secondary Education and Standards for Upper Secondary Education Subjects

Regulations on the National Standard for Basic Education and Standards for Basic Education Subjects

10.5.3. Specific Support Measures

In 2003, regulations were adopted stating the necessary provisions of general education institutions concerning special needs for integration of pupils with special needs in the mainstream schools. The pupil might be integrated either in a general education class or in a special class only for pupils with special needs within a mainstream school. All provisions are divided into three categories – institutional facilities and utilities of premises (territory); additional rehabilitation measures; and additional pedagogical staff and support staff. Main measures include – reduced class size (no more than 20 pupils in case of a general education class, or 4-20 pupils in a case of a special education class depending on disorder and individual diagnosis); all necessary auxiliaries (like slat-pencils, aerophones, ramps, elevators etc.) for the respective kind of disorder; additional lessons for rehabilitation and correction under the guidance of the respective specialists, therapeutic lessons, systematic psychological and medical examination and analysis, cautious regime etc.

The assistant helps the teacher working with learners with physical and/or mental development disabilities, vision or hearing impairment. During lesson, the assistant works individually with one, two, but no more than three pupils. He/she also helps pupils to prepare for lessons, for a walk, as well as helps to integrate in a class and school in general. A teacher - speech therapist works with children with speech problems in the first six classes.

There are also some specifics in educational assessment of pupils with special needs (see section **10.6.11.** studying in mainstream schools and also for those on sickness for a longer time. The latter are released from the acquirement of a subject according to the regulations concerning lying (bed regime) pupils. Subsequently, they are released also from passing state tests in these subjects.

Model Programmes for Special Basic Education

Model Regulations of Teacher Assistant's Work

Model Regulations of Teacher-Speech Therapist's work in General Education Institutions

Regulations on the Provision of General Basic Education and General Secondary Education Institutions in Conformity with Special Needs

10.6. Separate Special Provision

For those pupils that due to different reasons may not be integrated into mainstream schools, special schools are established. Usually these schools are specialized (school for hearing-impaired and deaf; school for weak-eyed and sightless, etc.) but may also organize classes for pupils with other kind of development problems. For pupils with heavy mental or several heavy development disabilities rehabilitation centres are established in order to teach/prepare children for life in society and for being able to take care of themselves.

See subdivisions for details.

10.6.1. Specific Legislative Framework

See section [10.5.1.](#)

Starting with 2005/06, revised Model Programmes for Special Basic Education and Model Programmes for Special Basic Education for Ethnic Minorities are applied in special basic education.

[Model Programmes for Special Basic Education](#)

[Model Programmes for Special Basic Education for Ethnic Minorities](#)

10.6.2. General Objectives

See section [10.5.2.](#)

10.6.3. Geographical Accessibility

The network of special educational institutions works in accordance with the demand for such institution. There are state special education institutions, special education institutions belonging to municipalities and private special education institutions. State schools serve children with special needs all over the country. Municipalities form special schools, boarding schools, development and rehabilitation centres that mostly educate children living in the respective administrative territory. The aim of special education development policy is to promote education of children with special needs in their place of living or close to it.

10.6.4. Admission Requirements and Choice of School

Main admission requirements are the same for all pupils no matter with or without special educational needs, see section [4.6.](#) In the case of pupils with special educational needs, the possibility to start compulsory education later is used frequently.

There is one substantial difference as regards the procedure of admission. Children with special needs are enrolled in special education institutions and general education institutions on the basis of the statement issued by the National or Municipal Pedagogical Medical Commission. The Commission determines children's mental development disabilities and special needs, necessity for special education, and type of special education programme, provides guidance to parents, teachers and education institutions on pedagogical medical issues and delivers an adjustment on the necessity on the appropriate special education programme.

[Education Law](#)

[Law on General Education](#)

[Regulations on the Responsibilities of National Pedagogical and Medical Commission and Municipal Pedagogical and Medical Commissions](#)

10.6.5. Age Levels and Grouping of Pupils

Special education is offered at pre-school, basic and secondary level. It may last longer than ordinary schooling in mainstream schools, and depends individually on special needs and health conditions of pupils.

Pupils are grouped taking into account the diagnosis. If someone has several defects, the main (harder) one is determinant. It is possible that children of different age belong to the same class.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

10.6.6. Organization of the School Year

Teaching work is organized in the form of lesson. Maximum learning load per week and the length of a lesson is determined in the Law on General Education. The number of teaching periods per day/week is the same as for pupils in mainstream schools as well as the way the school year and holidays are structured (see sections [4.9.](#) and [5.12.2.](#)).

The length of lessons for pupils with severe mental development disabilities or several severe development problems in classes 1 to 9 lasts 30 minutes. The length of lessons in the 1st class is 30 minutes; in classes 2 to 12 it is 40 minutes for pupils with other health and development impairments.

Special education programmes like general basic education programs are designed for 9 years. Pupils with vision impairment, learning disabilities or severe language disabilities acquire basic education program in 10 years, but those with hearing impairment in 11 years.

Law on General Education

Regulations on the National Standard for Basic Education and Standards for Basic Education Subjects

10.6.7. Curriculum, Subjects

See section [4.10.](#) for information regarding the implementers of programmes as well as the aims and tasks of programmes. Just as all educational programmes, each special education programme should be licensed. before it can be implemented in the school. The programme should also be accredited within two years after licensing.

Schools follow the sample plan of curricula issued by the Ministry of Education and Science, developed in cooperation with specialists and practitioners of various fields. Each category of special education has model plans of curricula. Curricula include the same compulsory subjects (including computer training) as in mainstream schools (see section [4.10.](#) , and specific rehabilitation and correction lessons for each category of special needs education. Taking into account the interests of parents and children interests as well as the capacity of the school, schools may offer optional subjects that are not included in curricula.

Education of persons with special needs due to mental retardation takes place in three levels:

- Level A and B for children with special needs due to minor mental development disabilities;
- Level C - for children with special needs due to medium or severe mental development disabilities, or several serious development problems.

In 2007 the Centre for Curriculum Development and Examinations completed the development of 10 subject model programmes in basic education for pupils with mild mental development disabilities in: Latvian, Literature, Mathematics, Life Skills, Geography, Latvian and World History, Crafts and Technologies, Natural Sciences. Guidelines for the content of subjects (native language, arithmetics, rhythmic, music) for pupils with medium or severe mental development disabilities.

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State Education Centre

Law on General Education

Model Programmes for Special Basic Education

Regulations on the National Standard for Basic Education and Standards for Basic Education Subjects

10.6.8. Teaching Methods and Materials

Pedagogues of special schools should use methods creating positive emotions and positive environment, and motivate children for learning. Children's age, condition of physical and mental health, ability to make contacts, interests and behaviour are taken into account when choosing methods.

Systematic work during classes and while doing homework assists to the development of children's intellectual abilities, extension of their outlook, systematization of their knowledge and improvement of the scope of their feelings and willpower. Special attention is paid to implementation of principles of "developing teaching" to achieve comprehensive development of children, acquisition of knowledge by emphasizing their practical application possibilities as well as development of different skills.

The teacher and pupil cooperation elements are included and may be implemented in every teaching method: organization and implementation, stimulation and motivation, control and processing of learning activities. Application of verbal, visual and practical methods has a positive effect upon children with special needs. If applied purposefully and skillfully, all teaching methods stimulate pupils' learning activities. See section **4.11.** for teaching methods used most frequently.

As regards teaching materials, there is a list of recommended books issued by the Ministry of Education and Science each year where materials for special education are also included. The Ministry also publishes teaching materials in relief print as well as in large font size etc. These materials are distributed free of charge. However, there is a lack of special teaching materials for pupils with heavy mental retardation and several other diagnoses.

The National Centre for Special Education develops guidelines for teachers who work with pupils with special education needs.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Law on General Education

Model Regulations of Special Education Teacher's work

10.6.9. Progression of Pupils

Progression of pupils with special needs does not differ from progression of other pupils, see sections **4.13.** and **5.16.** Teachers carry out continuous assessment of pupils' progress using a 10-scale grading system and non-grade system. Achievements of pupils with mental development disabilities are assessed without marks in classes 1-3. Parents of pupils receive a short oral and written assessment report on pupils' progress, describing development of knowledge, skills, attitude towards learning and class participation. Achievements in the 4th class are also assessed without marks, except in Mathematics, Native Language and Latvian (for minority pupils). 10-scale grading system is used to assess pupils in classes 5-9. Pupils in classes of level C (children with special needs due to heavy mental retardation or several serious development problems) do not receive marks, but a short, written assessment on pupils' general development, communication and self-expression skills and abilities.

Mark	Criteria
"10"	Pupil demonstrates independent, creative approach or outstanding achievements.
"9"	Pupil has learned 100%-90% of education content; pupil can independently reproduce the content and answer questions; pupil can differentiate between vitally important and insignificant matters; pupil can apply knowledge in practice and similar situations; pupil is able to respect and value different views, can express his or her opinion perceivably.
"8"	Pupil has learned 80%-70% of education content; pupil can independently perform learning tasks; pupil can argument his actions and ideas; pupil can see the consequences of certain actions; pupil is able to cooperate with mates and teachers.
"7"	pupil has learned 70%-60% of education content; pupil has acquired the necessary skills, does tasks with scrupulosity; pupil has learned the main concepts of subjects, understands them and can reveal the content by answering questions of teachers; pupil can use the knowledge and skills according to a model, analogy or in a familiar situation.
"6"	Pupil has learned 50% of education content; pupil understands practical connections, but can set them out only with the help of questions; pupil can independently reproduce just part of the content, is able to answer the main questions; pupil cannot make his own conclusions independently.
"5"	Pupil has partially learned 50%-40% of education content; pupil is able to answer simple questions and can do the simplest tasks independently; pupil can use knowledge and skills according to a model, but does not use them in similar situation and in practice.
"4"	Pupil has learned 40%-30% of education content; pupil cannot reproduce the content independently, but is able to partially answer questions; pupil cannot express the main idea independently, however, is able to do the simplest tasks with the help of teacher; pupil does not know how to use the knowledge and skills according to a model; activities of pupil have to be organized and controlled all the time.
"3"	Pupil has perceived 30%-20% of education content; pupil answers questions with one or two words; understanding of content is insufficient, conclusions are illogical.
"2"	Pupil has perceived 20%-10% of education content; pupil answers simple questions monosyllabically or with gesticulation; uses help of teacher with difficulty; communicative skills are very week.
"1"	Pupil has perceived less than 10% of education content; pupil is not able to do tasks independently, does not use help.

In assessing achievements, abilities and health condition of the pupil are taken into account.

Law on General Education

Regulations on Assessment of Educational Achievements in Special Education Programmes

10.6.10. Educational/ Vocational Guidance, Education/Employment Links

Pupils are encouraged to acquire occupations that allow finding job more easily. Domestic science, and technology and other practical classes are designed to teach the necessary working and living skills and provide an insight into occupations that correspond to pupils' abilities. In the 10th and 11th class of secondary vocational education, teaching is done taking into account the health of pupils, interests, choice possibilities and existing labour market. Vocational training in special education institutions is organised so that its

quality helps pupils find a job after leaving school or gives a possibility to continue education. Vocational schools cooperate with enterprises to provide placements to gain practice in occupations. Professional guidance services are available to all pupils. In the frame of European Social Fund Community initiative EQUAL project a network of professional aptitude centres in 8 vocational education institutions was established to promote rehabilitation of young people with disabilities

[Law on General Education](#)

10.6.11. Certification

Pupils who have mastered education programmes, receive a certificate on basic education or a certificate on secondary education and an achievement sheet.

Students with special educational needs who follow special education programmes and acquire the National Standard of Basic Education are assessed like pupils who follow general education programmes. Pupils following special education programmes are entitled to receive exam accommodations.

Pupils with certain diseases and mental development disabilities may not take national examinations in order to get general basic education certificate. The list of diseases is centrally determined. A nine grade student in a special on general education institution following a special education programme for pupils with mental development disabilities, may be exempt from taking state examinations by the school head after the recommendation of the School's Pedagogical Council. See section **4.14.** on state examinations and tests in basic education and section **5.17.** concerning the same in secondary education.

[Model Programmes for Special Basic Education](#)

[Procedure for Exempting Educatees from the Prescribed State Examinations](#)

[Regulations Governing National Assessment Procedures in Accredited Education Programmes](#)

[Regulations Governing the Content and Procedures of Centralized Examinations](#)

[Regulations on the National Standard for Basic Education and Standards for Basic Education Subjects](#)

10.6.12. Private Education

Private education institutions may also provide special education programmes for persons with special needs; those programmes are financed from state budget.

10.7. Special Measures for the benefit of Immigrant Children/Pupils and those from Ethnic Minorities

Latvia is not at present a target country for immigrants and has not faced the issue yet. However, the regulations on the Procedure for Providing Education for Minor Children of Asylum Seekers or for Minor Asylum Seekers, adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers, prescribe basic pamatizglītība (ISCED 1 and 2) and secondary vidējā izglītība (ISCED 3) education to be provided. If possible, also mother tongue teaching is provided during basic education stage. Besides, historical situation of Latvia and traditional presence of different nationalities on its territory have already created circumstances conducive to state-supported multi-ethnic schooling. See also the sections **1.4.** on minority education, and **4.17.** and **5.20.** on bilingual education.

[Regulations on the Procedure for Providing Education for Minor Children of Asylum Seekers or for Minor Asylum Seekers](#)

10.8. Statistics

All data from the Statistical Department of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia.

General special schools and classes, enrolment and number, 2008/09

Number of schools	62
Enrolment	8760
Of which:	
Classes 1-4	3021
Classes 5-9	4517
Classes 10-12	1222

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11. The European and International Dimension in Education

Please refer to the subdivisions for details.

11.1. Historical Overview

The co-operation in the field of education started to evolve at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. First forms of co-operation developed at unofficial level preceding official contacts at unilateral and multilateral levels. Scandinavian countries, Germany, UK, USA and Canada were among the first countries to develop contacts with Latvia in the field of education, consisting of exchange of education specialists, training and other support.

Important role in the development of international and European dimension in Latvian education system was played by the Latvian diaspora abroad. Individuals and organizations started a chain of conferences "Münster – Riga" for pedagogues, organized at the beginning of 1990s. This co-operation included scholarships for students and teachers as well as other support. Up to 1000 teachers participated in these conferences in Latvia. In this respect the Latvian Gymnasium in Münster (Lettisches Gymnasium Münster) should be mentioned. This school since 1946 has served as an education centre for Latvian diaspora abroad and from 1990s it started accepting also pupils from Latvia. Out of 70-80 pupils that were accepted each year, nearly half were from Latvia. Pupils from Latvia were accepted for three years to the 11th to 13th class, and some pupils were also granted scholarships based on merits. In 1998 this gymnasium was reorganized into the Münster Cultural and Education Centre.

Starting with the 1990s co-operation with other countries developed. More exchange programmes, training courses, grants and endowments were established on an official level. Attention was paid to education and training of teachers, development of teaching aids and methods.

Contacts with Scandinavian countries were established and the so-called "3+5" co-operation was developed. A representation of the British Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers Information office was opened in Latvia in 1991 as well as Goethe Institute Latvia (1992), Soros Foundation (1992) and other international and regional organizations.

Today Latvia has more than 30 bilateral treaties in the field of education and science, student exchange and support, technology, teacher training and other fields, see section **11.4.**

In 2003, recognition of professional qualifications of regulated professions acquired abroad started, and the respective legislation since then has been well coordinated.

European and international dimension has been present in curricula permanently. During the Soviet times, related issues were discussed in subjects like history, geography, economic geography and history of culture.

British Council

Goethe Institute Latvia

Soros Foundation - Latvia

11.2. Ongoing Debates and Future Developments

The co-operation in the area of education focuses mostly on the higher education and includes the exchange of students, teaching staff and scientists as well as information provision. In the beginning of 2007, Ministry of Education and Science signed mutual co-operation agreement with the respective ministries of Estonia

and Lithuania. It will help to facilitate mobility between the Baltic States in the field of higher education and mutual cooperation in the area of the evaluation of the quality of higher education. It is foreseen to develop joint programmes in higher education involving academic staff from the Baltic States. Further, in 2008 an agreement on a common doctoral programme was signed between three Baltic universities, namely, University of Latvia, University of Tallin and Vytautas Magnus University.

In 2007 a bilateral agreement was signed between the Ministries of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia and the Czech Republic on co-operation in education, youth affairs and sport. See also section **11.4.1.** on other operative bilateral agreements.

In 2008 Latvia started implementation of EEA Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism Scholarship Block Grant Scheme 2008 – 2011. Within the framework students and teachers can study and attend in-service training courses, language courses, conferences as well as deliver lectures or presentations in Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway.

In 2007 the Ministry of Education and Science and OECD signed an agreement about participation in the Programme for International Student Assessment 2009.

In 2009, amendments in the Immigration Law were made to simplify the procedure for students to receive a residence permit. Now the necessary documents for receiving residence permit can be submitted by the higher education institutions and the potential students do not have to undergo the recent more complex procedure.

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11.3. National Policy Guidelines/Specific Legislative Framework

After Latvia regained independence, the Education Law was adopted in 1991, and since then radical reforms in all levels of education have been taking place. This law served as a basis for the Law on Higher Education Institutions (in force since 1995) and linked Latvian education system with European higher education systems. Bologna Declaration and Lisbon Convention were signed by Latvia in 1999.

It should be admitted that Bologna process did not initiate reforms in Latvian higher education but rather shaped and directed them into the overall stream of higher education reforms in Europe on the way towards European Higher Education Area. Bachelor-Master structure was introduced in Latvia independently several years before Europe took a joint course towards a two-tier structure, staff and student mobility was stimulated, first of all, by the EU TEMPUS, later SOCRATES and now LIFELONG LEARNING programmes, as well as support through bilateral projects with several Western European and Nordic countries.

The Law on Higher Education Institutions in its 1995 edition states that higher education institutions and the government of the Republic of Latvia facilitate international co-operation of higher education institutions, exchange programmes of academic staff and of higher education institutions as well as co-operation programmes between higher education institutions in the field of research. Regional co-operation is also strengthened through financial arrangements.

The law also delegates assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications as well as participation in European recognition networks (NARIC) and information provision about Latvian higher education system, to the Academic Information centre. In such a way, the law of 1995 paved the way for ratification of Lisbon Convention in Latvia already in the beginning of 1999.

International co-operation in the field of education is also mentioned in the Education Law (1998) stating that an education institution is entitled to co-operate with foreign educational institutions and international organisations and in the Law on Professional Education prescribing the ensuring of the compatibility of professional education and professional qualifications of Latvia with those of other countries, creating

opportunities for further education in other countries and improving competitiveness in the world labour market as one of the tasks of an education institution.

In 1998 the Ministry of Education and Science signed a treaty with OECD about carrying out the "Education policy review" officially accepted in the meeting of "Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee" in Helsinki in 2000, with the participation of Ministers of Education of the three Baltic states. Report (<http://www.oecd.org/publications/e-book/1401071e.pdf>).

Latvia is also actively participating in the projects of:

- the Council of Europe, such as "Education for democratic citizenship and human rights", "History teaching", "In-Service Training Programme for Teachers", "European Centre for Modern Languages" and "Language portfolio".
- UNESCO. Since 14.10.1991 Latvia is a member of the organization and since then has been participating in projects. Most recent projects include Associated Schools Project Network and Agenda 21-Baltic 21 project concerned with environmental education.

Latvia, as member state of the European Union, invests effort in steering education development according to the common objectives in education and training. Through political support from the government and using possibilities provided by funding from structural funds, a number of national programmes in professional education, higher education, teaching of sciences in general education, science support as well as teacher training have been launched to achieve the benchmarks set in education.

[Reviews of National Policies for Education, Latvia](#)

[Academic Information Centre](#)

[Education Law](#)

[Law on Higher Education Institutions](#)

[Law on Professional Education](#)

11.4. National Programmes and Initiatives

The Ministry of Education and Science is the main authority responsible for international cooperation in education, however, the responsibility may be delegated to certain agency, or even a separate authority may be established for some programmes. Information on the kind of activity, the financing and the duration of activity is stipulated by agreements. The agreements may be signed by the government or by competent ministries.

[Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia](#)

11.4.1. National Programmes and Initiatives. Bilateral Programmes and Initiatives

Bilateral treaties have been signed with more than 30 countries, and most of them provide for supporting the exchange of the pupils, students and teaching staff, implementation of further education programmes as well as cooperation in order to facilitate recognition of foreign diplomas and qualifications.

- **Baltic States** (30.01.07.) A cooperation agreement between education ministries of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania about students, researcher and teaching staff exchange. (10.07.1998.) Agreement among the government of the Republic of Latvia, the government of the Republic of Estonia and the government of the Republic of Lithuania, on the creation of a common educational space in general upper secondary education and vocational (up to higher education level) education within the Baltic States. (18.02.2000.) Agreement

between the government of the Republic of Latvia, the government of the Republic of Estonia and the government of the Republic of Lithuania on the academic recognition of education qualifications in the Baltic education space. (08.12.2000.) Agreement between the government of the Republic of Latvia, the government of the Republic of Estonia and the government of the Republic of Lithuania on the creation of a common educational space in higher education within the Baltic States.

- **Azerbaijan** (04.10.2006.) An agreement on co-operation in education foreseeing exchange of pupils, students, professors and scientists.
- **Belarus** (13.05.2004.) an agreement between education ministries of Latvia and Belarus provide for cooperation in education and science, exchange of information as well as of students, researchers and teaching staff; (27.10.2006) an agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia and State committee of the Science and Technology of Belarus on co-operation in the field of science and technologies supports the exchange of professors and scientists.
- **Bulgaria** (21.03.2005.) An intergovernmental agreement with Bulgaria on co-operation in education, science and culture offers grants for studies.
- **Canada** (25.09.2009.) An intergovernmental agreement on new citizen exchange.
- **China** (07.06.1996.) An Agreement between the governments of Latvia and Peoples Republic of China on co-operation in Science and Technologies and (02.09.1996.) An Agreement between the governments of Latvia and Peoples Republic of China on co-operation in Culture and Education
- **Croatia** (23.02.2001). Agreement on Co-operation in the Fields of Science, Technology and Higher Education. The exchange of students, professors, scientists and experts is supported.
- **Cyprus** (08.03.2001). Agreement on Co-operation in the Fields of Culture, Education and Science. The treaty concerns student exchange as well.
- **Egypt** (01.03.2009.) An intergovernmental agreement on co-operation in education and science.
- **Finland** (10.09.1996). An agreement between the governments of Latvia and Finland on co-operation in the field of culture, education and science. The agreement encompasses museums, music, and cultural education, and literature, protection of cultural monuments, the visual arts, libraries, theatres and cinema.
- **Flanders** (05.03.1996) an agreement to promote the exchange and training for students and professors.
- **France** (14.04.1997). An Agreement between the Governments of Latvia and France on co-operation in the fields of culture, education, engineering, science and technology. On 20 June 2002 the "Co-operation Programme between Latvia and France in the fields of Science and Technology" was signed, with the goal of facilitating co-operation between scientific research laboratories in both countries and institutional co-operation in scientific research and the development of new technologies. An agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia and the Embassy of France in Latvia on the project "Development of the specialist network of continuing education for the French language teachers in Baltic States" implementation in Latvia. (04.12.2001.)
- **Germany** (20.04.1993.) An Agreement between the governments of Latvia and Germany on co-operation in Culture; (18.09.1993.) on sending German teachers to schools of Latvia; (12.06.2002.) on mutual recognition of the academic studies and acquired qualifications.
- **Greece** (17.03.1999). An Agreement between the governments of Latvia and Greece on Co-operation in the Fields of Culture, Education and Science (entered into force in 13.07.2001.) and in 2003 its implementation programme for 2004, 2005 and 2006.

- **Hungary** (06.03.1997). Agreement on Cultural, Scientific and Educational Co-operation. The exchange of students, pupils, scientists, professors and education specialists.
- **India** (01.09.1995.) Bilateral memorandum of understanding with India on co-operation in fields of culture, art, education, science, media and sport.
- **Israel** (27.02.1994.) An Agreement between the governments of Latvia and Israel on co-operation in fields of education, culture and science.
- **Italy** (23.10.1996). Latvia and Italy have concluded an Agreement on Cultural, Scientific and Technological Co-operation. Several Latvian universities (the University of Latvia, Riga Technical University and the Latvian Agricultural University) have concluded co-operation agreements directly with Italian universities. Student and academic staff exchanges are taking place within the framework of the existing agreements, along with joint projects and exchanges of teaching materials. Since 1996 the Italian government has awarded Latvian students scholarships to study in Italy. Thanks to Italian support, the opportunity to learn Italian has existed in a number of Latvia's schools since the 2000/2001 academic year. The Dante Alighieri Society, which organises educational seminars and Italian language courses, is active in Latvia.
- **Mexico** (15.04.2005) An intergovernmental agreement on co-operation in education, culture and sport.
- **Moldova** (07.09.2006) An intergovernmental agreement on co-operation in education, culture, youth and sport.
- **Mongolia** (01.07.2003.) An Agreement on Co-operation in Culture, Education and Science, providing exchange of students, teaching staff and experts.
- **Poland** (29.03.2006.) An intergovernmental Agreement on Co-operation in the Field of Culture, Education and Science. Both sides support internships for citizens of other side, the exchange of students, scientists, professors and other specialists. The treaty also includes the exchange of pupils and teachers.
- **Portugal** (17.10.2000). Agreement on Co-operation in the fields of education, culture and science and technology (in force since 19.09.2002.). In the academic year 2000/2001 the Portuguese language course was launched at the Romanic Languages' section of the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Latvia, and the possibilities of supporting the course are discussed with the Instituto Camoes.
- **Slovenia** (05.03.1998). Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on Co-operation in the Fields of Culture, Education and Science. Scholarships for studies and the training of specialists (depending on available resources) as well as support for summer training of students and teachers.
- **Spain** (13.08.1999). Agreement on Co-operation in the Fields of Culture and Education (in force as of 24.11.1999) and in 2003 its implementation programme for 2003-2006. The co-operation between the universities of Latvia and Spain is broadening: closer ties of co-operation have been established between Daugavpils Pedagogical University (Latvia) and the University of Murcia (Spain) within the framework of the TEMPUS and ERASMUS programmes, and between the Banking College of Higher Education (Latvia) and De Giron University (Spain). There is a possibility to study Intercultural Communication in Latvia-Spain specialization in BA programme at the Latvian Academy of Culture. The interest in the Spanish language is becoming more visible in Latvia – Spanish is taught as a facultative subject in several Latvian schools and several higher educational establishments. The Spanish government provides substantial study grants. The State Language Centre has established co-operation with Spain in developing language policy as well as in the field of research into the protection of regional and minority languages.

- **Sweden** (28.05.2009.) Bilateral memorandum of understanding between the government of the Republic of Latvia and the government of the Kingdom of Sweden concerning a multinational platform for the European spallation source.
- **Turkey** (19.04.2005) An intergovernmental agreement on co-operation in education, science, culture and sport supports exchange of students, professors, scientists and athletes.
- **Ukraine** (21.11.1995.) Agreement on Co-operation in Education, Science and Culture promotes exchange of students, doctoral students, scientists, teaching staff and educational specialists.
- **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** (22.11.1995.) Agreement on co-operation in education, science and culture.
- **USA** (12.03.2003.) on private education institution "The International School of Latvia".

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11.4.2. National Programmes and Initiatives. Multilateral Programmes and Initiatives

There is a good co-operation in the field of education with the Baltic States, Nordic countries and other countries. Latvia is also participating in European programmes (for education, training and youth matters – Lifelong Learning Programme and Youth) and other programmes.

Co-operation between the Baltic States is orientated towards harmonization of education systems. Agreements signed between the three states – Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia - include the establishment of a Tripartite Commission on Education Matters and Co-operation in the Matters of General Secondary Education, Vocational Education and Special Education. All sides have also agreed to recognise qualifications of higher education as well as to provide the same rules for tuition fees and support for studies in higher education institutions. Besides, Latvia is also participating in the project "Baltic 21E" of the Council of Baltic Sea states, with the aim to promote education for sustainable development in all levels of education.

In 2007, Latvia signed an agreement with the Estonian and Lithuanian ministries responsible for education, see section **11.2.** for more information.

Since the beginning of the 1990s a good co-operation has evolved with the Nordic Council. With the support of Nordic Council, Latvian students, representatives of teaching staff, scientists and officials exchange and gain experience, establish contacts with education institutions in Nordic Countries and develop new projects.

Several important projects have been carried out in co-operation with the Nordic Council and individual Nordic countries, including:

- The integration of children with special needs in mainstream education 2003-2006. The project foresees to co-operate and to assist in methodology development, teacher training as well as establishment of the supporting centre.
- BALTnet. The project was established by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1993 with the aim of supporting the development of educational and research networks in the Baltic States. BALTNet has provided networking equipment for schools and research institutes in Latvia and other Baltic States. This project has also been closely connected with other international projects – such as the development of Baltic–Nordic further education programmes for teachers, participation in I*EARN (International Education and Resource Network) and other projects.

Since 2008 Latvia participates on equal footing with Nordic Countries in Nordplus Framework programme 2008 – 2011, which offers financial support to a variety of educational cooperation between partners in the area of lifelong learning.

For information on education projects of these and other organizations see:

Council of Europe: http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/

UNESCO: <http://www.unesco.org/education/index.shtml>

European actions/programmes: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/index_en.html

Lifelong Learning programme in Latvia: <http://www.viaa.gov.lv>

Youth programme in Latvia: <http://www.yfe.lv>

Leonardo da Vinci structural programme in Latvia: <http://www.piaa.gov.lv/En/leonardo/>

AISEC: <http://www.aiesec.org/latvia>

11.4.3. National Programmes and Initiatives. Other National Programmes and Initiatives

Other national programmes and initiatives for European dimension can be structured into two groups – informative initiatives and exchange initiatives.

Informative initiatives on European dimension are not centrally determined but they depend rather on the interest of an individual educational institution and non-governmental sector. Schools often celebrate Europe day on 9 May each year when, and also during the "Project week" (a project week was introduced since the school year 1997/98 for encouraging pupils and teachers to use the method of project work) schools often have information sessions and project work on European issues.

Among the great variety of projects, one may mention "Citizens Europe" carried out in Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden. The main purposes of the project are to create more discussion and greater knowledge of the European Union. Pupils from the Grammar School of Nordic Languages (Ziemeļvalstu ģimnāzija) in Riga participated in the seminar (including the lecture on EU), the debate game "Citizens Europe" and a journalistic workshop.

In 2003 and 2004, informative seminars and lectures were organized intensively in schools and education boards all over Latvia because of the expected accession to the European Union.

Teachers often use informative materials (guides, information packs etc) on Europe and EU provided by governmental and non-governmental organizations such as European Union Information Agency, European Union Information Centre of the Saeima, European Movement in Latvia, Club Māja (Youth for United Europe), Information and Documentation Centre of the Council of Europe in Latvia and others.

The information function on the EU matters at national level is ensured by the European Union Information Agency (a state agency under supervision of the Prime Minister operating since 1 February 2005). The main objectives of the agency are development of suggestions on public information strategy in relation to EU and Latvia's membership in it; delivery of information to the society and organization of various events and discussions on Latvia's membership in EU; involvement of information intermediaries (lecturers, teachers, media, librarians etc.) into informational activities; cooperation with international institutions, as well as individual information provision for any person interested.

The Baltic Education and Eurointegration Co-operation Group is the annual meeting of the ministers of Education and specialists of three Baltic States in order to discuss actual issues, projects or problems in the field of education.

European Movement in Latvia

Information and Documentation Centre of the Council of Europe in Latvia

The European Union Information Agency

Club "Māja"

The Paliaments' European Union Information Centre

11.5. European/ International Dimension through the National Curriculum

Please refer to subdivisions for more details.

11.5.1. European/ International Dimension through the National Curriculum. Basic Education Level

According to the Standard of Basic Education (ISCED 1 and 2) issued by the Cabinet of Ministers, one of the tasks of education programmes of basic education level is to "develop understanding of Latvian, European and world cultural heritage". In the level of basic education this can mainly be achieved in one of the 4 areas of education – "Self and Society" (the other areas are Language; Arts; and Fundamentals of Technology and Science). For more information on curriculum of basic education see section **4.10**. Direct reference to European dimension is made in the following subjects of compulsory education: Civic Education, History and Geography. Indirectly, European dimension is incorporated into teaching of foreign languages (for more information on language teaching refer to section **4.10**.).

Starting from the school year 2004/05, a new subject named Social Sciences is included in the compulsory curriculum of basic education and is taught from the 1st class on. Other subjects of social sciences like Ethics (taught in the 7th class), Introduction to Economics (taught in the 8th class) and Civic Education (taught in the 9th class) are incorporated in the Social Sciences block. It is expected that Social Sciences will pay more attention to European and international dimension already from the first class.

In the classes of Civic Education (included in the 9th class compulsory curriculum) pupils are informed on EU institutions, the European Council and EU currency. Besides, also the development of EU and its institutions as well as its symbols are discussed. Pupils have to understand the basic principles of international relations (such as sovereignty, treaties and non-intervention); the largest international organizations (UN, NATO, EU, OSCE, Council of Europe) and their functions.

At the end of the course in Civic Education, pupils should be able to:

- describe ways and situations when cultural differences and different traditions encourage and impede the understanding among nations and their representatives;
- describe the reasons for conflicts and co-operation between nations (such as territorial issues, resources, division of labour, integration);
- describe global problems and international ways to solve them (such as environmental issues, illnesses, unequal distribution of natural resources, economical development and security);
- analyse what are the gains for Latvia of participation in NATO, EU, OSCE and Council of Europe;
- describe and name international non-governmental organizations and their value.

The subject of History discusses the history of the 20th century, including European integration. Pupils have to be able to name the core international organizations, understand regional (i.e. European) and global integration as well as global issues and problems. The historical aspects of Latvia's integration in European Union are also discussed.

At the end of the 9th class pupils have to pass a centralized test in Civic Education and History among other knowledge testing also European dimension of these matters. For example, pupils have to mark EU member states and accession countries in the map and show the understanding of historic, cultural and linguistic links between Baltic region and Western Europe.

Finally, in Geography pupils have to understand social processes and economies of European countries (such as UK, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, and Nordic countries). Pupils also learn about the EU, its territory, they have to know the member states and candidate countries and understand the idea and co-operation forms of the EU.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

Regulations on the National Standard for Basic Education and Standards for Basic Education Subjects

11.5.2. European/ International Dimension through the National Curriculum. Secondary Education Level

According to the Standard of Secondary education (ISCED 3) issued by the Cabinet of Ministers, the aims to be achieved during this level of schooling include "to get pupil acquainted with the world's cultural heritage" as well as "to promote the understanding of political direction of Latvia and human rights in the context of Europe and the world".

The European and international dimension on secondary education level is achieved in several subjects, including Politics and Rights, History, Geography, Basics of economics and other. For more information on curriculum and language teaching see section 5.13. A specific attention in Politics and Rights is paid to the theme "Latvia in International Politics". Pupils have to be aware of international relations, the main trends of Latvian foreign policy, and the integration of Latvia into international organizations (UN, EU, NATO and OSCE). They have to be able to support their opinion for Latvia's integration in EU and NATO as well as understand the motives behind Latvia's integration into the EU, NATO and other international organizations.

"History" continues to be "eurocentric" in secondary education. A big share of education time is devoted to history of Europe and its development from medieval times till nowadays, including Latvia's accession to the EU. Pupils have to be aware of different nations and nationalities in Europe and their roots as well as Latvia's place in European cultural context.

European dimension is also touched upon in subjects like Basics of Economics, where the EU budget is compared to that of Latvia and pupils get acquainted with the notion of common currency euro, Geography where pupils have to understand the geopolitics of European countries, History of Culture where the history of art and culture in Europe is discussed, and Literature where pupils learn about European literature.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia

Regulations on National Standard for General Upper Secondary Education and Standards for Upper Secondary Education Subjects

11.5.3. European/ International Dimension through the National Curriculum. Tertiary Education Level

EU related courses are usually included in programmes of social sciences, such as Economics, Politics, Journalism, Management, Communication, Public Relations, Sociology, Psychology, Law, Pedagogy, International Relations and other programmes.

Nevertheless, EU legislation and European dimension is discussed in other education programmes, too. E.g. in the academic education programme of Environmental Science in the University of Daugavpils, issues like environmental protection in the EU and EU legislation in the particular field are discussed. In the University of

Latvia the programme of Geography (at Bachelor level) includes the course of Regional Development and Politics that covers EU issues. EU-related issues are also discussed in other education programmes and courses – Food Chemistry and Expertise, EU Requirements for the Food Quality etc.

It is also possible to participate in special programmes in languages other than Latvian, implemented by Latvian higher education institution together with some foreign country resulting in obtaining a certificate of a foreign university testifying completion of the programme and also collect credit points for the Latvian programme.

11.5.4. European/ International Dimension through the National Curriculum. Teacher Training

Usually special education concerning European dimension is offered to those teacher training students whose subjects to be taught include European issues, e.g. teachers of History, Politics and Rights, Civic Education etc. (see also sections **11.5.1.** **11.5.2.**).

In the professional education programme for Teachers of History at the University of Daugavpils, a course Methodology of History is delivered, including the analysis of methodology of other EU countries, the role that lessons of history take in other education systems, and an outline of EU recommendations. In the professional education programme for a Teacher of Social Sciences, the course Political System of Latvia includes the analysis on the role and competencies of Latvian governmental institutions following the integration into the EU. Another course for the same programme is Methodology of Social Sciences, where methodology of other EU countries is discussed as well as general awareness is raised on the role that social sciences play in the curriculum of EU countries. The education programme Teacher of Geography also has a course on EU-related issues, namely, Integration of Latvia into the EU".

Other institutions of higher education (e.g. Rēzekne Higher Education Institution, the Pedagogical Academy of Liepāja) also offer courses on the EU for future teachers, especially in the fields of history and social studies.

In the University of Latvia (the biggest state university) European dimension is integrated in compulsory (A level) courses. Students of pedagogy at Bachelor and Master levels are taught about the Bologna declaration and process, education systems of other European countries and EU in general as well as other EU-related issues.

Latvian Academy of Sports Education preparing teachers of sports, also offers several courses on EU-related issues.

11.6. Mobility and Exchange

Please refer to subdivisions for more details.

11.6.1. Mobility and Exchange of Pupils/ Students

Latvian students may receive scholarships from the following foreign institutions for studies abroad:

- Nordic Council
- German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
- British Council
- The governments of Denmark, Czech Republic, China, Flanders, Greece, Germany, Spain, France, Great Britain, Japan, Island, Mexico, Netherlands, Switzerland, Russia and Italy.
- The Soros Foundation in Latvia.

Students studying in foreign higher education institutions may also receive a study loan.

Most of the scholarships offered by governments of other countries are intended for students at Master and Doctor levels. The exceptions are Danish and Chinese scholarships available also for the students of Bachelor level. The scholarships of the government of Russia are available for the graduates of secondary school for full-time higher education studies in Russia. There are no strict limits concerning the fields of studies (except for special scholarship programmes) although some of the scholarships are not available for medical students.

Besides, many higher education institutions have established special structural units for international co-operation with the task to coordinate, promote and ensure informing of students about the possibility to apply for various scholarships and grants as well as to realize other offers enhancing student mobility. In 2006/07, within exchange programmes, in total 847 students from 27 higher education institutions were studying in 36 countries.

Information on pupil/student exchange in EU actions / programmes can be found in the website of State Education Development Agency in Latvia: <http://www.viaa.gov.lv>

The recognition of foreign degrees or other qualifications plays an essential role for increased mobility and exchange. This task is carried out by the Latvian Academic Information centre (Latvian member of the European recognition networks ENIC and NARIC). See also section **6.15.** on the Diploma Supplement.

Academic Information Centre

British Council

Soros Foundation - Latvia

State Education Development Agency

11.6.2. Mobility and Exchange of Teaching and Academic Staff

The initiative of exchange of teachers and academic staff lies more upon themselves and their ability to participate in exchange projects or apply for exchange programmes. Those are promoted by European actions/programmes and other initiatives coming from other countries or international organizations.

The exchange of academic staff is promoted at the university or higher education institution level. This type of exchange is ensured by contracts signed between higher education institutions in other countries. By the year 2006, 647 contracts between Latvian institutions of higher education and those in other countries have been signed, providing the opportunity of mobility for 495 people of academic staff. The contracts were signed in natural sciences (astronomy, physics, biology and other), agriculture, medicine, health care, IT etc. Many contracts have been signed in the field of social sciences including disciplines like law (European law, criminal law, etc), philology, pedagogy, business administration, economics, tourism, sociology, psychology and other. Most of the contracts are signed with European countries, but they include such countries as India, Mexico, Russia, USA and others as well.

11.7. Statistics

Table 1. Number of foreign students in higher education institutions of Latvia, 2007/2008

Country	Number of students
Lithuania	332
Russia	382
Germany	88
Estonia	74
Sri Lanka	69
Belarus	57
Ukraine	56
Georgia	45
Kazakhstan	28
United Kingdom	25
Norway, Sweden	24
Siria	23
Italy	21

Country	Number of students
Uzbekistan	18
Poland	17
Pakistan	16
Israel	15
Lebanon, Armenia	14
France	11
Nigeria, India	10 from each
Nepal, Turkey	8 from each
United States, Azerbaijan,	7 from each
Cameroon, Portugal	5 from each
Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Netherlands, Finland	4 from each
Australia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Japan, China, Switzerland	3 from each country
Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Hungary, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Tadjikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan	2 from each
Austria, Bangladesh, Cyprus, Serbia and Montenegro, Mauritius	1 from each country
Total: 55 countries	1475

Source: the official website of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia.

Table 2. Latvian students, undertaking studies abroad, 2007

Country	Number of students	%
Germany	153	18
USA	5	0,5
Estonia	12	1,4
Lithuania	53	6,2
Denmark	36	4,2
UK	17	2
Norway	14	0,01
Russia	4	1,6
Switzerland	15	1,7
Czech Republic	13	1,5
Italy	39	4,6
Japan	2	0,2
France	59	6,9
Finnland	66	7,7
Sweden	41	4,8
Netherlands	42	4,9
Poland	29	3,4
Spain	51	6
Austria	42	4,9
Portugal	22	2,5
Belgium	52	6,1
Greece	10	1,1
Ireland	7	0,8
Malta	2	0,2
Romania	4	0,4
Turkey	8	0,9
Bulgaria	3	0,3
Hungary	16	1,8
Cyprus	6	0,7
Slovakia	8	9,4
Slovenia	6	0,7
Iceland	4	0,4
Kazakhstan	2	0,2
Argentina	2	0,2
Honkong	1	0,1
Mexico	1	0,1
Total	847	100

Source: Ministry of Education and Science

Note: Data from the inquiry of embassies made once in two years.

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

GLOSSARY

apliecība par profesionālo pamatizglītību (*apliecības par profesionālo pamatizglītību, apliecību par profesionālo pamatizglītību, apliecībā par profesionālo pamatizglītību*) : A document, issued at the completion of basic vocational education (primary and lower secondary), certifies the acquired level of education (ISCED 2).

apliecība par vispārējo pamatizglītību (*apliecības par vispārējo pamatizglītību, apliecību par vispārējo pamatizglītību, apliecībai par vispārējo pamatizglītību, apliecībā par vispārējo pamatizglītību*) : A document issued at the completion of basic education (primary and lower secondary), certifies the acquired level of education (ISCED 1, ISCED 2).

arodizglītība (*arodizglītības, arodizglītību, arodizglītībai*) : Partial upper secondary vocational education that allows a person to acquire level II of professional qualification (ISCED 3).

arodizglītības programmas (*arodizglītības programmām, arodizglītības programmas, arodizglītības programmās*) : Educational programmes of arodizglītība. The educational programme has to outline the aims, content, planning as well as define financial, personal and material resources needed for the running of a programme and how it relates to other levels of education.

arodskola (*arodskolas, arodskolu, arodskolā, arodskolai*) : Educational institution offering arodizglītība (partial upper secondary vocational education) (ISCED 3).

atestāts par arodizglītību (*atestāti par arodizglītību, atestātu par arodizglītību, atestātā par arodizglītību, atestātam par arodizglītību*) : A document, issued at the completion of arodizglītība (the partial upper secondary vocational education) (ISCED 3).

atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību (*atestāti par vispārējo vidējo izglītību, atestātu par vispārējo vidējo izglītību, atestātā par vispārējo vidējo izglītību, atestātam par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*) : A document, issued at the completion of general upper secondary education, certifies the acquired level of education. (ISCED 3).

augstskola (*augstskolas, augstskolā, augstskolu, augstskolai*) : Educational institution offering higher education

diploms par profesionālo vidējo izglītību (*diplomi par profesionālo vidējo izglītību, diplomu par profesionālo vidējo izglītību, diplomā par profesionālo vidējo izglītību, diplomam par profesionālo vidējo izglītību*) : A document, issued at the completion of vocational upper secondary education, certifies the acquired level of education. (ISCED 3).

formālā izglītība (*formālās izglītības*) : A system which includes basic education, secondary education and higher education levels the acquisition of the programme of which is certified by an education or professional qualification document recognised by the State, as well as an education and professional qualification document.

ģimnāzija (*ģimnāzijā, ģimnāziju, ģimnāzijas, ģimnāzijai*) : Educational institution covering lower secondary (forms 7-9) and upper secondary (forms 10 – 12) educational levels. Gymnasium has to offer at least three of general secondary educational programs in two educational directions. (ISCED 2, ISCED 3).

neformālā izglītība (*neformālās izglītības*) : educational activities in conformity with interests and demand organised outside of formal education

pamatizglītība (*pamatizglītības, pamatizglītību, pamatizglītībai, pamatizglītībā*) : Basic education – an educational level in which preparation for the upper secondary education takes place, where basic

knowledge and skills necessary for life in society and for the individual life of a person are acquired, and where value-orientation and involvement in social life is developed (ISCED 1; ISCED 2).

pamatskola (*pamatskolas, pamatskolā, pamatskolai, pamatskolu*) : Educational institution offering primary and lower secondary education (second stage of basic education) (ISCED 2).

pirmsskolas izglītība (*pirmsskolas izglītības, pirmsskolas izglītību, pirmsskolas izglītībai, pirmsskolas izglītībā*) : Pre-school education - an educational level in which multi-dimensional development of the child as an individual, strengthening of health and preparation for the acquisition of primary education takes place. (ISCED 0)

pirmsskolas izglītības grupas pie skolām (*pirmsskolas izglītības grupām pie skolām, pirmsskolas izglītības grupās pie skolām*) : Pre-school educational groups or classes at schools of general education (ISCED 0).

pirmsskolas izglītības iestāde (*pirmsskolas izglītības iestādes, pirmsskolas izglītības iestādei, pirmsskolas izglītības iestādi, pirmsskolas izglītības iestādē*) : Pre-school educational institution (ISCED 0).

pirmsskolas izglītības konsultatīvais centrs (*pirmsskolas izglītības konsultatīvie centri, pirmsskolas izglītības konsultatīvajā centrā, pirmsskolas izglītības konsultatīvo centru, pirmsskolas izglītības konsultatīvajam centram*) : Advisory center for pre-school education – provides parents and pre-school educational institutions with consultations and methodological help in educating children at pre-school age and in preparation of 5 and 6 year olds for the primary education.

profesionālā izglītība (*profesionālās izglītības, profesionālo izglītību, profesionālajai izglītībai, profesionālajā izglītībā*) : Vocational (professional) education – practical and theoretical preparation for the practice of a particular profession, and for the acquisition and improvement of professional skill.

profesionālā kvalifikācija (*profesionālās kvalifikācijas, profesionālo kvalifikāciju, profesionālajā kvalifikācijā, profesionālajai kvalifikācijai*) : Professional qualification – assessment of educational and professional skill with respect to a particular profession, confirmed by documentary evidence.

profesionālā pamatizglītība (*profesionālās pamatizglītības, profesionālo pamatizglītību*) : Vocational basic education is designed for basic vocational education and training purposes. Besides acquiring Level 1 of vocational education (allowing to exercise simple professional tasks), students also have an opportunity to accomplish general basic education.

profesionālā vidējā izglītība (*profesionālās vidējās izglītības, profesionālajai vidējai izglītībai, profesionālo vidējo izglītību, profesionālajai vidējai izglītībai, profesionālajā vidējā izglītībā*) : Vocational upper secondary education that allows a person to acquire level III of professional qualification (ISCED 3).

profesionālā vidusskola/ amatniecības vidusskola (*profesionālās vidusskolas/amatniecības vidusskola, profesionālā vidusskolā/amatniecības vidusskolā, profesionālo vidusskolu/amatniecības vidusskolu*) : Educational institutions offering vocational upper secondary education.

profesionālās izglītības iestāde (*profesionālās izglītības iestādes, profesionālās izglītības iestādēs, profesionālās izglītības iestādēm*) : Educational institutions offering vocational education.

profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecība (*profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecības, profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecībā, profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecību, profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecībai*) : Certificate on professional qualification

profesionālās vidējās izglītības programmas (*profesionālās vidējās izglītības programmas, profesionālās vidējās izglītības programmās, profesionālās vidējās izglītības programmām*) : Educational programs of vocational upper secondary education. The educational program has to outline the aims, content, planning as well as define financial, personal and material resources needed for the running of a program and how it relates to other levels of education.

sākumskola (*sākumskolas, sākumskolai, sākumskolā, sākumskolu*) : Educational institution offering primary (grades 1-4 or first stage of basic education) education. (ISCED 1).

sekmju izraksts (*sekmju izraksti, sekmju izrakstā, sekmju izrakstu*) : Achievement sheet

tālākizglītība (*tālākizglītības, tālākizglītībai*) : Continuation of previously acquired education and professional skills improvement in conformity with the requirements of the specific profession

vakara (maiņas) vidusskola (*vakara (maiņas) vidusskolas, vakara (maiņas) vidusskolā, vakara (maiņas) vidusskolai, vakara (maiņas) vidusskolu*) : Educational institution offering upper secondary education (ISCED 3) in full-time, evening and distance study programs.

vidējā izglītība (*vidējās izglītības, vidējai izglītībai, vidējo izglītību*) : Secondary education – an educational level in which multi-dimensional growth of an individual, purposeful and profound development in intentionally chosen general and professional education, or general or professional education stream, preparation for studies at the highest level of education or professional activity, and involvement in public life takes place.

vidusskola (*vidusskolas, vidusskolai, vidusskolā, vidusskolu*) : Educational institution offering upper secondary education (ISCED 3).

LEGISLATION

Basic Guidelines of Lifelong Learning Policy for 2007-2013 (*Policy Paper, approved by the decree of the Cabinet of Ministers*) : 23.02.2007., 111,

Development Programme Human Resources and Employment (*Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers*) : 20.02.2008., 82, LV - 22.02.2008., Nr. 30,

Education Law (*Law*) : 01/06/1999, LV - 17.11.98, nr.343

Education Law of the Republic of Latvia (null and void from 01.06.1999.) (*Law*) : 19.06.1991., Ziņotājs, 15.08.1991., nr. 31

Null and void from 01.06.1999.

Guidelines for Optimization of Vocational Education Institution Network for 2010 - 2015 (*Decree of Cabinet of Ministers*) : 06.01.2010., Nr.5, LV-08.01.2010. Nr.4,

Labour Law (*Law*) : 20.06.2001., LV-06/07/2001 Nr.105

Labour Protection Law (*Law*) : 20.06.2001., LV-06/07/2001 Nr.105

Latvian Lisbon Programme for the years 2005 - 2008 (*Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers*) : 19.10.2005., 684, LV - 25.10. 2005., Nr. 169,

Latvian Long - Term Economical Strategy (*Strategy*) : 17.07.2001.,

Law on General Education (*Law*) : 10.06.1999., LV - 30/06/1999, Nr.213/215

Law on Higher Education Institutions (*Law*) : 02/11/1995, LV - 17/11/95, Nr. 179

Law on Local Governments (*Law*) : 19.05.1994., LV-24/05/1994, Nr. 61

Law on Professional Education (*Law*) : 10.06.1999, LV - 30.06.1999., Nr. 213/215

Law on Religious Organizations (*Law*) : 07.09.1995., LV-26.09.1995., Nr. 146

Law on Support for Unemployed and Jobseekers (*Law*) : 09.05.2002., LV-29/05/2002 Nr.80

Model Programme for Basic Education (*Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science*) : 24.08.2005., 611

Model Programme for Pre-school Education (*Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science*) : 25.05.2002., 290

Model Programmes for Basic Education for Ethnic Minorities (*Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science*) : 16.05.2001., 303

Model Programmes for Special Basic Education (*decree of the Ministry of Education and Science*) : 27.04.2005., 301

Model Programmes for Special Basic Education for Ethnic Minorities (*Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science*) : 26.05.2005., 373

Model Regulations of Special Education Teacher's work (*Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science*) : 09.03.2004., 145

Model Regulations of Teacher Assistant's Work (*Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science*) : 18.07.2003., 348

Model Regulations of Teacher-Speech Therapist's work in General Education Institutions (*Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science*) : 09.03.2004., 146

National Development Plan 2007-2013 (*Regulations*) : 04.07.2006., 564,

National programme for Youth policy 2009 - 2013 : 27.08.2009., 589, LV-01.09.2009. Nr.138, <http://>

Official Language Law (*Law*) : 09.12.1999., LV-21/12/1999., Nr. 428/433

On Judicial Power (*Law*) : 15.12.1992., *Ziņotājs* 14.01.1993.. Nr.1

On Judicial Power

On the Enrollment for Compulsory Preparation of Five and Six Year Old Children for the Acquisition of Basic Education Programme (*Instructions of the Ministry of Education and Science*) : 21.05.2002., 3

On The Order of Issuing State-Recognised Qualifications Confirming Education and Scientific Degree (*Regulations*) : 21.06.2005., 450, LV-01.07.2005., Nr.102

On the Order of Issuing State-Recognized Documents Confirming Vocational Education and Professional Qualification and Documents Confirming Acquirement of Part of the Accredited Vocational Education Programme (*Regulations*) : 21.06.2005., 451,

On the Order of Issuing State-recognized General Education Documents (*Regulations*) : 06.11.2006., 913, LV-09.11.2006., Nr.180,

On the Procedure and Criteria for Awarding a Scientific Doctor's Degree (Promotion) (*Regulations*) : 27.12.2005., 1001, LV-30.12.2005., Nr. 210,

On the Procedure for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, Colleges and Study Programmes (*Regulations*) : 03.10.2006., 821

Policy Framework for the Development of Education for 2007-2013 (*Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers*) : 27.09.2006., 742

Procedure for Awarding and Disbursing Birth Allowance (*Regulations*) : 08.03.2005., 166, LV-15.03.2005., Nr. 43

Procedure for Exempting Educatees from the Prescribed State Examinations (*Regulations*) : 11.03.2003., 112, LV-20/03/2003 Nr. 44

Procedure for Licensing Higher Education Study Programmes (*Regulations*) : 30.08.2005., 650, LV-01.09.2005., Nr.138,

Procedure of Allocation, Discharge and Repayment of Study Loan and Student's Loan from Credit Institution's Funds with the State Guarantee (*Regulations*) : 29.05.2001., 220, LV-22.06.2001., Nr.97,

Programme for Increasing Remuneration of Teachers (except pre-school teachers not employed in preparing 5 and 6-year-olds for school) 2006-2010 (*Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers*) : 29.08.2005., 579

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