

**AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN  
THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF LATVIA  
AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS  
ON  
GOOD PRACTICE OF ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS  
AND DELIVERING STUDIES**

In order to build up the international reputation of Latvia and its higher education institutions and to provide international students with positive experiences in Latvia, as well as to attract for studies in Latvia only such potential students as are motivated to obtain a diploma of higher education in systematic studies, and recognising that the internationalisation of higher education is today important in the work of every higher education institution, ensuring the need to develop study programmes and processes in accordance with the quality criteria accepted in international practice,

providing teachers with the possibility to extend international cooperation into international study and research projects or programmes and to attract international teaching staff,

bearing in mind that the presence of international students would enable any student of a higher education institution in Latvia to master intercultural skills and enrich intercultural experiences in the study process and in public life;

acknowledging that studies abroad are an important decision in the life of each young person, the implementation of which is also the responsibility of the higher education institution,

undertaking to implement and constantly work on ensuring qualitative studies and a modern study environment for each student,

emphasising the need to familiarise international students with Latvian culture and inform them comprehensively and responsibly about Latvian society, gender equality and the values enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia,

the higher education institutions which have signed this agreement undertake to observe and implement the provisions of this agreement in good faith:

## 1. General Conditions

1.1. The purpose of this agreement is to define basic principles that the higher education institutions, which have signed this agreement, undertake to adhere to in good faith in the process of attracting international students and during their entire study process.

1.2. The principles of this agreement and the commitment refer to all international and internationalisation activities implemented by the higher education institution in Latvia regardless of whether the activity is related to the spending of state budget funds or has other sources of funding.

1.3. With this agreement, within the scope of its competence, the higher education institution undertakes to promote a positive image of the state and to certify in its operations that Latvian higher education is internationally recognised, qualitative and competitive.

1.4. In each marketing activity and advertising aimed at attracting international students, the higher education institution shall observe good faith and ethical principles, providing only true information.

1.5. The higher education institution is committed to helping to ensure that international students obtain a positive experience of their studies and the study process in the higher education institution, as well as of Latvia and the system of higher education in Latvia.

1.6. The higher education institution shall provide international students with the same rights and duties as those set for Latvian students, as laid down in regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia, international commitments and internal regulations of the institution. However, the education institution can set additional requirements related to the prevention of safety issues or risks.

At the same time as the flow of international students in the higher education institution increases, Latvian students are provided with the same quality study process and support service as international students.

1.7. The higher education institution is committed to ensuring that information about the activity profile and self-assessment of the higher education institution is available on the *Multirank* platform for comparison of higher education institutions, created by the European Union.

## **2. Information about Study Opportunities**

2.1. The higher education institution shall ensure that potential international students receive, in a timely manner and in full scope, information about:

2.1.1. accreditation of the higher education institution and the study programme, which is the basis for the issue of a diploma recognised by the state, and other activities related to ensuring the quality of studies in the study process;

2.1.2. the degree to be obtained in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the *International Standard Classification of Education* (ISCED) level;

2.1.3. the duration of the study programme, total number of credit points in the Latvian credit point and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the framework plan of study courses, including descriptions of study courses and study results of each study course, as well as other academic conditions in the study programme/process, if applicable (for example, mandatory placement, short-term mobility possibilities etc.);

2.1.4. enrolment conditions and requirements, and general administrative procedures;

2.1.5. the procedure for recognition of the education certificates obtained in any previous education;

2.1.6. costs of tuition fees and administrative procedures such as registration fees.

2.2. The higher education institution shall ensure that information provided about a single study programme and its implementation in English or in the respective study programme implementation language and in Latvian is identical.

2.3. The higher education institution shall provide prompt informative support to potential international students, not only about the matters listed in Sub-paragraph 2.1, but also about matters related to social life and living in Latvia.

## **3. Selection of International Students**

3.1. The higher education institution shall set the following conditions for potential international students in first level professional higher education

programmes and Bachelor level education programmes:

3.1.1. the higher education institution shall review the education certificates obtained in the previous education and those personal documents not advanced for further recognition, which received the lowest positive assessment in their country of origin in any of profile subjects of the relevant study programme;

3.1.2. if the previous education of the potential international student was obtained in other language, either an internationally recognised certificate is necessary or the higher education institution shall organise a test of the foreign language which certifies knowledge of the language in which the study programme is implemented, and the level of knowledge set by the higher education institution;

3.2. The requirements for the selection of international students for the highest-level study programmes (Master, Doctor) shall be set by the higher education institution, taking into account a recognised previous education diploma.

3.3. The requirements for the selection of international students are the same for all students regardless of their country of origin.

#### **4. Conditions for Marketing Activities in Attracting International Students and Work with Commercial Agents**

4.1. In any marketing and advertising activity, the higher education institution shall ensure that all information provided to potential international students is true and does not create a misleading impression.

4.2. If the higher education institution uses commercial agents, then the higher education institution shall, in cooperation with each commercial agent, take relevant measures to ensure that they observe the principles included in this agreement, to the extent they are applicable to the activities implemented by commercial agents in attracting students.

4.3. The higher education institution shall provide information to Latvian diplomatic and consular representations about those commercial agents entitled to attract students in their country of accreditation.

4.4. The higher education institution shall organise a regular survey of students about the practices implemented by the commercial agents and shall

evaluate the results of such surveys. The higher education institution shall foster good practice by commercial agents in attracting potential students.

4.5. The higher education institution cannot request a tuition fee from any potential international student before a positive decision about their commencement of studies has been taken.

## **5. Ensuring Study and Environmental Support**

5.1. The higher education institution shall send to the enrolled (matriculated) student a confirmation letter about their enrolment on the respective study programme and at the respective higher education institution.

5.2. The higher education institution shall send the student the following additional information prior to their arrival to Latvia: an academic calendar and the organisation of studies; necessary documents, visas and procedures for obtaining a residence permit; recommended types of travel.

5.3. The higher education institution shall organise the work of its international department/services in such a way that, prior to their arrival in Latvia the student can obtain answers to their questions, not only about studies, but also about living and social life in Latvia, by means such as attracting volunteers, assistants within the scope of placement, Latvian or existing international students, who provide the international student with the necessary support in the first weeks to make him/her feel at home in Latvia.

5.4. At the beginning of studies, following the arrival of the international student in Latvia, the higher education institution shall organise, either individually for the student or for a group of students, a face-to-face information day(s) providing general information about Latvia and the relevant city, the higher education institution, the study process and student life. During this information day(s), students shall receive extensive and practically valuable information about the opportunities for receiving healthcare, security matters, information about the emergency services, leisure opportunities and public transport.

5.5. The higher education institution shall consider the possibility of offering international students a primary course in Latvian even in cases not provided for by the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, or shall inform students about opportunities to learn Latvian through self-learning on the internet and using other tuition aids.

The higher education institution shall provide international students with study courses that create an idea of the Latvian culture and identity and promote integration of international students into the Latvian cultural space.

5.6. The higher education institution shall conclude a study agreement with each international student, wherein their rights and duties, the tuition fee and its payment procedure, as well as the rights and duties of the higher education institution are laid down.

5.7. The higher education institution shall ensure that study programmes for international students are implemented by qualified teachers whose level of foreign language in relation to implementing the study programme is high, preferably level C1, and shall provide language courses when required.

5.8. The higher education institution shall take care and ensure that not only university lecturers and employees of the relevant department/service, but also other staff of the higher education institution, including technical staff, who work with international students, have a relevant level of knowledge of foreign language (English).

5.9. The higher education institution shall organise a training course(s) for university lecturers and administrative and technical staff on intercultural communication and cultural differences in order to foster understanding of what should be taken into account when working with students from different countries and cultures.

5.10. If the higher education institution offers Latvian students support services, such as career support or psychologist consultations, then the higher education institution shall also provide such possibilities/services to international students in the relevant foreign language.

5.11. Selectively, at least once in a semester, a survey for a certain group of international students shall be organised to obtain feedback on their satisfaction with the quality and process of the studies, as well as any problems which they have faced in their studies or social life. The higher education institution shall analyse this information and use it for the improvement of the study process and the study environment.

## **6. Collaboration with the Ministry and State Governance Institutions**

6.1. The higher education institutions which have signed the agreement are

included in marketing and other information events in Latvia and international countries implemented from state budget funds.

6.2. The Ministry of Education and Science shall include the higher education institutions which have signed the agreement, taking into account their interests and pursuant to the programme of international visits, in its official delegations, and shall invite their representatives to participate in visits of international representatives held in Latvia.

6.3. The Ministry of Education and Science shall publish this agreement on the website of the Ministry in Latvian and English, and shall make this information available via other public data carriers which popularise study opportunities, recommending these Latvian higher education institutions as implementers of good practices.

6.4. The higher education institutions which have signed this agreement may be included in other presentation activities at national level or supportive higher education export activities.

6.5. Latvian diplomatic and consular representations in international countries shall provide the higher education institutions with any information at their disposal about potential unfair actions or unfair practices by commercial agents in attracting potential students.

6.6. If a student whose country of origin is outside countries of the European Union and the European Economic Area does not attend a relevant study programme of the higher education institution on a regular basis or for a long time, the higher education institution undertakes to inform the State Border Guard and the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

## **7. Implementation of the Agreement and Parties to the Agreement**

7.1. Any Latvian higher education institution which is registered and accredited in the Republic of Latvia can join and sign this agreement for its entire effective period, undertaking to implement the principles and activities described in this agreement.

7.2. The agreement is concluded for three years, and after three years its implementation shall be evaluated by a commission established on the order of the Minister of Education and Science, which shall decide in a collegial manner on termination of the agreement or extension of its effect, reviewing necessary

changes to this agreement.

7.3. Each of the parties to this agreement can terminate its participation in this agreement by notifying the other party about its intention.

*Signed by*

*Minister of Education and Science and*

*Rector of a Latvian higher education institution*