

# The Future of Academic Careers in Latvia and Beyond: Building Capacity Through Collaboration

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4 June 2025

# Today's focus

Latvia has initiated – and continues – a policy of encouraging mergers among its public higher education institutions, and among its public research organisations.

Today: how HE systems **foster collaboration** among HEIs, through consortia, alliances, and like arrangements, and how they can **organise shared resources and services for the common benefit** of higher education institutions.

# What resources are shared in EU HE systems? What activities are carried out in collaboration?



Joint centres or national institutes for performing research



Shared research infrastructure (e.g., computing, laboratories)



Shared resources for research commercialisation (e.g., patenting, business Incubators)



Cooperative internationalisation (e.g., international branding and recruitment)



Collaborative doctoral education (e.g., National Doctoral Schools)



Shared Digital Services (Acquisition, Training, and Use of Digital Technologies)



Teaching and Learning (Instructional Design, Curriculum, Assessment, Pedagogy)



Induction and Professional Development for Academic Staff

# Collaboration at what level? For what duration?

	Episodic or Fixed Duration	Persistent
Systemic		
Institutional		Animation joint degree programme
Individual	Semester course contract	

**In EU systems – and Latvia – collaboration and shared resources are most advanced in research, so I will focus on:**



Teaching and Learning  
(Instructional Design,  
Curriculum, Assessment,  
Pedagogy)



Induction and Professional  
Development for Academic  
Staff



Shared Digital Services  
(Acquisition, Training, and  
Use of Digital Technologies)



Collaborative doctoral  
education (e.g., National  
Doctoral Schools)

# How is sharing and collaboration organized?



National non-profit organisations governed by members and supported by sold services (JISC), membership fees, or grants + sold services (SURF Netherlands)



Conference of Rectors as providers of shared services (German Rectors Conference, Internationalisation Audits)



Distributed and Coordinated National Network (Ireland Nat. Endowment for Teaching and Learning)



National inter-university graduate schools (NL Institute for Programming Research and Algorithmics)



IHE Consortia (Graz, Austria, NAWI Advanced School of Science)



Principal university and/or NREN acts as host or provider of shared resources (Univ. Zagreb, SRCE)

## How can Latvia expand collaboration and sharing? Widely informed, locally adapted measures.

No two systems organise collaboration and sharing in the same way. How they do it varies widely depending upon national traditions and policies.

Latvia can benefit from expanded sharing and collaboration among HEIs, done in a way that reflects its own traditions, informed by European practice.

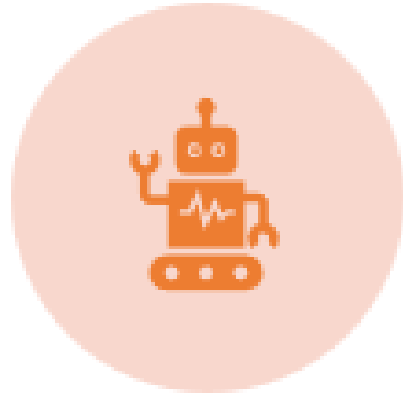
# What role for a national consultative forum?

It can focus on expanding the scope and improving the quality of collaboration and shared resources available to support HEIs. How? By playing a fact-finding role.

- A fact-finding report could be an **input to decisions about QA and teaching career policies** that are under development, highlighting ways in which the career policies in other HE systems and the QA policies they have adopted support teaching and learning across the length of the academic career.
- A fact-finding report can be **shared among higher education institutions** to help provide them models and targets to inform their practices.

I will illustrate how this might work with three examples, below.





## Shared Digital Services (Acquisition, Training, and Use of Digital Technologies)

# Shared support for digitalisation is underway...



Phase One - "[Higher Education and Science Information Technology Shared Service Centre](#)" (VPC), established by four scientific universities: the (UL), (RTU), (RSU), and (LULST).



Phase Two – Grants to support the implementation of new solutions across all universities, ensuring effective digitalisation integration.



Structure and Governance: An [association](#) governed by a Council of (4) university members, (1) member of government, and (1) IT business leader.



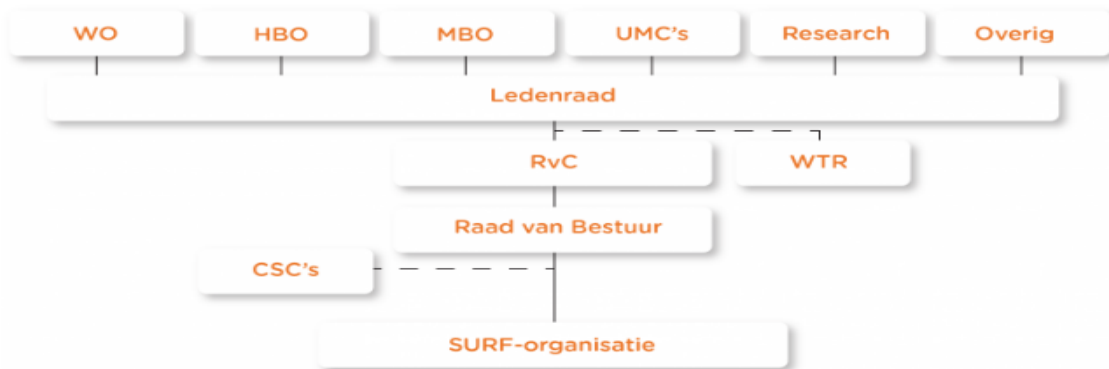
Funding. [EU] Grant-supported. Plans for revenue diversification and service model?

## ...governance in NL and UK more inclusive of HEIs, and excludes funders

SURF is a cooperative with over 100 members. The members own SURF: together we set the course.

Our members are represented in **the Members' Council**, the highest body within the cooperative. The Members' Council appoints **the Board of Directors**, which, among other things, determines SURF's policy and strategy. In addition, **the Supervisory Board** and **the Scientific Technical Council (WTR)** are part of the organisational structure. The members of the WTR are also appointed by the Members' Council.

Each SURF member institution appoints a **Coordinating SURF Contact (CSC)**. In addition, various communities and **special interest groups (SIGs)** are active within SURF.



### UK Jisc

Our members – Association of Colleges, GuildHE [vocational HE] and Universities UK -- each nominate one person to the board and act collectively to appoint the chair.

Public funding bodies collectively nominate one person to the board. This person attends Jisc board meetings as an observer.

Up to eight further trustees are appointed by the board to ensure a sufficient mix of skills and experience to provide strategic oversight of Jisc.

Jisc – Joint Information Systems Committee

## A Consultative Forum can advance digitalisation by reviewing the scope and adequacy of collaboration and resource sharing



How does the governance model of Latvia's VPC compare to that of other national digitalisation bodies?



Is its governance model well-adapted to the full range of stakeholders and needs in the nation's education and research landscape?



What lessons can be learned from other HE systems about sustainable resourcing for digitalisation?



Is the range of services provided by VPC well-adapted to the needs of the nation's HEIs and its research partners?

# Collaboration and Shared Services for Professional Development and Teaching



Teaching and Learning  
(Instructional Design,  
Curriculum, Assessment,  
Pedagogy)



Induction and Professional  
Development for Academic  
Staff

# Patterns across the EU

Governments often **co-fund university centres** to promote pedagogical excellence and innovation (e.g. Germany, Netherlands, Finland, France, Austria, and Switzerland)/

Governments may **provide guidance (in law or regulation) about professional development and the acquisition of training in setting out requirements for career advancement, or through the quality assurance system.**

Often guidance on professional development in the teaching career is **collaboratively developed by the sector**, as in the Netherlands (the University Teaching Qualification) or the UK (Professional Standards Framework), or by professional societies (The UK Royal Academy of Engineering, [The Career Framework For University Teaching.](#))

University T+ L centres will typically share, meet, and talk with one another (in national workshops and conferences). T+L centres in large public universities will offer to provide services within the system or even internationally.

Sometimes there is a **coordinated national network** with a **national public body** for T and L (Ireland), though in other systems there is a **distributed national network with voluntary coordination** (NL).

# How does public policy support professional development and teaching in Latvia?

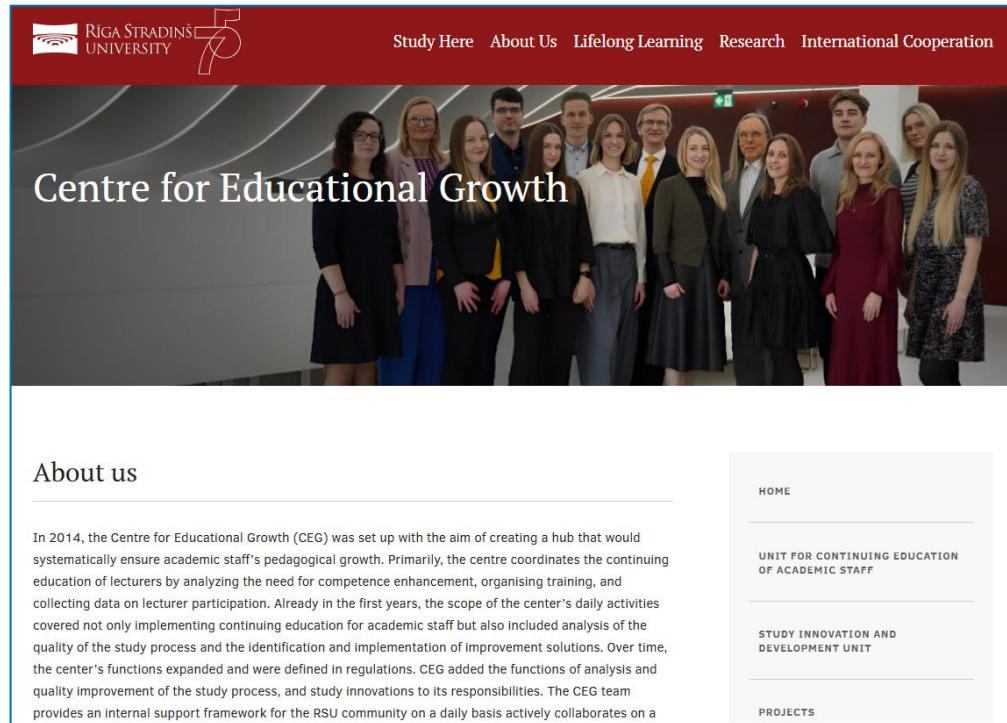
## Policy:

The Latvian Higher Education Act and Cabinet Regulations have set out a professional development requirement: at six years, instructors should complete 160 hours, of which 60 are instructional contact hours.

## Open questions:

- Will the new academic careers framework create an obligation for instructors to demonstrate continued professional growth across the academic career?
- Will the new academic career framework establish responsibility on the part of HEIs to set out a framework of professional development, and to support development through sustained learning?

# How do Latvian HEIs support professional development and teaching?



**HEIs:** some have established dedicated staff positions and units, and developed instruction to support professional development and teaching practices, but...

- Insufficient range of courses available (for instructional contact hour requirements)
- Classroom-focused content not adapted to practitioner/clinical/work-based learning needs
- Professional development oriented to junior faculty, not full length of career
- Theoretical focus -- rather than practical support for new teaching methods through consultation with feedback and continuous improvement.

Source: Baranova, Dedze, Rubene, 2017.



# Professional Development in the Netherlands

A shared teaching qualification framework collaboratively developed by HEIs themselves

A mandatory framework, but not by law

Spanning the full length of career

Linked to career advancement

Supported with a mix of locally-developed and learning shared among HEIs

With differentiated frameworks for UAS and research university sectors

Extends to instructors teaching half-time over one academic year

# Professional Development for Teaching at Leiden



To guarantee the quality of education in the Netherlands, the University Teaching Qualification (Basis Kwalificatie Onderwijs, BKO) is now compulsory for all lecturers, university lecturers, senior university lecturers, and professors.



The BKO is a mark of quality used by all Dutch universities. It functions as a reliable frame of reference with respect to your didactic skills. The BKO track consists of [a series of modules](#), allowing lecturers to assess and develop all facets of teaching. At the end of the track, you are awarded a BKO certificate. Once you have completed the BKO certification, you are qualified for all Dutch universities.



If you have an appointment for 0.5 FTE or more as lecturer, university lecturer, senior university lecturer, or professor for one year or longer, you are required to be in possession of a BKO. If you were recently appointed and are not yet in possession of a BKO, you have two years to complete the BKO track. Without BKO you cannot be appointed on a permanent contract or promoted to a higher position.

# The basic teaching qualification is part of a larger framework of support for teaching

Teacher platform FSW

> Educational design

> Organising education

> Teaching & supporting the learning process

> Assessment & feedback

> Reflection, research & innovation

> Teacher development (oa BKO)

About us

## Teacher platform FSW

Welcome to the teacher platform of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences (FSW). Here you will find information on everything related to teaching at FSW: from the practical issues you need to take care of to innovating your course.

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graph TD; ED[Educational design] --> OE[Organising education]; OE --> TSLP[Teaching & supporting the learning process]; TSLP --> AF[Assessment & feedback]; AF --> RRI[Reflection, research & innovation]; RRI --> ED
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## Learning resources are shared among HEIs

University teaching staff can develop professionally through a national offering compiled by Dutch universities united in the [Professional Development Exchange Hub](#). This allows you to deepen your teaching skills in current topics such as innovative technology, diversity and inclusion, assessment, sustainable development goals, or interdisciplinary teaching.

### DESIGNING EDUCATION WITH INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

- [VU - Effectively integrate generative AI into your course](#)
- [EUR - How to integrate virtual exchange into your course](#)
- [OU - What do we mean when we talk about quality? Five dimensions of quality for educational videos](#)
- [LU - Thesis supervision](#)
- [TiU - Helpful tutorials on AI technology for higher education](#)
- [UM - Responsible use of generative AI](#)
- [UM - AI prompt engineering](#)

## How can a national deliberative body advance collaboration and resource sharing for teaching?

- Desk-based scan of what teaching and learning support is available to instructors in Latvian HEIs, both full and part-time instructors.
- Launch a web-based survey of teaching staff about the adequacy of the teaching support.
- Invite presentations from other HE systems to learn how they support professional development and teaching
- Take stock of how Latvia's QA policy and career model support teaching and learning.
- Identify options to “fill the gaps” in shared support for teaching.

# Collaboration in doctoral education within the EU

**Between HEIs and public research organisations (PROs)** in doctoral education – in curriculum, teaching, staffing, and even degree awards (e.g., Bulgaria).

**Between two or more HEIs with complementary capabilities** to jointly carry out doctoral education in a range of related disciplines.

- The University of Graz and Graz University of Technology have created a joint school -- NAWI Advanced School of Science – with a combined faculty that provides joint teaching and research for 600 doctoral students and 450 joint research projects.

**Within a national graduate school delivery doctoral education in one discipline.**

- NL – National Interuniversity Graduate Schools, e.g. Institute for Programming Research and Algorithmics (IPA) is a national inter-university research school led by TU Eindhoven, 9 universities participate in this research school.

## Questions a national deliberative body might pose about Latvian doctoral education

Have we established a scope of collaboration in doctoral education between public research organisations and universities that makes best use of national resources?

Do we have the right level of cooperation and sharing among graduate schools in the development and offer of modules in the (60 ECTS) *taught* curriculum?

Would doctoral students benefit from having access to multidisciplinary consortia (e.g., Graz model) or national interuniversity graduate schools within a discipline (NL)?

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