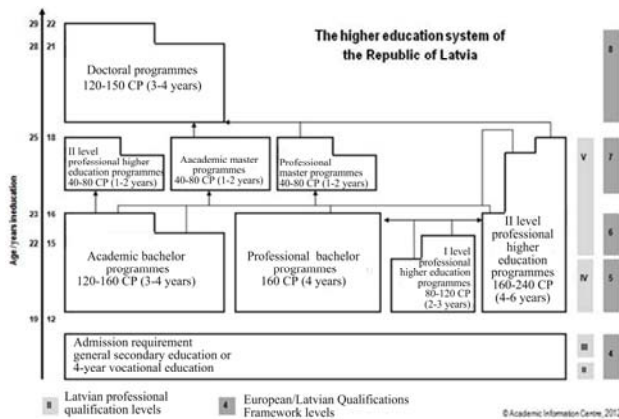


Certificate of general secondary education and diploma of vocational secondary education gives the right to continue education at higher education level. However, the universities/colleges are free to set specific admission requirements, e.g. additional subjects that had to be taken at the secondary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



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 Higher Education Certifying Education Documents in the LQF and EQF

| Education documents certifying higher education | LQF and EQF level |
|---|-------------------|
| Diploma of first level professional higher education | 5 |
| Bachelor's diploma Professional Bachelor's diploma Diploma of professional higher education, diploma of higher professional qualification (second level professional higher education, the length of full-time studies – at least 4 years) | 6 |
| Master's diploma Professional Master's diploma Diploma of professional higher education, diploma of higher education, diploma of higher professional qualification (second level professional higher education, the total length of full-time studies – at least 5 years) | 7 |
| Doctor's diploma | 8 |

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

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 *bakalaura* (Bachelor's) degree comprise 120–160 credit points (henceforth – CP)² (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 *profesionālā bakalaura* (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 *profesionālā 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 *bakalaura* (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.

- *First level professional HE (college) study programmes* that lead to the 4th level professional qualification (LQF level 5). Programmes comprise 80–120 CP (120–180 ECTS), and these programmes are mainly targeted at labour market, yet the graduates can continue their studies in second level professional HE programmes.

- *Second level professional HE study programmes* that lead to the 5th level professional qualification (LQF level 6–7). These programmes can comprise either at least 40 CP (60 ECTS) for holders of *bakalaura* (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 *bakalaura* (Bachelor's) programme, graduates obtain access to Master's studies.

Doctoral studies. Since January 1, 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 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.

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 (<i>with distinction</i>) | A |
| | 9 | teicami (<i>excellent</i>) | A |
| high | 8 | ļoti labi (<i>very good</i>) | B |
| | 7 | labi (<i>good</i>) | C |
| medium | 6 | gandrīz labi (<i>almost good</i>) | D |
| | 5 | viduvēji (<i>satisfactory</i>) | E |
| | 4 | gandrīz viduvēji (<i>almost satisfactory</i>) | E/FX |
| low | 3-1 | negatīvs vērtējums (<i>unsatisfactory</i>) | 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 – <http://www.izm.gov.lv>;
2. On recognition diplomas – <http://www.aic.lv>;
3. On status of programmes/institutions – <http://www.aiknc.lv>
4. On study possibilities in Latvia – <http://studyinlatvia.lv>
5. On European education systems and policies – www.eurydice.org

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.