

**Agreement on Good Practice
of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies**

*between the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia,
and Higher education institutions*

In order to ensure the international reputation of Latvia and its higher education system, and to provide foreign students with a positive study experience in Latvia, as well as to attract only those prospective students to studies in Latvia who are motivated to systematically pursue higher education leading to a diploma,

recognising that, in modern times, the internationalisation of higher education is an essential part of the work of every higher education institution and that it ensures the need to develop study programmes and processes in line with internationally accepted quality standards,

enabling academic staff to expand international cooperation through participation in international study and research projects or programmes, and allowing higher education institutions to attract foreign lecturers,

as well as acknowledging that, for every student in Latvia the presence of foreign students provides an opportunity to acquire intercultural competence and enrich their intercultural experience both in the study process and in social life,

agreeing that studying abroad is a significant decision in the life of every young person, for the implementation of which the host higher education institution also assumes partial responsibility;

committing to implement and continuously work towards ensuring that every student is provided with high-quality studies and a modern study environment,
emphasising the importance of introducing foreign students to Latvian culture and of providing comprehensive and responsible information about Latvian society, the principles of non-discrimination, and the values enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia and in European Union documents,

the higher education institution that has signed this Agreement hereby undertakes, in good faith, to observe and implement the following provisions:

1. General Provisions

1.1. The purpose of this Agreement is to establish the basic principles which the higher education institutions that have signed this Agreement voluntarily undertake to observe in the process of attracting foreign students and throughout their studies.

1.2. The principles and commitments expressed in this Agreement apply to all international or internationalisation activities carried out by the higher education institution in Latvia or abroad, regardless of whether the activity involves the use of state budget funds or other sources of funding.

1.3. By this Agreement, the higher education institution, within the scope of its competence, undertakes to promote a positive image of the state and, through its activities, to contribute to the international recognition, quality, and competitiveness of higher education in Latvia.

1.4. In all marketing and promotional activities aimed at attracting foreign students, the higher education institution shall act honestly and ethically, providing only accurate and truthful information.

1.5. The higher education institution undertakes to ensure that foreign students gain a positive experience both of their studies and study process at the institution and of Latvia and its higher education system in general.

1.6. The higher education institution undertakes to provide data on its activities to the European Higher Education Sector Observatory (EHESO), the comparative platform established by the European Union.

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)

1.7. The higher education institution has an internationalisation strategy or an action plan for the attraction of foreign students for at least a medium-term period.

2. Information on Study Opportunities

2.1. The higher education institution maintains and regularly updates a dedicated section of its website for foreign students and ensures that potential foreign students receive, in a timely and comprehensive manner, information about the institution, study programmes (including course catalogues), admission regulations and requirements, and the procedures for the recognition of educational documents obtained during previous education.

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)

2.2. The higher education institution ensures that information provided in English or in the relevant language of instruction of the study programme, as well as in Latvian, about the same study programme and its implementation is equivalent. The study course catalogue is also available in English.

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)

2.3. The higher education institution provides timely informational support to potential foreign students not only on the matters referred to in subparagraph 2.1, but also on issues related to everyday life or living conditions in Latvia and in the city where the host institution is located.

3. Selection of Foreign Students

3.1. The higher education institution examines the educational documents obtained in the applicant's previous education and shall not submit for recognition the documents of any person who, in the previous level of education, has received the lowest passing grade in any of the core subjects relevant to the respective study programme, and whose average grade in those core subjects at the previous level of education is less than 60% of the maximum, or whose overall average grade at the previous level of education is less than 60% of the maximum.

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)

3.2. The requirements for the selection of foreign students in higher-level study programmes (master's or doctoral level) are determined by the higher education institution itself, taking into account a recognised diploma of previous education, while observing the provisions of paragraph 3.1.

3.3. The higher education institution is required to organise an interview in a digital environment with any third-country applicant who requires a visa to enter Latvia, in order to determine his/her motivation to study at the institution and the authenticity of his/her intentions. At the beginning of the interview, the applicant's identity is verified. The interview is recorded, registered and stored in compliance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council (General Data Protection Regulation)¹ and the Personal Data Processing Law² of the Republic of Latvia, and is made available to the relevant state authorities upon request. The institution retains the interview recording for one year. For applicants who are citizens of countries whose nationals do not require a visa to enter Latvia, the higher education institution is recommended to conduct an interview as well.

3.4. The higher education institution informs the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the results of the selection of those students who require visas to enter Latvia by submitting the list of selected students no later than two weeks before the commencement of full-time studies to the e-mail address sengenas.vizas@mfa.gov.lv and to the e-mail address of the Latvian diplomatic or consular mission (hereinafter — “mission”) where the students included in the list are required to submit their documents for the issuance of a long-term visa. The list should separately highlight information regarding those students who are subject to additional checks as provided for in Cabinet Regulation No. 554 of 21 June 2010, “Regulations on Countries Whose Citizens Are Subject to Additional Checks When Issuing a Visa or Residence Permit”³ (hereinafter — Cabinet Regulation No. 554).

4. Conditions for Marketing Activities in Attracting Foreign Students and Work with Agents (Organisations or Natural Persons)

4.1. In any marketing or advertising activity, the higher education institution ensures that all information provided to potential foreign students is accurate, unambiguous, and not misleading.

4.2. If the higher education institution or its authorised organisation uses agents (organisations or natural persons), the higher education institution shall develop criteria for the selection of agents (including their awareness of the Latvian education system, the respective higher education institution, and its study programmes), conclude a written contract with them, and specify therein the principles of fair practice in the recruitment of foreign students, the procedure for mutual settlements, matters of information exchange, as well as the obligations and responsibilities of the higher education institution and the agents.

4.3. The higher education institution or its authorised organisation shall promote compliance by agents (organisations or natural persons) with the principles set out in this agreement, insofar as they relate to the activities carried out by the agent (organisation or natural person) in the recruitment of students.

4.4. The higher education institution publishes on its website or admission information system the list of agents (organisations or natural persons) who are authorised to recruit students in their countries of accreditation, and promptly updates the information if cooperation with any agent is terminated. The institution informs the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the website address where this information is published. The institution decides on the selection of applicants recruited by the respective agents (organisations or natural persons).

¹ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/LV/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L:2016:119:FULL&from=LV>

² Personal Data Processing Law, 5 July 2018. <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/300099-fiziskopersonu-datu-apstrades-likums>

³ Regulations on Countries Whose Citizens Are Subject to Additional Checks When Issuing a Visa or Residence Permit, Cabinet Regulations No. 554, 21 June 2010. <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/212364-noteikumi-par-valstim-kuru-pilsoniemizsniedzot-vizu-vai-uzturesanas-atlauju-veic-papildu-parbaudi>

4.5. The higher education institution, after the first semester, conducts a survey among the new students regarding the practices implemented by the agent (organisation or natural person) and evaluates them. The higher education institution promotes good practices by agents (organisations or natural persons) in the recruitment of prospective students, recognising the need to prevent the risks of illegal immigration within the common area of the European Union and the Schengen Agreement member states.

5. Ensuring Study and Environmental Support

5.1. The higher education institution sends to the admitted student a letter of confirmation regarding admission to the respective study programme and the institution.

5.2. Prior to the student's arrival in Latvia, the higher education institution sends the student the following basic information: the academic calendar and study organisation; required documents; procedures for obtaining visas and residence permits; instructions on how to get to the institution; information on finding accommodation; and contact persons.

5.3. The higher education institution organises the work of its international office in such a way that students are able to receive answers to their questions prior to arriving in Latvia, not only regarding their studies but also about life and daily matters in Latvia. During the first weeks after arrival, the institution also provides the necessary support to help foreign students adapt to life in Latvia, including information about the student council, opportunities to participate in it, and about student clubs or interest groups at the institution.

5.4. At the beginning of the studies, the higher education institution organises an information day or days, either in person or remotely, for student individually or for a group of students, during which general information is provided about Latvia and the respective city, the higher education institution, the study process, and student life. On this information day or days, students receive comprehensive and practically useful information about procedures by which the higher education institution handles student complaints, available health care options, safety matters, emergency services, leisure opportunities, and public transportation.

5.5. The higher education institution ensures that foreign students have the opportunity to study Latvian as an elective subject to at least level A2, even in cases where it is not required by the Law on higher education institutions and provides support for attaining level B1 for students who wish to do so.

5.6. The higher education institution provides courses for foreign students that form an understanding of Latvian culture and identity and promote the integration of foreign students into the cultural environment of Latvia and the city where the higher education institution is located.

5.7. The higher education institution concludes a study contract with each foreign student, specifying the student's rights and obligations, the tuition fee and its payment procedure, as well as the rights and obligations of the higher education institution.

5.8. The study contract stipulates that a part of the study programme may be implemented remotely in situations determined by external regulatory enactments. The contract also specifies the procedure for refunding the tuition fee if the student is forced to discontinue studies due to external circumstances, and it provides that, in the event of a visa refusal, the applicant shall submit an application for a tuition fee refund to the higher education institution within four months, indicating the account number and recipient. The higher education institution shall make the refund within one month from the date of receipt of the application.

5.9. The higher education institution ensures that study programmes for foreign students are implemented by qualified academic staff whose proficiency in the foreign language of instruction is high, preferably at

the C1 level, and, where necessary, provides foreign language courses for the academic staff.

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)

5.10. The higher education institution ensures continuous internal quality control to guarantee the quality of study programmes, including those in which foreign students are enrolled.

5.11. The higher education institution ensures and promotes that staff of the International Department, as well as other higher education institution personnel, including technical staff working with foreign students, possess an adequate level of foreign language proficiency.

5.12. The higher education institution organises training courses for both academic staff and administrative and technical personnel on intercultural communication and cultural differences to enhance their understanding of aspects that must be taken into account when working with students from different countries and cultures.

5.13. The higher education institution offers support services to foreign students that are identical to those available to Latvian students, such as career support or psychological counselling.

5.14. At least once per academic year, a selected group of foreign students is surveyed to obtain information about their satisfaction with the quality and process of studies, as well as any difficulties they have encountered in their studies or daily life. The higher education institution analyses this information and uses it to improve the study process and the study environment.

5.15. The higher education institution has established procedures and an internal control system regarding the attendance of foreign students, specifying the acceptable reasons for justified absences, their duration, and the types of supporting documents to be submitted, as well as the conditions for student exmatriculation.

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)

6. Cooperation with the Ministry and State Governance Institutions

6.1. The higher education institutions that have signed this agreement shall be included in the communication channels maintained using state budget funds intended for foreign students, as well as in other marketing activities, materials, and informational events held in Latvia and abroad.

6.2. The ministries and state administration institutions involved shall, taking into account the interests of the higher education institutions that have signed this agreement and in accordance with the programme of the respective foreign visit, invite their representatives to participate as members of official delegations, to attend visits of foreign representatives taking place in Latvia, where applicable, and may also consult with them during the preparation of foreign visits.

6.3. The Ministry of Education and Science, “Study in Latvia”, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall publish this agreement on their websites in Latvian and English, as well as include this information in other public information media promoting study opportunities, recommending these Latvian higher education institutions as implementers of good practice.

6.4. The higher education institutions that have signed this agreement may be included in other events representing Latvia on a at the national level or in events supporting the export of higher education.

6.5. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall ensure that visa applications submitted by students of the higher education institutions that have signed this agreement are processed as a priority within 15 calendar days from the date of receipt at the diplomatic or consular mission, and within 30 calendar days for those students who are subject to additional checks as specified in Cabinet Regulation No. 554. If a student fails to appear for an interview at the mission in person or remotely at the office of the external service provider, or in

other cases where the student has submitted incomplete documents or provided incomplete information in the visa application, or where additional checks are required, the mission may extend the visa application processing period to up to 60 calendar days.

6.6. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall work to expand the network of visa centres of external service providers in regions that are important for the higher education institutions that have signed this agreement.

6.7. Diplomatic and consular missions shall immediately provide higher education institutions with any information at their disposal regarding possible dishonest conduct or unfair practices by agents (organisations or natural persons) in the recruitment of prospective students.

6.8. The Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall, twice a year (in February and September), provide higher education institutions and “Study in Latvia” with aggregated statistical data on visa refusals.

6.9. Foreign applicants shall have the right to deposit their subsistence funds into the bank accounts of higher education institutions, thereby confirming the availability of such financial means in accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 225 of 25 April 2017 “Regulations on the Amount of Financial Means Necessary for a Foreigner and the Verification of the Availability of Financial Means.” In such cases, the applicant is not required to provide any other proof of the availability of financial means when submitting documents for a visa application, except in cases of justified doubt, when the consular officer of the diplomatic or consular mission may request that such proof be presented. If a visa is refused to the applicant, the higher education institution shall refund the deposited subsistence funds to the applicant’s account within 30 days.

6.10. The higher education institution shall immediately inform the State Border Guard and the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs about students whose country of citizenship is outside the EU and the EEA, if:

6.10.1. the student has not attended the respective study programme at the higher education institution for 14 consecutive days without a justified reason;

6.10.2. the higher education institution has reasonable doubts about the student’s intention to continue studies at the respective higher education institution;

6.10.3. the higher education institution possesses other information indicating that the student’s purpose of stay in the Republic of Latvia is unrelated to studies;

6.10.4. the higher education institution establishes that the student fails to comply with the mandatory attendance requirements set in the study programme and exceeds the permissible percentage of absences;

6.10.5. the student fails to arrive in Latvia within the prescribed period or does not commence studies at the higher education institution.

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)

6.11. The fee determined by the higher education institution for the processing of an application for studies shall not exceed 350 euros.

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)

6.12. The State Education Development Agency and the Ministry of Education and Science, when drafting amendments to the regulatory enactments governing the admission process of foreign applicants or when developing new such regulatory enactments, undertake to provide preferential conditions for the higher education institutions that have signed this agreement.

7. Cooperation with “Study in Latvia”

7.1. By signing this agreement, the higher education institutions acquire the right to use the identity element **“Best Practice University”** included in the “Study in Latvia” brand guidelines, which confirms their affiliation with the circle of partners of the national initiative “Study in Latvia.” The higher education institutions may use this element in their communication materials and digital environment in compliance with the brand usage guidelines, thus demonstrating their affiliation with the national initiative and contributing to the overall expansion of the brand’s visibility.

7.2. The higher education institutions that have signed this agreement and the study programmes they offer shall be listed on the website www.studyinlatvia.lv and promoted through “Study in Latvia” social media channels, as well as in other informational materials and events developed and organised within the framework of “Study in Latvia,” provided that the study programmes meet the following criteria:

- the study programme is implemented in one of the foreign languages – an official language of the European Union – and the respective language is indicated in the register of accredited study fields (Quality Agency for Higher Education – AIKA platform / State Education Information System – VIIS); and
- the study direction in which the study programme is implemented is accredited for the maximum period of six years.

7.3. By signing this agreement, the higher education institutions shall regularly cooperate with the State Education Development Agency, which implements the national initiative “Study in Latvia,” by providing timely information about study programmes offered to foreign students, export capacity activities, and marketing initiatives, as well as any changes thereto, to ensure that the “Study in Latvia” website, social media platforms, materials, and events reflect up-to-date and relevant information for foreign students.

7.4. Only best practice higher education institutions may submit applications to the State Education Development Agency for support in organising summer schools for foreigners and for participation in the “Digital Ambassadors” programme (a selected group of foreign students who share their study and daily life experiences in Latvia on social media).

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)

8. Implementation of the Agreement and the Parties

8.1. A Latvian higher education institution that is registered and accredited in the Republic of Latvia may join and sign this agreement at any time during its period of validity, undertaking to implement the principles and actions set out in this agreement.

8.2. The agreement is concluded for a period of one year. After one year, its implementation shall be evaluated by a commission established by an order of the Director of the State Education Development Agency (hereinafter – the Commission), which shall collectively decide whether to terminate the agreement or extend its validity for another year, reviewing and making any necessary amendments to this agreement.

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)

8.3. Each party to this agreement may terminate its participation in the agreement by providing written notice of its intention to the other parties.

8.4. When necessary, but not less than once a year, the implementation of the agreement shall be evaluated by the Commission, which shall collectively decide on the participation of the higher education institution in the agreement. In the event of a breach of the provisions of the agreement, the Commission reserves the

right to suspend the agreement with the higher education institution until the end of the agreement period. Before signing a new agreement, it shall be assessed whether the identified non-compliances and/or deficiencies have been remedied in accordance with the criteria under which higher education institutions are admitted to this agreement (see Annex 1).

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)

Signatories:

Ministry of Education and Science

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of the Interior

Turība University

RISEBA University of Applied Sciences

Daugavpils University

European Christian Academy

EKA University of Applied Sciences

Latvian Academy of Culture

University of Life Sciences and Technologies

Art Academy of Latvia

University of Latvia

Riga Graduate School of Law

Rīga Stradiņš University

Riga Technical University

Stockholm School of Economics in Riga

Transport and Telecommunication Institute

Ventspils University of Applied Sciences

Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences

Date of signature: 8 September 2025

**Criteria for higher education institution eligibility for the Agreement on Good Practice
of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies**

Annex 1

I. Organisation and Process Management

1. The higher education institution has a structural unit that provides foreign students with:
 - 1.1. information about the admission process and study programmes;
 - 1.2. support in administrative procedures;
 - 1.3. informational support for new foreign students prior to their arrival in the country and during the initial stage of studies (including orientation days after arrival; availability of information on the higher education institution's website; and the involvement of volunteers, assistants, or current foreign students in providing support);
 - 1.4. support services and information regarding living in Latvia and/or in the respective city.

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)
2. **The higher education institution ensures feedback mechanisms with foreign students, including:**
 - 2.1. the higher education institution conducts an annual survey of foreign students regarding their satisfaction with studies and daily life. Indicate which improvements have been made based on the results of the survey, where applicable;
 - 2.2. the higher education institution has developed a procedure/model for addressing complaints submitted by foreign students;
 - 2.3. the higher education institution ensures the representation of foreign students' interests within student self-governance institutions;
 - 2.4. the higher education institution organises and supports integration events for foreign students.
3. **The higher education institution has an internationalisation strategy or a working plan for the recruitment of foreign students covering at least a medium-term period.**

II. Attraction and Enrolment of Foreign Students

4. If the higher education institution or its authorised organisation uses the services of agents (organisations or natural persons) in target countries for student recruitment, the higher education institution has developed selection criteria for such agents (organisations or natural persons) and carries out supervision of their work.
5. The higher education institution is included in the comparative platform of higher education institutions established by the European Union – the European Higher Education Sector Observatory (EHESO).

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)
6. The admission regulations of the higher education institution shall include a provision stipulating that applicants are not eligible for admission to studies if, at the previous level of education, they have received the lowest passing grade in any of the core subjects relevant to the respective study

programme and the average grade in those core subjects at the previous level of education is less than 60% of the maximum grade, or if their overall average grade at the previous level of education is less than 60% of the maximum grade.

(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)

III. Study Process

7. The higher education institution's internal quality control system includes quality assurance aspects related to the quality of the study process, including the provision of study programmes for foreign students.
8. In the study programmes in which foreign students study, the proportion of the academic staff with English language proficiency at levels B2 and C1 (separately).
9. The higher education institution provides English language training to local academic staff.
10. The higher education institution provides training for academic, administrative, and technical staff on cultural differences and intercultural communication.

IV. Statistical and Other Key Indicators

11. *(Deleted by the 8 September 2025 Agreement on Amendments to the Agreement on Good Practice of Attracting International Students and Delivering Studies of 22 September 2022)*
12. The proportion of foreign students exmatriculated (without a diploma) within an academic year shall not exceed 20% (if the number of foreign students at the higher education institution is equal to or greater than 50) or 30% (if the number of foreign students at the higher education institution is less than 50) of the total number of foreign students. This indicator shall not apply if the number of foreign students at the higher education institution is 10 or less. *(VIIS data; information provided by the Ministry of Education and Science.)*
(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)
13. The number of refused visas within a calendar year shall not exceed 20% (if the number of visa applications is equal to or greater than 50) or 30% (if the number of visa applications is less than 50). *(Information provided by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs – OCMA.)* This indicator shall not apply if the number of applications at the higher education institution is 10 or less per year.
14. *(Deleted by the 8 September 2025 Agreement on Amendments to the Agreement on Good Practice of Attracting International Students and Delivering Studies of 22 September 2022.)*
15. The satisfaction of incoming foreign students with their experience at the higher education institution in Latvia *(Erasmus Student Network (ESN) data; information provided by ESN.)*
(Amended by the Agreement of 8 September 2025 on Amendments to the Agreement of 22 September 2022 on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students and Delivering Studies)
16. *(Deleted by the 8 September 2025 Agreement on Amendments to the Agreement on Good Practice of Attracting International Students and Delivering Studies of 22 September 2022.)*
17. At the time of the Commission's decision, the higher education institution has no tax debts.
18. At the time of the Commission's decision, the higher education institution, its managers, owners, and beneficial owners are not included in national or international sanctions lists.

V. Other Information

19. Information provided by other involved state institutions regarding the higher education institution's practices in the recruitment of foreign students and the study process.