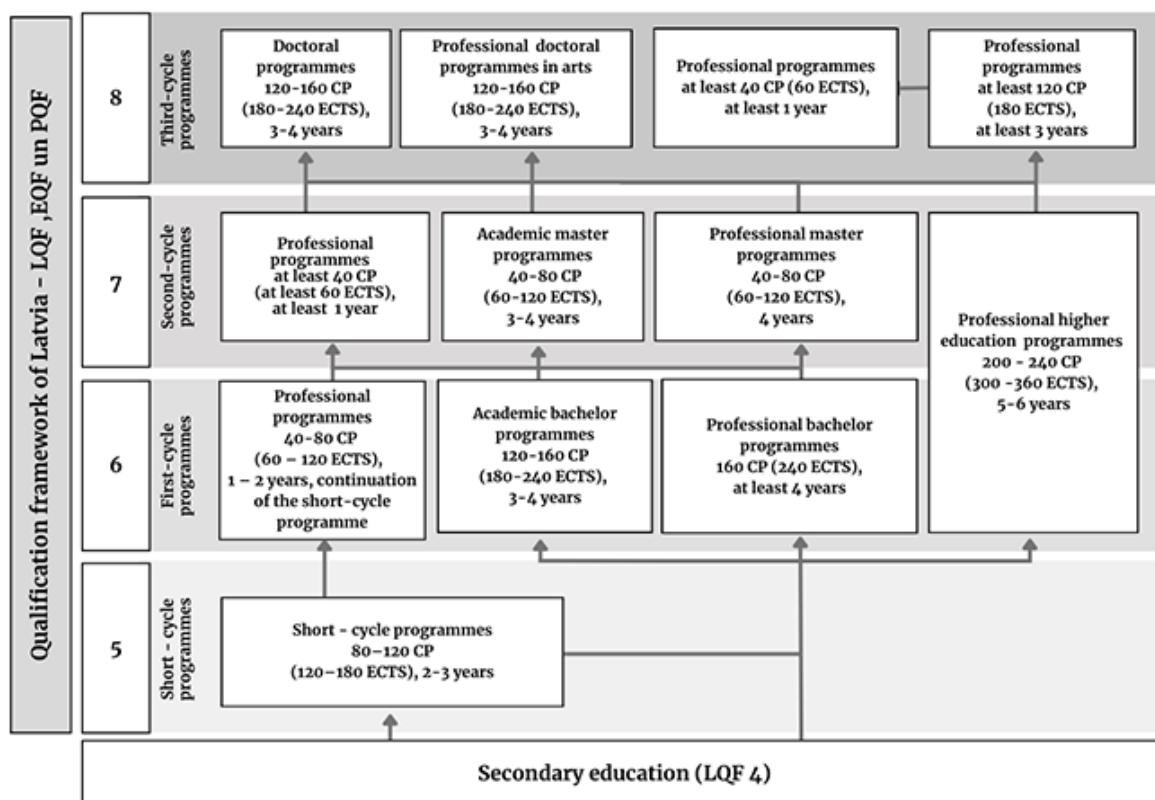


Information on the national higher education system.

Certificate of general secondary education and diploma of vocational secondary education gives the right to continue education at higher education level. However, the universities/colleges are free to set specific admission requirements, e.g. additional subjects that had to be taken at the secondary school level to qualify for admission to a particular programme.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA



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According to the Latvian legislation, higher education programmes are placed in the Latvian Qualifications Framework (henceforth – LQF) and comply with eight levels of the European Qualifications Framework (henceforth – EQF).

The Placement of Education Documents Certifying Higher Education in the LQF and EQF

Education documents certifying higher education	LQF and EQF level
1. Diploma of short - cycle professional higher education	5
1. Bachelor's diploma 2. Professional Bachelor's diploma	6

3. Diploma of professional higher education, diploma of higher professional qualification (first - cycle professional higher education, the length of full-time studies – at least 4 years)	
1. Master's diploma 2. Professional Master's diploma 3. Diploma of professional higher education, diploma of higher education, diploma of higher professional qualification (second - cycle professional higher education, the total length of full-time studies – at least 5 years)	7
1. Doctor's diploma 2. Doctor's diploma of professional doctoral degree in arts (third - cycle higher education, length of full-time studies – at least three years) 3. Diploma of higher professional education, diploma of higher professional qualification (third cycle professional higher education, total duration of full-time studies at least 3 years)	8

Starting from August 1, 2022, the professional higher education qualification to be obtained in higher education is determined according to the 5 - 8 professional qualification level.

Comparison of Professional Qualification Levels (PQF) in line with changes in the regulatory framework

Study programme		Professional qualification levels until July 31, 2022	Professional qualification levels starting from August 1, 2022	LQF and EQF level
First-level professional higher education programme	Short – cycle professional study programme	Fourth professional qualification level	Fifth professional qualification level	5
Second-level professional higher education programme	First – cycle study programme	Fifth professional qualification level	Sixth professional qualification level	6
	Second – cycle study programme	Fifth professional qualification level	Seventh professional qualification level	7
	Third – cycle study programme		Eighth professional qualification level	8

Higher education system comprises both academic higher education and professional higher education. *Bakalaurs* (Bachelor's) and *maģistrs* (Master's) degrees are awarded both in academic and professional higher education programmes.

From 1 August 2022, study programmes shall be grouped according to study cycles.

- Short - cycle study programmes that lead to the 5th level professional qualification (LQF level 5). Programmes comprise 80–120 credit points (henceforth – CP)² (120–180 ECTS), and these programmes are mainly targeted at labour market, yet the graduates can continue their studies in first-cycle HE programmes.

- First – cycle and second - cycle professional HE study programmes that lead to the 6th or 7th level professional qualification (LQF level 6–7). These programmes can comprise either at least 40 CP (60 ECTS) for holders of *bakalaurs* (Bachelor's) degree or at least 160 CP (240 ECTS) for secondary school leavers. In both cases programmes should include a practical placement and graduation examinations. If study programme comprises 160 CP (240 ECTS) and the compulsory part of a *bakalaurs* (Bachelor's) programme, graduates obtain access to Master's studies.

- Third - cycle study programmes leading to an eighth level professional qualification (PQF level 8). These programmes may be at least 120 CP (180 ECTS). Continuation of studies for the eighth level professional qualification in a subspecialty or sub-specialty (residency) shall be in programmes of at least 40 CP (60 ECTS).

The objectives of the **academic higher education (HE)** are to prepare graduates for an independent research work, as well as to provide theoretical background for professional activities.

Academic programmes leading to a *bakalaurs* (Bachelor's) degree comprise 120–160 CP (160–240 ECTS). The duration of full-time studies is 6–8 semesters (3–4 years).

Academic programmes leading to *maģistrs* (Master's) degree comprise 40–80 CP (60–120 ECTS). The duration of full-time studies is 2–4 semesters (1–2 years).

Total duration of full-time Bachelor's and Master's studies is at least 5 years.

Academic education programmes are implemented according to the state standard of the academic education.

The objectives of the **professional HE** are to provide in-depth knowledge in a particular field, preparing graduates for design or improvement of systems, products and technologies, as well as to prepare them for creative, research and teaching activities in this field.

Professional HE programmes leading to a *professional bakalaurs* (Bachelor's) degree are designed to ensure a professional competence, they comprise at least 160 CP (240 ECTS) including practical placement of ≥ 26 CP (39 ECTS). The duration of full-time studies is at least 8 semesters (4 years).

Professional HE programmes leading to a *professional maģistrs* (Master's) degree comprise no less than 40 CP (60 ECTS) including practical placements of ≥ 6 CP (9 ECTS). The duration of full-time studies is at least 2 semesters (1 year).

Total duration of full-time Bachelor's and Master's studies is at least 5 years.

Graduates of both types of *bakalaurs* (Bachelor's) degree have access to Master's studies, graduates of the *maģistrs* (Master's) degree – to doctoral studies.

Degrees obtained in medicine, dentistry and pharmacy professional studies (5 and 6 years of studies) are referenced to the *maģistrs* (Master's) degree and the graduates can continue their studies in doctoral level programmes.

In the professional HE there are other types of programmes apart from Bachelor's and Master's study programmes.

Doctoral studies. Since 1 January 2000, a single type of doctoral degree – *doktors* – is awarded in Latvia. The degree of *maģistrs* (Master's degree) is required for admission to doctoral studies. *Doktors* (Doctoral) degree is awarded after public defence of doctoral thesis and successfully passed exams in the chosen scientific branch or sub-branch. The doctoral thesis has to include original results of the research and new cognitions in the scientific discipline and may be a result of three to four years of

doctoral studies at a higher education institution or an equivalent amount of independent research. The doctoral thesis may be a dissertation, a set of scientific publications or a monograph. The rights to award the *doktors (Doctoral)* degree are delegated by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers to promotion councils established at the universities. The procedure for awarding the *doktors (Doctoral)* degree is controlled by the Commission of the Scientific Qualification.

Since 1 April 2018, a professional doctoral degree in arts is awarded in Latvia. Admission to professional doctoral program in arts requires a Master's degree. A professional doctoral degree in arts is awarded to a person after acquiring an accredited professional doctoral program in arts and after the development and defence of a doctoral theoretical research and artistically creative work. A professional doctoral degree in arts is awarded by the State Examination Commission.

Grading system. Degree of achieved study results is assessed by 10-point degree system or PASS/FAIL.

10-point Degree System

Achievement level	Grade	Meaning	Approx. ECTS grade
very high	10	izcili (with distinction)	A
	9	teicami (excellent)	A
high	8	ļoti labi (very good)	B
	7	labi (good)	C
medium	6	gandrīz labi (almost good)	D
	5	viduvēji (satisfactory)	E
	4	gandrīz viduvēji (almost satisfactory)	E/FX
low	3–1	negatīvs vērtējums (unsatisfactory)	Fail

Quality assurance. According to the Latvian legislation, state-recognized degrees/diplomas may be awarded upon the completion of an accredited programme in an accredited HE institution holding a state-approved [Satversme](#) (by-law) or college statute. Decisions on programme accreditation are taken by the Study Accreditation Commission, while those on the institutional accreditation – by the Higher Education Council.

More information:

1. On educational system – <https://www.izm.gov.lv>
2. On recognition diplomas – <https://aic.lv>
3. On study possibilities in Latvia – <https://studyinlatvia.lv>
4. On evaluation of universities/colleges, accreditation of fields of study and licensing of study programmes – <https://eplatforma.aika.lv/>
5. On European education systems and policies – <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/>

² Latvian credit point is defined as a one-week full-time study workload. An average workload of a full-time study year in most HE programmes is 40 credit points. Latvian credit point system is compatible with ECTS. The number of ECTS credits is found by multiplying the number of Latvian credit points by a factor of 1.5. Until 31 December 2024 a transition to the accounting unit - a credit point, which

expresses the amount of study load based on learning outcomes defined in the study programme or part thereof, has been determined. 60 credits correspond to full-time studies completed in one academic year according to the European credit transfer and accumulation system. One credit corresponds to the amount of 25–30 hour study work.