



European Centre for the
Development of Vocational Training



DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN LATVIA

THEMATIC OVERVIEW

FIRST ISSUE

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01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Latvia is a parliamentary republic in which the Saeima (the Parliament) is elected in general elections.

There are 26 districts in Latvia, which consist of 19 counties and 453 civil parishes (beginning of 2004) with elected local governments. Out of 77 Latvian towns, seven are under state jurisdiction.

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

- Surface area – 64 589 km²
- Population – 2 319 203 (beginning of 2004)
- Demographic development

In the beginning of 2002 the population had decreased by 12% in comparison to the data of the previous census (1989), and by the beginning of 2003 it had decreased further to 2.331 million.

The share of the population who have not reached economically active age, is decreasing (20.9% in 1995; 16.0% in 2003). In the beginning of 2004 the number of children (0-14 years old) and adolescents per 1000 economically active inhabitants was 1.4 times lower than the number of inhabitants at pension age (Demographics 2004. – Riga: CSB, 2004). The proportion of the population in schooling age might continue to decrease further till at least the year 2015.

The proportion of economically active inhabitants in the population has increased only due to an increase in the pension age (56.4% in 1995 and 62.4% in 2003).

According to demographic prognoses, the economically active part of the population will remain constant till 2010, since during this time those born in the 1980's (when the birth rate was relatively high) will enter the labour market. The number of the economically active population will decrease between 2010 and 2020 when the general aging of the population is expected.

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY PER CENT			
	2000	2003	2004
POPULATION - TOTAL	100	100	100
LATVIANS	57.7	58.5	58.6
RUSSIANS	29.6	29.0	28.8
BELARUSSIANS	4.1	3.9	3.9
UKRAINIANS	2.7	2.6	2.6
POLES	2.5	2.5	2.5

OTHER ETHNICITIES	3.4	3.5	3.6
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Source: Statistical Yearbook of Latvia, 2004 – Riga: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2004.

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Since mid-1990's the Latvian economy has constantly been growing. From 1996 to 2003 the Latvian Gross domestic product (GDP) has increased by an average 6.1% annually. The increase has been especially rapid in the most recent years - 8% in 2001 and 7.5% in 2003 (Report on the development of the Latvian national economy - Riga: ME, June 2004).

Table: Rates of employment in 2003 (according to Labour Force Survey data; distribution by per cent)

RATE OF EMPLOYED POPULATION TO THE TOTAL POPULATION			
	TOTAL	MALES	FEMALES
TOTAL	55.4	61.0	50.6
AGE (YEARS)			
15 -19	9.0	11.2	6.8
20 -24	56.9	65.9	47.7
25 -29	74.0	81.6	66.3
30 -34	79.7	85.3	74.0
35 -39	80.3	82.2	78.5
40 - 44	80.4	80.9	79.9
45 - 49	78.2	79.4	77.2
50 -54	72.4	73.5	71.4
55 - 59	59.6	65.4	55.1
60 - 64	30.9	38.8	25.3
65 - 74	11.2	15.7	8.5

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Latvia, 2004 – Riga: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2004.

GDP per citizen according to the purchasing power standards has increased to 36% of the EU average purchasing power in 2003.

The Latvian long-term economic strategy sets as the main goal of the states economic policy the attainment in foreseeable future of the level of welfare relevant to the standard of living of developed countries. In order to achieve this, Latvia needs to reach the average GDP per capita of EU countries in the next 20-30 years.

The distribution of the added value in various fields has changed between 1996 and 2001 in favour of services and building at the expense of industry and agriculture. At the same time the number of those employed in agriculture is still high (15.1% in 2001).

Table: The distribution of the added value in different fields in 1995, 2002 and 2003 (by %)

YEAR	1995	2002	2003
AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY	9.0	4.6	4.3
INDUSTRY	25.2	17.0	17.2
BUILDING	4.6	5.6	5.6
SERVICES	61.2	72.8	72.9

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Latvia, 2004. - Riga: CSB, 2004

According to the calculations of the Central Statistical Bureau, the share of shady economy constitutes 16-17% of GDP, and approximately half of it is related to unregistered employment. The majority of the employed who are not employed officially work in building, trade and various services.

On the average, 517 000 men and 490 000 women were employed in 2003.

In Latvia the unemployed are registered officially since 1992. Unemployment rate reached the highest degree in 1998, reaching 9.2% (111.4 thousand inhabitants) but since 1999 it has been decreasing gradually, reaching 7.6% (89.7 thousand inhabitants) or 8.5% (applying a new method for calculating the share of the economically active population) by the end of 2002 (The Social Processes in Latvia 2003 - Riga, CSB, 2003.) and 8.6% in the end of 2003.

At the end of 2003, the total number of the unemployed was 90 551 of which 41.5% were men and 13.9% were young people aged 15-24.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) shows that the unemployment rate is higher among men than among women (14.4% and 11.7% respectively, in 2001), but women constitute more than half of all the registered unemployed (57.4% in 2001). Women use Employment State Service services more often, for example, in 2001, 33.4% of the unemployed women were registered with the Employment State Service, whereas only 24.9% of the unemployed men were registered (Statistical Yearbook of Latvia, 2004 - Riga: CSB, 2004.).

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) data, the actual unemployment rate in Latvia is much higher than the officially registered unemployment rate. The unemployment rate calculated by the LFS was 20.7% in 1996, 13.1% in 2001 and 12% in the end of 2002. Even though this number has a tendency of decreasing, it is still higher than the average of EU countries (7.7% in 2002).

The registered unemployment rate differs greatly in different areas. It is very high in the eastern part of Latvia, in Latgale - 26.6% in Rezekne district, 24.4% in Ludza district, and 24.9% in Balvi district. In Riga the registered unemployment rate was only 4.8%, in April 1st, 2003.

The unemployment rate among young adults is still high (21% in 2000, 23% in 2001, 25% in 2002), and it is higher than the EU rate (stable at 15% since 2000), but lower than the average of the EU candidate countries (29%-31%) during that time period. According to LFS, the proportion of those seeking employment out of the total number of the economically active population aged 15-24 was 31.9% in 1996, 20.8% in 2002, and 18.5% in 2003.

The proportion of Latvians among the registered unemployed people has increased, whereas the proportion of non-Latvians has decreased since 1995. Nevertheless, the proportion of Russians among the registered unemployed (33.9%) is much higher than their proportion in the population in general (29%) in 2003.

In 2001 the absolute majority of those working in national economy were employed in the services' sector (59.4%) while 25.4% of the employed were working in industry and

building, and 15.1% in agriculture and fish hatchery. Comparing to 1996, the average annual number of the employed has decreased most in industry (by 14.9%), in the sector of social and health care (by 13.7%) and in agriculture (by 10.1%). It has increased in wholesale and retail (by 37.2%), in building (by 32.9%), and in the management of immovable property, renting and business services (by 29.5%).

In 2003 the unemployment rate was 4,8% among those with higher education (ISCED Level 5), in comparison to 10.9% among those with finished general upper-secondary education (ISCED 3A), 9.3% among those with vocational or upper-secondary vocational education (ISCED 3B + ISCED 4) and 17.0% among those who have only completed basic education (ISCED 2).

In May 2000 in the framework of the LFS additional questions on the received education were asked to those participants who had finished vocational educational institutions between 1990 and 1999. Of all the graduates of the given time period, in May 2000 28% percent were unemployed, 42% were employed in a field other than the pursued education, and only 30% were employed in the profession for which they had completed their studies.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
FROM THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET	15.7	15.1	16.9	18.3	18.4	17.8
FROM GDP	6.9	6.7	6.8	6.9	6.5	6.3

Source: Report on the development of national economy in Latvia - ME, Riga, June 2002; Report on the development of national economy in Latvia - ME, Riga, June 2004

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6	TOTAL (*)
EUROPEAN UNION (15 COUNTRIES)	34%	42%	21%	97%
EUROPEAN UNION (15 COUNTRIES) PLUS 10 ACCEDING COUNTRIES	32%	46%	20%	98%
BELGIUM	39%	33%	28%	100%
DENMARK	18%	50%	32%	100%
GERMANY	16%	58%	21%	96%
GREECE	46%	36%	18%	100%
SPAIN	57%	18%	25%	100%
FRANCE	35%	41%	23%	100%
IRELAND	37%	34%	26%	97%
ITALY	53%	36%	11%	100%
LUXEMBOURG	38%	42%	18%	98%
NETHERLANDS	32%	43%	25%	99%
AUSTRIA	22%	63%	15%	100%
PORTUGAL	78%	12%	10%	100%
FINLAND	24%	43%	33%	100%
SWEDEN	18%	54%	27%	99%
UNITED KINGDOM	15%	45%	27%	87%

ICELAND	35%	39%	26%	100%
NORWAY	13%	55%	31%	100%
CYPRUS	34%	37%	30%	100%
CZECH REPUBLIC	12%	76%	12%	100%
ESTONIA	12%	58%	30%	100%
HUNGARY	26%	59%	15%	100%
LITHUANIA	14%	63%	23%	100%
LATVIA	18%	64%	18%	100%
MALTA	80%	11%	9%	100%
POLAND	18%	68%	14%	100%
SLOVENIA	21%	61%	18%	100%
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	13%	75%	12%	100%

ISCED 0-2: Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education
 ISCED 3-4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education
 ISCED 5-6: Tertiary education

(*) difference = no answer

EU-15, EU-15+ Acc, D, L, NL, A, ISL: data for 2002

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey

Comments: Table - in comparison with EU member states (46% of the population) in Latvia 64% of the population have ISCED 3-4 level. Historically the population of Latvia have been striving to obtaining secondary education and higher education (today 65% of those with secondary education are being enrolled to higher education institutions). During Soviet times secondary education was compulsory.

Percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training			
	2000	2002	2003
EUROPEAN UNION (15 COUNTRIES)	19.4 p	18.5 p	18.0 b
EUROPEAN UNION (15 COUNTRIES) PLUS 10 ACCEDING COUNTRIES	:	16.5 p	15.9 b
BELGIUM	12.5	12.4	12.8
DENMARK	11.6	8.4	10.0 b
GERMANY	14.9	12.6	12.6 p
GREECE	17.1	16.1	15.3 b
SPAIN	28.8	29	29.8
FRANCE	13.3	13.4	13.3 b
IRELAND	:	14.7	12.1 b
ITALY	25.3	24.3	23.5
LUXEMBOURG	16.8	17	17.0 p
NETHERLANDS	15.5	15	15.0 p
AUSTRIA	10.2	9.5	9.5 p
PORTUGAL	42.9	45.5	41.1
FINLAND	8.9 b	9.9	10.7 b
SWEDEN	7.7	10.4	9.0 b
UNITED KINGDOM	18.3 p	17.7 p	16.7 p
ICELAND	28.6	27.3	27.3 p
NORWAY	13.3	14	6.6 b
CYPRUS	15.1	14	15.1 b

CZECH REPUBLIC	:	5.5	6
ESTONIA	14.2	12.6	11.8
HUNGARY	13.8	12.2	11.8 b
LITHUANIA	16.7	14.3 b	11.8
LATVIA	:	19.5	18.1
MALTA	:	53.2	48.2
POLAND	:	7.6	6.3
SLOVENIA	:	4.8 u	4.3 u
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	:	5.6	4.9 b

: = not available

b = break in series

u = unreliable or uncertain data

p = provisional value

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey

Comments: Table - from year 1991 only basic education (lower secondary education) is compulsory.

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

In the development of professional education in Latvia after 1990, three stages can be discerned:

Stage 1 (1995-1998). The main goals of the development of professional education were defined. They were determined by the Strategic Programme for the Development of Education (1998-2003). During this time period, the projects realized within the Phare framework had a great importance.

Stage 2 (1999-2001). The Law of Professional Education, adopted in 1999 formed the juridical basis for professional education. The main tasks of the law are to determine the forms of professional education, the levels of the qualifications to be obtained and the requirements for obtaining those qualifications, to determine the responsibility of the structures involved in professional education, and to ensure the realization of the professional education policy in Latvia. The projects of the Phare programme helped in the implementation of the Law.

Stage 3 (2002-2005). Continued reforms are being carried out linked to the process of joining the EU. The Education development concept for 2002-2005 is being adopted, and also the Programme for the development of professional education for 2003-2005 with much more specific goals.

A number of strategic documents have been adopted that determine the necessity to develop life-long learning and human resources, including improving vocational education and training – such as the annual National employment plans, the overall evaluation of the employment policy, the National development plan.

The main goals of development of education defined in the Education development concept 2002-2005 (adopted by the decree Nr 383 of the Cabinet of Ministers on July 17, 2002) are:

- To improve the quality of education in all the levels and types of education according to the needs of the society and the national economy;
- To ensure the availability of education for the inhabitants of Latvia in the context of lifelong learning;
- To increase the efficiency of education costs in all the levels and types of education.

In order to achieve the given goals in the field of professional education, the following actions are considered priorities:

- The provision of the quality of professional education according to the demand in the labour market;

- To improve the system of centralized exams in vocational education and training;
- To continue updating the contents of vocational education and training programmes in relevance to the changing needs of the labour market;
- To improve vocational education and training programmes and the accreditation of educational institutions;
- To develop first, second and third level occupational standards and relevant educational programmes;
- To promote collaboration between educational institutions and employers in vocational education and training;
- To continue the licensing of profession-oriented programmes and the accreditation of institutions;

The widening of access to vocational education and training;

- To increase the role of social partners to promote their involvement in determining the state procurement in professional education in relevance to territorial demand;
- To introduce vocational education and training programmes with pedagogical correction programmes for students with a low level of basic knowledge;
- To promote the realization of professionally oriented educational programmes;
- The implementation of guidance and counselling and career-related events in educational institutions of all kinds.

The widening of adult education opportunities, ensuring the offer of professionally oriented lifelong learning:

- To ensure mutually coordinated support of employers and the state for the development of adult education programmes, especially in the context of balanced territorial development;
- To promote the involvement of higher and vocational education institutions in the development of continuing education, offering continuing education programmes, educational programmes, professional development programmes, and getting involved in training the unemployed;
- To establish a system of credit points and to introduce it in the programmes mentioned, ensuring their compatibility with the academic credits' transfer system;
- To develop basic approaches for evaluating the performance of evening schools;
- To develop suggestions for a wider involvement of employers in financing continuing education;

Ensuring unified education management

- To hand over all the state upper-secondary vocational education and training institutions under the supervision of Ministry of Education and Science, with the exception of institutions where the studies and service are being regulated by service regiment in compliance with legal acts.

The Vocational education development programme 2003 - 2005 was approved by Cabinet of Ministers on September 2, 2003. The programme states that VET development programme is the key document for harmonising of VET for the next three years. It is drafted in accordance with Concept on education development, National employment plan 2002, National development plan and other strategic documents on EU integration.

The main goal of the programme is to develop vocational education system which is flexible to the demands of market economy, encourage employability, corresponds to EU human resource development statements, and promote competitive labour force in EU scope.

The programmes structure is elaborated in accordance with programme's goals and policy documents and consists of the following three sub-programmes:

- quality of vocational education;
- access to vocational education;
- management of vocational education and the increase of the effectiveness of spending in education.

Sub-programmes are diverse by targets, institutions involved, activities and other indicators, however, they all are based on EU key statements for VET – compliance of VET with labour market demand, reduction of social exclusion, involvement social groups with special needs into labour market. of.

Sub-programme "quality of vocational education" comprises further education of vocational schools' teachers, assurance of the quality of vocational education according to labour market demand.

The target group of sub-programme "access to vocational education" are children with incomplete basic education, with low marks in certificate on basic education, graduates of special schools for the disabled, prisoners. The actions of the sub-programme "Management of vocational education and increase of the effectiveness of spending in education" are directed to preventing administrative fragmentation of vocational education, to securing the unity of vocational education system and the effective use of financial and material resources.

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Law of Professional Education, adopted in 1999, determines the competence of those institutions that are responsible for the organization of vocational education and training:

THE CABINET OF MINISTERS:

- determines the state's political and strategic areas in vocational education and training
- founds, reorganizes and liquidates state educational institutions and other institutions of educational support as suggested by the minister of education or other ministers;
- determines the order of the organization of training praxis
- determines the form, criteria and order for the issue of state-recognized professional qualification documents;
- determines the order according to which professional qualification documents issued by institutions in foreign countries are recognized;
- carries out other functions related to vocational education and training, which are determined by the Law of Vocational Training and the Law of Education.

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (MOES):

- develops the model (sample) regulations of professional education;
- certifies the model regulations of colleges;
- creates and updates the register of occupational standards;
- makes proposals and in compliance to the established procedure submits a financial proposal for allocation of funds from the state budget, finances vocational education and training institutions and vocational education and training support institutions (under its responsibility), using the funds allocated for this purpose;
- develops draft statutes of organization learning praxis and other legal acts in professional education;
- organizes guidance and counselling and carries out research on the development of the labour market and the labour demand;
- employs and dismisses the headmasters of the professional education institutions that are under the supervision of the MoES;

- makes proposals to the Ministry of Culture concerning the founding, reorganization and liquidation of state educational institutions;
- carries out other functions related to vocational education and training, which are determined by the Law of Professional Education and the Law of Education.

Within the framework of the Ministry of Education and Science (103 officers in total), 12 officers at the Department of Vocational and Continuing Education (DVCE) and 23 employees at the Vocational Education Centre deal with issues related to vocational education and training.

In the Ministry of Education and Science the Department of Vocational and Continuing Education and the centre under its supervision – Vocational Education Centre, are responsible for vocational education and training.

The Department of Vocational and Continuing Education develops the state policy and strategy in vocational education and training and carries it out together with other state institutions. The department guides, plans and coordinates the development of the state vocational education and training, supervises the state educational institutions, collaborates with employer institutions and trade unions, provides technical support for the work of National Tripartite Sub-council for co-operation in VET and employment, National Tripartite Council for co-operation, as well as harmonizes the vocational education policy according to the EU demands; takes part in the development of transnational agreements, and organizes the establishment of college vocational education and training in Latvia.

The Vocational Education Centre organizes the accreditation of vocational education and training institutions and programmes, the development of occupational standards, the content and methodology of qualification exams, the functioning of learning and examination centres, organizes the professional development of teachers in vocational education and training.

OTHER MINISTRIES (MINISTRY OF CULTURE, MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, MINISTRY OF WELFARE, MINISTRY OF HEALTH)

- develop proposals and according to the established procedure submits a financial proposal for the allocation of funds from the state budget, finance the vocational education and training institutions and vocational education support institutions (under their responsibility), using funds allocated for this purpose;
- collaborate with the Ministry of Education and Science in issues related to vocational education and training, such as the development of vocational standards and update and evaluation of the quality of vocational education and training;
- in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science, other state institutions and local governments,

organize the continuing education of the teachers of institutions of vocational education that are under its supervision;

- participate in the activities of the state, local governments, trade unions, employers and other non-governmental organizations and institutions promoting cooperation.

In Latvia, vocational education and training is not supervised only by the Ministry of Education and Science. Historically a fraction of all schools have been under the supervision of other line ministries - Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry for Health, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Interior. In order to simplify the management system of the vocational education and training and ensure an effective use of finances and material resources in vocational education, it has been decided to hand over all schools under the supervision of one ministry - the Ministry of Education and Science. Since July 1st, 2004 the educational institutions that were under the supervision of Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Welfare, have been handed over under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science.

EDUCATION PROVIDERS

The number of Schools of Initial Vocational Education has decreased since the beginning of the 1990's. At the same time, the number of higher education institutions has increased, due to the founding of many private institutions.

Table: Schools of Initial Vocational Training (IVT) and higher education institutions (HEI)

YEAR	NUMBER OF IVT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	NUMBER OF IVT STUDENTS	STUDENTS PER INSTITUTION	NUMBER OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN HEI	STUDENTS PER HEI
1991	145	61 523	424	14	46 279	3 305
1995	133	42 377	318	28	46 696	1 667
2000	120	48 625	405	33	101 270	3 068
2001	126	47 627	378	36	110 500	3 069
2002	124	46 533	375	37	118 944	3 214
2003	111	46 789	421	49	127 656	2 605

Source: Educational Institutions in Latvia at the beginning of the school year 2003/2004. Riga, CSB, 2004

There are no schools of vocational training in only two of 26 districts in Latvia, in Balvi district and in Ventspils district. Since there are vocational education and training institutions in the city of Ventspils, their absence is only noted in Balvi district. 36% of the schools of vocational training are in Riga (40% of the admitted students are in Riga). In seven largest cities there are 447 students per educational institution whereas in the rural districts - 287 students. It has to be mentioned that schools of vocational training in rural districts successfully carry out also social functions. They act as cultural and economic centres in the respective territories.

There are higher education institutions everywhere in the country. In order to improve the availability of higher education, three new state higher education institutions have been founded since 1990.

0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Latvian Parliament decides on the main priorities and principles of educational policy and prepares new legislation. The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for carrying out the educational policy. The state and the local governments share the responsibility for financing education.

Education in the Republic of Latvia is regulated by the following laws:

- Law of Education, 1991;
- Law of Crafts , 1993;
- Law of Higher Education Institutions, 1995;
- Law of Education, 1998; (Law of Education - adopted by the government in 1998, amended in 1999, 2000 and 2001)
- Law of General Education, 1999;
- Law of Professional Education, 1999;

The Constitution of the Republic of Latvia (1922; renewed in 1991) stipulates that everyone has the right to basic education, that the state provides opportunities to obtain basic and upper-secondary education free of charge, and that basic education is obligatory.

Educational reforms started with the adoption of the Law of Education in 1991. It set the principles of the educational system and regulated vocational education and training and continuing education. The law stipulates that studies are obligatory until the age of 15, or until the primary school graduation (in the Soviet system upper-secondary education was obligatory).

The Law of Craftsmanship (1993) regulates the organisation of craftsmanship; it contains the basic principles and the order of awarding craftsmanship qualification.

The Law of Higher Education Institutions (adopted in 1995, amended in 1996, 1999 and 2000) determines the principles for organising and implementing higher education.

The new Law of Education, adopted in 1998 stipulates that primary school for children aged five and six is obligatory, and that basic education or studying until the age of 18 is obligatory. The law regulates the entire system of education, determines the rights and duties of the state, local governments, public organisations, professional associations, individuals, educational institutions, parents and students, as well as the levels and types of education and types of educational institutions.

The Law on Professional Education (1999) determines:

- the principles of organisation and implementation of professional education, as well as the principles for the award of qualifications;
- the division of tasks and competences and the relationship between employers, teachers and students. For the first time the rights of social partners to take an active role in professional education has been introduced;
- the pathways for pursuing professional education;
- the structure of professional education programmes;

- the principles of financing professional education.

The amendments of the Law of Professional Education from 2001 introduce two new types of professional education programmes:

- professional continuing education, defined as a type of professional education that allows adults with previous education and professional experience to obtain a professional qualification at a certain level;
- professional development as a special type of professional education that allows people, regardless of age and previous experience or professional qualification, to acquire a systematic professional knowledge and skills relevant to the demands of the labour market.

The Law of Professional Education and other laws related to it have so far determined the role of social partners in the development of vocational education. Social partners within the framework of their competence have the right to draw up proposals concerning the improvement of vocational education policy and strategic planning, to organise labour market research and to participate in planning of VET development areas in close cooperation with state and local government institutions, and to be involved in the elaboration of occupational standards and VET educational programmes.

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

In 2000 the National Tripartite Sub-council for Cooperation in VET and Employment was founded in order to ensure coordinated actions in education and training at state level. The Sub-council is part of the National Tripartite Council for Cooperation, which was created with the goal of promoting collaboration between the government, employers and employees in carrying out state policy in vocational education and training, human resource development and employment. The most significant issues passed to the committee in the years 2000 -2004 are the following:

- the drafts of the Latvian National Employment Plan;
- the procedure for organising practical training placements;
- the Law on Assistance to Job-seekers and the Unemployed;
- regulations for the centralised vocational qualification examinations and approval of their commissions, regulations for examination in programs for the unemployed;
- the State demand in vocational education;
- occupational standards.

The formation of sub-council in different districts is currently (end 2004) being discussed, and the Sub-council of the district of Rezekne has been formed.

In April 2000 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted the Regulations for the Council for Cooperation in VET, formed by representatives from several ministries - the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Agriculture (one representative per ministry) ,by representatives of the Association of Local Governments, Latvia's Employers Confederation, Latvia's Chamber of Trade and Industry, Latvia's Free Trade Union Association, as well as one representative from each of the vocational educational and training institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science. Unlike in the National Tripartite Sub-council for Cooperation in VET and Employment, in the Council for Cooperation in VET, representatives from professional education institutions are included.

In Latvia 76% of all enterprises were micro enterprises in 2000 with no more than 9 employees, and 20% were small enterprises with 10-49 employees. Many of them have survival problems and are not especially interested in collaboration with vocational education and training institutions.

In order to elicit greater interest in enterprises for collaboration with schools , favourable conditions must be created and allowances for investment in human resource development are needed.

Enterprises that are aware of the constantly changing character of the entrepreneurial environment are willing to participate in financing the education of their employees. These are in general large-scale economically stable enterprises that have human resource development plans as well as learning centres at their premises. (Vocational education and training and the labour market in Latvia, Riga, Latvian National Observatory, 2001).

The Cabinet of Ministers in May 2001 approved a specific regulation "Procedure how the State delegates to public organisations certain support and management functions of vocational education", providing considerable possibilities for active involvement of social partners. According to these regulation state institutions may not delegate the following functions - approval of policy and strategy of vocational education; approval of normative regulations; co-ordination of the system of vocational education and supervision of its activities; distribution of state budget and control of financial resources. Up to now, none of the social partner organisations has shown initiative to take over any additional function.

Employers evaluate the hands-on knowledge and skills of students during qualification examinations.

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

Diagram of the Latvian education and training system: [Education System in Latvia](#)

The current Latvian system of vocational education and training (VET) is based on the Law of Education from 1991. It is based on a network of educational institutions founded during Soviet occupation. There is a sufficiently wide network of small (in terms of the number of students) institutions of vocational education and training that includes almost all the districts in Latvia.

The change from a totalitarian system to free market economy changed the demands for vocational education and training. Now the main concern is to prepare students for the competition in the labour market and to continue a life-long professional development by enabling them to acquire a solid basis in vocational education and training.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN LATVIA

In Latvia the components of the educational system are pirmsskolas izglitiba (pre-school education), pamatizglitiba (9-year basic education) videja izglitiba (upper-secondary education) and augstaka izglitiba (higher education).

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION (PIRMSSKOLAS IZGLITIBA) (ISCED 0)

5-7 year old children have to participate in pre-school programmes provided by general education establishments or kindergartens as part of compulsory basic education. The objective of pre-school education is to foster general development of children and their readiness to enter primary stage of basic education.

The duration of general education in Latvia is 12 years. It consists of a 9-year basic education and 3-year upper secondary education.

BASIC EDUCATION (ISCED 1 AND 2)

9-year basic education (primary and lower secondary education according to ISCED) is compulsory for all children from the age of 7. The National Basic Education Standard determines the curriculum and the content of national examinations.

Those who, for what ever reason have not completed the 9-year basic education by the age of 16 should, according to the Law, continue studying in order to complete the programme by the time they reach the age of 18. They can also choose programmes of vocational education and training that allow them to obtain first or second level professional qualification and to complete the obligatory basic educational programme.

3-year vocational basic education programmes are provided in vocational schools for students without a certificate of basic education (after completion of at least 7 grades of basic education, but not before calendar year when they become 15 years old).

SECONDARY EDUCATION (ISCED 3)

There are two types of secondary education programmes: *vispareja videja izglitiba* (general secondary) and *profesionala videja izglitiba* (vocational secondary education programmes).

At the general secondary level there are 4 basic fields: general; humanities and social sciences; mathematics, natural science and technical, and vocational (arts, music, business, and sports). Those who finished the school before 2002 had to study five obligatory subjects: Latvian, mathematics, a foreign language, history, sports, as well as at least seven optional subjects.

The following subjects are obligatory for all the programmes: Latvian; first foreign language; second foreign language (in minority schools - the minority language); mathematics, history; sports; business foundations and computer science. In addition, every programme includes the obligatory and optional subjects relevant to the particular field of studies.

In order to receive the Secondary Education Certificate student should take not less than 5 examinations in compulsory or optional study subjects (these are centralised – with the content development and evaluation in the Education Content and Examination centre) and no more than 4 tests in compulsory study subjects:

- examination in Latvian language and literature
- examination in the compulsory study subject corresponding to the type of the programme (presently in the first foreign language)
- examination in the study subject determined by the educational institution,
- two examinations in the optional subjects chosen by the student
- test in sports, applied informatics, mathematics.

The content of education is regulated by the state which determines its level, form and target groups. Furthermore it defines the strategic goals and main tasks of each programme; its obligatory content, basic principles and assessment.

Observing the state standards is obligatory for anyone who develops and implements a particular educational programme.

Different vocational education programmes are developed and offered for all branches of the national economy. The National Standard of vocational education and the Occupational Standards determine the curriculum and content of vocational education programmes.

4-year vocational secondary education programmes are offered to those students who have successfully completed compulsory basic education. Graduates of these programmes obtain a diploma of vocational secondary education and Level 3 vocational qualification.

2-3 year vocational education programmes lead to Certificate of secondary education and qualification level 3.

POST SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (ISCED 4)

Vocational training programmes can be taken also after graduating from general secondary schools. These programmes are focused towards mastering purely professional skills and knowledge in line with requirements of the respective qualification level.

TERTIARY EDUCATION (ISCED 5)

The system of higher education in Latvia is binary since the Law on Education has set a difference between academic and professional higher education but it is not strictly institutionalised. Universities and other institutions of higher education mostly run both academic and professional programmes.

Academic higher education programmes (ISCED 5A) are based upon fundamental and/or applied science; they usually comprise a thesis at the end of each stage and lead to a Bachelor's degree (Bakalaurs) and Master's degree (Magistrs). The duration of Bachelor's programmes may be 3 or 4 years at different institutions. The 3-4-year Bachelor's degree is considered as a complete academic qualification. Master's degree is awarded after the second stage of academic education and requires at least 5 years of university studies.

The Law of Higher Education Institutions and the Law of Vocational Education and Training stipulate a two level professional higher education – the first level of professional higher education or college education (2-3 years) leading to professional qualification Level 4 (ISCED 5B) and second level of professional higher education (ISCED 5B) leading to qualification level 5 (4-6 years). Having mastered a programme of professional higher education, students are awarded a professional qualification or a professional Bachelor's degree that can be followed by a further 1-2 years of professional Master's studies. The Master's degree (Magistrs) of higher professional education is awarded if the total duration of studies is at least five years.

There can be the so-called “short” second level professional higher education study programmes (1-2 years), where qualification is obtained on the basis of the previously acquired first level professional higher education or academic Bachelor's degree. In total the duration of professional qualification Level 5 study programmes is not less than 4 years after secondary education and not less than 2 years after college education.

Bachelor's and Master's degrees exist both in academic and professional higher education. Bachelors of both categories have the right to enrol in master's studies, masters of both categories (including also degrees in medicine and dentistry - six and five years of study respectively) - in doctoral studies.

POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION (ISCED LEVEL 6)

Master's degree or the equivalent (graduates of 5-6 year professional higher education programmes in Law and Medicine can continue education at postgraduate level directly) is required for admission to doctoral studies (Ph.D.). Doctoral studies last 3-4 full-time years. They include advanced studies of the subject in a relevant study programme (or an equivalent amount of independent research while working at a university, research institution, etc.) and a scientific research towards doctoral thesis.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Law of Professional Education (revised in 2001) stipulates that professional education programmes are classified as follows, depending on the education to be obtained:

- a. vocational basic education programmes;
- b. vocational education programmes
- c. vocational secondary educational programmes;
- d. first level professional higher education (college education) programmes;
- e. professional continuing education programmes;
- f. professional development educational programmes;

The Law defines five levels of professional qualifications:

Level 1 -theoretical and practical training that prepares one for performing simple tasks in a certain area of practical activity (assistant of cook, carpenter etc.);

Level 2 - theoretical and practical background that allows the holder to perform qualified work independently (carpenter, hairdresser, cook, sewer, welder etc.);

Level 3 - advanced theoretical and professional background which enables the holder to fulfil certain tasks, including the planning and organisation of work (various technicians, car mechanics, hotel service specialist etc.);

Level 4 - theoretical and practical background that enables the holder to perform complicated tasks as well as to organise and manage others in their work;

Level 5 - the highest qualification of the specialist in the given field that enables the holder to plan and perform research and scientific work in the field.

At the vocational education institutions, various educational programmes are offered. The following table shows the types of programmes, their duration, previous education and possibilities to enrol at higher education institutions after the completion of the programme.

Types of professional education programmes					
PROGRAMME AND LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION TO BE OBTAINED	PREVIOUS EDUCATION	DURATION OF THE STUDIES (YEARS)	MINIMAL VOLUME OF THE PROGRAMME (HOURS)	OBTAINABLE DOCUMENT	POSSIBILITY TO ENROL AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS
VOCATIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME - LEVEL 3	9-year basic	4	5 760	Diploma of vocational secondary education	Yes
	vocational education	2	3 120		Yes
	Secondary	2	3 120		Yes
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME - LEVEL 2	9-year basic	3	4 230	Certificate on vocational education	No
	9-year basic	2	2 840		
	Secondary	2	3 160	Certificate of qualification	Yes
	Secondary	1	1 560		
VOCATIONAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME - LEVEL 1	9-year basic	1	1 428	Certificate of vocational basic education	No

1					
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME (PEDAGOGICAL CORRECTION PROGRAMME INCLUDED) - LEVEL 2	Eight years	3	4 224	Certificate of vocational education and certificate of basic education	No
VOCATIONAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME (PEDAGOGICAL CORRECTION INCLUDED) - LEVEL 1	Eight years	2	2 760	Certificate of vocational basic education and certificate of basic education	No

Source: MoES

*pedagogical correction – programme for early school leavers and those with low level of basic knowledge and skills. The main aim of the programme is to integrate youngsters back to education system and help them acquire simple professional skills.

THE TYPES AND STATUS OF INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Educational institutions are classified according to status in

- state vocational educational institutions;
- local government vocational educational institutions;
- private vocational educational institutions.

The acquisition of education is free for full-time students at vocational educational institutions operated by the state or local governments. Students, who study at these institutions, receive a grant the amount of which is determined by the Cabinet of Ministers. The number of vocational educational institutions operated by local governments and private parties is rather small; but growing (see Table).

Vocational education and training institutions according to their status		
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION ACCORDING TO STATUS	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS, SCHOOL YEAR 1999/2000	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS, SCHOOL YEAR 2004/2005
STATE VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	111 (91.8%)	93 (83.8%)
LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	5 (4.1%)	7 (6.3%)
PRIVATE VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	5 (4.1%)	11 (9.9%)
TOTAL	121	111

Source: MoES

The ways of obtaining vocational education can be:

- full-time studies,
- correspondence education,
- self-directed education.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

With the changing demands of the labour market, the educational programmes offered at vocational educational institutions have also changed. During the Soviet times there were only programmes of the upper-secondary level in VET, whereas since 1997 VET institutions offer vocational basic education programmes with pedagogical correction programmes (they are intended for youngsters who are returning to the educational system after an interruption of studies and for whom it is important to acquire professional skills and basic education). Since 1999 first level higher professional educational programmes are also being offered.

In 2003, after completing the obligatory 9-year basic education, 64.4% of pupils enrolled in general upper-secondary educational programmes, 32.4% - in vocational education and training programmes, but 3.2% did not continue studying.

After obtaining general upper-secondary education in 2003, 69% of students enrolled in higher education institutions, 10.3% of students continued their studies in vocational education and training programmes, and 21.5% did not continue their studies (see Diagram).

There has been a decrease in the number of elementary school graduates who do not continue their studies (4% in 2002), and an increase in the number of elementary school graduates who choose to study at a vocational education and training institution (31% in 2002).

Number of students in various fields in vocational education.		
FIELD	NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN 2000	NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN 2004
GENERAL EDUCATION	692 (1.42%)	384 (0.82%)
HUMANITIES AND ARTS	2 921 (6.01%)	2 754 (5.89%)
SOCIAL SCIENCES, ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY	8 494 (17.47%)	7 263 (15.52%)
NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS	1 055 (2.17%)	75 (0.16%)
ENGINEERING SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY	20 889 (42.96%)	23 376 (49.96%)
AGRICULTURE	1 721 (3.54%)	913 (1.95%)
SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE	2 195 (4.52%)	2 292 (4.90%)
SERVICES	10 658 (21.91%)	9 732 (20.80%)

Source: MoES

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

BASIC VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - ISCED 2C

Students are admitted into programmes of vocational education and training without consideration for their previous education but not earlier than in the calendar year in which they turn 15. Those without basic education are admitted if pedagogical correction (*) is provided in the programme.

The programmes' duration is 1-2 years. A certificate of basic vocational education certifies that the student has obtained a first level qualification, meaning a theoretical and practical aptitude for carrying out simple tasks in certain fields, for example as a cook's or carpenter's assistant). In the school year 2004/2005 1 227 students (0.75 % of basic education level students or 2.75% of vocational education students) participated in these programmes.

(*) pedagogical correction – programme for early school leavers and those with low level of basic knowledge and skills. The main aim of the programme is to integrate youngsters back to education system and help them acquire simple professional skills.

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

National classification of education (adopted in 2004).				
EDUCATION LEVEL	EDUCATION TYPE	TYPE OF PROGRAMME	ISCED 97	
			EDUCATION LEVEL	CODE
Secondary education	Vocational education	Vocational education- part of vocational secondary education which <u>does not give the right to continue</u> studies at a higher education level. Duration 2 - 3 years	(Upper) secondary education	3C
		Vocational secondary education – education which ensures professional qualification level 3 and give the right to continue studies at a higher education level. Duration 3-4 years.	(Upper) secondary education	3A 3B
		Intermediate programme in general secondary education. Duration 1 year. Previous education – vocational education.	(Upper) secondary education	3A 3B

One of the objectives of National classification of education is comparability with ISCED 97.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION- ISCED 3C

The state stipulates that the duration of vocational training is 2-3 years for persons who have completed basic education. Upon graduation a certificate of vocational education is awarded. It certifies that the qualification awarded corresponds to professional qualification level 2 (theoretical and practical aptitude for carrying out qualified executive work independently, for example as carpenter, hairdresser, cook, seamstress, welder).

Vocational training does not give the right to continue studies at a higher education institution, nevertheless for students who want to continue their education, a one-year intermediate course in general secondary education is offered.

In the school year 2004/2005 9532 students (21.35% of vocational education students) was involved in ISCED 3C vocational programmes.

The content of vocational education study programme leading to the professional qualification level 2 is as follows.

- theory 35% and practice 65%;

- general education subjects 60% and vocational subject's 40%.

Division of subjects in general education:

- languages and communicative knowledge 45%,
- mathematics, natural sciences, technical knowledge 33%,
- social and cultural sciences 22%.

VOCATIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION - ISCED 3A, 3B

Students who have completed general or vocational basic education are admitted to programmes of vocational upper-secondary education and training. The duration of these programmes is 3-4 years. Upon graduation, a diploma of vocational upper-secondary education is awarded, as well as a professional qualification level 3 (a high theoretical and professional preparedness for carrying out certain tasks, including also the planning and organisation of the work in question, for example as various technicians, fashion designers, catering service specialists). The diploma gives the right to continue studies at a higher education institution.

The structure of the secondary vocational education programmes leading to the professional qualification level 3 is as follows:

- theory 50% and practice 50%;
- general subjects 60% and vocational 40%

The division of subjects of general education:

- languages and communicative knowledge 45%
- mathematics, natural sciences, technical knowledge 33%
- social and cultural sciences 22%.

In the school year 2004/2005 29 261 or 65.53% of VET institutions' students studied in such programmes. These programmes (just like in previous years) are the most popular VET programmes.

UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION			
	TOTAL ENROLMENT	VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (%)	GENERAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (%)
BELGIUM	505866	55%	45%
B (FL)	281816	61%	39%
B (Fr)	224050	47%	53%
DENMARK	219166	55%	45%
GERMANY	2725260	64%	36%
GREECE	358573	31%	69%
SPAIN	1021793	25%	75%
FRANCE	2624784	57%	43%

IRELAND	151152		100%
ITALY	2590615	25%	75%
LUXEMBOURG	17066	63%	37%
NETHERLANDS	573315	68%	32%
AUSTRIA	361263	72%	28%
PORTUGAL	352430	28%	72%
FINLAND	292429	55%	45%
SWEDEN	350007	48%	52%
UK	3030724	35%	65%
ICELAND	15861	32%	68%
NORWAY	202025	58%	42%
CYPRUS	30932	14%	86%
MALTA	6510	17%	83%
CZECH REPUBLIC	432861	80%	20%
ESTONIA	50405	36%	64%
HUNGARY	453418	11%	89%
LATVIA	89544	44%	56%
LITHUANIA	89913	43%	57%
POLAND	2407736	64%	36%
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	250473	78%	22%
SLOVENIA	105642	70%	30%

Comment: Table - in Latvia the general secondary education pathway is more popular than vocational secondary education.

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

The Law on Crafts (1993) regulates the organisation of crafts, basic organisation of crafts education and the order of issuing crafts qualifications. The main organisation involved in the apprenticeship training is the Chamber of Crafts – professional craftsman self-governing organisation aiming at the development of crafts and craftsmanship in Latvia.

An apprenticeship system exists on a small scale mainly in the crafts sector in traditional professions. Through apprenticeship system it is possible to obtain journeyman and master of craft qualification. In 2002, the Chamber of Crafts issued 32 craft masters' qualification and 243 journeyman crafts qualification (altogether 2% of VET graduates) compared to 270 / 679 in 1996). The Latvian Chamber of Crafts has the right to award qualifications of craftsmen in 159 vocations.

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

There are no other alternative pathways for the acquisition of vocational education and training.

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

Vocational education and training that leads to professional qualification of second or third level - ISCED 4B

National classification of education (adopted in 2004).				
EDUCATION LEVEL	EDUCATION TYPE	TYPE OF PROGRAMME	ISCED 97	
			EDUCATION LEVEL	CODE
Secondary education level	Vocational education	Vocational education – education which ensures professional qualification level 2. Duration – not more than 2 years. Previous education – general secondary education.	Post secondary (non tertiary) education	4 B

It is possible to enrol in programmes of vocational training or post-secondary vocational training after completing general upper-secondary education. In that case the duration of the programmes is 1-2 and only the vocational subjects are being taught.

In the school year 2004/2005 8.81% (3 934) of students at VET institutions studied in such programmes.

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

The Law on Vocational education (1999) provides for higher vocational programmes at two levels: college programmes (professional qualification level 4) and professional higher education programmes (professional qualification level 5).

National classification of education (adopted in 2004). ISCED 5				
EDUCATION LEVEL	EDUCATION TYPE	TYPE OF PROGRAMME	ISCED 97	
			EDUCATION LEVEL	CODE
Higher education	Higher professional education	First level higher professional education (colleges), which ensures professional qualification level 4. Duration of studies 2 – 3 years. Previous education – secondary education.	First stage of tertiary education. Non-university education.	5 B
	Higher professional education	Second level higher professional education, which ensures professional qualification level 5 and professional bachelor degree in certain professional field. Duration of studies – not less than 4 years. Previous education – secondary education.	First stage of tertiary education. University education.	5A
	Higher professional education	Second level higher professional education, which ensures professional qualification level 5. Duration of studies –4 years. Previous education –secondary education.	First stage of tertiary education. University education.	5A
	Higher academic education	Academic education (bachelor degree). Duration of studies 3-4 years. Previous education – secondary education.	First stage of tertiary education. University education.	5A
	Higher professional education	Second level higher professional education, which ensures professional qualification level 5. Continuation of professional	First stage of tertiary education. University education.	5A

		studies in certain field. Previous education –higher education. Duration of studies 1-2 years		
	Higher academic education	Academic education (master degree). Duration of studies 1-2 years. Previous education –higher academic or second level higher professional education with duration not less than 3 years.	First stage of tertiary education. University education.	5A
	Higher professional education	Second level higher professional education, which ensures professional qualification level 5 and/or professional master degree in certain professional field. Duration of studies – not less than 1 year. Previous education – higher professional education with duration not less than 4 years.	First stage of tertiary education. University education.	5A

Source: National classification of education, 2004

Types of professional higher education, ISCED 5A, 5B.			
PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION	ACCESS REQUIREMENTS	DURATION OF STUDIES	OBTAINED EDUCATION DOCUMENT
FIRST LEVEL PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION (PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION LEVEL 4)	Secondary education	2-3 years	Diploma of the First Level Higher Professional Education
SECOND LEVEL PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION (PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION LEVEL 5)	Secondary education or first level professional higher education	At least 4 years At least 2 years	Diploma of Higher Professional Education
PROFESSIONAL BACHELOR STUDY PROGRAMMES	Secondary education	At least 4 years	Diploma of Higher Professional Education
PROFESSIONAL MASTER STUDY PROGRAMMES	Second level professional higher education, academic higher education	At least 1 year	Diploma of Higher Professional Education

Source: National classification of education, 2004

Higher professional education is subject to the Law of Education (1991, 1998) Law on higher education institutions (1995) and Law of Vocational Education (1999).

In accordance with Law of Higher Education institutions it is possible to obtain:

- academic education and following degrees:
 - bachelor *bakalaur* (academic degree),
 - master *magistr* (academic degree),
 - doctor *doktor* (scientific degree);
- 4 and 5 level professional qualification and following degrees:
 - bachelor *bakalaur* (professional degree),
 - master *magistr* (professional degree),

In a number of vocational fields it is possible to establish college programmes as the first cycle of vocational higher education. Previous postsecondary vocational education

programmes which were not regarded as part of higher education before September 1, 1999, have been restructured into “college programmes” leading to level 4 professional qualification.

Starting at the end of 2000, professional bachelor’s and professional master’s degree have been introduced in Latvia.

First level higher vocational education, “college education” (ISCED 5B):

These programmes are implemented by colleges (former institutions of postsecondary VET) and higher education institutions, providing professional qualifications of level 4. The duration of studies is 2-3 years following completion of general or vocational secondary education. The “Diploma of the first level higher professional education” (which has been conferred as of 9 June 2000) attests that the qualification achieved pertains to level 4 (theoretical and practical training that enables holder to perform complicated tasks as well as to organise and lead the work of other specialists). The fields in which college education programmes had been established first were engineering, computer science, business administration, nursing and law. Programmes can give credit to one’s further studies in the second cycle of vocational higher education and quality assessment of programmes has been implemented. In 2003/04, 11.9% (15 191) of higher education students were enrolled in these programmes.

The main aim of programme is to prepare the student for the work in certain profession, promote competitiveness, and enhance motivation for further studies.

Content of the first level higher professional education comprises the following components:

- Study courses,
- Practical placement
- Qualification thesis.

The content of study courses comprises:

- general subjects,
 - humanitarian sciences,
 - social sciences,
 - natural sciences, technical sciences, information technologies.
- Branch subjects

The content of study course and practical placement in certain profession is set by respective occupational standard.

Second level higher vocational education, “higher professional education” (ISCED 5A).

These programmes are implemented by universities and other higher education institutions. The length of studies is 4-5 years following completion of general or vocational secondary education. The “Diploma of Higher Professional Education” attests the qualification achieved to level five (the highest qualification of the specialist in the

defined field which provides for practical performance as well as makes it possible to plan and perform research and scientific work in the most sophisticated professions). In 2003/04, 52.1% (66 530) of higher education students were enrolled in these programmes.

The main aim of programme is to prepare the specialists for economic sectors, promote competitiveness, and prepare students for research, pedagogical and creative work within certain professional field.

Content of the second level higher professional education (professional bachelor programmes, professional master programmes, higher professional education programmes) comprises following components:

- Study courses,
- Practical placement
- Qualification thesis.

The content of study course and practical placement in certain profession is set by respective occupational standard.

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There is no special law for adult education in Latvia. It is regulated by the Law of Professional Education.

The Law of Education stipulates that adult education is a manifold process of education that provides a life-long personal development and competitiveness in the labour market. Non-formal adult education programmes determine the contents of this education and their compatibility with the interests of the state and the employer, as well as interests of personal growth, and in these programmes adults have the right to lifelong learning regardless of previous education. Graduating from these non-formal adult education programmes, the student obtains a document issued by the educational institution.

The Law of Professional Education regulates two forms of formal continuing education: professional continuing education and professional development. Professional continuing education is a special form of professional education that gives adults with previous education and professional experience a chance to obtain a professional qualification of a certain level.

Continuing professional development programmes always result in the acquisition of a state recognized qualification in a certain profession. The admission requirements in continuing professional development programmes differ depending on the level of the professional qualification that is to be awarded. Persons are admitted without limitations with respect to previous education in those continuing professional development programmes that give a possibility to obtain the second level professional qualification upon their completion. In those programmes that give a possibility to obtain the third level professional qualification upon completion, persons are admitted after completing vocational education or training, or upper-secondary education. Continuing professional development programmes include no less than 30 per cent of the content of the initial vocational programme of the appropriate level. Since these programmes are comparatively short and it is possible for adults to enrol in them even a long time after completing basic or upper-secondary education, they are very common in the training of the unemployed.

Professional development - a special kind of education and training that gives a possibility to persons regardless of age and previous education or professional qualifications to acquire systematic professional knowledge and skills relevant to the demands of the labour market. Professional development educational programmes differ from non-formal adult education programmes in the sense that they are a part of formal education and that upon graduation a person receives a state document -- a certificate of professional development education. The education development concept for 2002-2005 has advanced as one of the measures for ensuring the availability of education -- widening the opportunities of adult education, ensuring an offer of professionally oriented lifelong learning. In order to achieve this goal in the given time period it is necessary:

- to ensure mutually coordinated support between the state and employers to the development of adult education programmes, especially in the context of a balanced territorial development;
- to promote the involvement of institutions of higher and vocational education and training in the development of continuing education, offering continuing education programmes and professional development programmes, and getting involved in the training of the unemployed;
- to establish a system of credit points and to introduce in the programmes mentioned, ensuring their compatibility with the academic credits' transfer system;
- to develop basic approaches for evaluating the performance of evening schools;
- to develop proposals for a wider involvement of employers in financing continuing education.

The ideas introduced in the Education development concept are only gradually finding their reflection in actual life.

The system of credit points was not yet introduced in adult education at the end of 2004.

Traditionally adult education in Latvia has been part of the non-formal education. Adult education is mainly the responsibility of individuals themselves, of employers and local governments. The state is actively involved only in training the unemployed, although in the most recent years the funding for this purpose has been decreased.

0502 - PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

The Law of Education stipulates that in Latvia basic education or its acquisition until the age of 18 is obligatory. The acquisition of vocational education and training and continuing education of a specific kind is not obligatory in Latvia, except in regulated professions.

Non-formal adult education programmes and professional development educational programmes are developed by those who are implementing them; these programmes do not have specific demands.

Non-formal adult education programmes and courses are developed and implemented by educational institutions, as well as other legal or physical persons independently or in collaboration with customers. Institutions founded by the state and local governments have the right to implement non-formal adult education programmes without receiving a license, other legal and physical persons - after receiving a license at the local government.

In order to implement an educational programme of professional development, the educational institution has to receive a license in the Ministry of Education and Science. In order for the graduate to receive a certificate of professional development education, the educational programme has to be at least 160 hours long.

Programmes of professional continuing education have to receive a license and later they also must be accredited, so that the educational institution has the right to issue a state-recognized document certifying professional qualification - a certificate of qualification. In the accreditation process organized by the Ministry of Education and Science together with social partners it is evaluated whether the specific programme ensures that the student acquires all the skills determined by the occupational standard. The occupational standard is a document that determines what knowledge, abilities and skills are necessary in the specific profession. The Ministry of Education and Science organizes the development of the occupational standards and the National Tripartite Sub-council for co-operation in VET and employment finally confirms them. Upon the completion of a continuing professional development programme the student has to take a centralized qualification exam. This examination is the same for everyone who wants to obtain the specific profession, both for graduates of initial vocational education programme and the graduates of continuing professional development programmes. The Ministry of Education and Science organizes centralized examinations. They take place either at examination centres or at educational institutions. Their goal is to ensure that all the acquirers of a certain profession have equal knowledge, abilities and skills. Social partners of the relevant field also participate in the actual process of taking and evaluation of the centralized examinations.

0503 - TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Non-formal adult education programmes are offered by both, adult education institutions and other educational institutions. In the 2004 register of educational institutions 323 adult education institutions have been registered. Six of them are state institutions, 23 - local governments', three are private with state investment, and the others are private. Among the private adult education institutions there are also learning centres of enterprises.

Continuing professional development programmes and professional development educational programmes are being offered by professional educational institutions and adult education institutions, as long as they have received the corresponding license from the Ministry of Education and Science.

Employment State service organizes the professional training and retraining of the unemployed. Employment State service does not carry out the training; it only announces competitions and concludes agreements with educational institutions about training the unemployed in the necessary professions. In 2003 8% of the registered unemployed studied in the educational programmes organized by the Employment State service. Only accredited educational institutions may participate in the competition on training of the unemployed.

Latvian Adult Education Association (LAEA) that was formed in December 1993 is a non-governmental non-profit association, which unites the providers of adult education. LAEA was founded with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Institute of International Collaboration of the German Adult Education Association. The goal of LAEA is to promote the development of non-formal adult education in Latvia and to take part in policy making in lifelong learning, promoting the development of a civil, democratic and open society in the country. LAEA members are 75 legal persons (in April

2003) - district adult education centres, folk-universities, non-governmental organizations, learning centres, universities, vocational schools and evening schools.

LAEA has created a collaboration network of adult education institutions that comprises the entire country, prepared the teaching staff, developed and approved programmes, learning and methodical materials.

0504 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS

The main providers of adult education and vocational continuing education are local government training centres, institutions under supervision of ministries, professional associations, higher education establishments, training centres of enterprises and other state or private education establishments. Vocational continuing education programmes and vocational development programmes are not included in the National Education Classification and due to that the information about participation is limited and all participants are statistically included in adult education programmes.

91% of adult education programmes are registered in the capital Riga. 32% of total population live in Riga, and the majority of vocational continuing education and adult education is provided in Riga.

An unemployed person participates in continuing professional development programmes, professional development programmes or other educational programmes if:

- the former professional qualification or professional experience of the unemployed person does not suit the demands of the particular profession and therefore it is not possible to find a suitable job;
- this unemployed person has lost professional skills;
- this unemployed person does not have a previous professional qualification.

Persons who have reached the age of 18 participate in training programmes for the unemployed. Since the number of the unemployed who wish to participate in the training is higher than it is possible to provide for, the Employment State service carries out a selection of the unemployed and those who are better motivated to participate in the training programmes get the opportunity. The training programmes for the unemployed are financed from the state budget. The training programmes for the unemployed can be organized also according to suggestions of employers; in that case the employer has to employ the trained unemployed person at least for one year.

The agreement on further professional educating and development of the employees can be included in the contract of employment. This is usually done in large and economically stable enterprises. Labour Code stipulates: "The employee who without interrupting work studies at an educational institution of any kind, is granted study leave retaining his/her salary or not according to the contract of employment. If the employee receives salary for piecework, the study leave is granted, with paying the average salary or without paying it. For taking a state exam or preparing and presenting a graduation paper

the employee is granted a study leave no shorter than 20 days per year, meanwhile retaining his salary.

If the employee receives salary for piece-work, the study leave is granted, with paying the average salary." Thus, in the majority of cases obtaining a study leave and meanwhile retaining the salary, as well as covering the study expenses depends only on the agreement with the employer. In accordance with the Survey on implementation of the professional training of employees, carried out by the CSB in 1999, only 53% of enterprises in Latvia offered professional training to their employees. Only 12.4% of all employees took part in the professional training courses for employees in 1999 (The professional training of employees in Latvia in 1999 - Riga: CSB, 2002).

Participants' fee constitutes a significant part of the financing of the adults and proves that there is a demand for this education. Annual expenses of LVL 150 spent on education are considered justifiable. Inhabitants can receive tax re-paid on justifiable expenses, if they have worked and paid the income tax.

0505 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The structure of the Latvian educational system makes it possible to move from one degree of education to another. Those who have completed programmes of vocational education and training do not have the right to enrol at higher education institutions. Nevertheless, since they have mastered a part of the general upper-secondary education programme, institutions of vocational education and training and evening schools offer intermediate programmes where it is possible to complete general upper-secondary education. In Latvia it is not common to return to initial vocational education programmes after having been employed for several years. Those who want to obtain a state-recognized professional qualification having already gained some job experience enrol either at continuing professional development programmes or at higher education programmes. Studies in higher education institutions are very popular in Latvia; it is possible to study both in full-time and part-time programmes. Study and subsistence loans can be obtained. Employers also tend to cover expenses for studies at higher education institutions if the employee commits to work at the enterprise for a concrete time period after graduating from the higher education institution.

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET

The improvement of the teacher training and professional development system is one of the main action points in the Education Development Concept 2002-2005 developed by the Ministry of Education and Science, aimed at ensuring the quality of vocational training according to the needs of society and the economy. According to the stipulations of the Law of Education, the Ministry of Education and Science is the institution responsible for co-ordinating training and continuing education of teachers.

According to the Law of Professional Education passed in 1999, as of 1 January 2004, the right to hold a teaching position at a vocational education and training establishment may be conferred on persons who:

- hold an appropriate vocational qualification and who have received teacher training;
- hold an appropriate vocational qualification and are in the process of undergoing teacher training which meets the standards for vocational qualifications of teachers of vocational education institutions determined by the Cabinet of Ministers.

Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 347 of 3 October 2000 “Regulations on the standards for training and vocational qualifications required by teachers”:

- state in detail the vocational qualification standards to be met by teachers of vocational education and professional introductory courses and state a deadline at which these standards come into force;
- determine the training programmes which confer on persons who have undergone said training the right to work within vocational education programmes:

AT THE LEVEL OF BASIC EDUCATION:

- teachers of general subjects: higher vocational teacher education, qualification of teacher for the appropriate level of education, teaching subject or course;
- teachers of vocation-specific subjects: upper secondary vocational education or a craftsman’s qualification conferred by the Latvian Chamber of Crafts, which meets the level of master, craftsman, along with teacher training.

AT THE LEVEL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION:

- teachers of general subjects: higher vocational teacher education, qualification of teacher for the appropriate level of education, teaching subject or course, or academic education (a bachelor's degree) in the appropriate branch of science and the vocational qualification of teacher;
- teachers of vocation-specific subjects: higher vocational education in the appropriate field and teacher training, or, within vocational education programmes (lower secondary school level), upper secondary vocational education or a craftsman's qualification conferred by the Latvian Chamber of Crafts which meets the level of master craftsman, along with teacher training.

Vocational qualifications of teachers at vocational education and training institutions are confirmed by nationally recognised documents attesting to the relevant vocational training (qualification) and teacher training.

The Ministry of Education and Science instruction No. 8 of 10 July 2002 "Procedure for teacher training and professional development of vocational education teachers" describes these documents in detail.

Teaching qualifications should be acquired through vocational upper secondary education or higher professional education, or through academic programmes of study relevant to the level and branch of programmes to be taught, and these qualifications are confirmed by the following nationally recognised documents:

- diploma of vocational upper secondary education in a certain field – this confirms that qualifications have been acquired to teach introductory courses, basic vocational education courses and vocational education courses;
- diploma of first level professional higher education (college diploma) and diploma of higher education in a certain field – confirms qualifications to teach at the secondary vocational education and first level professional higher education (college) level;
- documents conferred by professional bodies (the master craftsman's diploma) in a certain field – confirm vocational qualifications to teach basic vocational education, vocational education and secondary vocational education programmes.

ROLE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

The work of the vocational education teacher is linked to:

- implementation of education programmes according to national vocational education standards and occupational standards;
- participation in the development of education programmes;
- development of methodological materials related to the teaching subject;
- choice of appropriate teaching methodologies;
- choice of teaching methods appropriate to the goals and assignments of the education programme;
- implementation of the learning process according to the goals and assignments of the education programme.

Evaluation and analysis of the knowledge and skills of students acquired during the learning process:

- development of diagnostic tests and final examinations for the control of theoretical knowledge and skills of learners;
- choice of evaluation methods appropriate to teaching methods employed;
- evaluation and analysis of test results;
- implementation of innovative actions.

Development of creative attitudes and independence in learners:

- work with students in order to develop and form a creative, independently thinking and professionally trained individual;
- encouragement of risk-taking and ability to take on responsibility in students, replacing an “I can’t” philosophy with “I can”;
- formation of moral and spiritual values;
- development of ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practice;
- development of capacity to choose appropriate working styles and communications methods.

Search for and application of new ideas, technologies, and methods:

- research and analysis of labour market requirements;
- up-dating of teaching programmes according to occupational standards and labour market requirements;
- application of information technologies in the acquisition and analysis of information.

In the context of the development of vocational education, teachers through their daily work are the implementers of reforms at education institutions. The work of teachers must:

- promote institutional development and receptiveness to the labour market and to co-operation with local enterprises and professional associations;
- promote the application of new forms of learning, based on the development of co-operation between educators and employers and on the modernisation of interaction between students and teachers in the teaching/learning process;
- develop a new approach to the development of the further education system for vocational education teachers.

Innovations in the teacher training system are mainly acquired through international projects.

The Vocational Education Centre of the Ministry of Education and Science annually organises a series of continuing education courses for teachers of vocational education institutions, for example:

- the role of directors of vocational education institutions and their deputies in the development of educational competence of teachers;
- methods for co-operation between teachers and students in the learning process;
- organisation and implementation of the learning process at vocational education institutions, et al.

National policy on the development of information technologies within the vocational education system

Ensuring the computerisation of the education system is one of the objectives of the White Paper on Development of Education in 2002-2005 approved by the 7th Convocation of the Saeima (Parliament) of Latvia.

The computerisation of the education system began in 1998 with the Latvian Education Information System (LIIS) project. As a result of project activities Latvian education institutions are provided with modern computer equipment and an internet connection.

IT training takes place within vocational education programmes of all levels – it is compulsory both for students and for vocational education teachers:

- According to the national standard for vocational education and upper secondary vocational education, applied information sciences is a compulsory subject within vocational education and upper secondary vocational education programmes. At the close of the programme the

learner must receive a mark in information sciences (within upper secondary vocational education programmes this mark must be at least 4 out of 10).

- Within college level programmes the information technologies course is a compulsory general knowledge course, at the close of which a mark of not less than 4 out of 10 must be achieved (Cabinet of Ministers regulations approved on 20 March 2001 concerning the national standard for first cycle higher vocational education).
- The basic teacher training programme for vocational education teachers includes the module “Using information and communications technologies (ICT) in the learning process”.

The Ministry of Education and Science, in co-operation with higher education institutions, has begun working on a programme for e-education – development of a concept and action plan for organised virtual learning; computer programme development for virtual distance education programme authoring on the internet has been organised.

0602 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

Teaching qualifications are acquired through vocational upper secondary education or higher vocational education, or through academic programmes of study relevant to the level and branch of programmes to be taught and these qualifications are confirmed by the following nationally recognised documents:

- diploma of vocational upper secondary education in a certain field – this confirms that qualifications have been acquired to teach introductory courses, basic vocational education courses and vocational education courses;
- diploma of first cycle vocational higher education (college diploma), or diploma of higher education in a certain field – confirms qualifications to teach at the upper secondary vocational education and first cycle higher vocational education (college) level;
- documents conferred by professional bodies (the master craftsman’s diploma) in a certain field – confirm vocational qualifications to teach basic vocational education, vocational education and upper secondary vocational education programmes.

Teacher training required by teachers can be acquired through:

- a higher vocational education programme that confers a qualification of “teacher”, or an academic programme of studies in education that confers a bachelor’s or master’s degree;

- further education programmes (teacher training courses include at least 320 contact hours, programmes last for at least one year), that confer a certificate that follows a form approved by the Minister of Education and Science, if the person has acquired vocational upper secondary education (or general upper secondary education and a master craftsman's qualification granted by the Latvian Chamber of Crafts), or has acquired higher education and is employed by a vocational education institution (this applies only to vocational subject teachers);
- acquiring teaching knowledge and skills via self-learning, continuing education courses, seminars, projects and other teaching skills development activities.

0603 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

Training of trainers/teachers at the workplace is not popular in Latvia.

Cases where teachers take a leave of absence from their education institution to take employment in an enterprise and return to work at the education institution after a pre-determined period are not widely known in Latvia.

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

Descriptions that determine the employees needed in the particular field, their abilities and skills as well as future perspectives were developed only for a number of fields, for example, IT and building.

The abilities and skills necessary for each particular profession are included in the occupational standards.

Representatives of both, educational institutions and social partners can develop draft professional standard. The evaluation of professional standard is organized by the Ministry of Education and Science which forms a work group, and representatives of employers, employers in the field, and educational institutions are included in the work group. Finally the occupational standard is confirmed by the National Tripartite Sub-council for co-operation in VET and employment and by the minister of education and science. The occupational standard includes a description in which specific tasks and duties of the employee of the particular profession are mentioned, as well as what abilities and skills are necessary in order to carry out the specific tasks. The occupational standard also determines to which level of professional qualification each specific profession corresponds. When developing educational programmes, educational institutions have to ensure the acquisition of all the abilities, skills and knowledge mentioned in the occupational standards. Till now 295 occupation standards are drafted and approved in Latvia.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

With the adoption of the Law of Professional Education in 1999, the system of professional qualifications in Latvia was created. It is included in the overall Latvian educational system and closely related to general upper-secondary education and higher education. By introducing centralized final examinations also for the graduates of vocational upper-secondary educational programmes, it is ensured that everyone who obtains general upper-secondary education will have the same examinations and opportunities to enrol at higher education institutions.

Since in programmes of vocational education and training general upper-secondary education is only partly acquired, special intermediate programmes of general upper-secondary education are being offered to the graduates of these vocational programmes, so that they could complete also general upper-secondary education and later enrol at higher education institutions.

First level higher professional education is a new section of higher education in Latvia.

Since professional in Latvia is based on the programme principle, the possibilities to change the programme during the study time are rather limited.

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

Vocational education programmes (curricula) are developed by education establishments (based on guidelines developed by Professional Education Centre) and based on two different standards:

- National vocational education standard,
- Occupational standard.

National vocational education standards are developed by the Ministry of Education and Science and adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers. Standards determine strategic objectives of education programs, compulsory contents of education, basic principles and the procedure of assessment in accordance with the level of education.

Regarding the content of vocational education programme, the National vocational education standards determines the relation of theory to practice, the general subjects versus professional ones and the distribution of general subjects.

Occupational standards determine basic demands of vocational qualifications, as well as specific demands for performing the main tasks in the given profession. The occupational standard is developed based on a common agreement among employers, trade unions and national and local government institutions involved in vocational education and employment, which is geared toward creating an optimum level of order in the area of professions and which determines the compulsory content of vocational education programmes and the place of a certain profession within the overall system of vocational qualification levels.

Vocational education programme defines:

- objectives of the vocational education programme in question;
- content of the vocational education programme;
- implementation plan of the vocational education programme;
- enrolment requirements;
- financial, personnel and material resources necessary for the implementation of the programme.

The obligatory subjects in the vocational education programme are Latvian, foreign language, computer science, history, and business foundations. Subject programmes are developed by teachers who teach the relevant subject and these are approved by the director of the education establishment.

Evaluations of vocational education programmes are carried out by Vocational Education Centre. In 2003 the centre evaluates 1687 following programmes:

- 683 vocational continuing education programmes (41%);
- 375 professional development educational programmes (22%);

- 302 vocational secondary education programmes (18%);
- 176 vocational education programmes (10%);
- 151 vocational basic education programmes (9%).

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

Graduating from a professional educational institution, the qualification mentioned in the document issued by the institution. The Regulations by Cabinet of Ministers Nr 339 from 2001 "Procedure for the issue documents certifying to professional education and professional qualifications and certifying to the acquisition of part of a accredited programme of professional education" stipulates that state-recognized documents certifying professional qualification are awarded for the completion of an accredited professional educational programme. These documents determine also the samples of documents certifying to the acquired qualification, which means that all the graduates of a programme of the same level have the same sample documents, in which the concrete educational institution and the profession are stated. The State Seal on the first page of the educational document certifies that it is a state-recognized qualification.

In order to receive such document, the student has to fill all the requirements stated in the educational standard, i.e. receive a grade in all the subjects, practical studies and practical placement and pass a qualification examination with a grade no lower than 5 "satisfactory." The Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers from 2000 "Regulations on professional qualifications that are acquired by passing centralized professional qualification examinations" stipulate that in the majority of cases, in order to obtain a third level professional qualification the student has to take centralized professional qualification examinations. Vocational Education Centre of the Ministry of Education and Science develops the contents of these exams. Students usually take them at learning and examination centres, and they ensure that everyone who obtains a concrete qualification -- profession, are tested and evaluated using the same methods. Social partners take part in the centralized qualification examinations. They are usually the heads of the examination commission.

If a person has received a state-recognized document certifying a professional qualification, the person may work in this profession both, in regulated and non-regulated. In special cases if the profession is regulated, for example, building, medicine, with this document the person may work only under the supervision of a certified specialist. In order to obtain independent practice rights, it is necessary to work under the supervision of a certified specialist for 2-5 years and then to receive a certificate (with or without a certification exam) issued by a relevant competent institution - usually professional association. The certification exam developed by the professional associations usually tests the applicant's capabilities to apply his abilities and skills in practice.

0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

In Latvia there is no legislation regulating the recognition of non-formal education. Each educational institution that implements non-formal educational programmes itself determines the conditions for the issue of certifying documents. These documents are issued only on behalf of the educational institution. It is then the employer's competence to determine whether this document of non-formal education is sufficient in order to occupy a

certain position, or not. Professional associations organizing continuing education of employees choose themselves which non-formal educational programmes are recognized.

Also employers themselves can choose and determine which non-formal educational programmes to recognize. Larger enterprises have staff training plans in which it is stated which non-formal educational programmes the particular specialist has to master.

Non-formal education is not recognized in formal education.

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

In Latvia the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Welfare (MW) are responsible for career guidance and counselling. The Concept of carrier guidance in the Republic of Latvia (adopted on 15.11.1994) determines the goals of guidance and counselling. The MW policy in the sphere of guidance and counselling is realized by the Carrier Guidance State Agency which is under MW's supervision and which operates in accordance with the Law on Social Security (adopted on 09.05.1995) and Law on the Support for the Unemployed and Job Seekers (adopted on 09.05.2002), with its Article Nr7 "The preventive measures for diminishing the unemployment determining:

The preventive measures for diminishing the unemployment is services of guidance and counselling and consulting, which are offered to persons who want to pursue an education or who are working or wish to do remunerated work; the aim of this is to promote the competitiveness of these persons in the labour market and to offer help in the choice of a professional career.

The clients of the Carrier Guidance State Agency (CGSA) receive the following services:

- individual and group consultations on career and educational choices and professional suitability;
- individual consultations in questions on seeking employment;
- learning workshops for young people and adults on career development and questions on seeking employment;
- informative consultations on educational opportunities in Latvia and abroad.

CGSA was created in 1987; in 2002 it has consultation rooms in 20 districts in Latvia and a mobile consultation group.

The Law of Education (adopted on 17.11.1998) stipulates that the district local government ensures the guidance counselling of children and young adults while the Law of Professional Education (adopted on 30.06.1999) stipulates that the Ministry of education and Science organizes guidance counselling and the research of development of the labour market and labour force demand.

In 2000 the Ministry of Education and Science within the Professional Education Development Agency created Professional orientation information centre (POIC), which deals with information on professional education in Latvia and in the EU countries. POIC is partly financed by the Ministry of Education and Science, partly by the EU cooperation programme Leonardo da Vinci. The centre with two employees collaborates with similar organizations in Europe, together forming the "Euroguidance Network."

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

The total number of people CGSA consulted in questions on profession choices in 2002 is 30 442. Of those 21 828 were high school juniors and seniors, 4 007 unemployed persons, 481 students of vocational educational institutions, 351 students of higher education institutions, 1 019 unemployed job seekers who are not registered at the Employment State service, 1 572 employees and 1 184 parents of students. In comparison to 2001, the number of people consulted by CGSA has increased by 8 474 or 39% (PKIC 2002 work overview - Riga, 2003).

In the consulting work with clients at the Centre various work forms are being used:

- thorough individual consultation in questions on education, profession choices and career planning, that includes professional self-determining,
- group consultations for determining the optimal professional field, that includes professional self-determining (with examples from specific professions)
- informative consultation on educational possibilities,
- informative consultation on the content of the profession,
- determining the professionally important qualities, skills, individual characteristics of the nervous system, etc.,
- workshops - for young adults "You and your carries,"
- workshops - for job seekers "How to find a job,"
- consultations in the improving methods for job search and CV-writing

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

The total number of CGSA employees in 2003 is 53, the total number of professional and carrier guidance consultant is 37, of which 3 men and 34 women, the average age of the consultants - 36. The requirement for working at the CGSA is higher education in psychology (academic or professional - the duration of the education 4-5 years) but higher pedagogic education is also acceptable.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

The expenses allocated to education increase from year to year, but the actual amounts are still insufficient.

Expenses per student (calculating in PPS units in Euro) in Latvia in 1999 were very low. In upper-secondary education expenses per student were 1 600 in Latvia, 5 900 in the EU, in higher education 1900 in Latvia, 8 800 in the EU (Eurostat, Key Data on Education in Europe, Luxembourg, 2002).

The budget expenses for professional education (except higher education) in 1999 and 2000 were approximately 0.7% of the GDP, and it is not sufficient to promote development. Comparing to previous years, there has been an increase in funding only thanks to an increase of teachers' salaries. In 2001 97% of expenses were intended for maintenance expenses and only 3% - capital investments.

The total budget of professional educational institution in 2000 (LVL 30.2 million) was composed of 85% (LVL 25.6 million) subsidy from general income and 15% (LVL 25.6 million) own income (paid services by professional education institutions).

Study loans in higher education have increased greatly in the most recent years. The number of awarded loans has increased rapidly, 2590 in 1997, 11 600 in 1999, 30 280 in 2001, yet the average volume of study loans has remained constant - LVL 450 in 1999 and 2001.

At the state level there are no special goals that should be attained with respect to financing education. Education development concept envisages to increase the cost effectiveness in every level of education and it states that additional funding (approximately LVL 13 million in 2003 and LVL 17 million in 2004 and 2005) is necessary in order to achieve the goals advanced in the concept. The largest share of the funding is intended for higher education development.

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

As the great majority of VET schools are state schools, the national budget is the main source of funding.

The overall budget of VET establishments (30.2 million LVL in 2000) was made up by 85% of subsidies from general revenues (25.6 million LVL) and by 15% of own income (paid services provided by the VET institutions, amounting to 15%, 4.6 million LVL).

In 2001 97% (96% in 2000) of funds allocated for VET establishments went for regular expenses, just 3% (4% in 2000) of the national budget expenditure on VET was expenditure on capital investment. Staff costs account for the bulk of the current expenditure (75%).

Annual public funding for VET institutions, 1999-2002			
	1999	2000	2001

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE FOR IVET (% OF GDP)	0.7	0.7	no data provided by CSB	no data provided by CSB
SUBSIDIES FROM GENERAL REVENUE	25 361 512 LVL 39 813 991 EUR	25 646 414 LVL 45 788 991 EUR	26 884 752 LVL 47 778 127 EUR	29 611 671 LVL 50 791 888 EUR
SELF EARNED INCOME	4 923 313 LVL 7 728 906 EUR	4 651 614 LVL 8 304 971 EUR		

Source: MoES

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

Although educational expenses constitute a considerable share of the GDP, expenses for continuing vocational education and training of the unemployed still remain low. There is no precise data on the total investment in continuing education in Latvia. According to data available from the CSB, annual state budget expenses allocated to adult education institutions have decreased. There are several sources of funding for adult education: participant's fees, employers' investment, investment of non-governmental organizations, payments from the local governments and the state budget share. It has to be noted that participants fees constitute as large sum as employers fees for training their employees.

Table: Funding of adult education institutions (including funding for the education and re-qualification of the unemployed and officer training) (thousand LVL)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
TOTAL ANNUAL FUNDING	11568.9	10629.4	12987.3	10563.2	11593.3
OF WHICH:					
FROM THE STATE BUDGET	5545.2	4763.7	5509.5	3065.1	3526.4
FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' BUDGET	393.5	415.9	455.6	482.4	292.7
PARTICIPANTS' FEE	2633.3	2659.4	2298.0	2700.5	3233.6
FEES PAID BY ENTERPRISES AND ORGANISATIONS FOR THE TRAINING OF THEIR EMPLOYEES	2836.9	2581.8	2798.2	3313.1	3995.4
OTHER SOURCES	160.0	208.6	1926.0	1002.1	545.2

Source: CSB data, 2004

According to Eurostat data the total expenses of professional training courses of employees constituted 1.1% of the total labour expenses in all the enterprises in Latvia, which is much less than in EU countries (from 1.2 in Portugal to 3% in Denmark) and less than in the Czech Republic 1.9% and Estonia - 1.8%, but more than in Lithuania - 0.8%. It corresponds to the average figure in the EU candidate countries - 1.2%. In the second 1999 Eurostat professional education survey of employees nine candidate countries also participated. In Latvia direct expenses for the professional training of employees in organizations were LVL 16.9 million, or LVL 86 per employee in those enterprises that offered training. The labour expenses for the participants of the professional training courses for employees (indirect expenses) during the attendance of these courses were LVL 8.1 million. Hence, the total expenses of professional training courses for employees constituted LVL 2.5 million or 1.1% of the total labour expenses in all the enterprises.

The average expenses per participant are rather high in Latvia (EUR 324), of the 10 candidate countries the expenses are higher only in Hungary (EUR 505), Estonia (EUR 428) and Slovenia (EUR 333)

The funding allocated to active employment measures is low. In 2000 it was 0.25% of the GDP, in 2001 - 0.22% and in 2002 - 0.16%. The active employment measures are financed from the basic state budget (labour market administration (0.12% of the GDP) - State Employment Service maintenance, the state control for the attribution of labour protection and labour legislation acts, as well as temporary paid voluntary work are financed from this basic state budget line) and special employment budget (in 2002 0.04% of the GDP were allocated to training, guidance counselling and increasing the competitiveness of the unemployed, but 0.4% of the GDP - to unemployment benefit). Specialized budget for social security is composed of obligatory payments in the state obligatory social insurance. On November 25, 1999 a new law was adopted "On insurance for cases of unemployment". This law replaces the former law and stipulates that unemployment insurance services are financed from the State social insurance special budget. The law stipulates that starting with January 1st, 2002 the funds from the social insurance budget are used for financing active employment measures but no more than by 10% from the annual total budget.

The state funding for adult education (including funding for officer training and re-qualification of unemployed people) has decreased by 15% in the time period between the school year 1999/2000 and 2000/2001. The increased funding from the local governments could not compensate this decrease. Some local governments allocate a concrete percentage from the budget to adult education.

The Latvian tax system does not promote the interest of the employers to invest in the training of their employees. Only approximately 4% of enterprises have a training budget. Professional training is mainly available only in large and economically stable enterprises.

	TOTAL COSTS	DIRECT COSTS	LABOUR COSTS OF PARTICIPANTS
EU-15	2.3	1.4	0.8
BELGIUM	1.6	0.6	0.9
DENMARK	3	1.7	1.4
GERMANY	1.5	0.9	0.7
GREECE	0.9	0.4	0.5
SPAIN	1.5	0.5	0.9
FRANCE	2.4	1	1.2
IRELAND	2.4	1.5	1
ITALY	1.7	1.2	0.6
LUXEMBOURG	1.9	1	1
NETHERLANDS	2.8	1.7	1.1
AUSTRIA	1.3	0.8	0.5
PORTUGAL	1.2	0.7	0.6
FINLAND	2.4	1.3	1.1
SWEDEN	2.8	1.6	1.3
UK	3.6	2.8	0.8
ICELAND	:	:	:

NORWAY	2.3	1.4	0.9
CYPRUS	:	:	:
CZECH REPUBLIC	1.9	1.2	0.7
ESTONIA	1.8	1.3	0.5
HUNGARY	1.2	0.5	0.4
LITHUANIA	0.8	0.5	0.3
LATVIA	1.1	0.8	0.4
MALTA	:	:	:
POLAND	0.8	0.5	0.3
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	:	:	:
SLOVENIA	1.3	0.8	0.5

Direct costs: costs of CVT courses

Total costs: sum of direct costs, staff time costs and balance of contributions to national or regional training funds and receipts from national or other funding arrangements
Cyprus, Malta, Slovakia and Iceland are not covered by CVTS
Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, 2nd continuing vocational training survey in enterprises (CVTS)

Comment: Table - the small enterprises in transition period is fighting for survival and not investing in human resources. Only large enterprises are investing in human resources.

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

The main institution that implement the labour market policy and programmes for the unemployed is the Employment State Service, which was formed in 1992. NVD was reorganized in 1999 into a state non-profit stock company under the supervision of the Ministry of Welfare. In accordance with the State Agencies' Law and Cabinet of Ministers Decree, Employment State Service was reorganized into a state agency Employment State agency (SSA) in the fall 2003. This new status is more appropriate to the functions of Employment States service since it is a governmental institution funded by the state that provides services to the society, but it is not a profit enterprise.

The law "On insurance in cases of unemployment" was adopted on November 25, 1999. This law stipulates that insurance services for the unemployed are financed from the state social insurance special budget. The law envisages that starting with January 1st, 2002 funds from the employment specialized budget are used for financing active employment measures but no more than within the range of 10% from the annual total employment budget.

Even though according to the new Law on the Support of the Unemployed and Job Seekers, the range of clients of the Employment State Agency has been broadened, the funding was not increased. The funding for active employment measures has even decreased from 0.25% of the GDP in 2000 to 0.22% in 2001 and 0.16% in 2002. The largest decrease has been in the funding for training and re-qualification of unemployed people - from 0.08% of the GDP in 2001 to 0.04% in 2002.

In 2003 approximately 72% of the total funds spent on the labour market were used for passive measures (benefits), 24% were envisaged for active employment measures (including the Employment State service/ Employment State agency funding), 3.3% - for the labour protection and labour market legislation and 0.7% preventive measures (guidance counselling).

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

The Development Plan 2004-2006, adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers on 18.03.2003 envisages the following measures in the framework of the priority "Promoting the development of human resources and employment"

- Promoting employment (43% of the total financing of priorities is allocated to this priority);
- The development of education and continuing education (38%);
- Reducing social exclusion (19%).

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

On 17.10.2002 Cabinet of Ministers confirmed the Education Development Concept for 2002-2005 (Education development concept 2002-2005 - adopted by the government on 17.10.2002) in which principles of Lifelong Learning Memorandum are included. The common goal of the Education development concept is to ensure such changes in the educational system that would promote the formation of a knowledge-based, democratic and socially integrated society and the increase of competitiveness of the Latvian population and the national economy, at the same time preserving and developing the characteristic Latvian cultural values.

The concrete goals of the Education development concept were the following:

- to increase the quality of education in all the degrees and types of education in accordance with the needs of the society and the development of the national economy;
- to ensure the availability of education for inhabitants of Latvia in the context of lifelong learning;
- to increase the cost effectiveness in all the levels and types of education.

Education development concept 2002-2005 sets rather general goals.

The Development programme of the system of professional education was confirmed by the Cabinet of Ministers on September 4, 2003. This document determines qualitative and quantitative goals of the professional education development in accordance with the Education Development Concept for 2002-2005.

The Ministry of Education and Science organized public discussion of the Lifelong Learning Memorandum in 2001. The discussion took place at workshops, Internet discussions, a survey was carried out, in six meetings the main questions were examined and a final conference took place. In the final report summaries of the discussions concerning the main questions are included, as well as recommendations for solving the most important problems of lifelong learning in Latvia. The recommendations deal with those problems at state and district level.

The Development Plan for 2004-2006, adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers on 18.03.2003, envisages the following measures in the framework of "Promoting the development of human resources and employment":

- Promoting employment (43% of the total financing of priorities is allocated to this measure);
- The development of education and continuing education (38%);

- Reducing social exclusion (19%);

The second level intermediary body for the implementation of European Social Fund measures for the promotion of employment is the Employment State agency, whereas the second level intermediary body for the implementation of education and continuing education measures is the Professional Education Development Agency. The first competitions of the project were opened in 2004.

Latvia takes part in the most important EU education development processes - both, in the Copenhagen process in the professional education and in the Bologna process in higher education.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Latvia takes part in the Leonardo da Vinci programme since 1998.

Table: The number of mobility projects in Latvia 2000-2004

PROJECT FORM	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
PUPIL MOBILITY	13	12	17	18	22
STUDENT MOBILITY	2	6	4	6	4
NEW EMPLOYEES' MOBILITY	7	8	9	9	13
MOBILITY OF HUMAN RESOURCES, THE LEADERS AND PLANNERS OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION	22	27	27	30	39
MOBILITY LANGUAGE PROJECTS	10	3	6	2	6
TOTAL	54	56	63	65	84

Source: PIAP agency, Leonardo da Vinci II programme

Table: Total number of participants in the Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	TOTAL
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	322	301	373	343	543	1882

Source: PIAP agency, Leonardo da Vinci II programme

The inhabitants of Latvia also have possibilities to obtain a professional qualification abroad. In 2001 a law "On the recognition of regulated professions and professional qualification" was adopted that determines the procedure for the recognition of professional qualification in regulated professions obtained in foreign countries (not only in EU countries).