

## **Latvia: Research Assessment Exercise**

Panel Report: Humanities

technopolis <sub>group</sub>, November 2013

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## 1. Introduction

The humanities panel would like to begin its report by expressing its warm thanks both to the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science and, particularly, to the Faculties, Centres and Institutes that took part in this exercise. An enormous task of compiling information was required and we appreciate the effort and goodwill shown by all parties, especially given the heavy workloads of the staff concerned. We are also grateful for the generous welcome we were given at the institutions we visited; these visits were extremely interesting and informative.

### Number and type of institutions covered

The panel received self-assessment reports (SARs) and other material from a total of seventeen units in the field of humanities research in Latvia. Among this comparatively small number of submitted units, there was a striking range of types, sizes, structures and functions. Within the University of Latvia (UL) in Riga, three Faculties were submitted: the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of History and Philosophy and the Faculty of Theology. Four provincial HEIs, each with an important regional base, were included: the humanities sections of the University of Daugavpils and Rezekne HEI Institute for Regional Studies, in the east, and the University of Liepaja and Ventspils University College, on the west coast. Other submissions from Riga were the research units affiliated to the three specialist Academies, the Jazeps Vitols Latvian Academy for Music, the Latvian Academy of Culture and the Latvian Academy of Art. Also affiliated to the University of Latvia, but housed currently in the Academy of Sciences building and essentially autonomous, were four Institutes whose staff are employed on a research-only basis: the Institute of Latvian History (ILH), the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art (ILFA), the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology (IPS) and the Latvian Language Institute (LLI). The Institute of Applied Linguistics (an ‘institute’ in a different sense) at Riga Technological University (RTU) was also submitted. Finally there were two submitted units which the panel deemed not to be eligible for this exercise – the Academic Board of the journal *History of Latvia* and the Jewish Association *Shamir*. Of the seventeen units submitted, ten were visited, in Riga, Daugavpils, Liepaja and Rezekne.

### Fields/topics covered by the institutions assessed by the panel

The main fields covered under the rubric of humanities were (in alphabetical order): anthropology/ethnology, archaeology, area studies (French, German, Spanish, Middle Eastern, Far Eastern etc languages, literatures and cultures), art/arts (see 19.2.1 b below), folklore and heritage studies, history, language (including many linguistics sub-fields and translation studies), literature, music, philosophy, regional studies, sociology and theology. Some units have centres of ‘comparative studies’, which cover a variety of fields. Some units – for instance those in Ventspils, Rezekne and the RTU – specialise in applied rather than fundamental research in their field, as does the Sociology section of the IPS. In many cases – for instance, music, literature, folklore, ethnology – research was principally on Latvian music, literature etc., in line with the mission of national self-development which is expressed in the focus of the state research programme *National Identity* and was voiced in many direct statements made to us during the visits. At the same time, research that went beyond the national in the sense of posing over-arching comparative, general or theoretical research questions or using innovative methodologies, and thus having a more international reach, was found in many units (see 19.1.2 below).

There was both a rich variety of work being conducted among what is, after all, a comparatively small community of scholars and a certain risk of fragmentation and duplication, which will be discussed later in this report.

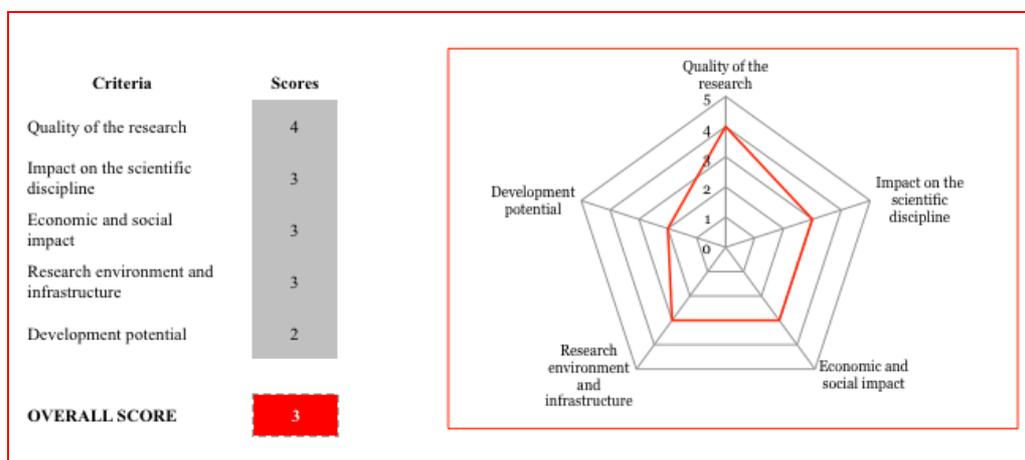
# Assessment of the Research Institutions

## 2. H\_01\_Jazeps Vitols Latvian Academy of Music, Scientific Research Centre

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Scientific Research Centre</b>
Name of university	Jazeps Vitols Academy of Music
Type of institution	University

The Centre is the research institute of the Academy of Music, the only specialist research unit in musicology in Latvia. It was created in 2005 on the basis of the former science department of the Academy. The Academy is an institution of higher teaching and research following the Bologna principles. The goals are defined within the institutional framework of the Academy, and they have comprised, since 2007, the cultural history of Latvian music, ethnomusicology, theory and methodology, the European heritage and interdisciplinary research. According to the SAR and answers to follow-up questions, 5 researchers are formally affiliated with the Centre while a larger number of staff from the Academy are involved in projects and publications. The FTE is given as only 0.95.

Figure 1 H\_01 - Scores



### Quality of the research

The output is of high quality and in accordance with the aim of the Centre; several of the publications have an original theoretical perspective and an international ambition through a comparative take or a broader historical contextualisation; this also applies in some cases where papers are focused on the Latvian music/musical context. Given the size and resources of the Centre, international relations are wisely concentrated in the neighbouring region which seems to give them stability and continuity: relations to strong musical research environments in Russia, Germany and Finland and participation in a Nordic project with external funding. However, some of the submissions are only abstracts with less than satisfactory translations. Overall, this unit is researching effectively on its field, which is mainly national but internationally contextualised and with interesting theoretical perspectives, although the interdisciplinary dimension of the stated goals is not strongly presented in the documentation and the general list of publications.

**Impact on the scientific discipline**

As the only research unit devoted to musicology in Latvia, although individuals and small groups exist elsewhere, it is locally responsible for the discipline, which is strengthened by its focus on Latvian music and its connection to musical practice and pedagogy. With the emphasis on a historical and ethno-musicological approach – particularly, but not only, focused on Latvian music – the documented development carried out by the researchers also has good international dissemination. Their engagement with national and some international projects supports this trend. The supervision/co-supervision of MA theses and doctoral theses (slightly growing in number) also supports the development and impact of the discipline. However, publication is predominantly in-house. On the other hand, collaboration with other HEIs is reported.

**Economic and social impact**

The Centre documents close contacts with music practitioners, with general education and with the local population through ethno-musicological studies. Being integrated in the Academy, it promotes a relationship between teaching, practice and research. However, the broader outreach is not specified in detail, either in the strategy or in the SWOT analysis.

**Research environment and infrastructure**

Due to economic volatility in the short life of the Centre, it is hard to assess the structural and infrastructural conditions. Being based at a musical Academy with a long history gives it a firm anchor in the world of musical education with a relevant infrastructure. The strategy is rather general and unfocused, and the SWOT analysis points to problems with material infrastructure, as well as with database access. However, the response to the panel's follow-up questions supports the SWOT/strength by confirming that even in a time of financial cut-back, it could have no better situation than its current position within the JV Academy, which provides a broader frame for the Centre's activities, planning, innovation and further development than would be the case for an isolated Institute or a minor field within a larger faculty.

**Development potential**

The self-assessment testifies to a capacity to formulate clear goals, probably one of the reasons for the high quality of the research and the high number of publications in relation to the size of staff and funding. The publications and the high degree of efficient self-reflection in the SAR reveal considerable potential for future development. But, probably due to the precarious financial foundation in relation to the state funding, the Centre's strategic thinking is rather vaguely formulated. Although a stronger ambition concerning external and international funding, through collaboration, could be wished for, it is clear that without state funding, it will be difficult for this successful Centre, much to the detriment of Latvian musical culture at large, to realise its potential for a sustainable long-term future.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

We recommend that the Centre be supported to guarantee its future existence as the central national player in musicology. We also recommend that its position embedded within the Academy of Music should continue as the best institutional frame for musicology in Latvia. Its international orientation should be encouraged and supported.

### 3. H\_02\_Latvian Academy of Culture, Centre for Scientific Research

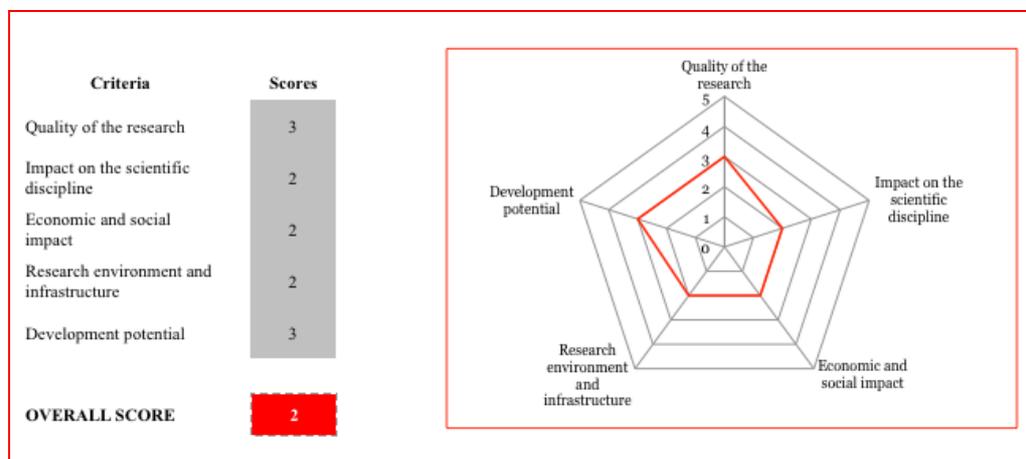
<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Centre for Scientific Research</b>
Name of university	Latvian Academy of Culture
Type of institution	University

The Centre for Scientific Research (CSR) is a small research unit within the Latvian Academy of Culture (LAC) in Riga. The CSR was founded in 2007 and its staff are all research-only; their work relates directly to the remit and strategy of the LAC. The reported FTE increased from 7 in 2011 to 8 in 2012.

The research areas of the CSR have expanded in number and reduced in proportion between the two reports; in the first they were three – Traditional culture and cultural anthropology, Performing art, and Semiotics (plus Archaeology) – and in 2012 they were six, with the addition to these of Literature, Audiovisual art and Sociology and Management of Culture. These areas of research appeared in the reports to be largely based on the interests of individuals or very small groups.

The unit did not wish to be visited by the Panel of Assessors, which is regrettable, but their replies to our questions helped to explain the rapid changes in research focus: recent developments in LAC museum holdings, plus the election of ‘young scientists, representing audiovisual art, literature and translatology, as well as cultural sociology fields’.

Figure 2 H\_02 - Scores



#### Quality of the research

CSR carries out some very interesting research, and the items submitted were all of good quality, some very good – especially the work on newly invented ‘ancient holy places’, which is of international level and relevance. Other research areas are Latvian film, cultural heritage law, semiotics and, earlier, urban studies. However, the Centre’s research fields appear rather serendipitous and thinly-spread; their relation to the focus of LAC was not clearly presented in the SAR. These fields are essentially related to staff interests, and thus vary as staff come and go (three more fields were added in 2012). Some of the publications are surveys of national phenomena for an international audience rather than innovative in conceptualisation and analysis. Output per person in 2011 is good at 16.5.

### **Impact on the scientific discipline**

Disciplinary impact is hard to assess because there is no clear scientific discipline, which is arguably problematic for the unit's efforts to have impact, develop etc. Because the items are themselves strong, the unit, with this personnel, could well have impact, but personnel seems to change rather fast, to judge by the 7 years presented. The international contacts are also decent but based on individuals; given that the latter (both past and present) seem to be doing exciting work, this is fine as long as they stay. The listings in the SAR under *Q5: Scientific Activities, national and international*, are generally very good. The interdisciplinary interests, which could enhance its importance, are mainly generated by the coexistence of researchers from different fields, however, rather than by shared projects across the disciplines.

### **Economic and social impact**

There is nothing at all in either SAR under *6.4 The societal impact of the Institution's/Unit's activities*. This is odd in the light both of their high scores in 'popularising science' (§2.2) and of the fieldwork done on new memory sites in relation to the tourism industry, which one imagines has some impact on 'users', or the history of Latvian cinema or intangible heritage, which again relate directly to popular culture. Given the general strength of scientific impact (+ representation on editorial boards, inter/national associations, etc.) across the range of disciplines covered, this omission is surprising, but one can only conclude the CSR staff are unaware of the non-academic impact they may be having, or how to present it.

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

The smallness of the unit and frequent changes make it somewhat difficult to describe this aspect consistently, but CSR seems safely embedded within the LAC and to be delivering an impressive research base. Yet again here there are problems with the completion of the SARs: neither has anything to say about this unit – as opposed to the LAC in general – under *6.6: Assess the Institution's/Unit's research infrastructure available*. Under *Strategy* there are plenty of good ideas, but no overall plan about how to implement them; in addition to repeating LAC's strategy (in very general terms), future plans are listed by field, each field having 1, 2 or at most 3 researchers, at all levels, and basically these small groups' research interests and plans are reiterated.

### **Development potential**

CSR has not completed the SARs well, failing to flag up what appears to be some at least societal impact, presenting strategy in a very diffuse and unclear way, etc. Yet the staff are doing exciting work that potentially could develop very well, internationally as well as nationally. Thus, our view is that by its structure and also by the documented high-level activity of its present staff and the attempts to maintain international outreach, the CSR is efficient and has considerable potential. To ensure this potential is fulfilled, a more explicit and coherent strategic consciousness will have to be developed; staff numbers must be sustained or increased; funding must enable the invitation of guest researchers; development of doctoral students and postdocs should be a priority; and there should be more interdisciplinary projects among staff, with international participation.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

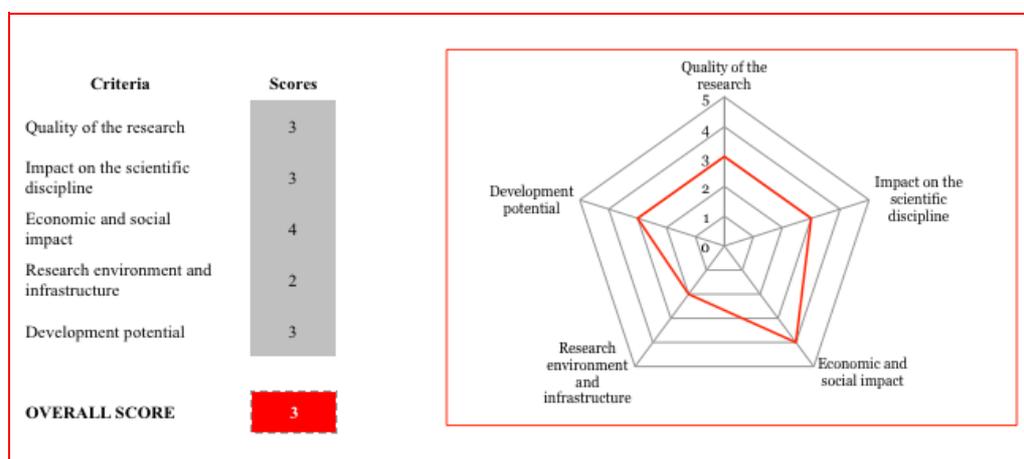
Though much of the Centre's research is very good, there is a lack of coherent focus, and it seems to rely over-much on individual staff members, with a rapid turnover. However, due to the fact that it takes up important research questions and engages with research fields that to some extent are neglected by other units but prominent on the international research agenda, the potential for development is certainly there. The panel recommends that a sustainable organisation of interdisciplinary research is set up in the future both internally and with other research institutions.

#### 4. H\_03\_Latvian Academy of Art, Institute of Art History

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Institute of Art History</b>
Name of university	Latvian Academy of Art
Type of institution	University

The Institute of Art History was established in the early 2000s after a split from the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Arts. It is affiliated to the Latvian Academy of Art (a total of 725 students enrolled in all degree programmes, 59 of them studying at BA and MA level at the Art History department). The Institute is very small, consisting of only six researchers with no administrative and technical personnel. Between 2008 and 2011, the number of staff was reduced by half because of the economic crisis and the drastic reduction of funding.

Figure 3 H\_03 - Scores



#### Quality of the research

The Institute of Art History is a small but highly productive group of researchers working on original sources and publishing for various audiences. The Institute is the main research unit in Latvia specialized in the history of visual art, applied art, design and architecture and its methodology. It carries out sound research within a national frame. The research is focused predominantly on individuals, schools and trends of Latvian art and architecture. While the methodology can hardly be considered particularly innovative, there are important novelties on the thematic level – the attention is directed towards personalities and phenomena that were marginalised during the Soviet period. Researchers collect information from archives, museums and by *in situ* fieldwork, systematise it and interpret it predominantly within the national context. Some innovations in the methodology of recent research include a trans-cultural approach. In particular, the Hanseatic perspective seems very promising as it fruitfully transcends the national frame towards a broader contextualisation of the phenomena under scrutiny.

The Institute has participated in international projects in partnership with related institutions from Germany, Poland and the neighbouring Baltic countries – an indication that the quality of research has conformed to accepted international standards.

#### Impact on the scientific discipline

The Institute is highly visible nationally with 151 outputs up to 2012, including several monographs (an average of 27.6 outputs per researcher). Most of the publications listed in the self-assessment report are in Latvian and testify to the authority of the Institute as a national centre of competence. At the same time, some of its main activities, such as the peer reviewed academic journal *Art History & Theory* (15 issues published from 2003 till the end of 2012), have an international dimension, as well as an international editorial board. The journal publishes articles in Latvian and foreign languages and is available in libraries abroad, including CEEOL (Central and East European Online Library). Some of the staff's articles are published in internationally recognised forums in foreign languages. The Institute has been involved in a couple of international projects. These partnerships could potentially result in influential publications with high profile international publishers.

PhD training is another way of influencing the development of the discipline. Five dissertations have been completed for the period 2006-11. Students at the Academy of Art apply their research training at the Institute – they work with the database processing unclassified material.

A major project started in 2012 with the support of the State Culture Capital Foundation is a multi-volume Latvian art history. However, the key bilingual web based project on Latvian art history, which could greatly enhance the international visibility and impact of the Institute, has been aborted because of insufficient funding.

### **Economic and social impact**

Like many of the other institutions assessed, the Institute of Art History has a high social impact due to its focus on national cultural artefacts, in both the modern and the pre-modern period. The Institute is committed to the popularisation of Latvian artistic heritage. It carries an ambitious educational programme as well, part of which is the documentation and dissemination of monuments of Latvian art and architecture. The series *Riga Monuments of Art and Architecture* published by the Institute targets broad non-specialist audiences. The Institute collaborates with state agencies involved in the protection of cultural heritage and with companies working in the field of cultural tourism. These relations have resulted in the publication of information materials (including digital) and expert consultancy. Staff members from the Institute have served as experts on the boards of state and local agencies active in the field of art and cultural heritage. It is noteworthy that in 2012 new partnerships have been established, which is a sign of the importance of the Institute and the demand for its experts.

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

The strategic aim of the Institute is a comprehensive history of visual arts, architecture, applied arts and design in Latvia. The Institute is small and there has been an alarming tendency of diminishing its staff from 9-10 researchers in 2006-08 to 5-6 in the last two years. The Institute has hired three of the five PhD students promoted in 2011, and the link to the University of Latvia Faculty has been reinforced in 2012 by the appointment of a new director. However, there is no long-term plan for employing research personnel, or for financial resource management. On the contrary, an important and innovative bilingual project on Latvian visual heritage online project has been brought to a halt because of insufficient funding. The Institute's personnel is limited to researchers, without any administrative and technical staff. The lack of technical staff, together with the limited funding, is seen as a main weakness of the Institute, making strategic planning very difficult. The research infrastructure needs updating, and the resources are of limited availability to outside users.

### **Development potential**

The strategy of the Institute is in conformity with the state funded research programme in humanities. Although the Institute does have some experience with collaborative projects funded by international bodies (ERDF, NATO), the SWOT analysis does not point to the opportunities to seek external funding and does not envisage a plan to cope

with weaknesses and threats (especially the insufficient and unpredictable state funding).

The self-assessment report leaves the impression that the expectations towards the Institute for a contribution to contemporary Latvian art history and national culture are not matched by adequate funding by the state. On the other hand, there is no evidence that the Institute is actively seeking external funding or adapting its priorities to new agendas that could possibly attract external/international partnerships and funding. According to section 7.1. none of the international projects has brought any additional funding into the Institute.

Although the staff have a rich experience and carry out substantial research, the lack of critical mass of researchers, including early stage researchers, the poor conditions and the insufficient funding seriously threaten the sustainability of the institution and its development potential.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The Institute of Art History in its present form is the result of a split from a larger unit, the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, and at present it lacks a critical mass of research and other staff. However, given its current position within the Latvian Academy of Art, there is a potential for survival and sustainable development by further strengthening this integration. The experience thus far seems to have created a viable formula for combining research with teaching and supervision of PhD students.

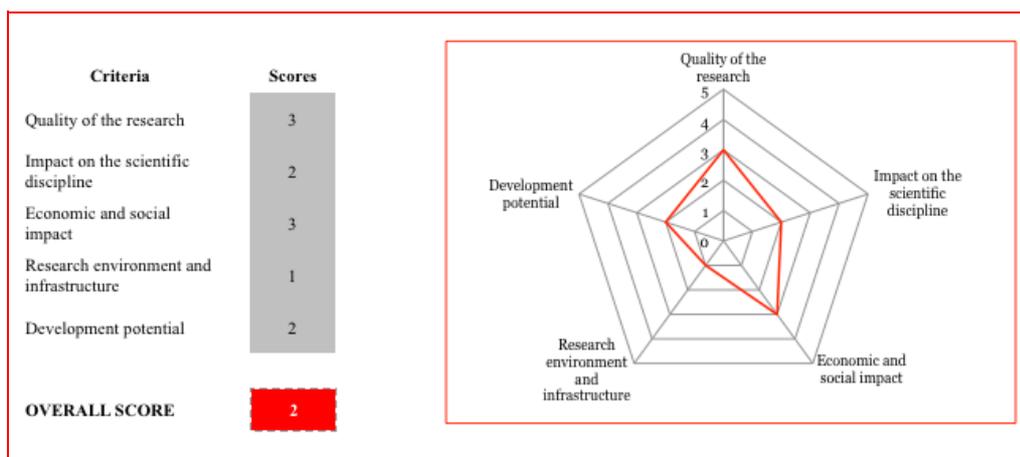
The Institute needs to be proactive in seeking external funding, international visibility of its research and collaboration with non-academic partners for which it could provide consultancy and possibly commissioned research.

## 5. H\_04\_UL Faculty of History and Philosophy

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Faculty of History and Philosophy</b>
Name of university	University of Latvia
Type of institution	University

The Faculty was founded in 1919, including Philology; in 1970, the Faculty of Humanities was created, which reduced this Faculty to its current size and structure, running the main BA, MA and doctoral curricula for history in the country, and curricula for Philosophy and Archaeology which are unique in Latvia. Around 400 students are taught by 19 historians and 10 philosophers in the academic staff. Some confusion arose about the numbers of staff members: 29 names are listed in the SAR, which figure was confirmed in the interview, and specified into 19 historians and 10 philosophers, among whom 11 professors. The numeral lists in the SAR mention 14.1 FTE academic personnel, among whom 5.37 are at professorial level. The non-mentioning of PhD students in these overviews appears to have been a misunderstanding.

Figure 4 H\_04 - Scores



### Quality of the research

With only two disciplines in a faculty, history and philosophy, they both have a certain broadness of scope and interest, although reduced by a dramatic reduction of staff over the last few years. Quantitatively the output is clearly satisfactory and, moreover, although the focus of the specimen is Latvian, a larger European perspective is integrated in the contributions. Nevertheless, the channels of publications are predominantly local with a substantial share of articles in English, German and Russian, mostly among the archaeologists and historians. The enclosures from history show research across the long historical timeline back to pre-history. The main focus is on 20<sup>th</sup>-century Latvian history, for which faculty members heavily contributed to general books on national history which rest on the disclosure of new sources and the interpretation of the various regimes. A large part of the publications of the Philosophical section concerns translations and commentaries on classical philosophers. It is striking that some senior professors only published nationally and that the record of some philosophers is relatively low during the years 2006-2012. A strong doctoral training led to 27 doctorates in history and 12 in philosophy. Frequent international contacts have to be noted, too. Overall, the faculty's two sections show quite different

profiles, of which that of the historians and archaeologists are distinctly higher than that of their colleagues in philosophy.

### **Impact on the scientific discipline**

It is highly relevant to uncover source material leading to unbiased new interpretations of recent Latvian history. Three of the faculty's professors co-authored the new History of Latvia, published in 2006/2007 in four languages, followed in 2009 by a volume on Latvia during WWII, which unfortunately is still not yet internationally broadly accessible. It is to be hoped that the international impact of the new research will grow further; the specialists in the pre-modern history appear to have already collaborated more intensively with their colleagues abroad. Nevertheless, the development of history and philosophy seems to be mainly local within Latvia and historical documentation seems to be stronger than innovative theoretical contributions discussing research paradigms. Some interdisciplinary cooperation with other faculties is pointed but only with few details. During the site visit, it appeared that the most innovative group among the philosophers, working on cognition, has moved to the Faculty of Social Sciences, due to a divergence attributed to generations. The remaining staff follows more conventional paths and works on a fairly individual basis. This observation reinforced the panel's view that the archaeologists and historians display a greater scientific innovation than the faculty's philosophers, which implies that they would deserve differentiated scores.

### **Economic and social impact**

Re-writing the contemporary history of the Baltic states is highly relevant for social and political consciousness. The government sponsored this research and its dissemination, and it is to be commended that PhD research and education has profited directly from this effort. On the other hand, the unit should be encouraged to collaborate more intensively with researchers in neighbouring states and to contribute more actively in the historical debates on a European and global level. In that respect, the specialists of the older periods are already thinking more in larger frames and comparisons. Cooperation with museums and some public outreach are listed, but that seems to rely mostly on individual initiative without being anchored in concerted institutional efforts.

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

The small size of the Faculty, with only two disciplines, and its subdivision into seven departments of unequal size, threatens to limit collaboration on the internal, local, national and international levels. The material infrastructure only satisfies basic research needs. As a consequence, relatively few external funds could be acquired, which keeps the Faculty in a rather depressing state: too small and heavily under-funded. The small scale and fragmentation of the units, with their limited research capacity, hamper the development of the disciplines and, with the decrease in staff and the extreme financial cuts after 2008, also threatened the critical mass to an alarming level. The combination of the two (or three) disciplines follows uniquely from tradition, not from research based criteria, and no relevant collaboration has become apparent between the two main components. Moreover, each of the disciplines has external counterparts with whom the formal collaboration under the umbrella of the UL takes place for 'conferences, research projects and PhD supervision' (as says the SAR). The fragmentation of historical and philosophical research in separated units in different buildings hampers the transfer of new insights into the educational system, while the university professors have too few opportunities for developing their own research lines, unless they can profit from external opportunities such as government programmes.

### **Development potential**

The Faculty is aware of its 'insufficient number of international publications' (SAR); they should be encouraged to participate more actively in international programmes. The plan to compose a volume about the authoritarian regime of '15 May' deserves praise. The absence of an attempt to formulate forward-looking strategies and goals beyond the explicitly stated intention to continue what is already done, testifies to a potential counter-productive narrowness of the research environment. The broadness of

contextualisation of the Latvian research topics, particularly in a European perspective, shows a potential for stronger future collaborations within and across the disciplines and a capacity through joint efforts in a larger disciplinary context to produce projects with an innovative potential. The discussion with PhD students showed a potential in the next generation, but the training programmes of the doctoral schools deserve to be organised on a smaller more intensive scale encouraging more intensive exchanges. The slight increase in staff in 2012 will probably not be enough to reorient the research structure. But in all respects, the lack of collaboration within the Faculty and the thin and very unequal links with the respective Institutes, urgently calls for rethinking the inherited structures for the university as a whole, also in relation to the Institutes, in more collaborative and more inspiring ways.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The entire Latvian research domain of archaeology, history and philosophy would benefit considerably from a more coherent insertion into the university education and doctoral schools of the scholarly potential accumulated in the Institutes; in turn, these could profit from the incentives of younger generations in order to modernise their research agendas. The strikingly unequal distribution of funds between this Faculty on the one hand, and the Institute for Latvian History and the Institute for Philosophy and Sociology on the other, appears to be a counterproductive way of organising research and higher education, including the doctoral schools. The scholarly output of the Institutes – insofar as it can be deduced from the SARs – within the same fields is not proportionately larger or better.

A fundamental restructuring of the location of historical and philosophical research in several separate institutions and buildings, all in Riga, would greatly benefit Latvian research, including on matters Latvian.

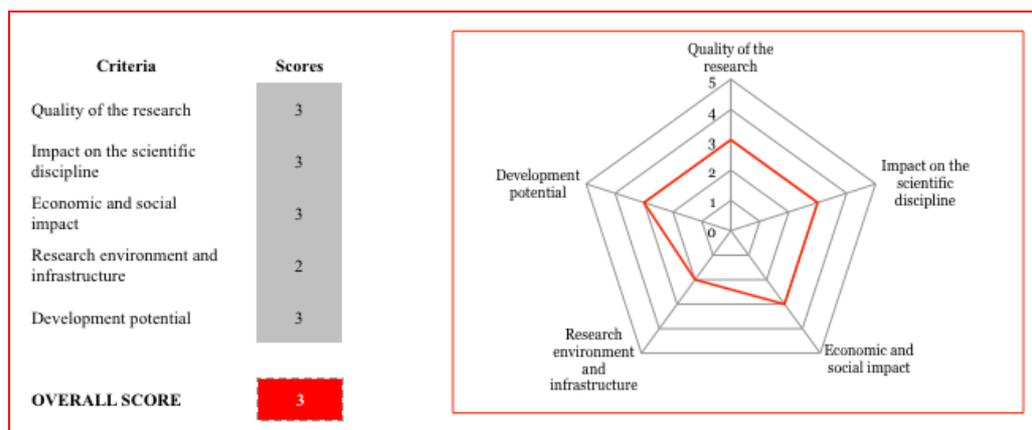
The various documents prepared for the evaluation were highly confusing and lacking transparency with regard to the input of human and material resources, and their relation to the output. In particular, the panel observed that the existing structures rather divide those activities which need to collaborate and condemn to ‘peaceful coexistence’ those who have little contact.

## 6. H\_05\_UL Faculty of Humanities

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Faculty of Humanities</b>
Name of university	University of Latvia
Type of institution	University

The Faculty is by far the largest of the research units scrutinised by panel H, based at the University of Latvia and organized into seven Departments and a Centre for applied linguistics. The Faculty concentrates mainly on studies of languages and literatures, bordering on area studies (e.g. Asian studies and Oriental studies) and cultural studies (e.g. Anthropology), with some of the disciplines staffed by only one person (e.g. Scandinavian, ethnomusicology, theatre/film). Thus each department covers several sub-disciplines, and this results in 15 chairs and 14 BA and MA programmes, each with its own programme director. The 11 submitted papers could not cover all the fields and the ranking is an average evaluation, based on the reading and the site visit.

Figure 5 H\_05 - Scores



### Quality of the research

Each of the departments has a satisfactory track record within the language and culture of its particular domain, Latvian/Baltic being the most important, with publications both in Latvian and in the languages concerned, at times in decent but not remarkable international channels of publication. A number of in-house publications and series carry the majority of the publications, albeit with some exceptions. Given the working conditions and the reduced amount of time for research (until 2011) the output is satisfactory, but there were some problems with submitted items: of the 13 texts listed and 11 submitted, only 7 were full text submissions and of these a couple were in illegible photocopies. The working conditions and reduced funding do not allow for larger joint projects that could set in motion national and international research activities; the disciplines seem to work in parallel, each with its own international collaborations. For the Faculty as a whole the number of disciplines is conceived in a somewhat narrow way, given the title 'Faculty of Humanities' – history, theology, philosophy are not included – and this impacts upon the possibility of broader interdisciplinary projects, although the publications represent a number of collective volumes including book projects with some European co-financing. Few of the articles have an innovative theoretical and methodological edge, although some are based on original archival or field research and the ethno-literary studies seem more advanced. The attempts to maintain a research profile for each discipline, promoted by several parallel journals and series and staffed

with few people prevent broader collective projects from materializing within the Faculty, which is regrettable since this could attract external funding/collaboration and foster broader and innovative developments with an interdisciplinary profile.

### **Impact on the scientific discipline**

There are many disciplines represented in the Faculty, and thus the impact is likely to be quite diffused. Some of the fields are unique in Latvia, e.g. anthropology, classical philology, Oriental studies, applied linguistics in English or Asian studies. Most of the disciplines maintain strong international ties within their linguistic and cultural field but mainly at the receiving end, exploiting the opportunity of being updated within the discipline. Not all the sub-disciplines are represented in the general list of researchers' publications. The unit has also been involved in a cross-disciplinary European Social Fund project with Daugavpils University on Latvian rural society, which includes e.g. a literary strand. A high number of doctoral students, including in non-Latvian fields, points to a high intergenerational impact; the Faculty provides supervision as well as degree awards to most of the doctoral students of Riga in the humanities disciplines, and there is particularly impressive research training and *esprit de corps* among the PhD students, both within and across the disciplines.

### **Economic and social impact**

With a good range of non-academic impact, including museums, schools, publishing houses – translating and interpreting – other businesses, embassies, banks etc., the Faculty's outreach is considerable within Riga and probably Latvia as a whole, and gives the unit extensive visibility, although the type of research activity that is disseminated is not spelled out in the SAR. But broader economic or political impact, e.g. from the area studies, translation studies or foreign language departments, is not documented to any extent, only implied (relations with embassies) in the SAR.

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

Although the Faculty is the largest unit we examined, it is still below the average size of comparable international faculties and also, from an international point of view, has a restricted, arguably skewed range of disciplines. The presence of many sub-disciplines, each with its chair and programme director, reveals the most pronounced weakness of the Faculty: a structure that causes each small discipline/sub-discipline to work in semi-autonomous isolation with no strong shared synergy through collaboration. A stronger relation between research strategy and organisation could produce efficiencies that would to some extent counterbalance the Faculty's size, fragmented structure and insecure funding. However, the strategy as set out in the SARs is more a list of goals, with interdisciplinarity and internationalisation among them, rather than a strategy indicating the means to reach the goals. With the rather important activity in linguistics, a stronger impulse, via the organisation, to join forces across the languages might be beneficial for the Faculty as a whole. Worth mentioning as positive elements in the structure is the Asian Studies department, partly based on Chinese funding and the engagement in Indian studies.

### **Development potential**

The Faculty staff is a strikingly engaged and committed group of researchers, with a goal-oriented involvement and a remarkable sense of responsibility for developing their disciplines. With the coexistence of the many disciplines there is potential for positioning the unit more strongly, including internationally. The Asian and Indian studies initiatives testify to a potential for further development. But the structural fragmentation and the somewhat restricted (probably historically based) selection of disciplines within the Faculty create clear limits to the realisation of this potential. It is difficult for the staff to take on larger initiatives of collaboration and interdisciplinarity, even though the potential is there.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

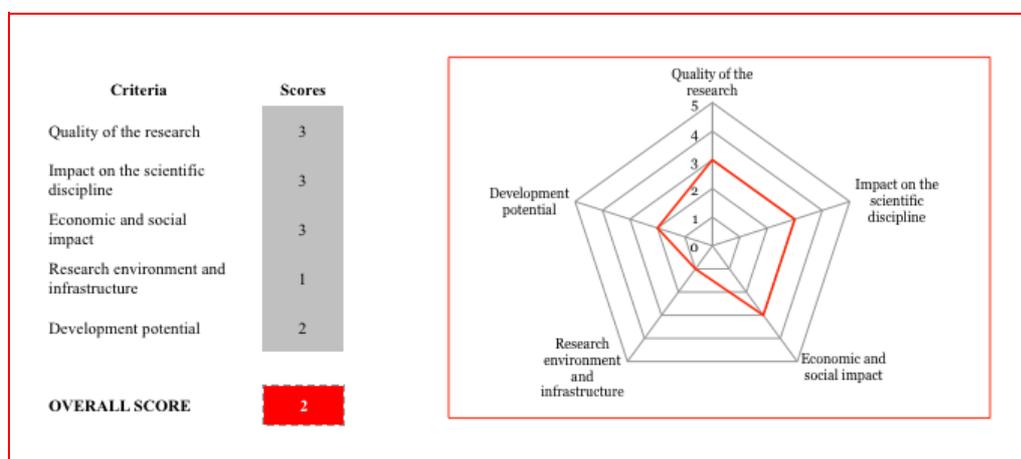
We recommend that the Faculty continue as it is, but also invite the University of Latvia to reconsider the location of some disciplines outside the present Faculty, disciplines which in most parts of the world would be regarded as belonging to the humanities. The Faculty is a unit that needs and deserves to be strengthened by more formalized collaboration with small and unsustainable faculties at the university. At the same time, a simplified organisation of the existing units might also prove beneficial for the Faculty.

## 7. H\_06\_UL Faculty of Theology

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Faculty of Theology</b>
Name of university	University of Latvia
Type of institution	University

The faculty is one of the smallest faculties of University of Latvia, with a small number of persons affiliated and with a total FTE in 2012 of 2.43. The general list of research publications refers to some of the traditional Christian theological disciplines, whereas the submitted publications cover the two fields indicated as active research interests of an interdisciplinary nature: pedagogy and philosophy of religion. The Faculty does not educate pastors/ministers (according to the response to supplementary questions, although such tasks are stated in the SAR).

Figure 6 H\_06 - Scores



### Quality of the research

The international orientation, mainly European (German/Russian), of the research puts its stamp on the attached publications, the distribution of publications among staff, the cooperation and contacts. The publication channels are diverse and both national and international. The documented research lies rather within a broad field of religious studies than theology proper and thus testifies to an interdisciplinary ambition. On the one hand, the SAR points to two foci of interests, philosophy of religion and pedagogy but, on the other hand, it also argues that it has broad expertise in the traditional sub-disciplines of theology, an interest that is re-affirmed in the responses to the follow-up questions. However, neither the size of staff nor the submitted publications confirm this double focus of the Faculty's research profile. In the general list of publications only church history predominates alongside the two main foci. If the ambition is to conduct Christian theology proper it will probably exceed the resources of the Faculty. The predominant use of Latvian as language of publication – supplemented by German, English and Russian – makes the faculty an important national unit, but with only some international recognition.

### Impact on the scientific discipline

With doctoral education and ongoing international collaboration the impact at times reaches beyond Latvia, but mainly within the two prioritised research fields. As a Faculty of theology as a whole, its size, functions and priorities do not allow for general international impact in the overall field of theology. There is an adequate theoretical

grasp of the subjects dealt with in the submissions, but the innovative features are mostly related to the study of the awareness of the cultural role of religion today, rather than traditional theology, as conducted on most European Faculties of Theology, and also to the broader aspects of philosophy or cultural studies of religion. The existence of the faculty's in-house journal suggests only a strictly local dissemination.

### **Economic and social impact**

The engagement with pedagogy and education in terms of religious 'awareness' is an important social impact factor in a composite culture, both related to modern globalization and the post-communist culture. It is an important feature for this unit that its outreaching engagement is both related to research and to research dissemination to a non-academic public, providing it with high visibility on the national level, addressing the variety of religions. However, its educational role is does not clearly describe the education of pastors/ministers and thus what type of program the research is supporting.

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

The material infrastructure seems only to cater basic academic requirements. The strategy seems more oriented to updating facilities and activities than to establish an innovative research development. The goal and role of the teaching programs are not clear. Compared with any international theological faculty the faculty as a whole is too small to develop a broad strategy for teaching and research. The relation to other faculties or to the section of religious studies at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the University of Latvia to ensure a broader platform is not discussed in detail.

### **Development potential**

The unit has the potential for positioning itself more strongly internationally. But the structural limits in terms of funding and size of staff is a major impediment. It is difficult to take on larger initiatives of collaboration and interdisciplinarity. But by transcending the narrow limits of traditional theology (as defined above), the unit may open itself productively to future mergers and/or broader collaborative endeavours. The faculty is too small to cover the research fields necessary for an autonomous unit, but discussions about mergers or substantial cooperation with other research units are not part of the SWOT or the strategy. The SAR contains no discussion on the implications of the chosen research profile in philosophy and pedagogy for the future of theology as a self-contained unit.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

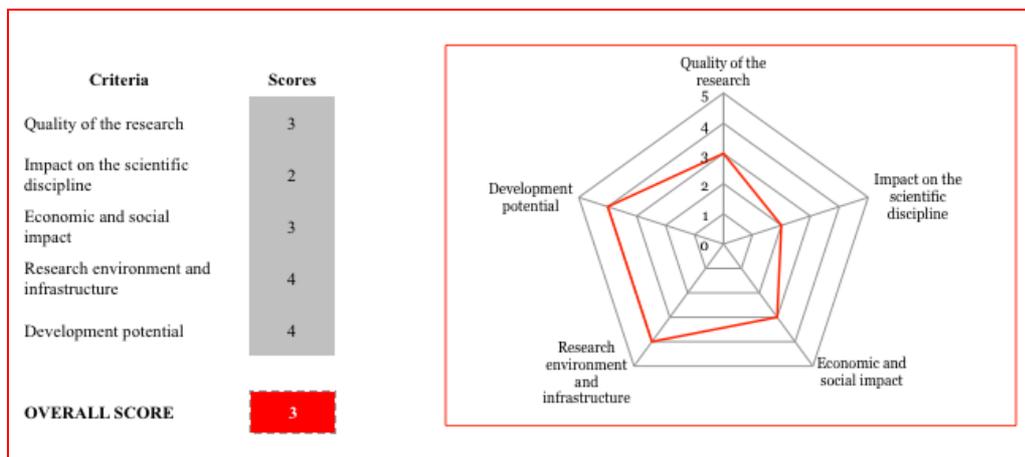
It is difficult to see an independent future for a Faculty as small as this. With the main research interests pointing toward more sociological, philosophical and pedagogical projects, the particular theological specificity of the research is reduced. The Faculty exemplifies the dissatisfactory fragmentation of the Latvian research landscape, impeding the further development of religious studies in an interdisciplinary direction as carried out at the Faculty at present. We recommend that theology be allowed to enter a larger institutional structure where the present research interests can be strengthened.

## 8. H\_07\_DU Faculty of Humanities

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Department of Humanities</b>
Name of university	Daugavpils University
Type of institution	University

Daugavpils University is the second largest in Latvia with its c. 3000 students enrolled in 51 study programmes. The Faculty of Humanities was first established in 1952 within the then Pedagogical Institute. Some restructuring within the Faculty took place between the 2011 and the 2012 self-assessment reports, which led to some initial confusion on the part of the panel. The on-site visit helped to clarify such questions. Currently, the Faculty of Humanities comprises six departments and four centres organised around the Institute of Comparative Studies, which is a research unit, while the others combine research and teaching.

Figure 7 H\_07 - Scores



### Quality of the research

The Department, now Faculty, of Humanities is responsible for teaching and research in Literary and Cultural Studies (including comparative studies), as well as languages. Apart from the Institute for Comparative Studies, all the other units combine research with teaching. As of 2012, the Institution’s research profile has been streamlined around three doctoral programmes. The research is diverse in terms of themes and methodology, ranging from filling the gaps in empirical knowledge about national literary history to studies using new approaches (e.g. feminist perspectives on nation). Border studies and youth studies are among the recent research foci which are being developed with the help of international projects (including FP7 collaboration projects and the Nordplus programme). The staff have a heavy teaching load, which has increased in the past couple of years. This will inevitably have a negative impact on the volume and perhaps quality of research output in the near future.

### Impact on the scientific discipline

The Faculty of Humanities has a history of 60 years but most of the units presented in the SAR have been recently established and could not have a significant impact yet. There is some potential for such an impact as quite a number of the staff participate in international events (esp. in the Baltic and Nordic region, as well as with other post-Soviet countries) and international projects. The Faculty has been remarkably successful in acquiring ESF scholarships enabling a substantial number of PhD students (37) to be

funded. The faculty launched three doctoral programmes, of which comparative literature was launched in 2004 and history in 2011, having 17 and 11 participants respectively in 2013/14. The third school is in linguistics. The Institute of Comparative Studies publishes a journal in English on an annual basis, which is included in EBSCO. While staff members are active in publishing, the majority of publications have limited visibility and influence, being included in locally produced volumes, series, etc. The institution could significantly raise its profile by seeking international publication outlets, esp. in English (in addition to Russian, which is currently the most common foreign language of publication).

Since 2009, the in-house publication series has applied peer review, but the great number of articles in Latvian and Latgalian obviously limits the number of experts. For many other in-house publications and congress volumes, the quality review is still less formal. The panel was struck by the high number of seminars, colloquia and congresses which have all led to various publications and series sponsored by the Faculty, some of which appear to be relatively ineffectively luxurious and ostentatious productions. The balance between quantity and quality seems still in need of fine-tuning. PhDs have joined the university faculty, some work as teachers and journalists. During their meeting with twelve PhD students, the panel was impressed by the enthusiasm and open mindedness they demonstrated.

### **Economic and social impact**

While most of the contacts of the Faculty are with universities and research institutions, some of the partners are museums, archives, local civil organisations in the region. The Faculty of Humanities at DU develops themes of regional history, language and literature, contributing to the understanding of the identity of the multicultural and multilingual region of Latgale. In this respect, there are some initiatives targeting youth but the public visibility of the Faculty could be further enhanced. (No media publications are listed in the 2006-11 SAR; 21 are listed in the 2012 SAR).

The flagship of the History department is the oral history group which collects, analyses and digitalises life histories concerning the culturally and socially complex evolution in the region. Apart from the invaluable historical information which is made accessible in this way, the group also plays an important role for the self-consciousness of the various cultural communities.

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

The Faculty has kept its personnel through 2006-11 despite the economic hardships, and has grown in 2012 with the incorporation of new units. The SAR is focused on the units within the Faculty of Humanities, with an abundance of detail which is not always really relevant for the research evaluation. The Faculty has had the courage to reorganise in 2012 and to choose a new and energetic Dean. The various areas of research came under the heading of ICS, but it is not clear yet if and how they all coordinate their research to contribute to a common goal related by the policy of DU. The university library offers access to books and periodicals, as well as access to online databases in the field, as well as up-to-date audio and video equipment for research and teaching purposes. Technical staff are available but the workload of the teaching staff is excessive and may seriously hinder research. The panel was impressed by the recent refurbishing of several rooms and offices that it was able to visit, and, more generally, by the committed, positive, enterprising and optimistic spirit it encountered.

### **Development potential**

The Institution has managed to retain its staff (even to recruit eight new faculty members in 2010 and 2011) and to attract external funding from highly competitive international programmes (such as FP6 and FP7). For 2012, the latter exceeds the state subsidy almost 6 times. The Development Strategy, as presented in the Reports, does not specifically address the threats identified in the SWOT analysis but rather follows the programme designed before the establishment of ICS, focused primarily on Latgale and Latvia. While the on-site visit revealed a clear, ambitious and realistic managerial vision,

the ICS and the Faculty in general would benefit from designing an integrated development strategy ensuring coordination between units and more open to international research agendas.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The positive evolution of the research environment, of the funding and infrastructure, the strategic management and the composition of the research staff all point to a strong commitment to the regional role of the DU, and the Humanities Faculty in particular.

Strong collaboration has been established with local and regional social and cultural institutions and numerous contacts have been developed with universities through Europe, in view of the comparative study of culturally mixed borderlands. As this theme will probably remain high on the political agenda in the future, the research orientation may prove fruitful. Deepening of the international orientation should be encouraged, as well as becoming more selective in the exchanges.

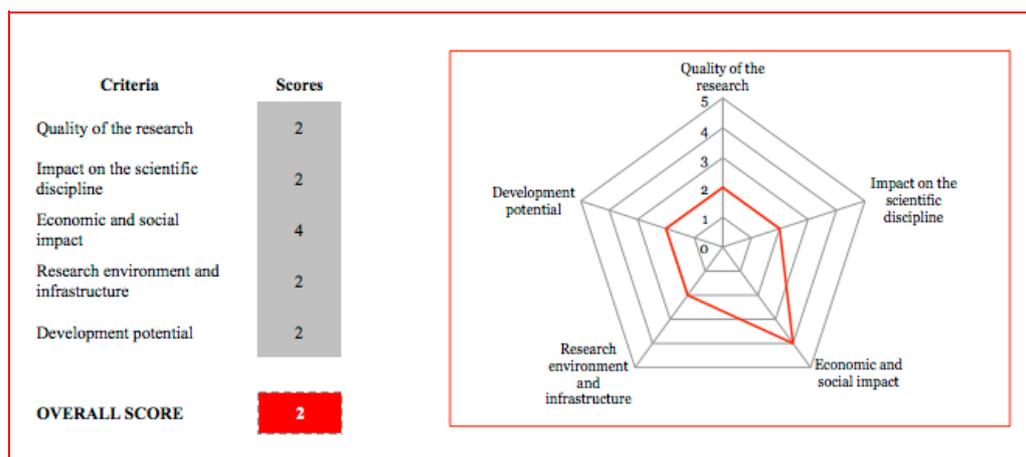
The Faculty is recommended to concentrate its research efforts further, as well as its investment in the organization of congresses and occasional publications, in order to position just one key highly visible series on the international platform, ensuring high standards of selection.

## 9. H\_o8\_Liepaja University, Humanities Direction

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Humanities Direction</b>
Name of university	Liepaja University
Type of institution	University

Liepaja University acquired university status in 2008; previously it functioned as a Pedagogical Institute. It is a member of the Small University Community of the European Union (which unites 20 universities from 7 EU countries). In 2012, Liepaja University Science and Innovation Park was established. Fundamental and applied research is performed within the three Liepaja University faculties: in the field of humanities – at the Humanitarian [sic] and Art Science Faculty and at two special research structural units the Kurzeme Humanitarian Institute (since 2007), and the Art Research Lab (since 2006). It has joint doctoral studies in Linguistics with Ventspils University College and since 2012 has had a licence for the doctoral program New Media Art (recruiting students since January 2013).

Figure 8 H\_o8 - Scores



### Quality of the research

The unit seems to be interesting but its structure is somewhat peculiar. In the SAR it is not made clear whether the ‘Faculty of Humanitarian & Arts Science’ includes the two other named sub-units, the *Kurzeme Humanitarian Institute* and the *Art Research Lab* or is a third one. The research areas are specific and well-defined: the unit is particularly strong in regional (Kurzeme/Rucava) studies and in new media, especially art practice. This topic – New Media Art – is exceptionally impressive, a sparkling unit with an arts lab, excellent international contacts, a very good monograph (published once in Latvian, once in English, submitted as item 2) and a new international doctoral programme. This unit seems to be unique in Latvia, despite the fact that many of the research activities are carried out by a few people with one person in particular bringing it to an international level. Publications in other fields of the Faculty are mainly in Latvian (that is understandable given that the main object of research is the national language and folklore), and mostly in local press. Studies on Rucava dialectology deserves special mention.

### Impact on the scientific discipline

The unit is difficult to grade since there are essentially two very different areas of successful research. As highlighted above, the New Media Art department is of

international standard and very energetic, but research in this area comprises only ca one-sixth of the scientific output of Liepaja Humanities; it is also still under development. The studies of the Kurzeme region and Rucava dialect are also of a high standard but they do not have sufficient international reach, being mostly published in Latvian and in-house, and do not appear to be investigating comparative or theoretical questions. These two very different areas of research have been averaged to reach the overall 'Impact' score.

### **Economic and social impact**

The unit's local social collaboration is impressive. Within the region they are active in the city, businesses, schools, including nursery schools, etc. Projects, summer schools and festivals in the field of new media art have created a new interactive and multiform cultural environment, which promotes recognition of Liepaja in Europe among new media researchers, e.g. the Art Research Lab has created a space for *Open ideas* – a communications platform for creative people interested in various fields. The Lab itself is a busy and exciting environment for students and others. There is an undeniable spill-over from research done at this regional University; it is well embedded in both the town and the region and, aligned with city of Liepaja strategy, it fosters creativity with the aim of local economic renewal.

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

The support services, equipment etc seems to be good, although the archives and the library are not fully digitised. By contrast, the material infrastructure in the New Media Art unit satisfies international criteria. A lot of their recent development has been EU-funded (e.g. ERAF for infrastructure, European Social Fund for postgraduate studies, masters & doctoral), as well as by the EEA Norwegian Financial Mechanism – three projects: two for development of new media art education and one for promotion of regional development). Bearing in mind the two different areas of development of the research environment, the unit remains uneven in terms of organisation and especially strategy. While in new media art the investment has borne fruit e.g. this year in creating an international doctoral programme, in linguistics and literature the innovative nature of the research is not clearly visible.

### **Development potential**

The SAR provides a useful grid of plans, which are excellent for the New Media Art unit but lack a vision and a strategy for transcending the local context for the other units. Under 'SWOT threats', they highlight concern at the disproportion between Riga and the regions. Strategically, they seem to have put their eggs in the basket of (i) the regional plus (ii) the global, which is arguably a good balance, but the latter is currently dependent on a very small team. New media art is launching study programmes at all levels, but it still needs time to develop critical mass in this field, though the drive and energy is there, as long as this staff is retained

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

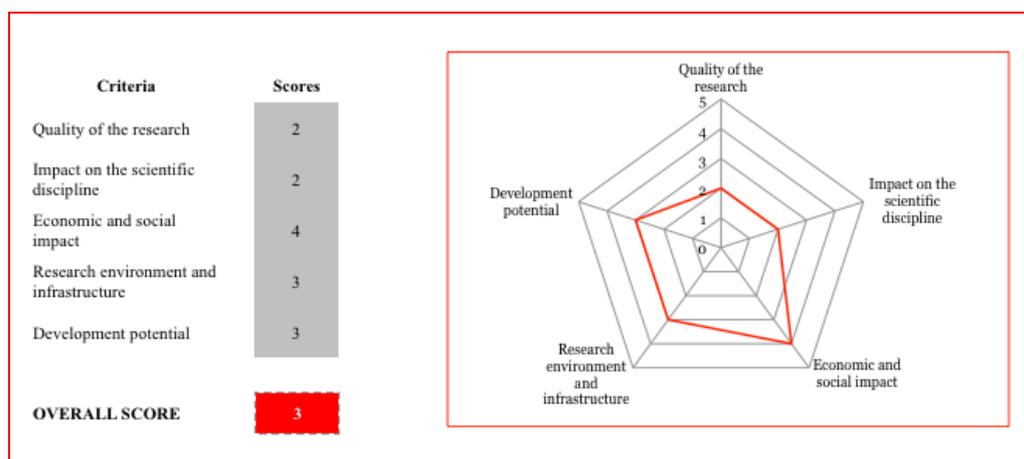
This unit is actively networked within its city and region, and this is one aspect that unites the two otherwise very different sub-elements of its research. In one of those sub-elements – new media art – the unit has created a unique niche in the Latvian research landscape and has the potential to be an international player and this should be strongly supported. Given the quite recent creation of the University the other units of the Faculty should be given the opportunity to develop a strategy that reaches beyond the local context to enable it to become a greater player in regional studies by becoming more international in its research questions and by seeking international peer-reviewed publication outlets.

## 10. H\_09\_Rezekne HEI Institute for Regional Studies, Humanities Direction

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Institute for Regional Studies, Humanities Direction</b>
Name of university	Rezekne HEI
Type of institution	University

The Rezekne Higher Education Institution (developed from the former Pedagogical Institution) has a regional importance recruiting almost half of its students from Rezekne and its region. The Institute for Regional Studies (REGI) is one of the two research units established in 2006. REGI is a relatively small interdisciplinary institution comprising social sciences, engineering and humanities. Staff combine research and teaching. The focus is on applied research in the field of sociolinguistics/linguistic landscape research.

Figure 9 H\_09 - Scores



### Quality of the research

The Institute is well positioned to work in newly developing fields such as regional studies and heritage studies, as well as sociolinguistics. There seem to be good cross-fertilisations between disciplines. Though recently established, it has found its own niche and has been remarkably goal-oriented in its activities. With its regional focus, the Institute stands out against the backdrop of other research units whose priorities lie predominantly with national identity, national language, etc. The combination of fundamental and applied research, with an emphasis on the latter (the ratio reported around 1:3), adds to the unique character of the Institute within the Latvian research community. While most of the publications of the Institute are local, some have appeared in international journals and collective volumes.

The Institute has good research potential, which is expected to develop in the coming years. Some of the publications suggest that a lot of the research carried out so far has been empirical and predominantly descriptive. Furthermore, a lot of energy has been dedicated to the raising of awareness and the popularisation of Latgalian language, which is perceived as a major mission of the Institute (see below, esp. criterion 3).

### Impact on the scientific discipline

Regional Studies is an emerging interdisciplinary field, to which the Institute is in a position to contribute by its innovative way of combining basic and applied research into

problem-oriented, rather than discipline-oriented projects and activities. Through its ambitious and energetic work, it has managed to achieve perceptible results in a short time. The Institute publishes the Humanities journal *Via Latgalica*, indexed in EBSCO. Its most important impact is in the study of lesser used languages (Latgalian) as well as the establishment of research information infrastructure in the form of databases on language and cultural heritage.

It seems especially fortunate that the Institute is not closed in the national space but oriented towards the international community. While currently there seems to be no capacity and ambition to contribute to international research on a conceptual and methodological level, the team of the Institute actively seeks to benefit from the experience of internationally recognised centres in the field of sociolinguistics.

### **Economic and social impact**

Collaboration with local institutions and society seems really impressive. The social and cultural impact is related to the main activity of the Institute on research and protection of Latgalian as a regional language and the local/regional cultural heritage. The Institute maintains lively connections with municipalities and organisations from the region, including professional organisations and museums. Part of this collaboration is the participation of experts from the Institute in the elaboration of regional development strategies. Another activity of considerable social importance is in the field of language education. The encyclopaedic Lingvoterritorial Dictionary of Latgale, resulting from an ESF-funded project targets wider non-academic audiences, as do some other publications popularising Latgale culture.

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

The Institute has been able to attract significant external funding through participation in international projects and successful bids to EU Structural Funds. As a result of recent projects, the Institute has built a good infrastructure including IT facilities and subscriptions to online resources needed for research. The Institute is about to move into thoroughly renovated premises. Financial support is available for publications through the HEI. On its behalf, the Institute has developed a few databases as well as resources for language education. Further development of resources in Latgalian occupies a central place in its strategy. A joint PhD programme with Kaunas University is under development. In the field of its research specialisation – applied goal-oriented regional studies of Latgale region – the Institute provides a very good research environment.

### **Development potential**

The strategy of the Institute conforms to the growing attention to regional development in Latvia and on a European scale. The SWOT analysis in the self-assessment report is balanced and realistic. The strategy addresses adequately some of the weaknesses identified in the SWOT analysis. The Institute is small but the staff is predominantly younger and dynamic individuals who seem to work very well as a team. Recent projects have made it possible to attract early stage researchers who have stayed on after the end of the project. Some of them are at the stage of completing their PhD theses. The Institute has been active in joining international networks and building partnerships with local and regional institutions. The competences of the research team are well balanced to enable its development as an interdisciplinary centre of regional studies. The Institute offers support for publications on a competitive basis. There is a clear vision for the future development of both research and awareness raising activities through participation in projects and international collaboration. However, there are concerns that the regulations about priorities given to the Research Centres of National Significance and the state programmes focusing on national identity could put the Institute at a disadvantage in terms of eligibility to apply for funding.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

REGI is a young and dynamic unit with high potential to become an important research centre in the field of Regional Studies. The Institute has found its niche in the Latvian

research landscape. With the combination of basic and applied research and the regional framework, the Institute offers a valuable supplement to the predominantly national focus of Latvian humanities.

REGI attempts to combine two directions: on the one hand research and on the other a mission to play a key role in the region contributing to sustainable development through the socialisation of intangible cultural heritage. Currently, the latter seems to prevail, but there is good potential for enhancing the depth and quality of research as well. There is a clear vision for the future development of the Institute as a major player in Regional Studies and comparative research on language and sociolinguistics. To achieve this goal, the Institute should encourage its research staff to improve their foreign language competences and to actively seek international contacts and international peer-reviewed publication outlets.

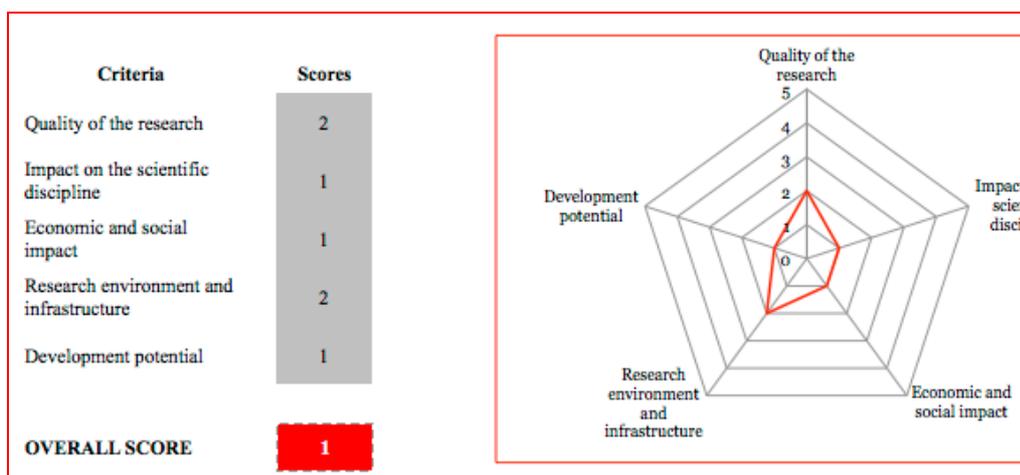
## 11. H\_10\_VUC Centre for Applied Linguistics

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Centre for Applied Linguistics</b>
Name of university	Ventspils University College
Type of institution	University

Ventspils Centre for Applied Linguistics is a small unit (6.1 FTE) created as a research unit in 2006 at Ventspils University College. The main directions of their research fall into the domain of applied linguistics: i) theory and practice of translation and intercultural communication; ii) terminology and LSPs; iii) the theory and practice of lexicography.

As well as their research remit, the Centre's staff also have a teaching load in BA, MA and PhD study programmes at VUC. Unfortunately, due to constraints of time and distance, it was not possible for the panel to visit this unit.

Figure 10 H\_10 - Scores



### Quality of the research

The main direction of the unit is translation studies. The national focus on translation studies and the establishment of a database is a well chosen focus with a potential for national impact. Other topics are added also, but with the said main focus a productive research profile can be built. The language of publications will, by the nature of the research focus, for a large part be Latvian, but other languages could be used to disseminate the results. Although the corpus of material for the database project is national, there is at the moment a vibrant international preoccupation with theories, methodologies and technologies for digitising projects, all of them with different national grounding, to which contacts could be beneficial for the research. Moreover, in translation studies there has been a booming international research environment over the last 20 years or so, to which contacts should be made. In this unit, however, we see that translation is understood as one-way process from outside into Latvian, not as a broader research domain.

### Impact on the scientific discipline

Although the institution tries, productively, to define a focus and to prioritise its research interests an impact is only created when a more generalising conceptual framing is formulated beyond the national and local confinement. However, the role of the unit in Master's education deserves mentioning. Ventspils University College is one

of 2 places in Latvia having EMT (European Master of Translation) programme. There is a collaboration with Liepaja University concerning doctoral education.

### **Economic and social impact**

A major outreach activity is not documented in the SAR, but being a recently created institution (2006), there are rich possibilities of a broader impact, including through re-education of language teachers.

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

Though the unit, according to the documentation, receives relatively high funding support in the Latvian context, the creation of internationally visible research environment demands long-term strategy and international interaction which is not documented. The size of staff and funding does not seem to make rapid progress possible which could be wished for with the database project which should have a potential for a broader national collaboration beyond the modest level indicated in the SAR. Also, funding for active contact with international research environments in translation studies will be necessary. The strategic reflexions do not seem to be sufficiently pro-active in this regard. The material infrastructure covers basic needs.

### **Development potential**

The chosen research focus has the potential to grow to a research of major national importance, but the task can hardly be carried out by this institution alone. Moreover, ideas about how to collaborate are not developed. The short history of the institution hosting the research unit may explain some deficiencies, but plans for a national project across institutions could be considered.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

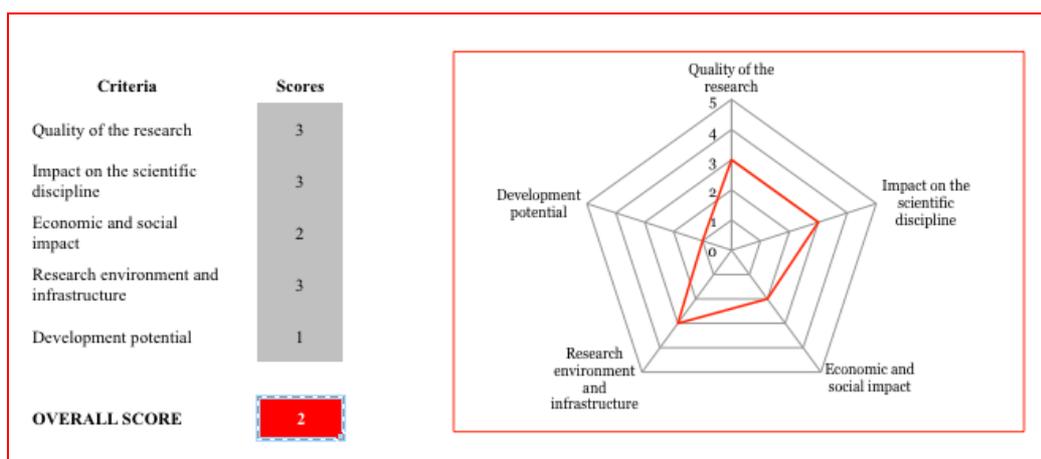
Several research units are dealing with translation studies in Latvia (at least VUC Centre for Applied Linguistics, UL Faculty of Humanities and RTU Institute of Applied Linguistics). One could consider possibility of active collaboration in the field, and maybe some joint projects or funding applications, specially having in mind size of the unit and other characteristics. The sustainability of VUC as a local institution of learning, which no doubt is important in the region, will depend on a much more intensive interaction with other national research institutions in the same field.

## 12. H\_11\_UL Institute of Latvian History

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Institute of Latvian History</b>
Name of university	University of Latvia
Type of institution	Institute established by university

The Institute of Latvian History, formerly part of the Academy of Sciences, is affiliated to the University of Latvia with the status of an ‘agency’. It is one of the largest research institutions in the humanities in Latvia, although its staff total has been dramatically reduced in the past few years. While the nine departments cover the history of Latvia from pre-historic times to the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, there are two main strands of research, which perform on different scales and often for different audiences (international and national): archaeology, dendrochronology and palaeodemography on the one hand, and 20<sup>th</sup> –century history on the other.

Figure 11 H\_11 - Scores



### Overall score

This score reflects the lack of flexibility and adaptability to the changing conditions (esp. compared to other evaluated institutions), as well as the inner fragmentation of the Institute.

### Quality of the research

The ILH is the leading research institution on the history of Latvia with long traditions dating back to 1936. It covers a broad range of Latvian history, from pre-historic until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In archaeology, they are very well equipped to create relevant repositories of materials concerning ecological conditions and prehistoric societal structures. The Institute has earned international recognition in the field of archaeology, including bioarchaeology and dendrochronology. It is the only institution in Latvia and one among few in Europe developing the latter two subdisciplines. These account for the most high-level and most cited publications of ILH. Other fields of research covered by ILH are Mediaeval and Modern History of Latvia, 20<sup>th</sup> Century History of Latvia and Ethnology. The panel did not have access to publications in any of these fields; the self-assessment report leaves the impression that the major part of the historical research aims at the discovery of new source material revealing unknown facts and leading to new interpretations of Latvia’s history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Impact on the scientific discipline**

The ILH publishes four series/journals: the historical Latvian *Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*, has a limited circulation and visibility. A substantial part of the articles appear in Latvian in the Institute's journal which has a leading position in developing Latvian history. It is not formally peer reviewed, originally published only articles in Latvian, although recently also in other languages. *Arheologija un etnografija* also primarily publishes in Latvian, as do the series on the monumental history of Riga and castles. Publications in archaeology, dendrochronology and palaeodemography are mostly issued in international media and therefore have the widest visibility; they are often co-authored by international teams including Latvian researchers. These are the fields where interdisciplinary and international collaboration is most developed. The institute's archaeologists publish widely in foreign languages, functionally collaborating with natural scientists. Their themes and methods appear to belong to the forefront of international research. As a result of completed projects, repositories of material have been created which can be used for further research.

The staff remained remarkably stable during the period 2006-12, between 50 and 55 members, of whom around 43 academics. They published a total of 86 monographs (which are mostly co-authored volumes), 38 articles in category 1 (mostly by the archaeologists) and 32 in category 2. Moreover 685 publications are referred in category 4 ('Other'). Thus it is not clear how the definition of the last category has been interpreted, but anyhow it is striking that most of the publication tradition of the historians is not targeted at an international audience nor subject to formal peer review.

### **Economic and social impact**

In addition to research, the aims of the Institute include developing 'history as the basis of the national cultural identity and national pride', which obviously is relevant to wider national tasks. The Institute has partnerships with a number of museums in Latvia and heritage agencies. Some of the staff are members of expert boards or independent organisations in the field of cultural heritage, research policy bodies on a national level, as well as members of the Commission of Historians of the President of Latvia. The Archaeology Department collaborates with a number of private agents carrying out or supervising excavations.

Staff members play a significant role in the national dissemination and popularisation of new scientific insights. The publications on 20th-century Latvian history obviously have great public resonance. However, its main means of dissemination, the ILH's own journals and other publications, are hardly marketed and poorly disseminated, which raises questions about their viability. Given the central role the ILH plays in the nation, one wonders why it does not attract higher numbers of young researchers. There is almost no involvement in teaching although the staff has huge potential in this respect.

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

The infrastructure of the ILH is adequate but not entirely up-to-date. The Institute has a rich repository of archaeological material, an archive of dendrochronological data, a collection of historical wood samples. It has concerns about the storage and preservation of the archaeological material, which cannot be kept in the Academy building where the staff is working. Databases and repositories are available for research. In 20th-century history, a database of politically persecuted individuals (1940-41) is under development. While the slow generational replacement is noted in the SWOT analysis, the SAR does not clarify if anything is undertaken to ensure human resource development.

The relation with the history department at the UL Faculty of History and Philosophy appears to depend on personal affiliation rather than institutional collaboration.

### **Development potential**

ILH has been competitive on a national level, benefitting from support through two National Research Programmes focused on national identity, as well as 17 projects funded by the Latvian Council of Science. The Institute has a critical mass of

researchers, especially in the field of archaeology and is in a position to undertake research on all periods. The generational turnover is slowed down, esp. in some departments, because of the unattractiveness of research careers. If a substantial part of the research remains focused on Latvian history exclusively, this may in the longer term hinder the potential of the Institute to take part in comparative and transnational projects, and its competitiveness on the international level. Complaints about the uncertain financial basis for the publication of *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls* seem to be unrelated to the numerous other publications of the ILH. During the interview, the possibility was mentioned of turning to a uniquely electronic version. Possibilities to reconsider the journal's scholarly scope and its editorial outlook have not yet been considered.

During the site visit, the panel was struck by the lack of creativity and vision among the Institute's leadership. Diverse research themes are enumerated rather vaguely, which can be understood due to the uncertainty of the funding. The fragmentation of the staff in nine small units does not trigger innovation. The staff reacted defensively to all kinds of suggestions to stimulate the research environment and its attraction for young researchers and international funding.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

Considering the academic staff of around 43 full-time researchers during seven years, the overall scientific output deserves closer scrutiny because of its unbalanced character. First, the publishing styles of archaeologists and historians differ considerably; second, publications in category 4 take up an overwhelming share: 16 items per person during the years 2006 to 2012, in contrast to an average of 1.6 peer reviewed articles in categories 1 and 2. Two 'monographs' on average per person are hard to evaluate, as the concept itself is unclear and can refer just as well to a single-authored PhD thesis as to a collective volume with outside contributors.

The conservative and defensive attitude of the ILH is striking. Its staff has remained pretty stable over the years. State funding, substantially supplemented by the National research Council's grants, provided a relative security, which the ageing staff wishes to preserve. The two main branches, archaeology and (contemporary) history operate quite separately and differently: the former interdisciplinary and internationally competitive, the latter rather inward-looking. EU subsidies were first acquired in 2012. So, the interaction between the ILH's two main constituent branches remains a very weak basis for their cohabitation.

The fragmented structure and 'splendid isolation' of the ILH do not stimulate innovation. The ILH is expected to play a key role in the elaboration of Latvian national identity but it does not quite live up to this mission, as its publications are not widely disseminated. The ILH has contributed significantly to prehistoric research and to the publication of primary sources and studies about the 20<sup>th</sup>-century political history; however, a coherent vision on the Institute's future mission, covering other research themes Latvian history as a whole in its international context, would be highly desirable. The ILH has failed to attract young researchers and international funding. The panel especially recommends a much closer collaboration between the ILH and the historical and archaeological sections of the UL Faculty of History and Philosophy, which would be beneficial to both sides, reinvigorate and rejuvenate the ILH and offer a broader impact to its work. At the same time the quality of the Faculty's education and doctoral training would be enhanced by improved research facilities.

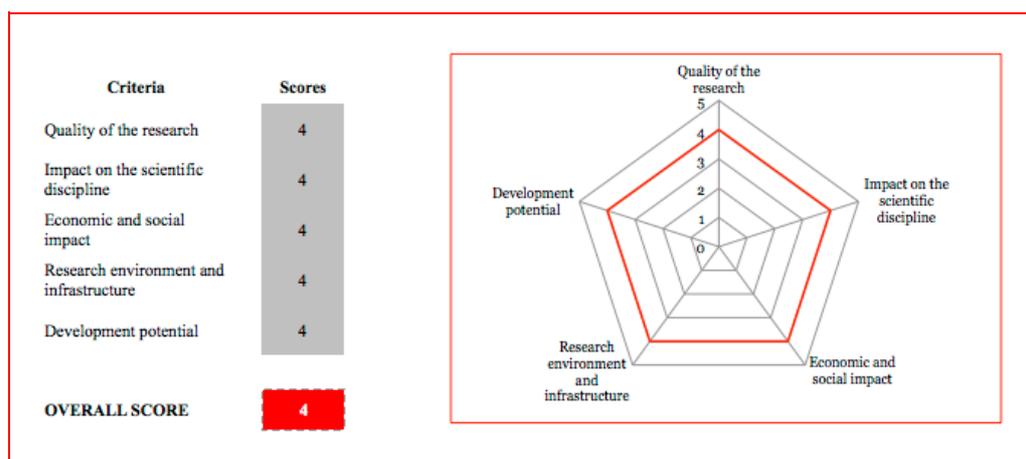
### 13. H\_12\_UL Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art</b>
Name of university	University of Latvia
Type of institution	Institute established by university

The Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art [ILFA] is based at the University of Latvia in institutional terms and is currently based physically in the Academy of Sciences building, but will soon be relocated to the new National Library of Latvia. It is one of the larger units submitted, having 30.3 FTE reported staff, all research-only.

ILFA runs three main units – literature, folklore and art [*sic* = arts, specifically music and theatre], the smallest by far – and each is fairly autonomous; after an introduction by the director & heads of unit we visited them separately. Literature includes both Latvian literature and comparative and foreign literature, including theory; folklore ranges widely and includes the extensive and well-established Archive of Latvian Folklore, which will soon be available in the National Library.

Figure 12 H\_12 - Scores



#### Quality of the research

ILFA is not the only place in the country researching on Latvian/Baltic literature and ‘folkloristics’, but it is undoubtedly the main one. The SAR is exceptionally clear and well presented. The jewel in ILFA’s crown is the Archive of Latvian Folklore [ALF], which is currently being digitised. While types of publications swing quite a lot over the 7 years, a respectable proportion are peer-reviewed articles or monographs – and all the five articles supplied were of high quality. In addition, particularly on the literature side, the research goes well beyond the national focus to contemporary theoretical and methodological approaches, e.g. queer studies, eco-criticism, postcolonial studies, the everyday etc. Thus there is a lot of interdisciplinary work. They also combine the study of Latvian authors in Latvia with that of those in exile. On the folklore side, the ALF and related research is unique, and again their research approaches include original interests such as online folklore and storytelling; the Folklore Unit is also well networked in the international theory of folkloristics. They have good international visibility: 43 of the 195 publications listed have appeared with international publishers in English or German. Finally, there is high quality collection, editing and translation. Strengthening the focus on comparative and transcultural studies will further enhance the profile of the Institute.

### **Impact on the scientific discipline**

ILFA is a leader in Lettonistic and Baltic Studies. It has been engaged in international projects, including one funded by the highly competitive FP7 Collaboration Programme. Four new fund-seeking projects were launched in 2012. At the same time, one of its main goals is to collect, preserve and disseminate Latvian literary, artistic and folklore heritage as research sources. While folklore & literary studies are conducted in other Latvian units, ILFA plays the major role in these two areas, being exceptionally well networked both with other Latvian HEIs and with international (esp but not only Baltic) ones. Having a broad but focused research area is very helpful in this. Much of the international collaboration is multilateral. Joint publications, conferences etc include both Baltic studies & folklore studies, + theatre studies, storytelling, music, archive studies, Herder, etc. Among interesting aspects of the ALF archive is work on prison camp folklore which shows how ILFA takes up a broader definition of folklore.

### **Economic and social impact**

ILFA regards itself as both a research institution and a heritage institution. A considerable proportion of its publications present and interpret Latvian folklore and thus target broader audiences. It has worked on issues related to national identity which are of wide public interest. The Institute is engaged in partnerships with non-academic institutions (museums, professional associations in arts and literature, publishers, schools) and cultural practitioners. Some of the staff are members of expert boards in the field of cultural heritage (including UNESCO), doctoral defence boards and prize juries. ILFA researchers participate in the development and implementation of university programmes in their fields of expertise. Further, ALF holdings include CDs & DVDs, as well as the 'Virtual Encyclopaedia of Latvian Culture' & digitised material, 96% of whose users are from outside the University of Latvia. ILFA also offers public lectures, a children's folklore festival, and works with Ministry of Defence, UNESCO intangible cultural heritage etc. A striking element of social impact is research on online folklore and storytelling face-to-face and through the media, radio, TV etc.

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

As stated above, ALF is a multifunctional research infrastructure with long traditions, currently being digitised. The Institute has hosted five scholars from abroad for research. All nine doctoral students who completed their studies successfully at the University during the period under review have been appointed as researchers at ILFA. The PhD topics are an integral part of the research of the Institute, and again are often original and imaginative (e.g. a thesis on stories of getting lost in forests, or one on the suburban fishing community). Dissertations may be published in the *Studia Humanitarica* series. However the SWOT analysis indicates as a threat the diminishing support for early-stage researchers as a result of decreased state funding. The use of IT resources is growing but expertise is insufficient. The ILFA researchers currently suffer from inadequate working space, though hopefully this too will improve after the move to the Library. Also, the Report does not give evidence of any collaboration between the three departments of the Institute, and the visit suggested they are rather separate, with 'Art' (music and theatre) itself divided into two units of 2 people each, both suffering from a sense of isolation: for instance, music aspires to having doctoral students but this would require closer collaboration with external units.

### **Development potential**

The Strategy is very clearly presented: future infrastructure & research development correspond closely with national research policy, maintaining continuity between the programme periods. Management of both the whole Institute and its sub-units is visible and hands-on; during the visit, good communications seemed evident. The main goals are to maintain the excellence of research, especially in literary and folklore heritage. The development of online resources is an important aspect of the latter, ensuring wide public accessibility of the Institute's archives. The ILFA is actively seeking internationalisation of its research, planning support for publications in other languages

and participation in international professional organisations, as well as integration of its electronic resources into European networks.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

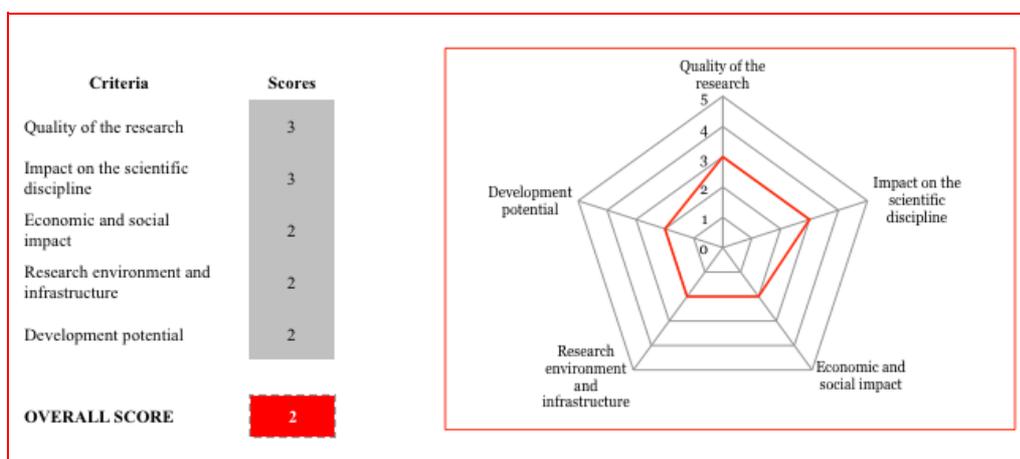
A good impression of *esprit de corps*, sound management and commitment to both maintaining heritage and connecting to international issues and networks was in evidence. However, it was less clear how the three units related to each other and more integration is to be encouraged. The third unit, 'art' [music & theatre], raised some concerns of isolation and smallness: its researchers would probably benefit from being directly integrated into units elsewhere researching these fields.

## 14. H\_13\_UL Latvian Language Institute

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Latvian Language Institute</b>
Name of university	University of Latvia
Type of institution	Institute established by university

The Latvian Language Institute is one of the oldest research institutions in the field of Latvian language; it was established as one of the constituent institutes of the Academy of Science, and is focused exclusively on research. It became part of the University of Latvia in 2006. As stated in the SAR, its main research fields are dialectology, history of the language, onomastics, grammar, lexicology and lexicography, sociolinguistics, terminology and studies of language culture. The SAR lists 26 FTE staff.

Figure 13 H\_13 - Scores



### Quality of the research

With the study of the history of the Latvian language in a contemporary perspective, the research goal of the Institute is clearly of a national character, emphasising its contribution to nation-building. Being a research institution without teaching obligations, LLI's output covers all the major fields defined by the standard paradigms of national language history. In spite of the strictly national focus, some of the Institute's publications appear in relevant international outlets. Given the history of Latvia with its recent entry into the EU and the role of small nations/languages in the age of globalisation, its goals are of crucial national interest. However, more topical studies of language use, pragmatics, loan words, new linguistic domains (like terminology of IT, economy, politics), translation studies, language and digital media, youth and children's language, gender issues, social media etc. are not included and nor are recent developments within general linguistics. Such a reorientation could enhance the possibility of situating the study of Latvian within the paradigms of modern linguistics and reinforce international interaction with other small languages where current research focuses on similar problems. Discussion of globalisation etc. appears in the SAR, but it does not appear to be translated into research practice.

### Impact on the scientific discipline

The Institute has a strong position in branches of traditional linguistic studies– it covers the major fields of the history of language, focused on Latvian material, and is therefore

the main national research agent in the field. But its output is characterised more by solidity and meticulousness than by innovation. The unit's international impact is related to disseminating material rather than to asking innovative research questions. In sum, its inward-looking strategies prevent it from having as substantial an international impact as it might and should.

### **Economic and social impact**

The Institute's impact relates mainly to the academic world, although there is in principle considerable potential for public outreach, including to schools and/or members of the general public interested in language in the internet age or linguistic changes in the light of Latvia's changing international position. The unit's main current social impact is in responding to consultations on language use. The SAR notes the threat of indifference in society towards language and research on it. There may be a lack of interest in the particular fields and paradigms developed at the Institute, but the example of other small languages in Europe and elsewhere suggests this is not universally the case: many new lines of research are developed in modern-language studies and provoke public debate. Given the radical changes in post-Soviet societies, the Institute could play a significant and valuable role in examining questions such as language politics, the correlation between literary language and dialects, youth language, digital media etc. A few interdisciplinary projects with medical fields and IT are mentioned, but these are more the exception than the rule and again do not appear to be based on innovative research questions.

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

As the largest institution of its kind and covering the major aspects of its field, the Institute is a strong national player. But because it sees itself as having a predominantly conservationist, conservative role - keeping the Latvian language intact and alive - lines of innovative research are not easy to discern, either with regard to the material under scrutiny or with regard to the theoretical underpinning of the research. Staff numbers have remained stable in recent years, but recruitment beyond traditional language-history fields has been limited. The SAR points to a generation gap - insufficient researchers in early middle age. Recruitment should be more effectively and explicitly focused on developing linguistic topics of special interest in post-communist societies and relevant to present-day language changes. The material infrastructure seems to be sufficient, but there is no innovative strategy for redirecting structure, organisation or research developments.

### **Development potential**

In the SAR, the SWOT analysis is more elegiac than practical or analytical, and without a clearly forward-looking strategy reflecting the international reorientation of the study of national languages in the world; there is little perceptible potential for going beyond the national quasi-monopoly. There is clearly a wealth of experience and talent in the Institute but without this forward- and outward-looking attitude, the possibility of building up a serious theoretical expansion allowing for the study of Latvian under contemporary globalised conditions seems unlikely. In sum, there is a worrying lack of dynamism or perspective on future development.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

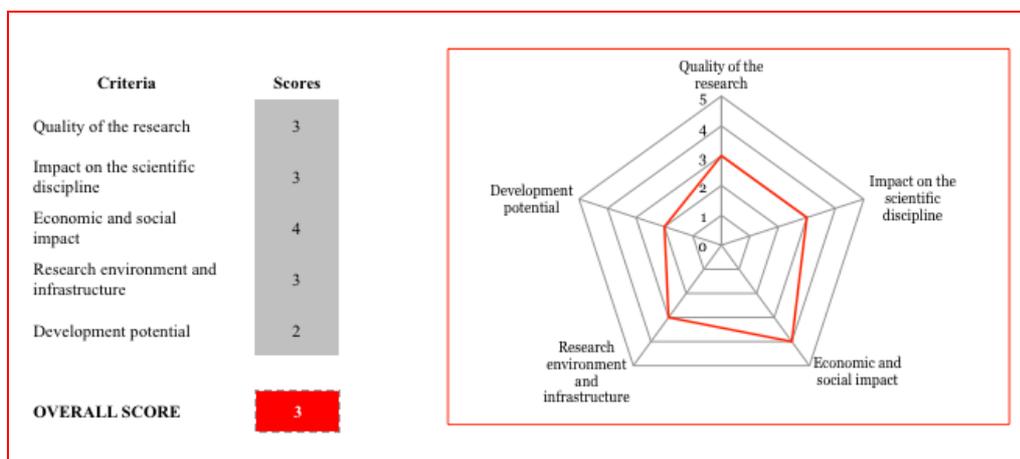
Being the oldest and most authoritative research unit conducting research on the Latvian language gives the Institute a special responsibility for keeping up-to-date in international linguistic research, with regard to methods, paradigms and research domains. The Institute's emphasis is on the national mission to preserve the language, which is in itself an important goal, but this should not exclude studying its latest developments in the contemporary national and global context. We would advocate a fundamental reconsideration of the units that share the responsibility for research on the Latvian language.

## 15. H\_14\_UL Institute of Philosophy and Sociology

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Institute of Philosophy and Sociology</b>
Name of university	University of Latvia
Type of institution	Institute established by university

The Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, formerly part of the Academy of Sciences, is affiliated to the University of Latvia with the status of an ‘agency’. It is one of the largest research institutions in the humanities in Latvia. The philosophy and sociology departments seem relatively independent of each other, with the former focusing on the translation with commentary, dissemination and popularisation of Western philosophy and the study of the development of Latvian philosophy and history of ideas, and the latter – on research on ethnicity and youth. Other research fields include religion and oral history.

Figure 14 H\_14 - Scores



### Overall score

The overall score reflects the undoubted achievements of the Institute in its various areas of expertise. The fragmentation of research between the Institute on the one hand and the two LU faculties on the other, as well as between the various sections of the Institute, does not seem advantageous. The lower score on development potential conveys the doubts as to the viability and competitiveness of such an organisation.

### Quality of the research

The Institute of Philosophy and Sociology presents itself as the ‘culturological flagship’ of Latvia. Indeed, it is the largest, best funded and most authoritative Latvian institution in the two fields it covers. The Institute carries out research on philosophy and the history of ideas in Latvia, religious philosophy and religious studies, ethnic relations and integration, youth and deviance research, and national oral history.

The combination of classical Western philosophy with empirical sociological research is all but obvious, and rather a relic from the past. During the site visit, the panel members were not convinced of a substantial cross-over or structural collaboration between the main disciplines, with the positive exceptions of the groups working on religious studies and oral history.

The research team on youth has taken part in a number of international projects giving good opportunities for comparative research. In the 2012 update of the self-assessment

report, comparative research is listed as a separate direction of the research – obviously an evidence of its growing importance, although this is not yet clearly visible in the publication output. 58 of 189 publications listed in the 2012 Report are published abroad, including the prestigious *Analecta Husserliana*.

The Institute's mission of 'putting into the practice of society life humanitarian and social values' is quite challenging and unclearly related to the research priorities as it seems to imply that the educational and popularisation mission should be the leading one rather than a supplement to research.

### **Impact on the scientific discipline**

The Institute plays a leading role in the development of its disciplines in Latvia. The translation programme of the Institute contributes to the introduction of classics and new ideas in philosophy to Latvian audiences. In addition, the philosophy section delivers valuable instruments helping to popularise classical philosophical concepts via a digital encyclopaedia and a series of translations. These are widely used in education.

The section on the philosophy of religion produces its own periodical *Religious-Philosophical Articles* with an international editorial board and double-blind peer review. The periodical traces its origins back to the 1920s; it was re-established in the 1990s after a ban during the Soviet period.

The sociological section publishes the interdisciplinary English-language journal *Ethnicity*, available online and included in international databases. The sociological section is very much oriented towards an international readership, even if some research themes have been commissioned or sponsored by state institutions.

The oral history section has established an archive, which is a valuable resource for future research. The researchers are considering possible ways of its dissemination to broader audiences as well.

On an international scale, the Institute has been active in hosting international conferences and workshops in its research fields. International funding has been secured for some publications: by the Friedrich-Ebert Fund for some issues of *Ethnicity*, by EU funds for youth studies.

### **Economic and social impact**

Like other Latvian research institutions in the field of the humanities, the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology has a strong vision of its mission in relation to the preservation, popularisation and study of national intellectual heritage, as well as the enhancement of Latvian scholarship through bringing it in touch with the most important achievements of world humanities (esp. philosophy). At the same time, the Sociology section aims to combine fundamental and applied research and seems open to practical problems such as strengthening civil society and democracy, integration of minorities, etc. Thus there is an obvious difference between the high social relevance of the sociological research, which is largely applied, and the more theoretical studies of the philosophers.

A number of the Institute's publications target wider audiences. In this respect, a very good use is made of new media, including DVDs and internet, which are considered particularly apt for younger publics, including school students. The FSI research results are used as teaching materials for students, while publications such as the *Virtual Encyclopaedia of the Humanities* will target wider non-professional audiences.

The Institute has been engaged in partnerships with a number of ministries and state agencies providing expert advice on policies and strategies. The Institute (esp. the sociology section) has done commissioned research analysing social change in Latvia. Collaboration with various national and international organisations has also been active.

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

Only one researcher was appointed in 2012 and four in 2011. Ageing and slow renewal of staff is pointed as a weakness in the SWOT analysis. The Institute has become part of a

National Research Centre, which is expected to result in moving to a new building and an update of the IT equipment. The Institute has managed to attract two internationally renowned scholars of Latvian origin as project leader and honorary member of the Institute.

The Institute has been active in PhD training and supervision; the problem however is that the research system seems not to be able to accommodate the post-doctoral researchers and they often face difficulties after the completion of their dissertations.

The Report does not give evidence of any collaboration between the Philosophy and the Sociology departments of the Institute, nor between strands within each of them (e.g. oral history is 'national' and does not seem to have anything to do with research on ethnic minorities and youth). It is not clear either what the relations are with two related institutions: LU Faculty of History and Philosophy and LU Faculty of Social Sciences. Quite a number of researchers belonging to the Faculty of History and Philosophy appear here as well, with the same publications. This is desirable in scholarly terms, but it is not clear if the administrative side of this double counting is right. The relations between colleagues in the faculties may deserve a more convenient structure, as does the rationale for the combinations of disciplines in all these cases.

### **Development potential**

The research strategy of the Institute is focused on developing its areas of expertise: history of ideas, national and European identity, intellectual traditions, social change, ethnic and youth policy. In terms of international cooperation, the Baltic region is a priority, together with the ambition to take part in EU-supported international collaborative research. Another strategic priority is providing expertise for the needs of state institutions. The Institute has the ambition to combine the strengths of the humanities and the social sciences in an interdisciplinary research centre but there is no clear programme as to how this should happen.

The recognition as National Research Centre is advantageous but it is unclear how far scholarly autonomy and integrity can be preserved under the current budgetary pressures. Fragmented and insufficient funding hinders long-term planning of research, looking for external funding with matching funds and development of new themes.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

One serious problem is the generational renewal of research staff: budgetary constraints and inflexible structures hamper the recruitment of early stage researchers. Another aspect of the same problem is PhD students' unclear status: they are recruited and trained by the University, while their academic advisors are based at the Institute and they do their research at the Institute. Combining research with education, esp. at the doctoral level, is mostly beneficial for all parties and should be guaranteed by a close collaboration between faculties and institutes within UL, including on a structural level.

It would be advisable to reconsider inherited structures that have led to mechanical mergers of disciplines on the one hand, and at the same time to fragmentation of research between and within institutions. While interdisciplinarity is very welcome, it is not obvious that it should/could be developed precisely among the sub-disciplines and thematic fields currently developed at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology. Research environments should be flexible enough to give the researchers the freedom to team up for interdisciplinary projects.

## 16. H\_15\_Academic Board of Journal "History of Latvia" Fund

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Academic Board of Journal "History of Latvia" Fund</b>
Name of university	Academic Board of Journal "History of Latvia" Fund
Type of institution	Scientific institution

The board consists of eight members, seven of whom occupy this 0.4 FTE position since 1991, and one since 2006, the only full-time member. Three of them are professors at the UL Faculty of History and Philosophy. The publications listed were mainly published in the Journal itself, and for two board members no publications are listed at all.

The Journal publishes important research articles based on archival research in various countries. The aim is mainly to demystify the position and fate of Latvia in the difficult international context of the 20th century. A certain nationalistic tendency is revealed by the wording of the SAR. The publications are important for Latvian history and its position in the European context. The focus lies mainly on diplomatic and political history, although more innovative themes have been addressed in PhD theses – which cannot be directly related to the Board of the Journal. The articles are in Latvian, which should make them accessible for school teachers, but less for an international scholars. However, the SAR refers on p.17 only to an academic audience.

As the research outputs – the main publications of the board members and PhD dissertations – were created within the UL, this Board was not considered to be a research institution in its own right.

**SCORE: 0**

## 17. H\_16\_Jewish Association “Shamir”

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Jewish Association “Shamir”</b>
Name of university	Jewish Association “Shamir”
Type of institution	Scientific institution

Shamir is an NGO which is committed to the exploration and popularisation of the history and culture of the Jewish community in Latvia, especially immediately before and during the Holocaust. It acts as a lively cultural centre and as such is instrumental in the enhancement of historical memory and cultural understanding.

Its research activities are mainly fact-finding, developing online databases, collating and publishing others’ research and liaising with international Jewish Studies actors. They are of enormous value for both future researchers and the wider society.

However, the SAR and other supporting documentation do not make it possible to apply the RAE criteria to this institution: only two staff members hold a PhD, which does not fulfil the criteria for acceptance within the RAE (5 PhDs) and there is no formal procedure for application, evaluation and appointment.

**Score: 0**

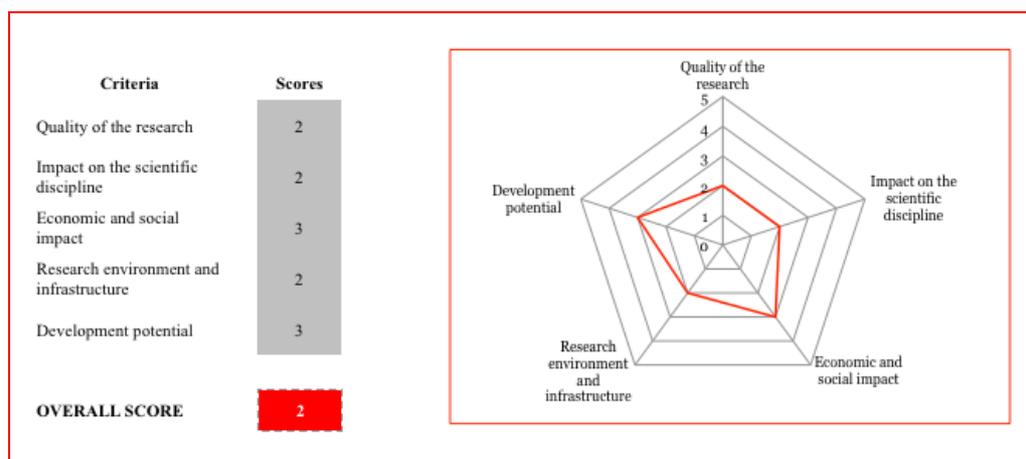
## 18. H\_17\_RTU Institute of Applied Linguistics

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Institute of Applied Linguistics</b>
Name of university	Riga Technical University
Type of institution	University

The Institute of Applied Linguistics is a small, dedicated unit based at the Riga Technical University, itself a very large HEI providing training in a range of technical fields (engineering, economics, chemistry, IT etc). The unit was only created by name in 2011, though language teaching at RTU goes back to 1958. Staff at the IAL provide all the foreign-language training (principally English) and courses in technical translation for RTU's ca 5000 students at BA & MA level. They are currently applying for the right to award doctorates. IAL staff conduct research into ESP [English for Specialist Purposes] and more broadly into theory of ESP pedagogy and theory of translation, which are both international fields.

The site visit was arranged at the last minute, because another unit was unavailable, but was conducted very professionally, with presentation, discussion and supplementary material provided.

Figure 15 H\_17 - Scores



### Quality of the research

The unit is heavily engaged in teaching English for Specialist Purposes and their research relates to this. Their submitted publications are essentially textbooks and training manuals, but there is evidence of original research within this circumscribed (but international) field: some of the material supplied was interesting and of quite mature quality. In addition, the unit is well networked, involved in an international conference series whose 2012 conference *Meaning in Translation: Illusion of Precision* was hosted by the unit at RTU, with speakers from 30 nations; the papers extended to issues of cyberterrorism, translating Wikipedia, subtitling, translating puns, misunderstanding, etc. The proceedings will be published by a UK academic press. The staff are also on a number of editorial boards etc.

### Impact on the scientific discipline

Staff at the unit are active in international contexts – one is Secretary of the International Federation of Language Teacher Associations in the Baltic and another is

on the EC DGT list of experts in translator training. There is also national collaboration in their field.

### **Economic and social impact**

Given the pedagogical focus, i.e. training the next generation of Latvian linguists, translators, engineers, economists etc., plus extension into many external fields (business etc., internships, language-teacher association etc), the impact of their research is assured. They are also actively engaged in producing translated and edited material for their university and organised the above-mentioned international conference in celebration of RTU's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012. The unit has social impact in particular through its good interaction with non-academics (European Commission Representation in Latvia and various enterprises).

### **Research environment and infrastructure**

The RTU IAL derives its strengths and identity from being part of the technical university. Under SWOT, they list lack of funding for research and lack of equipment and lab space for large-scale experiments etc. Yet at the visit the environment seemed impressive as a workplace, technologically etc. Their research is included on several international databases. They have up-to-date IT software, mainly used for teaching, and the full facilities of RTU are available for conferences etc. As far as future strategy is concerned, the staff have plans for upcoming book-length publications, networking etc. and more international involvement. Also during the period 2 PhD were obtained, 3 are about to be defended and two other staff members are doing PhDs.

### **Development potential**

The SAR 2006-11 (info on 2012 was only supplied following the visit), is unclear on income, giving no figures because its funding could not be separated from that of RTU overall. This makes it impossible to assess developmental potential in financial terms. But other evidence – not least the development plan, which has clear strategic goals – suggests they have the energy and momentum to add further research networking and publications to their active pedagogic portfolio and existing research. In addition to publications mentioned above, they intend to establish an international journal.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The unit's current research is largely pedagogic, closely related to their field of ESP and translation theory, but there is good potential for development, given the energy and commitment of the unit and its network of international relations. We would also advocate that they develop more research collaboration with colleagues engaged in translatology and theory of translation in such other units as the University of Latvia Faculty of Humanities and VUC Centre for Applied Linguistics.

## 19. Summary of the Institutional Assessments

### 19.1 Overview of the research performance across the Panel coverage

#### 19.1.1 The general level of quality of research in Latvia in the fields submitted

Out of the fifteen units which the panel scored, one was given the overall grade of 4 ('Very good: the institution is a strong international player'), six were given a 3 ('Good: the institution is a strong national player with some international recognition'), seven were given a 2 ('Average: the institution is a satisfactory national player') and one was given a 1 ('Poor: the institution is a poor national player'). This gives an average overall score across the board of 2.46.

#### 19.1.2 Key strengths, areas of particular interest

- a. Within this scoring, certain aspects of Latvian humanities research were rated as being above the level of the overall grade, in particular the *Economic and Social Impact* of many units assessed. Five units scored 4 on this criterion – ILFA, the Academy of Art, Rezekne Institute for Regional Studies, the IPS and Liepaja University: they are all actively networked within their locality and some beyond that. Notable achievements in this area include ILFA's storytelling workshops and online folklore research, Liepaja's cooperation with the city, businesses, schools, including nursery schools and running of festival and summer schools; the participation of experts from Rezekne IRS in the elaboration of regional development strategies, and IPS's work with state agencies providing expert advice on policies and analysing social change.
- b. Also within the overall scoring, many institutions or sections of institutions, and some individual researchers or research groups, stand out as being particularly strong (one point to remember is that where a unit combined different disciplines working without evident collaboration, the overall score inevitably 'flattens' out the successes of the stronger element; this also affected the individual scores on *Quality of research* and *Impact on the discipline*). Examples of excellent achievement are the history section of the UL Faculty of History and Philosophy and the Archaeology section of the ILH, which publishes internationally-recognised research in dendrochronology and palaeodemography; the new media arts lab of the University of Liepaja; the work in literary theory and new literary approaches being conducted by ILFA and Daugavpils; the UL Faculty of Humanities' unique development of Asian studies; and the *Virtual Encyclopaedia of the Humanities* created, with national funding, by the IPS, the LLI and ILFA.
- c. Both ILFA and Daugavpils University were found to be particularly innovative in their current research – in both up-to-date research questions and methodologies – and in their future strategies. Among researchers in applied linguistics, Ventspils and the RTU are commended for their engagement with international issues of translation theory and pedagogical research, and their active problem-solving approach to these issues – this is particularly noteworthy since, due to the unclear status of applied research, they did not score high. The UL Faculty of Humanities and Daugavpils had particularly good support for doctoral students; Liepaja and Daugavpils have recently inaugurated several new doctoral programmes. Generally, in visits, these and other doctoral students also spoke very positively of the support provided by their supervisors, many based outside their university of registration in Institutes or Academies. Throughout the fifteen submissions that were graded, there were many outstanding examples of academic engagement: prizes awarded, committees and panels served on, etc. A staff member of RTU is on the EU DGT list of experts in translator training. Ventspils is one of only two units in Latvia to be a member of the European Masters in Translation network.

- d. Among the individual research items submitted, particular note was taken of the following: publications at the Jazeps Vitols Academy on comparative music history and ethnomusicology; at the Academy of Culture on newly discovered ‘ancient holy places’ and their impact on the tourist industry; and at the Liepaja media arts section – a monograph on ‘creative networks’, previously published in Latvian and now republished in English.
- e. Finally, some units stand out for their success in obtaining international funding. Both Daugavpils and ILFA are involved in FP7-funded projects; the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has provided valuable funding to the IAH (which has also had NATO funding), Daugavpils, Liepaja and Rezekne, and these three institutions have also had support for infrastructural development, such as building up their doctoral student base, from the European Social Fund. Looking further afield, the UL Faculty of Humanities has developed its work in Asian studies with the support of Chinese funding; it has also worked with Daugavpils on the ESF-funded project on Latvian rural society. The IPS has benefited from EEA and other grant schemes to support its participation in international comparative youth studies.

### *19.1.3 Main weaknesses, areas of particular concern*

Though, as noted above, there are some clear areas of ‘strong international research’ and several areas of ‘strong national research with some international recognition’, much of the research produced by Latvian humanities scholars falls below this level and fails to reach international recognition. The panel wishes to highlight five main reasons for this.

- a. The focus on Latvian culture, while in itself valuable for the rediscovery and conservation of the national culture, inevitably limits the worldwide resonance of the research; one way in which some units overcome this limitation is to take a comparative stance – either within the Baltic region, or by making comparisons with the languages or cultures of other, similar-sized states or those with similar histories of occupation; another is to engage in overarching research questions of a theoretical kind; a third to take up issues of contemporary culture, for instance that of youth, the ‘born-digital’ generation.
- b. Another reason for the failure to reach international standing is the propensity to publish in the Latvian language and in local, even in-house publications which, in many cases, have a small distribution and do not meet international standards of peer review, editorial boards etc. Below we suggest some solutions to this problem, in relation both to translation and to publishing fewer but more globally resonant journals and series.
- c. While we understand the pressures that Latvian researchers are under, we hope, that by providing our recommendations below, to help more of them raise their sights towards international, especially European, grant applications and other forms of supranational research collaboration. Our suggestions of a system of centrally funded Visiting Fellowships and support for framing grant applications are intended to help towards this.
- d. Most importantly, we note a considerable amount of duplication within particular disciplines and fragmentation of potentially strong research groups in those disciplines. This is discussed in detail in 19.2.1 below.
- e. The linked issue of duplication and fragmentation is one of the problems we recognised in the relationship between Faculties and Institutes. More generally, the status of Institutes formed during the Soviet period gives rise to some concern. While the work of some of them is outstanding and engages directly with new and timely research questions, others have tended to rest on their laurels, secure in their relatively privileged position with research-only contracts and exceptional infrastructures. We recommend finding a more equitable way of sharing these assets and providing access to these privileges for more researchers, especially

those with heavy teaching loads and thus little time for the research that is nevertheless required of them.

## 19.2 General comments on Latvian humanities research

We have isolated six particular issues, with detailed discussion below and suggestions for ways forward. Our recommendations are summarised in conclusion in 19.3.

### 19.2.1 Duplication and fragmentation

- a. As noted above, the most striking issue for the panel was that of fragmentation and duplication of research effort. This is to some extent offset by plentiful collaboration, particularly encouraged by the need of individual staff – especially but not only those on teaching-based contracts – to supplement their income by working in more than one institution; but it also leads to a centrifugal structure of provision and research which is not ideal for developing new ideas, methodologies and research groupings.
- b. Much of the duplication and fragmentation mentioned above concerns discipline coverage. While some of the units clearly specialise in one specific area – such as music at the Jazeps Vitols Academy or theology at the UL Faculty of Theology, Latvian language at the LLI or art history at the Latvian Academy of Art – even in these areas there are pockets of research elsewhere. For example, there are important studies of regional dialects and dialectology at the LLI but also at Daugavpils and Rezekne (Latgalian) and Liepaja (Rucava). Latvian literature is researched at ILFA, as is literary theory and some comparative literature, but also at the UL Humanities Faculty, at the Academy of Culture and at the Universities of Daugavpils and Liepaja. Translation studies are conducted in different ways at the UL Faculty of Humanities and at RTU and Ventspils, but are also found at the Academy of Culture, while translations into Latvian are sponsored at the IPS and ILFA. Under the broad heading of ‘art’ (which would more familiarly be termed ‘arts’), there are – in addition to the visual arts and architecture research unit of the Academy of Art – various sub-units researching on theatre, music (in ILFA) or cinema (in the Academy of Culture) or new media (at Liepaja); and the study of ethnomusicology is found in the UL Humanities Faculty as well as at the Jazeps Vitols Academy. Folklore studies is of course concentrated at ILFA, but is also found, in the form of regional or cultural heritage studies, at Liepaja, Daugavpils and Rezekne. A final, cross-disciplinary instance: the new field of ‘youth studies’ is researched in a variety of modes at the UL Faculty of Humanities, Daugavpils University, the IPS and Liepaja.
- c. To some extent and in some cases, this duplication is already mitigated by cooperation between units. But much of this valuable collaboration relates to teaching rather than research. And in most cases – especially when not justified by regional specificities – the separation of functions seems counter-productive in terms of both staff time and the optimisation of research outcomes. We have cited cases of very small numbers of staff conducting research in an institution not mainly geared to their field (e.g. music in ILFA or cultural anthropology in the Academy of Culture) to whom being embedded in a larger specialist unit could offer support and greater collaborative opportunities.
- d. The most striking case of discipline fragmentation is that of history and philosophy. Within Riga alone, history research takes place at both the ILH and the UL Faculty of History and Philosophy and philosophy research takes place at both the IPS and again the UL Faculty of History and Philosophy. The panel is sensitive to possible causes for the splits and mergers of the past, and to the current special role of Institutes, but considers that more innovative, internationally competitive work and more economic use of staff talent in larger sub-units would result if these researchers were grouped together.

- e. Another, connected oddity is that the UL Faculty of Humanities includes only research disciplines within language and literature/cultural studies grouped by area, not those other fields – history, philosophy, theology – that in universities in other countries would be counted as ‘humanities’. Again, research synergies **would** result if a different structure were considered, leading to greater collaborative engagement both within Latvia and internationally. A final concern is that, in some cases, such as the above-mentioned Faculty of History and Philosophy and Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, two or more quite distinct disciplines are conjoined in a single institution without evident collaboration and with often a very different quality of research produced. It should be noted that, in these cases in particular, the overall score and some sub-scores are perforce based on a compromise (see 19.1.2 b above) and careful attention to the appended explanations is needed.

### 19.2.2 *The relationship between Faculties and Institutes*

- a. Also noted above (19.1.3 e) is the disparity between the conditions of teaching Institutes. This dual support system has some advantages for those in Institutes but also some drawbacks in encouraging an inward-looking conservative disposition and discouraging innovation in terms of research questions and methodologies. It is difficult to see any advantages for those based at Faculties, given the points outlined above; this is the reason that we propose developing short-term research-leave arrangements for Faculty and other university staff engaged on projects, through which they could avail themselves of the infrastructure and research environments of the Institutes and Academies.
- b. This issue mainly concerns the University of Latvia, to which both the Faculties and the Institutes are affiliated. Again, it is understood that past conditions, particularly those of the Soviet era, may have given rise to the present organisation and that there are doubtless some advantages, but the panel is concerned at the deleterious results of what is effectively a two-tier system. While some teaching and supervising of (mainly doctoral) students based in Faculties is provided by Institute staff, this is beyond the specifics of their different roles and does not affect them. Essentially, there is a dual support system: government funding is paid to Faculty staff for teaching, so that their research must be conducted in their ‘spare time’, whereas government funding to Institutes covers research alone. This results in a certain rivalry and resentment. There is much excellent work being done in Institutes, but also much that is old-fashioned and self-perpetuating. In addition, the relationship between the Institutes and the University is unclear: the level of Institute staff numbers, their distribution and their activity seems to depend on internal decisions without reference to the context of the University or its development strategy. We would have expected – and the University itself might reasonably expect – more direct engagement with it from Institutes, which are explicitly sited within it.
- c. Given that the academic field of Latvia is small and funding is tight, the panel urges the government and the University of Latvia to consider other ways of managing research provision. One possibility is to redesign the function of Institutes, for instance in the following ways: they might have a small core staff managing research strategy, budgeting etc., while the main other use of funds would be to support periods of research leave for academics teaching elsewhere within the Latvian system, who could be selected competitively on the grounds of project proposals, especially for externally (nationally- or internationally-) funded projects; this would afford teaching staff the opportunity to focus on research for a time and also create successive research groupings – and it would conform more to the model of Research Institutes and Institutes of Advanced Studies (IASs) elsewhere in Europe. Such IASs also bring together international scholars through Fellowship schemes, whether funded (e.g. under EURIAS) or non-stipendiary. Finally, the Institutes could continue to provide supervision to doctoral students registered at the University, and extend such supervision and mentorship also to early-career and postdoctoral researchers, again selected competitively and supported for specific periods for single or group-based research projects.

- d. Academies such as the Academies of Art History, Music and Culture might then have units supporting research leave and projects in a similar way for their specialist fields. In this way, academic staff throughout Latvia who are currently essentially funded for teaching could have the opportunity to develop themselves and their work and also bring a fresh perspective to the Institutes.

#### *19.2.3 Doctoral student support*

- a. The panel found it initially difficult to understand where doctoral students were affiliated, since in many cases they appeared to 'belong' to more than one institution. For example, doctoral students researching on Latvian language might be listed under both the LLI and the UL Faculty of Humanities or doctoral students in History, Religious or Ethnic studies, or Philosophy both under the IPS and the UL Faculty of History and Philosophy (and, presumably, also in the UL Faculty of Social Sciences); or students researching on language pedagogy might appear under both Liepaja and Ventspils. It became clear, following the visits, that students were of necessity affiliated to and registered at the universities that award doctoral degrees – in these two instances, the Universities of Latvia and Liepaja – but that their supervision might take place at the Institute and at Ventspils. This is not in itself a problem, though it may be worth considering a different promotion system wherein doctoral degrees were awarded on a centralised basis, with quality standards assured nationally and students were registered at the institution of their supervisor – or of their two supervisors, following the system now current in many other European countries.
- b. As far as research training is concerned, this exists already in a variety of forms, but we would advocate a more streamlined system. We found examples of excellent practice in the Faculties of Humanities of the Universities of Latvia and Daugavpils: the students we met were enthusiastic about both their individual supervision and the opportunity to meet their peers in other disciplines and fields, with whom they were able to network and could exchange ideas. This fits well into a three-level system which could be developed regionally, i.e. one such for humanities in each of the areas: the east (Daugavpils and Rezekne), the west (Liepaja and Ventspils) and Riga (UL, RTU and the Academies). Liepaja and Daugavpils have recently inaugurated several new doctoral programmes, and Rezekne is developing an international joint doctoral programme with Kaunas, Lithuania. Starting at the most individual level, students would continue to be trained by one or two supervisors focused on their project. On the intermediate level, students within a discipline (e.g. music or archaeology) or a closely defined set of disciplines (the arts, linguistic research) would receive subject-based training within their region, in naturally-formed groups. On the most general level, students within the humanities could receive generic training at a central institution, which would include specifics such as palaeography, archival research methods, use of IT etc., but also be the context for them to develop essential academic skills such as running workshops and conferences and co editing volumes, and to create interdisciplinary groupings of common interest that would lead to future research ideas.

#### *19.2.4 Career progression*

- a. The developments for doctoral students suggested above would hopefully help to galvanise the field of humanities in Latvia. The panel was very impressed by the liveliness, enthusiasm and dedication of the young scholars we met: despite the practical difficulties of living on the relatively low salaries of university staff, there are plenty of energetic young Latvians determined to build an academic career. More support could be provided for them, especially to help them seek an active role in the international context of European research. In many units, doctoral students find their first and perhaps a lifelong post in the institution that trained them. This is a happy outcome in some ways, and strengthens the unit itself, but we would urge more doctoral students to spend substantial periods of research abroad, both within the Baltic region and beyond, before establishing their career in Latvia.

The panel met some excellent doctoral students in the IPS and at Daugavpils University who had succeeded in obtaining international grants for research and training periods abroad. This helps to promote an international outlook, and EU membership makes it comparatively feasible. Incentives may be necessary to encourage return, but a competitive process should ensure this. Student exchange should also be encouraged.

- b. The panel did not – quite properly – have access to information on the ages of staff members, but the SARs and SWOT analyses referred in places to the problem of the ‘absent middle’ – that is, units with many senior researchers and a good number of early-career researchers but few in early middle age. To assure continuity, consideration must be given to bringing on the younger staff, for example by postdoctoral programmes (see 19.3.7 d below) and to movement on the part of the older staff into honorary emeritus positions, which would ensure a role for their immediate successors. Introducing a retirement age for researchers and university professors, while at the same time retaining the opportunity for them to apply for projects and participate in research teams and degree committees could be beneficial.

#### *19.2.5 Riga and the provinces*

- a. The panel saw or read about some very good work going on outside Riga, in both the western institutions of Liepaja and Ventspils and the eastern institutions of Daugavpils and Rezekne. Particular highlights are the regional research of Liepaja and Daugavpils on Kurzeme/Rucava and Latgale respectively; the internationally networked new media arts at Liepaja; comparative studies and a flourishing doctoral student environment at Daugavpils; regional linguistics at Rezekne and applied translation studies at Ventspils. Though their position within their developing regions encourages strong local engagement and also gives them access to valuable European regional development funding, they felt disadvantaged by their position outside the dominant centre of Riga, in the sense that government funding is felt to be too metropolitan, to the detriment of the ‘polycentric’ development of research.
- b. Given that the panel observed many parallel interests between these four units and those in Riga, encouragement of both virtual and physical mobility among staff and students, in the form of short-term secondments, joint research-student supervision arrangements, streaming of postgraduate lectures and research training etc., might help to improve intra-national research collaboration.

#### *19.2.6 Publications*

- a. Some of the humanities research in Latvia is published abroad, but the vast majority is published in Latvia and in Latvian. This is not surprising and indeed makes sense in the light of the focus on Latvian studies – language, literature, music, folklore, history archaeology, art history, etc. At the same time researchers need to try to place more of their work where it can be read by international researchers in peer-reviewed journals, with international publishers etc – either by writing in English and other languages, or by having their work translated.
- b. Most research outputs are currently published in-house, and the number of journals and series edited by the researchers submitted to this exercise is impressive, but again there appears to be much fragmentation and duplication of effort on these publications, which are in some cases quite lavish and possibly over-expensive to produce.
- c. It is our recommendation that fewer, stronger, peer-reviewed journals and other publications should be produced, by pooling editorial and financial resources within disciplines and across institutions, and that worldwide distribution be encouraged by a system of centralised translation, outlined in 19.3.7 e. below. Time-limited

centrally funded grants, to which applications could be submitted, could launch the initiative and help establish digitised editorial tools and shared webpages for the journals, a Latvian platform in relevant languages for journals in the Humanities.

- d. That clarification of all kinds of applied research would have been helpful.

### 19.3 Summary of recommendations

#### 19.3.1 Duplication and fragmentation

*See also 19.2.1*

The duplication of efforts on the same research areas in different centres, particularly those in geographical proximity, e.g. within Riga, seems regrettable. The panel recommends that in cases of individual disciplines, such as history, archaeology and philosophy, consideration be given to bring these disciplines back together in a single unit, in which collaboration within sub-units would be easier than at present making a coherent overall strategy for the discipline would be possible. As a consequence, the current arbitrary yoking together of pairs of subjects in units, such as history and philosophy or philosophy and sociology, would be rationalised. For archaeology, a named unit of its own would make sense – currently this important field of research is distributed among units of history and regional studies etc. In the cases of the arts, such as music, theatre and cinema studies, it might make sense for this research to be conducted in a more unified manner.

#### 19.3.2 Faculties and Institutes

*See also 19.2.2*

The panel urges the government and the University of Latvia to consider other ways of managing research provision other than the present dual support system. We recommend consideration of a redesign of Institutes. They might have a small core staff managing research strategy, budgeting etc., while the main other use of funds would be to support periods of research leave for academics teaching elsewhere within the Latvian system. These individuals could be selected competitively on the grounds of project proposals, especially for externally (nationally- or internationally-) funded projects; this would conform more to the model of Research Institutes and Institutes of Advanced Studies elsewhere in Europe and could be implemented on both an individual and a team basis, with special attention given to interdisciplinary teams. They could additionally have Fellowship schemes, and provide supervision to doctoral students, early-career and postdoctoral researchers. Academies such as the Academies of Art History, Music and Culture might also have units supporting research leave and projects in a similar way for their specialist fields. This should ensure that the provision is available for most or all disciplines.

#### 19.3.3 Doctoral student support

*See also 19.2.3*

The panel recommends considering a different promotion system wherein doctoral degrees are awarded according to rigorous quality standards assured nationally and applied where possible by expert panels including some international members. Doctoral students would be registered at the institution of their supervisor – or possibly two supervisors – and should be encouraged to write their theses in English if they wish, to ensure their early positioning in the international research community.

Research training could be rationalised into a three-tiered system, to be developed regionally, i.e. one such for humanities in the east, the west and Riga. At project level, students would continue to be trained by their supervisor/s. At subject-specific level, students would be trained in methodologies and theories of their discipline or set of disciplines. At the level of generic training, students within the humanities could receive training at a central institution, which would also be the context for developing skills

such as running workshops and conferences and co-editing volumes, and for creating interdisciplinary groupings.

#### 19.3.4 Career progression

See also 19.2.4

The panel recommends encouraging doctoral students to apply for extended study abroad, especially within the EU, both by support for preparing applications (see 19.3.7 a below) and by incentives for return; at the same time, a national post-doctoral programme and the encouragement of study visits by early-career researchers from outside Latvia would also support early-career academics. To ensure progression of staff at more advanced levels, the panel recommends that the most senior staff should move into honorary emeritus positions, which would ensure succession and provide a role for their immediate juniors.

#### 19.3.5 Riga and the provinces

See also 19.2.5

To assure a more ‘polycentric’ research system within the humanities, the panel recommends the development of both virtual and physical mobility among staff and students, in the form of short-term secondments, joint research-student supervision arrangements, streaming of postgraduate lectures and research training etc.

#### 19.3.6 Publications

See also 19.2.6

It is our recommendation that fewer, stronger, peer-reviewed journals and other publications should be produced by Latvian humanities researchers, by pooling editorial and financial resources within and between disciplines, and that worldwide distribution be encouraged by a system of centralised translation, outlined in 19.3.7 c and e below.

#### 19.3.7 Suggested centralisation of humanities research infrastructure

See also 19.1.3 c, 19.2.3 a, 19.2.6, 19.3.3 and 19.3.6

These suggestions for centralising some infrastructural systems are presented in alphabetical order and no necessary priority is intended.

- a. **Inter/national grant applications:** a centralised body to assist individuals and groups to prepare research grant applications, especially to international funders, would greatly assist hard-pressed or early-career researchers; it could provide both practical support for financial elements and guidance in optimising presentation; this body might use the expertise of university administrators and/or that of academics who have experience of assessing or obtaining international project funding.
- b. **Inter/national grant applications:** in cases where matched-funding is a requirement of grants, we suggest that a central funding pot be created on which successful applicants could draw.
- c. **Journals:** As noted above in 19.2.6, most of the in-house journals produced by Latvian humanities researchers are fragmented and have relatively weak visibility; we suggest centralised funding for discipline- or theme-based journals would create a critical mass for researchers and for distribution; these journals would need to fulfil the criteria of peer-review, international editorial board etc.
- d. **Postdoctoral programme:** the panel understands that the Ministry already plans to establish a national postdoc programme and fully supports this initiative. A mix of general methodological and thematically focused activities is recommended.

- e. **Translations:** researchers who need to publish their work in English and other languages would be greatly assisted by a central pool of highly qualified translators and language editors, preferably native speakers of the target language; qualified editors could also work with drafts of texts in foreign languages in order to improve and regulate standards; the actual translation and editing jobs would be paid for by HEIs or researchers but a central body could employ the translators and editors and maintain quality assurance.
- f. **Visiting Fellowships/Professorships:** researchers from abroad would be funded to deliver lectures, preferably touring to both Riga and the provinces, possibly with virtual streaming to other centres; a similar system exists in Lithuania, which might provide a useful model.



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