

World Bank Reimbursable Advisory Service on Higher Education in Latvia

## Academic Careers in Latvia: Recommendations

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I E G U L D Ī J U M S T A V Ā N Ā K O T N Ē

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## Abbreviations

HEI	higher education institution
HRs	human resources
PBS	performance-based salary

## Executive Summary

**This report covers the career trajectories and employment conditions of academics in Latvia and presents recommendations for higher education institutions (HEIs) and the Latvian government on how to improve academic careers.** Increasing the performance of its higher education system is an avowed goal of the Latvian government. Having started to address issues of system-level funding and university-internal funding and governance, the consideration of the field of academic careers has recently moved to the forefront. All those efforts have been supported by World Bank engagement in Latvia. A first World Bank higher education advisory service addressing the Latvian higher education funding model on the system level was carried out in 2013/14. A second higher education project with World Bank support<sup>1</sup> started in 2016. In the first of its two phases, it turned to the internal funding models and governance arrangements of Latvian HEIs. This report is part of the project's second phase, and covers strategic human resources (HR) management, doctoral training and the postdoc, academic careers with a focus on the selection and promotion of academics, and the remuneration of academics and the evaluation of their performance. Based on an examination of good international practices in the area of academic careers and the development of a set of criteria for good system- and institution-level HR policies (World Bank 2017), and an assessment of the related status quo in Latvia (World Bank 2018), this report comprises recommendations on how academic careers could be strengthened in Latvia.

### **Recommendations concerning Doctoral Education and the Postdoc**

**Tasks lying ahead for Latvian HEIs to improve doctoral education—which is a crucial part of any attempt to enhance the approach to academic careers—revolve around further developing its institutionalization and framing it with adequate policies and procedures.** That includes designing and implementing clear and consistent processes for the admission, progression, and assessment of doctoral students in a transparent and fair way. Similar requirements apply to policies and processes surrounding the doctoral education process, such as appeals and complaints mechanisms for doctoral students. HEIs would be well advised to ensure basic preconditions for high-quality doctoral education, including the supervision of doctoral candidates, a stimulating research environment, and taught elements of doctoral programs and skills development opportunities that prepare students for academic and nonacademic careers. Contributing to a successful future of doctoral students, career support measures and assistantships allowing for competence development should likewise be addressed by institutions. Particularly, a promising way of institutionalizing doctoral education are doctoral schools, which would merit being established or developed further by HEIs. All activities mentioned need to be covered by comprehensive internal quality assurance mechanisms that ensure continuous monitoring and improvement of all quality facets. In addition, framing the postdoc by suitable policies and providing postdocs with career support would contribute to an overall supportive environment for young researchers.

**To support HEIs in their efforts to improve the quality of doctoral education, the Latvian government is tasked with adapting framework conditions where necessary and providing direct support for institutions.** Initiating an open discussion with the higher education sector on the essence and standards of the doctorate constitutes a starting point for engaging in further reforms. Those reforms should aim at a sufficient degree of regulation where necessary, while providing HEIs with flexibility to

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<sup>1</sup> This report uses the term “project” for this World Bank higher education advisory service.

implement their own approaches where possible. Based on agreed standards, promoting external quality assurance processes is key, as are institutional funding mechanisms that incentivize quality improvements. Tailored system-level funding mechanisms for research priorities and doctoral students should be used to promote national research priorities.

### **Recommendations concerning the Development and Advancement in Academic Careers**

**Providing academics with attractive and conducive working conditions and career opportunities requires that HEIs reconsider their current practices and policies.** The overarching objective in that respect should be to reduce the risks, volatility, and fragmentation of employment that many academics face under the current system. To achieve that, HEIs—within the possibilities of the current system-level framework—will need to establish predictable and transparent career structures, and efficient and fair recruitment and promotion procedures. However, HEIs are also tasked with considering HR issues as part of the strategic institutional development, which requires, among others, ensuring a close connection of these two areas, for example, via strategic recruitment procedures and support for the internationalization of the academic staff. HEIs also need to engage more strongly in the strategic planning of human resources and to adopt a more dynamic approach to HR issues, which in turn requires the development of additional HR management capacities.

**In all areas related to academic careers and working conditions, the efforts of HEIs and the Latvian government need to reinforce each other.** Important framework conditions that the government would need to address are the two-track system of teaching-focused and research-focused positions, the overall national academic career framework (in particular, barriers to institutions introducing structured promotion patterns), and regulations that currently hamper the institutions' internationalization efforts. Furthermore, incentives for institutions to engage in HR development more strategically could provide a new impetus to the entire sector. Generally, HR issues should be considered a crucial part of any reforms in the higher education sector.

### **Recommendations concerning Remuneration and Performance Evaluation**

**While the development of performance-based salary systems and performance-supporting measures are still at an incipient stage, considering early on basic preconditions for future activities in this area could prove to be very useful for HEIs.** Basic issues worth considering in that respect include developing a concept of performance that accounts for the diversity of academic tasks, and thinking about models that comprise an adequate balance between fixed salary components and performance rewards that are actionable from an administrative and financial management perspective. In that respect, it would be particularly important to consider how performance-based forms of remuneration and incentives can be connected to institutional strategies.

**In the absence of specific system-level regulations on performance-based salary and performance-supporting measures, the key tasks for the Latvian government are to create preconditions for potential future reforms and to avoid a system-level framework that restricts the introduction of such measures.** That requires maintaining clarity on basic principles of remuneration and types of positions in the legislation, while at the same time investigating possibilities to make salaries more adequate and performance oriented. A close consultation process with the sector, including unions, would be a basic precondition for the success of such an endeavor. With respect to HEI efforts in this area, the government could encourage institutions to further develop their concept of performance, incentivize them to promote an orientation toward performance in matters of remuneration, and

engage in capacity building via bringing together institutional leaders and HR managers from different institutions.



# 1 Introduction

**This report presents recommendations for Latvian HEIs and the Latvian government on how to further develop the career trajectories and employment conditions of academics.** Building on an examination of good international practices in the area of academic careers (World Bank 2017), which also included a list of criteria for good system- and institution-level HR policies, and an assessment of the related status quo in Latvia (World Bank 2018), the World Bank team has developed recommendations on how academic careers can be improved in Latvia.<sup>2</sup> The recommendations cover (a) doctoral training and the postdoc, (b) academic careers with a focus on the selection and promotion of academics, and (c) the remuneration of academics and the evaluation of their performance. Furthermore, system-level framework conditions as well as policies and practices within HEIs are addressed. Additional, detailed information and data underpinning the recommendations presented below can be found in the two previous reports.<sup>3</sup>

**All three reports mentioned are part of a series of World Bank advisory services on higher education in Latvia.** The first World Bank higher education advisory service was carried out in 2013/14, and addressed the Latvian higher education funding model on the system level. It led to the introduction of a new, three-pillar funding model including a performance-based funding pillar. The second higher education project with World Bank support started in 2016. In the first of its two phases, it turned to the internal funding models and governance arrangements of Latvian HEIs. It focused on the effects of the system-level reforms, particularly on the HEIs' responses to the introduction of the performance-based funding pillar. The project's second phase—which comprises the three reports mentioned—covers strategic HR management; doctoral training and the postdoc; academic careers with a focus on the selection and promotion of academics; and the remuneration of academics and the evaluation of their performance.

**The recommendations presented in the following are based on criteria for good system- and institution-level HR policies, and an assessment of the status quo in Latvia.** The criteria—which are outlined in detail in the report *Academic Careers: Learning from Good International Practice* (World Bank 2017)—were derived from the relevant research literature (including scholarly articles, policy reports, and consultative papers), the examination of selected cases of good practice, and the authors' expertise and experience in the field and their perspectives on successful examples. With the exception of selected references to staff members working in HR management, the criteria—as well as the status quo assessment and recommendations—focus on academic staff members, that is, those whose main responsibility is teaching and/or research (as opposed to staff members with primarily administrative responsibilities, technical staff, and secretarial/support staff). The status quo—which is presented in

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<sup>2</sup> Members of the World Bank team that authored this report are Dr. Nina Arnhold, Senior Education Specialist and Task Team Leader, World Bank; Dr. Elias Pekkola, University of Tampere, Finland; Vitus Puttmann, Consultant, World Bank; and Dr. Andrée Sursock, Senior Adviser at the European University Association. Adjunct Professor Jussi Kivistö, University of Tampere, Finland; Professor Hans Vossensteyn, Director of the Center for Higher Education Policy (CHEPS), the Netherlands; and Professor Frank Ziegele, Director of the Centre for Higher Education (CHE), Germany, provided substantial input and comments. The team would like to thank the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science, six case study institutions, and other sector representatives involved for the strong collaboration that has made the preparation of this report possible.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/izglitiba\\_augst/2\\_1\\_LV\\_Acad\\_Careers\\_Intern\\_Practice\\_Report\\_FINAL.PDF](http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/izglitiba_augst/2_1_LV_Acad_Careers_Intern_Practice_Report_FINAL.PDF); [http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/izglitiba\\_augst/2018/2.2\\_LV-Acad-Careers-Status-Quo-31Jan18-FINAL.pdf](http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/izglitiba_augst/2018/2.2_LV-Acad-Careers-Status-Quo-31Jan18-FINAL.pdf).

detail in the report *Academic Careers in Latvia: Status Quo Report* (World Bank 2018)—was assessed against those criteria. It is based mainly on the analysis of key documents such as laws, regulations, and policies; information and data provided by the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science, and six HEIs that volunteered as case study institutions<sup>4</sup>; and interviews with representatives of these HEIs and various system-level stakeholders during site visits in September 2017. The recommendations presented in this report are based on both the criteria for good system- and institution-level HR policies and the status quo assessment. The Annex provides an overview of the criteria, of the findings of the status quo assessment, and of the recommendations.

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<sup>4</sup> These institutions are the University of Latvia, Riga Technical University, Daugavpils University, Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, the Art Academy of Latvia, and the Latvian Academy of Sport Education. The different size, profile, and strategies of the case study institutions allowed the World Bank team to obtain an overview on developments in the Latvian higher education sector.

## 2 Recommendations on the Doctorate and Postdoctorate

**Doctoral education is a first important element of efforts to further develop academic careers, and is also relevant for sectors outside academia.** As a precondition for an academic career, acquiring a doctoral degree is a stage that every future academic must pass through. Thus, doctoral education is a key lever for promoting the quality of academic careers, and of the science and higher education system more generally. In addition, many doctoral degree holders proceed to important positions within society and the economy, making doctoral education also relevant for societal and economic development. To attain high-quality doctoral education in Latvia—and the sound design of the postdoc—HEIs responsible for implementing it and the government responsible for setting framework conditions must act in a concerted manner. With respect to a sound institutionalization, for example, the government needs to provide institutions with latitude in designing their structures and programs, and with incentives to continuously improve them. HEIs need to make use of their autonomy and implement doctoral education with a focus on the necessary conditions for successful preparation of doctoral students for academic and nonacademic careers.

### 2.1 Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions

#### **Anchoring the Doctorate in the Institution**

**1. (A.6) *The principles for the admission, progression, and assessment of doctoral students should be defined at the central level of an institution.***

The admissions process in Latvia is based, with some exceptions, on students getting in touch with a potential supervisor. During the interviews conducted by the World Bank team, it appeared that students did not always know where to find appropriate information on all aspects of doctoral education, because their point of entry was through a potential supervisor. The promotion process in Latvia does not give HEIs full responsibility for the assessment of doctoral theses.

Admission procedures for doctoral students should be clear, fair, and applied consistently on the basis of published criteria and procedures. To ensure fairness, at least two academic members of staff need to be involved in reviewing the qualifications and applications of the candidates. Admission procedures should give consideration to the availability of supervision in a particular program and to issues of discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, and disabilities.

Doctoral students should be provided with access to up-to-date information about regulations and processes regarding their program (for example, academic requirements; rules and regulations; availability of funding; time commitment; supervision) and their specific rights and responsibilities (for example, costs; intellectual property rights to the outcomes of their work; appeals and complaints procedures). Such information should be provided as part of an orientation session and be available at all times (for example, via a dedicated web page).

Progression should be monitored regularly during the students' time at an HEI; doctoral students should be advanced to candidacy when they have demonstrated their capacity to undertake original research. The institution should be responsible for organizing the assessment and defense of the

theses, which currently is not the case (for details see Recommendation 5 (A.10) below and World Bank 2016).

**2. (A.7) As a key condition for the quality of doctoral training, good supervision should be framed by a set of regulations and procedures.**

In Latvia, regulations concerning the supervision of doctoral students are evolving to the extent that some institutions are setting appropriate institutional policies and guidelines, and require signed agreements between supervisors and supervisees. However, training and ongoing support for supervisors, and the monitoring of their performance, are rare. Co-supervision is not a policy but an ad-hoc practice, and continuity of supervision is left to the students' initiative (which can be a challenge in case of disagreement with a supervisor, particularly in small institutions and faculties). Other forms of support, such as access to a general advisor, are informal and rely on the students' initiative.

The supervisor is fundamental to the success of students undertaking research. A good relationship with a supervisor is one of the major conditions for the successful completion of a thesis. Latvian HEIs should have a supervision policy in place that is public and consistently applied. A good policy specifies the qualifications of academic staff who are allowed to supervise (for example, being active researchers, in the relevant field), how supervision is considered as part of the teaching workload, the maximum number of doctoral students per supervisor, and the supervisors' responsibilities (for example, expectations regarding regular interactions with the doctoral student; requirements about monitoring their progress; the support given to attain the identified learning outcomes). In addition, regulations should specify whether co-supervision is required or optional, and any mandatory or optional supervisor training; the formal performance appraisal of supervisors; and the complaints and appeals procedures available to supervisors. Regulations should also explain what would happen in case a supervisor leaves, is removed, or is the subject of a student's complaint.

In an increasing number of countries in Europe, supervisors are trained for their supervisory tasks. Supervisors are generally required to monitor student progression and completion via signed contractual agreements between doctoral students and supervisors. The contracts should include clear milestones (including any requirements for publications) and require doctoral candidates and supervisors to meet regularly. Appropriate procedures should be available to deal with circumstances that have an impact on the duration of studies. Doctoral agreements should be reviewed as required if the personal circumstances of the candidates change (for example, parental leave, changing status from part-time to full-time or vice versa).

Alongside their primary supervisors, doctoral candidates in many European countries have a second supervisor and the two supervisors work together as a team; students also have access to an advisor to discuss their supervision in a safe environment. Any conflict and issues with the supervisor can be addressed through the advisor.

**3. (A.8) All institutions that engage in doctoral education should ensure a stimulating research environment to their doctoral students.**

In several Latvian HEIs, doctoral education would benefit from a significant number of research-active staff and an adequate research environment. However, the financial situation of some HEIs has a negative impact on those aspects, including on the learning opportunities and research equipment found in institutions, and on the available financial support for conference participation and international mobility for doctoral students.

In addition, students in Latvia can prepare a doctorate at an HEI that is not a doctoral-conferring institution. Under such an arrangement, it is not ensured that the student is part of a research project or team and has access to appropriate research resources (such as libraries, databases, lab equipment, funding opportunities to attend international conferences, and so forth). All institutions that are allowed to confer the doctorate should ensure that students are working in a stimulating research environment. Such an environment should be characterized by the availability of qualified supervisors, a collegial community of research-active academic staff who participate in regular discussion of research within and across disciplines, funding opportunities to attend relevant international and national conferences and to spend short research visits at another institution, and adequate physical resources (such as infrastructure; information technology, including computer access, technical support, specialist software and the possibility to securely store large amounts of data; access to research facilities including high-quality research infrastructure and laboratory; access to adequate library resources; a desk and study space for each doctoral student).

**4. (A.9) *The taught component of doctoral programs and skills development opportunities should be developed to prepare doctoral students for both academic and nonacademic careers.***

Almost all Latvian institutions have a predetermined ratio of taught components and thesis work. Institutions tend to divide the taught component into required courses and electives, even though there are faculties that do not stipulate mandatory coursework. Taught components do not always include courses in research methodology and scientific integrity, and professional skills such as grant writing and written and oral communication. Learning outcomes for doctoral programs are generally not identified, and the general understanding of the doctorate is that it leads to an academic career only.

All HEIs should identify the learning outcomes at the doctoral level, specify the balance between research and coursework, and provide guidance to faculties for a suitable application across different fields. The goal should be to ensure that doctoral students develop a range of skills through their research and coursework in order to prepare them for both academic and nonacademic careers. Coursework includes academic courses in their subject and cognate fields, and soft skills development.

The most important learning outcomes at the doctoral level include learning to do research, thinking critically, and producing new knowledge; planning, managing, and delivering research projects; and behaving ethically and professionally. To achieve those outcomes, it is necessary to provide doctoral students with formal research training adapted to their discipline and research topic. That includes training in research methods, and discussion of research ethics and scientific integrity. Digital issues, such as open research and data management, are gradually becoming important in the world and are increasingly discussed in the courses on research methods and writing for publication.

**5. (A.10) An institution-wide policy and related procedures for establishing an examination committee should ensure objectivity and fairness.**

The promotion process in Latvia is very complex; therefore, institutions should ensure that their doctoral students are well informed about it, while in the medium term the process needs to be simplified.

Importantly, Latvian HEIs are not fully responsible for the promotion process, which includes a very important external judgment on the evaluation of the thesis. The Latvian policy should be changed to be in line with common practice in Europe and the rest of the world, and should entrust HEIs with full responsibilities for the promotion process. In this context, the HEIs need to include the following aspects in their institutional policy:

- Clear regulations about the format of the thesis should be issued. Students need to be informed about acceptable formats for their thesis. Clear guidelines should be available for each permissible format, including the deadline that students must respect for indicating the format of their thesis.
- Assessment of the theses should be based on clear, fair, and published criteria. Those criteria should be benchmarked nationally and internationally, and should be communicated to both doctoral candidates and supervisors. The institution should periodically review the theses that have been accepted to ensure that they are of consistent quality across disciplines.
- The examination of the theses should be based on procedures that are applied rigorously and consistently. If there is an oral defense, such regulation should specify whether the session is public or private, its approximate length, and the responsibility for arranging and communicating the time and place of the event.
- The theses should be evaluated by an examining committee, which includes at least two external examiners. External examiners are academics who are not affiliated with the institution conferring the degree. A confirmation that no conflict of interest exists with the candidate or his or her supervisors must be signed by each examiner. The committee members should write an individual report evaluating the thesis. There should be a formal process for appointing the examiners and for evaluating their reports. The supervisors could be allowed to attend the oral defense as observers.
- Doctoral candidates should be informed of possible examiners before they are appointed and should have the right to raise concerns. The institution should consider these concerns and decide whether they warrant changing a proposed nominee.
- The examining committee should collectively produce a statement for candidates that explains the outcome of their examination and the rationale for the final decision. The institution should specify the basic requirements of that statement and should have a procedure in place to deal with situations where examiners disagree.

**6. (A.11) HEIs should provide career support for doctoral students to move into academic and nonacademic jobs, and grant them access to teaching and research assistantships.**

In Latvia, there is widespread belief in the academic community that doctoral students should be prepared only for an academic career. Nevertheless, teaching and research assistantships are not systematically provided to all students, and there is no career service dedicated to doctoral students.

Doctoral students should have full access to the institution's student support services, including advice and guidance on career opportunities. Support services staff should be trained to understand the particular circumstances of doctoral students and, among other tasks, be able to help them find nonacademic jobs. Doctoral students should have access to teaching and research assistantships as opportunities to develop their academic and scholarly skills.

**7. (A.12) Open access to doctoral theses should normally be promoted.**

Currently, in Latvia, at least one institution promotes open access to doctoral theses. The institution mandates that publications and data from research funded by public funds or the institution itself are deposited in an open access repository and ensures public access to doctoral theses on the institution's website before their presentation.

Elsewhere in the world, all theses are being increasingly made available in open access, except if there are reasons requiring an embargo for a designated period of time (for example, due to copyright issues, ethical sensitivities such as protection of human subjects). Latvian HEIs would be well advised to adopt that practice.

**8. (A.13) Adequate information about formal appeals and complaints mechanisms should be available to all doctoral students, and institutions should analyze them.**

Formal appeals and complaints procedures are available in Latvia, but students did not seem well-informed about them.

HEIs should ensure that appeals and complaints procedures are clear, fair, safe, comprehensive, and up-to-date; they should be described in an easily accessible document and should be discussed with new students during the orientation session. While respecting confidentiality and anonymity, the complaints and appeals that have been lodged should be periodically analyzed to ensure that the roots of serious individual problems and clusters of problems are addressed.

**9. (A.14) The quality of all aspects of the doctorate should be continuously monitored and assured.**

In Latvia, some institutions are moving toward more structured doctoral programs and are developing internal quality assurance processes, but this is still at an incipient stage.

Latvian HEIs should monitor all phases and aspects of the student-life cycle to ensure quality. They should develop an institution-wide framework for internal quality mechanisms that would allow some degree of flexibility in faculty-level implementation. The framework should be evaluated regularly to ensure its fitness and relevance.

The framework should include institution-wide data collection (such as completion rates and career tracking), which can be analyzed according to relevant categories (for example, by gender, by faculty,

by program, and so forth). Those data collection mechanisms should also be used to monitor the progression of individual students. The framework should include feedback from doctoral students and supervisors, and from internally initiated evaluations of academic and professional courses and research activities (research institutes, research groups, and so forth).

As part of the internal quality assurance processes, institutions should monitor the performance of doctoral students' supervisors. Their department head, or other relevant staff member, should organize a yearly meeting with the supervisors to discuss their students' progress and any issues arising (for example, an unusual number of students who are not progressing normally, patterns of students' complaints, and so forth). If necessary, the department head should require a supervisor to seek training or should remove a supervisor from his or her role.

If more than two institutions are involved in the training and education of doctoral students, a written agreement should describe the division of responsibilities, including with respect to the internal quality management of the degree.

Data analyses and the results of the evaluations should be provided to the relevant HEI, faculty, and departmental officers and bodies to allow them to monitor quality in a continuous manner. The institution should be able to demonstrate how it uses the results of those quality assurance processes to improve, including how the senior leadership monitors improvement at the levels of the faculties and departments.

**10. (A.15) Doctoral schools should institutionalize doctoral training and promote its quality.**

Some HEIs in Latvia have an overarching structure that is called "doctoral school." With one exception, the main function of those structures is to deliver colloquiums, conferences, and workshops. At the time of this project, only one institution had given administrative responsibilities to the doctoral school, including for quality assurance.

Doctoral schools are a particularly effective way to institutionalize doctoral training and promote its quality by ensuring standard processes, providing students with an intellectual community, and promoting cooperation and exchange. Typical functions of doctoral schools in Europe include the following aspects: implementing administrative procedures such as the admission of doctoral students and the recognition of their prior experience; providing student support services and information to doctoral students; funding international mobility of doctoral students; training, supporting, and monitoring supervisors; offering (soft) skills development opportunities; providing workspace for students and a place for faculty members to meet; and setting standards and being responsible for quality assurance and improvement processes.

Doctoral schools in Latvia should evolve toward this model. HEIs should identify clearly, albeit flexibly, the mission and functions of their doctoral schools. HEIs seeking to establish doctoral schools should determine the optimal number of doctoral schools in relation to their size and the need to promote interdisciplinarity.



**11. (A.16) *The mission and governance of doctoral schools should be clearly defined.***

Apart from one HEI, Latvian institutions do not have doctoral schools that have a mission larger than as a provider of conferences and workshops. Therefore, to date, there has been no need to define the governance of those doctoral schools.

As Latvian doctoral schools are entrusted with more responsibilities, HEIs should define the governance of their doctoral schools, including their reporting mechanisms to the highest body in the institution. Information about the mission, functions, and governance of doctoral schools should be easily accessible to all interested parties and designed in a way that contributes to the branding of the university.

### **Managing Partnerships**

**12. (A.17) *Doctoral partnerships must be framed by a general policy and specific agreements for each student.***

Some HEIs in Latvia have relevant partnerships with industry and other partners, which provide opportunities for doctoral students to conduct research in an industrial setting; however, these are not necessarily accompanied by the necessary governance arrangements, policies, and procedures to ensure quality. A formalized framework for those students interested in a doctorate in cooperation with industry should be in place in all universities that offer these opportunities.

Different types of cooperation arrangements, with academic and nonacademic partners, are possible. HEIs should develop a strategy about their partnerships at the doctoral level, that includes identifying strategic industrial partners and strategic HEI partnerships nationally and internationally. Those partnerships should be framed by a general policy that describes their governance and management, the policies and procedures that affect the students, the decision-making process, and the human and financial resources that are available to support such partnerships. Specific agreements for each student should ensure good management of those relationships and minimize risks. Doctoral research carried out in partnership between an HEI and a company requires an arrangement integrating the industrial supervisor in a supervision team, with the academic supervisor in the lead.

HEIs should also develop guidelines for doctorates in cooperation with industry and cotutelles, and faculties should be assisted in preparing contractual agreements with external partners and be required to report to a high-level institutional body that is responsible for monitoring those partnerships.

**13. (A.18) *Stakeholder involvement in doctoral school governance should be encouraged to contribute to preparing doctoral degree holders for nonacademic careers.***

In Latvia, there was no evidence of a structured and systematic involvement of external stakeholders in the design of doctorates and the governance of doctoral schools.

HEIs should encourage faculties to identify appropriate external stakeholders who will update academic staff about professional trends and provide opportunities to doctoral students during their

studies or after they earn their doctorate. Quality of partnerships, based on trust and long-term commitment, should be the primary goal, and also cover the evaluation of doctoral programs.

## **Postdoc**

### **14. (A.19) *The postdoc should be framed by appropriate policies and guidelines.***

The status of postdocs in Latvia is left rather vague (that is, it is defined as anyone conducting research in an institutional setting within five years of obtaining the doctorate); the explicit nature of the rights and responsibilities attached to this position are not clearly defined or understood.

The postdoc should be seen as an opportunity to strengthen one's research capacity, and the postdoc position must be framed by appropriate policies and guidelines covering, among others, recruitment procedures and the objectives of appointments. The postdoctoral position should be considered (an optional) part of the academic career ladder, and the institution should take responsibility for related human resource issues. HEIs should clearly define the rights and obligations of postdoctoral fellows and treat them as part of their staff.

### **15. (A.20) *Postdocs should have access to career advising.***

In Latvia, HEIs do not offer specific career support to their postdocs.

Because postdocs are not yet fully-fledged professionals, they need to have access to career counseling in the same way as doctoral students. Therefore, HEIs should provide career advice to postdoctoral fellows to prepare them for academic and nonacademic careers.

## **2.2 Recommendations for the Government**

### **System-Level Framework**

### **16. (A.1) *Define the standards of the doctorate, in consultation with the higher education sector.***

Latvia has a strict classification of doctoral degrees and accreditation regulations for doctoral programs, but the regulations restrict the flexibility of HEIs to design doctoral education in emerging fields or in interdisciplinary areas.

The national framework for doctoral training should seek to find an appropriate balance between regulation and flexibility. While regulations and quality criteria need to be applied rigorously and consistently, doctoral training also requires room to accommodate personalized paths, and a reasonable level of institutional and disciplinary differences. That necessitates a national consensus, notably with the academic community, on the essence and standards of the doctorate. Regulations should be focused on quality standards for the doctoral level that are defined in a generic way.

**17. (A.2) Define the standards and criteria for conferring the doctorate and the associated quality assurance mechanisms.**

Internal and external quality assurance procedures are still at an incipient stage in Latvia, and the focus on a suitable research environment and quality supervision as conditions for training doctoral students and conferring the doctoral degree is insufficient. As a result, it is possible for doctoral students to prepare a doctorate in an institution with very limited research capacity.

It is crucial to review the criteria for deciding which HEIs have doctoral degree conferring powers, and to envisage having formal cooperation agreements between those institutions with doctoral awarding powers and those that do not. Those agreements should provide a general framework for dealing with individual students; each student would have a specific agreement in line with the framework that has been agreed between the two institutions.

The external and internal quality assurance systems must be developed and designed together. HEIs should be required to develop internal quality assurance mechanisms, and the external quality assurance process should take these internal mechanisms into account and design a process specific for the evaluation of the third cycle. Those developments require capacity-building mechanisms to ensure a good understanding of the mechanisms, tools, and procedures that are most effective. At least for the first quality assurance cycle, the external quality assurance agency should accredit each doctoral program separately (and not as part of an accreditation of a cluster of programs). Later quality assurance cycles could then move to the evaluation of the doctorate at the faculty or institutional level.

**18. (A.3) Review funding mechanisms for the doctoral level to ensure completion, and to promote efficiency and quality.**

State funding for higher education incentivizes the doctorate to some extent. However, the state stipend for doctoral students is very low; this may be a contributing factor to the slow progression and low completion rate. In addition, funding ends when the thesis is sent for the external assessment process (“promotion process”), which is unfair to the students, while national research project funding is low and on an irregular cycle, which does not provide HEIs with any stability for planning research activities and doctoral recruitment.

Doctoral training needs to be incentivized financially to promote efficiency and quality. That should be done through a stable funding source; Structural Funds programs and other sources should be viewed as complements to state funding. Doctoral students should be funded in priority fields at a sufficient level to allow them to be full-time students. An increase in research funding would provide stability and the possibility for long-term institutional planning.

**19. (A.4) Set national priorities in broad (inter)disciplinary fields (including arts, humanities, and social sciences) while preserving some funding for blue sky research.**

Public funding for doctoral education considers, to some extent, national needs based on labor force planning. The allocation of budget places by the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science is based on the perceived need for specialists in the different disciplines. That work needs to be further developed:

national priorities in broad disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas should be established, while preserving some funding for blue sky research.

That work could be bolstered through labor market observatories tracing graduates into the labor market and providing information on career tracks, income patterns, and other relevant factors to help students (including graduate students) and their families to make well-informed choices.

**20. (A.5) Ensure that research is at the center of the doctoral experience.**

The national research support programs provide very weak incentives to ensure that doctoral candidates are appropriately involved in research projects. As a result, there are students working on their doctorate in units that are not research active. That issue will be tackled in new regulations.

Research funding should include financial incentives to promote doctoral students' participation in funded research. Involvement in research should be made a defining criterion and condition for doctoral training. HEIs should be required to provide co-supervision to their students and to frame doctorates in cooperation with industry and cotutelles with framework agreements.

### **3 Recommendations on the Development and Advancement in Academic Careers**

**Academic career patterns are a complex phenomenon, whose design requires system-level regulations and policies and institutional policies and practices that are well coordinated.** Working conditions and career opportunities of academics have a direct impact on the motivation and performance of those working in science and higher education, and on the extent to which the right persons advance to the right positions. Their specific shape in Latvia derives from a range of interdependent factors, including the career structures within HEIs and their recruitment and promotion procedures, and key legislation and policies such as the national academic career framework (with its barriers to structured promotion patterns) and the two-track system of teaching-focused and research-focused positions. Thus, to increase the predictability and stability of contractual arrangements—currently one of the most pressing challenges with respect to academic careers in Latvia—the efforts of HEIs and the Latvian government need to reinforce each other across several issues.

#### **3.1 Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions**

##### **Status and Role of Academics**

**21. (B.2) Increase the predictability and stability of contractual arrangements, and move toward long-term HR planning.**

As the authors of this report concluded earlier (World Bank 2018), academic careers are fragmented in Latvia. One of the main reasons for the fragmentation is the contractual form of academic work. It is mostly commissioned based on contracts that contain a rather detailed breakdown of tasks.

Individual academics have “collections” of contracts (one for each task at an HEI), and are thereby able to combine teaching, research, and administrative duties, even though not all academics are engaged in all different types of academic duty. That has severe consequences. Individual academics shoulder the risk of changes affecting their working environment, since the content of contracts (for example, the hours of a teaching contract) can be frequently adapted. That might result in significant volatility in individual careers.

The level of economic risk and the volatility of contractual arrangements should be reconsidered, especially by taking the perspectives of institutional and individual planning into account. HEIs need to move toward medium-to-long term planning horizons with a view to HR and financial planning instead of keeping an “ad-hoc” approach, which seems to have developed under the conditions of the financial crisis. Administrative and financial management capacity will need to be strengthened to that end. Responsible HR units will need to have adequate financial resources to carry out their duties regarding personnel and enable longer-term planning.

Under an ideal scenario, HEIs will create medium-to-long term HR plans with matters of personnel being firmly anchored in institutional strategies. Plans will need to be developed for how to arrive at a more holistic academic profession—combining teaching and research, as required by law, with other duties—and allowing individuals to focus on performance and meaningful contributions instead of “assembling” a portfolio of contracts with different institutions or units. When transitioning toward a more holistic notion of the academic profession, institutions would be well advised to ensure that all academic activities receive sufficient attention, particularly the academics’ engagement in teaching and learning processes.

**22. (B.3) Gradually develop consistent working conditions and resources for budget-funded (teaching-focused) and externally funded (research-focused) staff.**

The salary level and other working conditions of budget-funded teaching work and externally funded research work differ drastically. That creates a situation in which the same person might have unequal pay for equally important work, or a situation in which another member of the same working unit has a drastically lower or higher salary due to a different funding source. HEIs and their units are tasked to consider how benefits of different funding sources can be distributed more equally within units without hampering related incentives.

The institutions should gradually develop a time management system that allows the allocation of working time to different tasks. However, that should be done in such a way that successful applications for external funding are still motivating at an individual level.

### **General Career Patterns**

**23. (B.6) Ensure that individual career trajectories are predictable and compatible with formal career structures.**

A range of specific features of the Latvian approach to academic careers, like the six-year rule (that is, that all contracts are fixed-term contracts with a duration of six years), the nonexistence of a

mandatory retirement age, and a funding model that is based at the program level on the numbers of students enrolled, make career planning for individuals and HR planning for institutions very difficult.

In some institutions, it seems nearly impossible for most young (and even older) academics to plan their career. HR planning should be based on the strategic planning of institutions and should create a predictable framework for individuals to plan their future. In many countries this is achieved through tenure track models.

Institutions should communicate their personnel plans to faculty members and have a transparent and predictable personnel policy. Individuals should be aware of the (re)opening and closing of positions. Institutional career frameworks need to be anchored in a national career framework to ensure that there are no institutional practices that hinder national mobility or restrict the transferability of academic merits between institutions or internationally.

***24. (B.7) Maintain the transparency of institutional promotion criteria and develop balanced criteria for promotion.***

The promotion (election) criteria were overall considered well-known, transparent, and clear. That is an important achievement and should be maintained and further strengthened. The respective criteria in evaluating teaching, research, and other merits should be well defined and transparent.

***25. (B.8) Ensure and communicate the alignment between institutional strategy and career framework.***

The overall institutional career structure should consist of and link the recruitment, promotion, and remuneration processes. To ensure that the institution has the right body of academic (and other) personnel for the tasks at hand, it is of utmost importance that the career structure and personnel policies are aligned with the institutional strategy. After all, the strategy of an institution is implemented by individual academics and other staff.

In addition to active leadership, the most important instruments in steering the tasks of HEIs are the recruitment, promotion, and remuneration practices. To ensure the consequent implementation and further development of agreed strategic directions, institutions need to limit staff turnover and have an adequate number of full-time and tenured staff members. In reforming the career structures, the specificities of the institutional strategy should be taken into account, because the career structures should be considered as a tool for implementing the strategy.

***26. (B.9) Make sure that the institutional leadership and middle management are aware of the contractual arrangements of their staff.***

As mentioned, the contractual arrangements of academic staff at Latvian HEIs are fragmented and complex. It seems that in many institutions, human resource planning is done in a rather administrative manner and coordinated by personnel departments, a process that seems largely detached from the strategic management of the institution or unit.

To tackle the issue of the instability of academic work and decrease the related volatility, institutional leadership, deans, and heads of departments will need to take a more active role in following the contractual arrangements and personnel statistics. A close monitoring of the situation should provide the basis for more consistent and strategic HR planning, allowing for more balanced arrangements at the unit and individual level.

**27. (B.10) Prepare a midterm plan for developing HR services.**

In Latvia, like in many higher education systems, HR services would benefit from being developed further. Institutions should make a midterm plan to develop their HR services to be more compatible with institutional strategies, while also taking into account a changing higher education landscape.

A first and crucial step toward more strategic HR services is to align the HR functions (HR planning, recruitment, selection, promotion, staff development, and so forth) (see Box 53 in World Bank 2017) with the institutional strategy and decide on the optimal centralization/decentralization of these services (see Table 9 in World Bank 2017). In addition, the participation of HR managers in matters of institutional strategic management needs to be discussed. The HR plans should include follow-up mechanism related to the development of the respective HR services (see above).

**Selection and Recruitment of Academic Staff**

**28. (B.12) Strengthen the efficiency, transparency, and fairness of recruitments.**

Latvian academic staff selection procedures in recruitment processes are based on a vote by the faculty council or a council of professors. Those elections seem to be widely considered as a fair and acceptable way of selecting academics; however, there are also critical voices who believe that this process opens the door to ambiguity and clientelism.

In the short term, it would be advisable to strengthen more formal aspects of the selection process by utilizing HR experts and institutional management in preparation of recruitment meetings to make the election process more efficient and less time-consuming for academics. It is also worth considering giving a stronger role to the institutional and faculty leadership in the selection process, also with a view to a stronger link between HEI strategic priorities and personnel decisions. For example, after consultations in the faculty council, the dean could consolidate the input received until this stage of the process and formally propose a candidate to the rector. In the longer term, however, it would be advisable to consider and promote a more radical overhaul of the system as a way to overcome the inertia and complexity related to the current approach. The envisaged stronger role of the leadership could and should still be balanced by collegial control via responsibilities of the faculty council and the role of external evaluators.

**29. (B.13) Communicate the selection criteria of academics to employees and candidates.**

Each vacant position should be reconsidered and aligned with the institutional strategy. The selection criteria for an open position should reflect the profile of the unit and the tasks of the position. Currently, institutions are to some extent allowed to alter and amend the national qualification criteria.

Institutions should use that possibility and balance the criteria based on teaching, research, and other merits to respond to the organizational needs.

In recruitments, transparency is one of the key success factors. The selection and qualification criteria, and the rationale for their selection, should be communicated openly in job descriptions and advertisements. That is one way of avoiding a mismatch between individual ambitions and organizational needs.

**30. (B.14) Streamline the selection procedures.**

The recruitment process in Latvian HEIs is time-consuming and requires a considerable amount of time from the academics involved. Many academics seem to be members of several boards, councils and committees (for example, faculty council, promotion council, council of professors), and the same individuals seem overly committed in institutional decision making. For that and other reasons, a more streamlined selection process is advisable. However, while changes to the process can and should be promoted by HEIs, a revised approach will also need to find the endorsement of the government.

The advertisement of positions is currently done in a pragmatic way, in accordance with what is stipulated in the legislation. While that has some administrative advantage, announcements of positions tend to reach the Latvian scholarly community only within the country. It would be worth considering how to advertise open positions to a broader audience. Institutions should, for example, identify and make use of international outlets for recruitments, including for the advertisement of junior positions. However, a comprehensive internationalization of advertisements and recruitments would only make sense in the context of more accommodating arrangements for foreign academics.

**31. (B.15) Strengthen the strategic role of HR services alongside institutional leaders, and consider the involvement of stakeholders in recruitment.**

While it would be advisable to reconsider the recruitment process, particularly with respect to the election of academics, the roles of different parties involved generally seem clear. Under a future model, there also needs to be clarity and the proper articulation of roles and responsibilities will need to be ensured. The role of HR services and institutional leaders should be strengthened in strategic recruitments to ensure a strong link between institutional priorities and profile and personnel decisions. Institutions might also consider involving external stakeholders in the recruitment process, especially in cases where positions have a strong third-mission-related component.

**32. (B.16) Build a system of checks and balances in basic units.**

Recruitment systems need to be based on institutional strategies as well as values of the academic collegial community. An objective, fair, and transparent procedure is key for the acceptance of the system. A system of checks and balances should be created to ensure aspects such as an appropriate representation of the collegial community—while not overburdening individuals—in decision making, efficient implementation of decisions, and equal treatment of individuals.



The roles of different players in the process need to be balanced; however, this balance depends on the specific type of recruitment. In professorial recruitments, for example, the academic community tends to play a key role; in organizational recruitments of lower-level academic staff, the unit head has a major role; and in short-term recruitments for projects, the project managers have a significant role. The differences of aims and processes of recruitment in different types of recruitments should be acknowledged (see Table 6 in World Bank 2017). In general, there should also be room for strategic recruitments, giving the institutional leadership the possibility to reflect major strategic considerations in recruiting professors and other teaching staff.

### **Career Advancement and Promotion Patterns**

#### ***33. (B.17) Develop predictable, transparent, and clear promotion patterns.***

Currently, promotions in the Latvian higher education system are based on vacancies for which individuals apply. The fact that there is no mandatory retirement makes it difficult to estimate when related vacancies occur.

Institutional promotion patterns should be developed in a way that they are aligned with national qualification criteria, are transparent and well documented, and provide predictable and realistic targets for talented and hardworking young scholars, that is, these scholars should be well aware of what they are expected to achieve if they decide to continue with an academic career. In some countries, this is realized via tenure track systems. If such clarity is not achieved, the attractiveness of the academic profession in Latvia is likely to suffer, impacting both the pool of available future academics and, most likely, the migration patterns of academics.

#### ***34. (B.18) Continuously improve promotion patterns via balanced, flexible, and transparent promotion criteria.***

Currently, the Latvian promotion system is based on vacancies and collegial (sometimes labelled “democratic”) evaluations and decision making. The current system takes into account different aspects of academic work. However, if in the future institutions decided to also reflect the reality of more research- or teaching-intensive positions in promotions, the promotion criteria would need to reflect this reality. Institutional and unit leaders will need scope to tailor criteria for promotions in accordance with institutional priorities. In all cases, the transparency and fairness of the process should be maintained. In any case, job descriptions should be developed further to reflect a realistic (teaching) load.

#### ***35. (B.19) Develop a systematic approach to follow and steer career advancement.***

Some of the Latvian HEIs have a proactive way of establishing new positions and altering their personnel structure to strengthen institutional capacity while promoting individual development. However, several system-level variables are causing inertia (for example, the six-year rule, the lack of mandatory retirement, quotas on qualifications, language requirements) and constrain systematic development of motivating career structures and individual career advancement. Regardless of the

system-level restrictions, institutions should explicitly discuss career advancement as part of their strategic human resource development, while trying to advance much-needed system-level changes through consultations.

Career advancement should not be constrained and viewed exclusively as an individual's application for an open position. The leadership should be aware of the aims and professional ambitions of its faculty. A systemic career dialog between an academic and his or her supervisor should be organized in every academic unit, for example, as part of development discussions.

### **International Mobility in Academic Careers**

#### ***36. (B.21) Strengthen an organizational culture that supports internationalization.***

HR departments and institutional leaders responsible for HR management can significantly influence the degree of internationalization of institutions. To develop an organizational culture that provides good working conditions for foreign faculty members, several small steps can be taken. For instance, all important HR documents, regulations, and policies should be made easily accessible in English (or other major European languages, as appropriate) and proactively communicated to foreign staff, and a welcome center might facilitate the introduction phase. In addition, suitable forms of support and services for the families of the foreign faculty members should be considered, as well as dual career issues (that is, the needs of couples where both partners pursue an academic/professional career).

Internationalization of faculty should be encouraged by aligning the remuneration and promotion criteria with the agreed internationalization strategy. Faculty members should be systematically encouraged to apply for international projects, to co-publish internationally, and to take advantage of opportunities of international staff exchange as provided, for example, by Nord+, Erasmus+, and other programs.

### **Alignment of Elements of Human Resource Policies**

#### ***37. (B.22) Align HR practices with the institutional strategy.***

The institutional strategy development process should be planned in such a way that individuals responsible for HR planning and the implementation of HR management have a voice. HR issues should be one explicit topic of the strategy development process. The institutional strategy should, furthermore, be reflected in job descriptions, performance appraisals, career progression, and approaches to remuneration.

## 3.2 Recommendations for the Government

### The Status and Role of Academics

#### **38. (B.1) *Initiate a policy dialog on the reform of the two-track system with the aim of overcoming a dichotomy between teaching and research.***

Integration of research and teaching is a precondition for developing a research-intensive and research-informed public higher education system with diversified institutional profiles. Regardless of the integration of research institutes and the stipulated unity of teaching and research, the Latvian career model is still based on a legislative distinction between research-focused and teaching-focused positions. The varying balance among research and teaching activities, management, and service tasks should be approached as an institutional matter of division of labor, not as a distinction enshrined in legislation.

A policy dialog on the legislative distinction between research and teaching duties needs to be launched. When the legislation is reformed, all three missions of higher education (that is, teaching and learning, research, and service), should be taken into account within a national career framework. It would be important in that respect to ensure that all academic activities receive adequate attention, in particular, that teaching activities are not sidelined by a focus on research. The national career framework should allow institutions to develop a distinct profile of their staff—a step that will require adjustments to the current list of criteria for elections to the extent that they limit the scope of HEIs to select and promote academics in accordance with the institution’s profile and needs.

The introduction of a new framework for academic careers would require careful consideration of the transition process and its challenges. While applying a new framework to academics who entered the higher education system after its introduction does not pose challenges, potential gains and losses for academics who already were in the system before need to be taken into account. Thus, a condition for a successful transition to a new system is a clear plan for its introduction, comprising distinct successive steps. In addition, it would be expedient to devise incentive and/or compensation mechanisms to facilitate the shift of academics who were hired under the old system to the new system. Legal issues that might arise in connection with the transition also merit to be considered in advance.

### General Career Patterns

#### **39. (B.4) *Develop the national career framework to be compatible with international frameworks and to support mobility among different sectors (industry, public administration, and others) within the Latvian society.***

The national career framework should be aligned with the (stages of the) career frameworks used by international agencies and foundations and reflected in related programs and instruments (for example, European funding instruments, mobility programs) to improve conditions for attracting funding and supporting international mobility. The national career framework should also allow for mobility among sectors. Thus, when developing the national career framework, the entry and exit points of academic careers—including from/to other sectors of society/the economy—should also be considered. Other points to be considered pertain to mobility and international recognition issues at different career stages.

**40. (B.5) Continue developing system-level incentives to ensure a strategic approach to HR development.**

Providing system-level incentives is an efficient way of developing suitable career structures and research competencies at the institutional level. Policy measures like the recent introduction of postdoc positions have an immediate and stimulating impact on the personnel policies. While further qualifications of academic staff should be encouraged, it is not advisable to set rigid quotas for certain types of qualifications, especially for small and innovative institutions, which need flexibility and time to develop their academic staff.

**Selection and Recruitment of Academic Staff**

**41. (B.11) Develop further national regulations to ensure equal treatment.**

National legislation needs to ensure the required openness of the system and equal treatment of its members and potential candidates. Legislative reforms should aim at removing any obstacles to internationalization and ensure equal treatment in term of gender, minorities, and other such status. For instance, narrowly defined language requirements for filling academic positions need to be avoided to make internationalization and an open system a reality.

**Career Advancement and Promotion Patterns**

**42. (B.17) The national career framework should allow for predictable career models in institutions, including a tenure track option.<sup>5</sup>**

Currently, promotions in the Latvian higher education system are based on vacancies for which candidates can apply. Latvia currently does not have a tenure track option; thus, it is not possible to promote a person “in situ.” Because of the lack of a mandatory retirement age and due to the small size of the system, career progression seems almost impossible to individuals active in some fields. The national career framework should be designed in such a way to allow institutions to develop career models that include predictable promotion practices and a possibility to eventually obtain tenure.

If the sector decided to move in the direction of a tenure track system, the tenure track would need to be anchored in national legislation, that is, a longer probationary period should be regulated, as should permanent positions and the option of “in situ” promotions. However, with regard to a future tenure track model, transparency and clarity will need to be ensured according to the standards of international good practices of tenure track models.

In a first step, a tenure track model could be piloted in such a way that major legislative changes would not be required. The Ministry could work with HEIs (for example, by providing administrative or financial support) with the latter announcing positions leading to professorships in areas of strategic importance. This would mean that persons in these positions could be promoted to the next career

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<sup>5</sup> This recommendation relates to institutional level recommendation B.17 in the matrix in the annex of this document. It was included here, since the realization of the related recommendation would also require system-level changes.

step without establishment of a new position. Individuals recruited as a docent/postdoc could, for example, be promoted to associate professor and further to professor on the basis of periodic assessments. The pilot positions could be either newly established or vacant professorial positions. From a financial management perspective, this would allow for savings during the initial phase and ensure a time frame where the financial implications of the new model can be explored. The assessment could be done after six years in the position or earlier, if requested by the academic. It would further be worth considering aligning the type of pilot positions and promotion criteria with Pillar 2 funding criteria or other agreed priorities.

In the medium term and following legislative changes, the professorship should be a permanent (tenured) position with a clearly established retirement age. If from a legal perspective this cannot be realized, HEIs will need to find pragmatic solutions, for example, by timing contract duration with the retirement age established for comparable professions.

## **International Mobility in Academic Careers**

### ***43. (B.20) Reconsider and revise legislation hindering mobility.***

Latvia has a small higher education system. Traditionally, the academic labor force has consisted mostly of Latvian nationals. One way of increasing the dynamics and adaptability of the system is to ensure international outward and inward mobility of staff. Internationalization of the academic workforce is also important for students, because it supports internationalization at home.

As an academic labor market, the Latvian higher education system seems almost closed, and the current approach allowing for visiting lecturers does not provide an adequate framework for internationalization of academic work.

Existing language restrictions will need to be reconsidered and revised in a way that allows for scientific dialog (in teaching and research) in major European languages (alongside the national language) that are mastered by the respective academic community. The role of the English language, especially, needs to be strengthened to ensure that academic activity in the country stays internationally connected and relevant. System- and institution-level information should be easily accessible in English to help promote Latvian higher education. These and other steps can be taken by government and institutional actors immediately to promote the internationalization of Latvian higher education. In addition, the government would be well advised to further develop mobility schemes that bring talent from neighboring countries and beyond to Latvia and provide Latvian academics with international experience early in their careers. In addition, academic exchange during the later stages of a career should be supported. Specific attention needs to be devoted to reentrance after a period of mobility and work with the academic diaspora in a way that benefits the Latvian higher education system.

## **Alignment of Elements of Human Resource Policies**

### **44. (B.23) Take HR issues into consideration when reforming higher education policy, funding, and legislation.**

According to the European University Association Autonomy Scorecard (EUA 2017), staffing autonomy is high in Latvian HEIs. However, from an institutional perspective, there are many minor regulative norms that as an aggregate determine HR policies.

At this stage, Latvia does not have a comprehensive policy on academic work and careers. In future higher education reforms, also pertaining to academic careers, it will be important that the academic community has a voice. In particular, it should be ensured that academics at different career stages are heard in the policy process. The legislation on academic work and careers will need to be well aligned with the aims of national higher education policy. If the system is striving for excellence and internationalization, this will need to be reflected in national HR-related regulations and incentives that ensure a highly attractive and internationally open academic profession. The government would be well advised to provide a vision on the development of the academic profession in the country, which should include the vision with respect to teaching (education export included), research (global knowledge transfer included), and social innovations and technological advancement (mobility among sectors).

## **4 Recommendations on Remuneration and Performance Evaluation**

**Since the system-level framework and institutional policies and practices currently hardly address performance-oriented forms of remuneration, a key task for Latvian HEIs and the Latvian government is to pave the way for future reforms.** System-level funding arrangements and institution-internal allocation mechanisms have both been on the higher education reform agenda in Latvia. One option for further promoting the system's orientation toward performance would be to translate performance orientation to the level of the individual academic. Currently, there are no specific system-level regulations on performance-based salary systems and performance-supporting measures. Nor do HEIs engage in this area to a broader extent. That creates the possibility for HEIs and the government to conjointly develop ideas on how this matter could be tackled in the future. Basic issues that would merit consideration at this stage include an adequate notion of performance, system-level regulations that incentivize institutions to increase performance orientation while granting sufficient institutional autonomy, and managerial and financial implications of potential reforms.

### **4.1 Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions**

#### **Regulation at the System Level**

There are no specific regulations on the system level pertaining to performance-based salaries (PBS) or bonus systems on the institutional level. That means that institutions are in principle free to develop

such models, if their financial situation allows. Minimum salaries for different staff categories are, however, determined at the system level (see World Bank 2018, 39).

### **Concept and Measurement of (Good) Performance**

#### ***45. (C.3) Ensure the integration of teaching and research functions, including in individual academic careers, at the institutional level.***

This recommendation is fueled by the need to maintain an open concept of performance that reflects the diversity of academic tasks. In principle, Latvian academics are supposed to display strong performance in both teaching and research. However, various HEIs put a stronger emphasis on research performance. The reason might be that research was put “on the back burner” during and after the year of the financial crisis, and is now specifically rewarded through performance-based financing provided by the government under Pillar 2 of the reformed funding system. While the system level needs to define key features of academic tasks, HEIs should have the flexibility to (a) promote an integrated vision of academic duty (comprising of teaching, research, service, and managerial activities), while (b) also allowing for a certain amount of specialization within this broad definition of academic duty, to the extent that it fits with the profile and needs of the respective HEI.

#### ***46. (C.4) Further develop the concept of, and provide incentives for, performance on the institutional level.***

To the extent that PBS models are developed in the future, it will be important to take different performance categories into account while striving to ensure an integrated approach to careers with regard to different types of academic duty (teaching, research, service, and management)—see previous paragraph.

#### ***47. (C.6) Strive to achieve a more balanced view on performance, particularly by incentivizing excellence in both teaching and research.***

As mentioned, financial cuts in the context of the financial crisis, in particular, impacted research funding and subsequently research performance. It is thus no surprise that the Ministry and HEIs currently try to compensate for this shortcoming through financial incentives and a strategic emphasis on research. However, the Latvian higher education sector would be well advised to follow the example of neighboring countries (for example, Poland) and put more emphasis on excellence in teaching. Incentives could be set on different levels, including performance-based funding on the system and institutional level, and via future performance-based salary models, if the sector chooses to go in that direction. Thus, this concerns the system overall as well as individual HEIs.

### **Aspects of Model Development – Linking Performance to Models and Procedures**

The criteria for good system- and institution-level human resource policies list a range of model development aspects to be considered when developing PBS models and performance-supporting

measures. Fully-fledged PBS models currently do not exist in Latvia, nor are they being developed. However, there are initial experiences with bonus systems, mainly for research-related performance.

If Latvian HEIs embarked on the development of PBS models, they would be well advised to:

- Combine fixed salary components with performance rewards (and ensure that the fixed part is substantial, as performance is also required as part of normal duty)
- Develop PBS systems that reflect institutional strategies
- Avoid crowding-out effects by developing incentive systems that do not reward every single (small) activity and that accommodate different types of performance with a clear goal to enhance individual motivation
- Make sure that performance criteria, assessments, and the related award process are fair, transparent, and clearly structured
- Develop models that are “actionable,” that is, that reflect constraints with regard to administrative and financial management
- Combine top-down and bottom-up aspects.

Detailed guidance on model development and good practice examples are provided in an earlier World Bank publication (World Bank 2017).

### **Remuneration and Financial Management**

As stated in the criteria for good system- and institution-level human resource policies (see Annex section C.13, pp. 62–63), financial management considerations are an integral part of the development and implementation of PBS systems. Such systems need to be developed with the short-, medium-, and long-term funding basis in mind and carefully consider the various financial implications of performance-supporting measures proposed.

The bonus systems currently under development in some Latvian HEIs can be implemented without a long-term financial commitment on the part of the HEI. However, all performance-supporting measures lead to an expectation that comparable performance leads to comparable rewards in the future. Nevertheless, ad-hoc rewards can be steered more easily than comprehensive performance-based salary models with a medium-to-long-term impact. Besides predicting future available funds, model developers also need to consider how performance of staff is likely to develop (triggering a respective reward), which might be related to increasing experience and thus questions of age cohorts. The latter will also determine when larger amounts of funds become available due to retirement of staff higher up the career ladder. This, of course, is more difficult in a system without a mandatory retirement age and, relatedly, less predictability of the availability of institutional resources.

Finally, complex planning processes, for example, in the context of PBS models, require well-trained and experienced administrative and financial management capacity at the institutional level and related capacity-building measures.



## 4.2 Recommendations for the Government

### Regulation at the System Level

As mentioned, there are no specific regulations on the system level in Latvia that define or incentivize the introduction of PBS or other performance-related measures. The following considerations thus mainly pertain to creating preconditions for a potential introduction of PBS or other performance-related measures in the future, and to avoiding a system-level framework that would hamper the introduction of such measures.

#### ***48. (C.1) Maintain clarity on basic principles of remuneration and types of positions in the legislation while exploring ways to make salaries more adequate and performance oriented.***

In Latvia, the main types of academic positions and the related minimum salaries are regulated by legislation. The resulting clarity needs to be maintained in the future. However, the Ministry would be encouraged to explore options to make salaries in the higher education sector adequate—also in a competitive European environment—and to incentivize performance. The former will be needed to increase the attractiveness of the academic profession, which already faces many imponderabilities (previous sections have discussed the difficulties of career planning in a system that lacks a tenure track option and a mandatory retirement age) and attractive alternative options, and to avoid academic mobility from becoming a one-way street with Latvia losing able young academics.

#### ***49. (C.2) Strengthen the role of unions at the institutional level and, where appropriate, the system level, while at the same time seeking measures to enhance the capacity of unions.***

Feedback collected from the academic community and its representatives, as well as from the representatives of HEIs as employers, could play an important role in articulating and discussing the needs, demands, and policy proposals of academic staff. It is thus important to strengthen the voice of academics, including via unions, and make them an important discussion partner wherever appropriate. If that requires capacity enhancement, this seems to be an agenda in the interest of all partners involved, who might want to discuss and agree on suitable related measures.

### Concept and Measurement of (Good) Performance

#### ***50. (C.3) Maintain transparency and adaptability of election criteria while exploring diverse ways of career advancement.***

Election criteria need to be considered under two different aspects. The first aspect relates to the criteria that appear to be, overall, perceived as fair and clear. That clarity needs to be maintained. The second aspect is the mechanism of electing academics to their position. That approach raises many questions, as discussed in earlier sections. The mechanisms of elections open the door to matters of personal preferences and can potentially trigger conflict of interest issues. Election as a key mechanism for career advancement thus needs to be reconsidered.

**51. (C.4) Further develop the concept of performance by encouraging HEIs to consider—and provide incentives for—the introduction of performance-supporting measures on the institutional level.**

Performance pay is a relatively new concept in the Latvian higher education sector. While the scarcity associated with financing higher education at the time of the financial crisis did not leave much room for additional pay, now might be a good time to reconsider the appropriateness and performance orientation of salaries. The national legislation stipulates minimum salaries; in principle, HEIs are free to pay more, based on criteria established on the institutional level.

However, in reality, the minimum pay seems to be considered as the defined salary at some HEIs. In combination with hourly contracts, that can lead to a precarious situation for some academics. The government might want to signal the importance of performance-related pay by including this topic in its policy dialogue, and start building related capacity at the system and institutional level. Nucleus bonus systems under development at some HEIs can be showcased, and the pros and cons of PBS openly discussed to advance considerations on the institutional level.

**52. (C.5) Promote a more diverse approach to performance (beyond incentivizing academic functions).**

To follow up on the previous point, capacity-building measures should also include a discussion on what is considered performance or, more broadly, an “extra task” worthy of additional pay. It would be suitable to include considerations concerning the market value of work in certain areas and skills in that discussion. Is it fair that academics in certain “marketable” fields can achieve higher salaries than those in less “marketable” fields? To what extent should salary models compensate for a lack of alternative income, for example, through consulting or other work with a private clientele? Should staff who generate extra income for HEIs (and the sector) also be rewarded by HEIs? These are some of the questions that need to be answered.

Even though—taking into account the personnel and financial autonomy of Latvian HEIs—key decisions will be taken at the institutional level, it will be beneficial to support a joint discussion on these important questions at the system level. Ministry and HEI leadership might want to deepen their knowledge about the pros and cons of models that have been developed elsewhere and related implementation experience.

**53. (C.6) Consider broadening the criteria for performance allocations (“Pillar 2”) to HEIs in future to incentivize teaching excellence and third-mission-related activities.**

Criteria of good (or excellent) performance will also need to be discussed at the institutional level and fit individual institutional profiles. However, public funding will have an important signaling function. Currently, performance allocations by the Ministry largely focus on research performance. That seems to be mirrored by some institutional strategies, which primarily focus on research excellence. Funding under Pillar 2 (performance-based funding) by the government can trigger a stronger focus on teaching excellence, while institutions might need some guidance on how teaching excellence can be supported and measured.

### **Aspects of Model Development – Linking Performance to Models and Procedures**

The development of a PBS system at the system level is currently not planned in Latvia. As mentioned, current regulations, however, do not prevent HEIs from developing such models. Related recommendations have been provided in Section 3.3. General considerations on model development on the system level have been discussed earlier by the authors of this report (World Bank 2017).

### **Remuneration and Financial Management**

The same applies to financial management considerations at the system level. However, given the importance of administrative and financial management capacity at the institutional level (discussed in Section 3.3), the Ministry might want to organize peer learning events and capacity building for institutional leaders and HR management.

## **5 Considerations on Promoting Strategic Human Resource Management in Latvia**

**The HR management function of Latvian HEIs is still at an early stage of development.** In that respect, the Latvian higher education system is not an exception within Europe. In most HEIs, HR departments are still largely carrying out traditional tasks of personnel administration. Within the given context, the development of a more strategic approach toward personnel policies needs to be initiated by institutional leadership with a strong drive from academic departments and faculties, that is, ideally in a combined top-down and bottom-up approach. However, moving to the next stage of strategic HR management will need to be done in a realistic and gradual way.

The World Bank's International Practice report on academic careers (see Box 53 in World Bank 2017) refers to a European project on HR management in HEIs. That project is a practical attempt to map and develop HR management in European HEIs (Pausits et al. 2017). The framework developed under that project is also useful when considering the development of strategic HR management in Latvia (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Framework for mapping and developing HR management**



*Source:* Pausits et al. 2017, 12.

**Regardless of their degree of autonomy, public HEIs are instruments for national higher education policy** (Pekkola and Kivistö 2016). That provides a starting point for the strategic management of public HEIs and has important implications for policy makers and institutional leaders. That also explains why national higher education policy is an important point of reference for HR management in HEIs.

**Academic careers and the attractiveness of the academic profession are a shared responsibility of policy makers and HEIs.** Autonomous institutions play an important role in the design of academic careers. However, strategic HR management still needs a suitable national framework, and policy makers willing to play an active role in supporting institutional HR management and to ensure a conducive environment for the academic profession. National higher education policies provide a framework or the type of playing field for HEIs to act strategically. With regard to HR-related issues, higher education policies and legislation determine several conditional factors that have an impact on the HR management at HEIs, including the following:

- Content of work (research, teaching, management)
- Positions and (related) qualifications
- Recruitments and promotions
- Payments (minimum salary)
- Requirements for professionalization opportunities
- Retirement.

Latvia is considered one of the leading nations in Europe in terms of staffing autonomy (7th position in the EUA Autonomy Scorecard; EUA 2017). However, based on the authors' observations on academic careers in Latvia (World Bank 2018) and related policies and regulation, there are system-level factors in all above-mentioned areas that have a major impact on HR management in Latvian HEIs.

**HR management is not only an institutional matter but also highly related to the external environment** (Beer et al. 1984). To promote strategic HR management at HEIs, policy makers in Latvia should consider:

1. Strengthening the dialog between institutions and academic staff (including via unions)
2. Carefully assessing the HR impacts of policies on funding (for example, study places), internationalization, and the ratios and quotas for academic staff, among others
3. Reassessing intentions compared to the reality of a two-track career system (that is, a career system which, in practice, has academics in either a teaching or research track) and how to mitigate undesired effects.

**However, in addition to a conducive HEI-external environment, strategic HR management calls for proactive leadership of HEIs.** While national policies and scarce resources are challenges, institutions need to explore all suitable options within their environment (while triggering discussions on system-level changes, where needed). This is well illustrated by the fact that some institutions proactively develop reward systems for their academic staff while others have not yet explored such options.

The strategic management of public institutions always takes place in a policy environment that sets constraints for institutional management. Within this environment, however, HEI managers need to provide a vision for their institutions with regard to acquiring resources for their actions and ensuring their operational capacity to carry out their mission (Moore 1995). To strategically manage human resources in HEIs, institutional leaders need to:

1. Actively discuss the role of higher education and academic staff within society
2. Actively promote and support the dialog on HR management with the Ministry and other institutional stakeholder (industry, unions, local authorities, other stakeholders)
3. Approach academic staff as an institutional resource and not primarily as an individual cost item.

**First and important steps for introducing strategic HR management at Latvian HEIs would be (a) the development of institutional HR strategies, (b) the alignment of HR activities with the overall institutional strategy, and (c) the inclusion of HR managers in the institutional strategy process.** This would also imply that deans and other academic leaders and line managers should be involved in the development of the institutional HR strategy and in HR planning, and that HR functions are considered in the light of the institutional strategy. Table 1 summarizes the general recommendations on HR functions in relation to the strategic management of HEIs. The following section discusses what this means in detail in Latvia.

**Table 1. Recommendations on human resources functions in relation to the strategic management of higher education institutions**

Function	Strategic dimension	Recommendation for strategic HRM
<b>HR strategy and planning</b>	Link to institutional strategy and national policies	Include HR functions and actors in strategy process  Align HR policies with institutional strategy
<b>Job demands</b>	Consideration of staff as an institutional resource and as individual contributors who can be developed	Develop HR planning (either a strategic HR plan, or a HR section in other institutional strategies)

	Definition of job demands is the most efficient method of division of labor and integration of academic tasks	
<b>Recruitment and selection</b>	The most efficient way of profiling and steering autonomous professional workforce  Define the access points of external talents into the system	Balance individual (equity considerations), organizational, and professional needs
<b>Performance evaluation</b>	Alignment of activities, institutional strategy, and national performance requirements	Clearly define what is considered and rewarded as performance in institutional context, as well as related criteria and procedures
<b>Training and development</b>	An effective way of profiling the institutions in teaching, research, and management, as well as internationalization	Develop an institutional policy on the training and development of academic staff
<b>Career progression</b>	Alignment of performance evaluation, institutional missions (tasks), and motivational systems  Strengthen work-related well-being and attractiveness, as well as predictability of careers	Develop predictable, transparent, and clear promotion patterns  Maintain transparency
<b>Pay and benefits</b>	Set incentives to reach goals on various levels (individual, institutional, system)	Develop stable, transparent, and motivating systems for pay/benefits
<b>HR analysis and reporting</b>	Provide sufficient level of information for strategic and operational decision making and professional HR planning	Develop HR reporting to support everyday management of HEIs
<b>HEI-specific issues<sup>a</sup></b>		
<b>Doctorate</b>	Shared understanding of the role of doctoral education as part of studies and in relation to employment policies in HEIs and beyond  Strengthened university industry/society linkage  Staff development	HEIs should develop institutional policies on the doctorate
<b>Doctoral schools</b>	Cross-disciplinary collaboration  Interinstitutional collaboration	HEIs should develop institutional practices for doctoral education and its administration and quality assurance
<b>Postdocs</b>	Strengthened university industry/society link  Staff development	HEIs should have an institutional understanding of the position and role of postdocs
<b>Internationalization</b>	Institutional and staff development Resource acquisition	Support internationalization activities

Note: a. That is, issues pertaining to the specific profile and scope of the HEI.

**A viable HR strategy and HR planning are essential for creating and implementing the institutional strategy.** The outcomes of HEIs are mostly produced by academics. Without a shared understanding of profile and directions of the HEI, the strategic management of, and effective support for, individual academics, programs, departments, and faculties is impossible. Institutional strategies and national

policies have a direct impact on academic work and its resources at the basic level. Thus, this connection should be made explicit, in order for academics and units to proactively adapt to the changing environment.

**Job demands should be considered at the departmental and faculty level.** A basic unit for HR planning should not be an hourly-based work contract that covers a task and is managed primarily in an administrative fashion, but a group of positions within an organizational structure to meet changing demands. The job demands and descriptions should be explicitly stated so that an individual holding a position knows what he or she is expected to do (and should be capable of doing). This applies to related tasks, as well. While overall strategic questions on the integration of research and teaching will need to be considered by the Ministry and institutional leadership, a suitable division of labor will need to be ensured at the unit level.

**Recruitment and selection are essential processes for ensuring an adequate institutional profile, professional excellence, and predictability of career steps at the individual level.** The strategic dimension should be taken into account when opening and defining positions, and in determining procedures as well as criteria. The strategic importance of selection and recruitment to senior positions will be even more elevated if Latvia decides to follow international practice in implementing permanent academic positions via a tenure track model. The selection criteria should reflect the institutional strategy (that is, put an emphasis on certain research areas, applied sciences, or teaching excellence) and provide room for strategic decision making, but also be transparent and predictable.

**Performance evaluation is a way of aligning national demands; institutional strategy; and departmental, group level, and individual activities and ambitions.** Performance appraisals are a means of establishing a common understanding of the aims of academic work and its efficiency. Currently, in Latvia, performance is often evaluated in a context of hourly-based agreements, with student numbers serving as an indicator for individual performance. In a context of demographic decline and outward migration, this raises several questions, makes strategic management challenging, and may encourage individuals to act in an opportunistic manner.

**Training and development should be planned in the context of institutional missions and visions.** Depending on the institutional strategy, academic personnel should have opportunities to develop their skills and competences in teaching, supervision, research, and institutional management. These training and development activities can be planned in a way to simultaneously increase the productivity of the institution. Examples of areas where competences can be deepened are joint degrees, joint supervision, collaboration in research projects, joint authoring, and participation in international exchange programs.

**Career progression is a practical step allowing an HEI to align aspects of selection and recruitment, promotion, pay and benefits, internationalization, and performance evaluation with the institutional strategy.** Career progression criteria should be communicated clearly to the employees so they know how they can advance their career. This advancement should also support the overall goals of the institution. The introduction of a tenure track system should be considered accordingly at the system and, subsequently, the institutional level.

**Performance-oriented pay and benefits build on performance evaluation and allow the HEI to incentivize desired activities in line with strategic priorities.** PBS systems should be kept simple and manageable, and financial management implications need to be carefully considered. It is advisable to

start rewarding particular types of performance through bonuses—several Latvian HEIs have some initial experience with this—before embarking on designing and piloting PBS systems.

**HR analysis and reporting should support strategic and operational decision making in personnel management.** It should be organized in such a way that it enables institutional leaders to have a sound overall understanding of the situation of their staff and adequate information on its long-term development, as well as of staff-related expenses. HR reporting should also be tailored toward the needs of departmental and faculty managers. They should have a realistic picture of their staff that increases their operational management capacity. In relation to HR strategy and planning, a set of indicators should be developed for systematic follow-up of the implementation of the strategy and adapting it to a changing environment. HR analysis and reporting should be supported by an adequate higher education management and information system.

**The doctorate, early careers, and the organization of doctoral education are of strategic importance for the future of science and higher education in Latvia more generally, as well as in HR development in Latvian HEIs, as documented in earlier reports by the authors (World Bank 2017, 2018).** Doctoral education needs to be taken into account in strategic HR management as it is an important way of increasing the talent pool in Latvia.

**Early career positions have a strategic role in knowledge transfer between HEIs and the surrounding society.** The early career positions have a decisive role in the attractiveness of academic careers, recruitment of talent and mobility of young talent between HEIs and other organizations. Thus, it is important also from an HR management perspective that the career advancement and counseling system is in place, and that institutions have transparent and well-communicated principles in admission, recruitment, and quality assurance of the early career phase. The doctoral schools in HEIs can provide an important platform for interdisciplinary collaboration and for internationalization and national collaboration, in addition to improved educational quality.

**Internationalization is a vital condition that should be taken into account in institutional planning.** Institutions should explicitly ponder the benefits and risks associated with internationalization and, if selected to be a strategic goal, have a practical HR policy supporting the inward and outward mobility of their staff.

**In summary, strategic HR management in Latvian higher education calls for:**

1. National support and dialog
2. Proactive institutional leadership and stakeholder dialog
3. Strengthened management of HR
4. Alignment of institutional strategy and HR functions
5. Involvement of an HR dimension in the strategy process
6. Shared and well-communicated HR policies
7. Recognition of the importance of the early career stages.



## Annex. Overview on Recommendations for Academic Careers in Latvia

Level	Criteria for Good System- and Institution-Level Human Resource Policies	Status Quo Assessment	Recommendations
<b>A. Early-stage researchers: doctoral candidates and postdoctoral fellows</b>			
<i>System-level framework</i>			
<i>System level</i>	<b>A.1</b> <u>The system-level framework for doctoral training finds an appropriate balance between regulation and flexibility.</u> While regulations and quality criteria need to be applied rigorously and consistently, doctoral training also requires room to accommodate personalized paths, and room for a reasonable level of institutional and disciplinary differences. <u>This necessitates a national consensus on the essence and standards of the doctorate developed jointly by all relevant stakeholders of the higher education system.</u>	<i>Not achieved.</i> There is a strict classification of doctoral degrees and accreditation regulations for doctoral programs, but they restrict the flexibility of HEIs in adequately designing doctoral education.	<u>Define the standards of the doctorate, in consultation with the higher education sector.</u>  Ensure that regulations are focused on quality standards for the doctoral level and define those in a generic way.  Consult the academic community during the definition process.
<i>System level</i>	<b>A.2</b> <u>The autonomy of HEIs in the field of doctoral training is complemented by mandatory internal accountability mechanisms and appropriate external quality assurance processes</u> of research and doctoral education. This includes regulations on which HEIs have the right to confer the doctorate and the related requirements. The regulations need to reflect that original research is the core component of the doctorate and,	<i>Achieved only to a limited extent.</i> Internal and external quality assurance procedures are still at an incipient stage and the focus on a suitable research environment as a condition for training doctoral students and conferring the doctoral degree is insufficient.	<u>Define the standards and criteria for conferring the doctorate and the associated quality assurance mechanisms.</u> Review the criteria for deciding which HEIs have doctoral degree awarding powers.  Promote internal quality assurance through capacity-building mechanisms.  Ensure that the national quality assurance process for the third cycle covers the HEIs' internal quality assurance mechanisms.

Level	Criteria for Good System- and Institution-Level Human Resource Policies	Status Quo Assessment	Recommendations
	therefore, stipulate that institutions provide a suitable research environment.		
<i>System level</i>	<b>A.3</b> <u>Doctoral training needs to be incentivized financially to promote efficiency and quality.</u> <sup>a</sup>	<i>Achieved only to a limited extent:</i> State funding for higher education incentivizes the doctorate to some extent. However, the state stipend for doctoral students is very low, and access to research project funding is weak. This might lead to low completion rates.	<u>Review funding mechanisms for the doctoral level to ensure completion, and to promote efficiency and quality.</u>  Fund doctoral students in priority fields at a sufficient level to allow them to be full-time students.  Increase research funding to provide stability and long-term planning.
<i>System level</i>	<b>A.4</b> <u>Public funding for doctoral training is allocated in accordance with national needs</u> and competencies required, while ensuring a diversity of doctorates.	<i>Achieved only to a limited extent:</i> Public funding for doctoral education to a limited extent considers national needs.	<u>Set national research priorities in broad (inter)disciplinary fields (including arts, humanities, and social sciences) while preserving some funding for blue sky research.</u>
<i>System level</i>	<b>A.5</b> <u>Research support programs</u> designed and funded at the system level <u>ensure that doctoral candidates are appropriately involved in research projects</u> wherever possible and that suitable co-supervision agreements are in place.	<i>Achieved only to a limited extent:</i> Research support programs designed and funded at the system level provide very weak incentives to ensure that doctoral candidates are appropriately involved in research projects. As a result, there are students working on their doctorate in units that are not research active. This issue will be tackled in new regulations.  Although sometimes students have access to a second supervisor, this cannot be construed as co-supervision, which implies a team effort.	<u>Ensure that research is at the center of the doctoral experience.</u>  Research funding should include financial incentives to promote doctoral students' participation in funded research.  Involvement in research should be made a defining criterion and condition for doctoral training.  HEIs should be required to provide co-supervision and to frame doctorates in cooperation with industry and cotutelles by formal contractual agreements.

Level	Criteria for Good System- and Institution-Level Human Resource Policies	Status Quo Assessment	Recommendations
<i>Anchoring the doctorate in the institution</i>			
<i>Institutional level</i>	<p><b>A.6</b> <u>Admission, progression, and assessment of doctoral candidates are monitored and supported.</u> This includes published criteria and transparent processes for admission, an orientation and the provision of relevant information for newly recruited candidates, contractual agreements between doctoral candidates and supervisors with clear milestones (including any requirements for publications), sound assessment procedures based on clear and transparent criteria and processes, and the monitoring of the students' progression and completion.</p>	<p><i>Partially achieved in some institutions and not achieved in others.</i> Most institutions are still offering the doctorate on the apprenticeship model, which means that admission, progression, and assessment of doctoral students are monitored and supported by the individual supervisor without much accountability to the faculty of the institution. A few institutions are developing more systematic processes, but their decentralized nature hamper[s] those efforts.</p>	<p><u>The principles for the admission, progression, and assessment of doctoral students should be defined at the central level of an institution.</u></p> <p>HEIs should develop, implement, and monitor an admissions process across all faculties. It should involve committees in the relevant units (departments or faculties) and not be based on individual admission decisions by potential supervisors.</p> <p>HEIs should develop and publish institution-wide admission criteria (while also leaving some discretion for faculty/department-level specificities).</p> <p>HEIs should inform students of their rights and responsibilities and the expected requirements during all phases of their doctoral education.</p> <p>HEIs should develop procedures to monitor students' progress and completion, and monitor the consistent implementation of procedures in all faculties.</p>
<i>Institutional level</i>	<p><b>A.7</b> <u>The supervision of doctoral candidates is framed by appropriate institutional policies and guidelines</u> (among others, outlining the respective responsibilities and rights of supervisors and doctoral candidates), training and ongoing support</p>	<p><i>Partially achieved in some institutions and not achieved in others.</i> Regulations concerning supervision are evolving in some institutions toward setting appropriate institutional policies and guidelines. Some institutions require signed</p>	<p><u>As a key condition for the quality of the doctoral training, good supervision should be framed by a set of regulations and procedures.</u></p>

Level	Criteria for Good System- and Institution-Level Human Resource Policies	Status Quo Assessment	Recommendations
	for supervisors, and monitoring their performance. <u>Co-supervision is encouraged</u> and continuity of supervision is assured.	agreements between supervisors and supervisees. Training and ongoing support for supervisors, and monitoring their performance, is not yet a practice. Co-supervision is not a policy but an ad-hoc practice, and continuity of supervision is assured to the extent that the students take the initiative to ensure such supervision.	HEIs should put in place a clear process for ensuring continuity of supervision and consider co-supervision as an effective solution for that.  HEIs should develop a process to train, support, and monitor supervisors.  Students should have access to an advisor to discuss any supervision issue.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>A.8</b> <u>HEIs provide a stimulating research environment</u> for doctorates with a critical mass of research-active staff; adequate learning and research tools; sufficient physical and financial resources; support for, among others, mobility and conference participation; and an overall environment supportive of research achievements.	<i>Partially achieved in some institutions and not achieved in others.</i> A few institutions have a critical mass of research-active staff and an overall environment supportive of research achievements. The underfunding of the sector has a negative impact on the learning and research tools applied at the institutional level and available financial support for conference participation and mobility.	<u>HEIs should provide a stimulating research environment to their doctoral students.</u>
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>A.9</b> <u>There is a policy outlining the balance between course work and research (thesis).</u> Such a policy reflects the competencies that a doctoral candidate is supposed to acquire. Courses include research methodology and scientific integrity, and professional competencies such as grant writing, and written and oral communication.	<i>Partially achieved in some institutions and not achieved in others.</i> The policy in large institutions is not always applied consistently across the faculties and, in many institutions, does not always include courses in research methodology and scientific integrity, and professional skills such as grant writing, and written and oral communication.	<u>The taught component of doctoral programs and skills development opportunities should be developed to prepare doctoral students for both academic and nonacademic careers.</u>  HEIs should define the competencies that doctoral students should develop to prepare them for both academic and nonacademic careers.  HEIs should specify the balance between research and coursework, and provide guidance to faculties for a suitable application across different fields.

Level	Criteria for Good System- and Institution-Level Human Resource Policies	Status Quo Assessment	Recommendations
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>A.10</b> <u>An institution-wide policy and related procedures for establishing an examination committee ensure objectivity and fairness.</u>	<i>Not applicable</i> since this is regulated nationally through a complex and opaque process.	<u>An institution-wide policy and related procedures for establishing an examination committee should ensure objectivity and fairness.</u>  If the national promotion process is changed, HEIs should be required to develop an institution-wide policy and related procedures for establishing examination committees that ensure a fair and objective process in line with best international practice.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>A.11</b> <u>Institutions provide doctoral candidates with a range of academic courses</u> (for example, subject-based courses, and courses on research methodology, teaching competencies, and scientific integrity), <u>and soft-skills courses</u> to prepare them for both their academic and nonacademic careers. Furthermore, <u>HEIs provide career support and, where possible, teaching and research assistantships.</u> Career support includes helping students, when appropriate, to find nonacademic jobs (including in the private sector).	<i>Partially achieved in some institutions and not achieved in others.</i> The policy in large institutions is not always applied consistently across the faculties. The majority of institutions prepare students for academic careers and do not offer soft skills courses. There is no formal career support, but in some institutions, there are opportunities for teaching and research assistantships to which students can apply.	<u>HEIs should provide career support for doctoral students to move into academic and nonacademic jobs, and grant them access to teaching and research assistantships.</u>
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>A.12</b> <u>Open access to doctoral theses is promoted.</u> Normally, all doctoral theses are available in open access, except if there are reasons requiring an embargo for a designated period of time (such as copyright issues, and ethical sensitivities related to, for example, the protection of human subjects).	<i>Achieved in at least one institution,</i> which has an open access policy mandating that publications and data from research funded by public funds or the institution itself [...] [be] deposited in an open access repository, and which ensures public access to doctoral theses on the institution's website before their presentation.	<u>Open access to doctoral theses should normally be promoted.</u>

Level	Criteria for Good System- and Institution-Level Human Resource Policies	Status Quo Assessment	Recommendations
<i>Institutional level</i>	<p><b>A.13</b> <u>Formal appeals and complaints mechanisms are available</u> to all doctoral candidates. The procedures are clear, fair, safe, comprehensive, and up to date, and are described in an easily accessible document. While respecting confidentiality and anonymity, the <u>complaints and appeals that have been lodged are analyzed periodically</u> to ensure that clusters of problems are addressed.</p>	<p><i>Partially achieved.</i> There are formal procedures for appeals and complaints but not all students seem to be informed of those opportunities, and the quality mechanisms are undeveloped.</p>	<p><u>Adequate information about formal appeals and complaints mechanisms should be available to all doctoral students, and institutions should analyze them.</u></p> <p>HEIs should ensure that students are aware of the formal appeals and complaints procedures.</p> <p>HEIs should periodically analyze the complaints and appeals that have been lodged to identify recurring problems.</p>
<i>Institutional level</i>	<p><b>A.14</b> <u>The quality of all aspects of the doctorate is continuously monitored and assured.</u> Internal quality assurance mechanisms are adapted to the specificity of doctoral training and include feedback from doctoral candidates and their supervisors.</p>	<p><i>Partially achieved in some institutions and not achieved in others.</i> Some institutions are moving toward more structured doctoral programs and are developing internal quality assurance processes, but this is still at an incipient stage.</p>	<p><u>The quality of all aspects of the doctorate should be continuously monitored and assured.</u></p> <p>HEIs should develop an institution-wide framework for internal quality mechanisms that would allow some degree of flexibility in faculty implementation.</p> <p>This framework should include feedback from students and supervisors.</p> <p>The framework should be evaluated regularly to ensure its fitness and relevance.</p>
<i>Institutional level</i>	<p><b>A.15</b> <u>Doctoral schools are a particularly effective way of institutionalizing doctoral training and promoting its quality.</u> HEIs that establish doctoral schools consider their number and their location within the institution to maximize benefits with respect to critical mass and interdisciplinarity.</p>	<p><i>Partially achieved in one institution and not achieved in others.</i> Some institutions have an overarching structure that they call “doctoral school,” which is mostly construed as providing colloquiums. There is only one example of an institution that has given administrative responsibilities to the doctoral school, including</p>	<p><u>Doctoral schools should institutionalize doctoral training and promote its quality.</u></p> <p>HEIs should establish doctoral schools to achieve three key objectives: raising quality by ensuring standard processes across the institutions,</p>

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		for quality assurance; in all other cases, the doctoral schools are viewed as a place to offer conferences and workshops.	providing students with an intellectual community, and promoting cooperation and exchange.  HEIs should determine the optimal number of doctoral schools in relation to their size and the need to promote interdisciplinarity.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>A.16</b> <u>Doctora[...][te]-granting institutions</u> have a clear mission for their doctoral schools (with appropriate attention to disciplinary differences), and <u>a comprehensive and explicit policy on the governance and organization of doctoral training</u> that is published and easily accessible.	<i>Partially achieved in one institution and not achieved in others.</i> While one institution has a doctoral school that serves as the starting point for a structured approach to the governance and organization of doctoral training, others do not have such schools (in the traditional sense of the word) (see A.15).	<u>The mission and governance of doctoral schools should be clearly defined.</u>  HEIs should define clearly, albeit flexibly, the mission and functions of their doctoral schools.  HEIs should identify the governance of the doctoral schools, including their reporting mechanisms to the highest body in the institution.  Information about the mission, functions, and governance of doctoral schools should be easily accessible to all interested parties.
<i>Managing the doctorate with partners</i>			
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>A.17</b> <u>Partnerships with national and international HEIs, research bodies, and the private sector (including industry)</u> can improve the quality of doctoral training. To manage related risks, <u>partnerships are framed by a strategic approach, appropriate governance arrangements, adequate policies and procedures, and a cotutelle agreement.</u>	<i>Partially achieved</i> to the extent that some institutions have relevant partnerships with industry and other partners; however, they are not necessarily accompanied by the necessary governance arrangements, policies, and procedures. A formalized industrial doctorate is currently not in place.	<u>Doctoral partnerships must be framed by a general policy and specific agreements for each student.</u>  HEIs should develop a strategy about their partnerships at the doctoral level that includes asking faculties to identify strategic industrial partners and other HEIs.  HEIs should develop guidelines for doctorates in cooperation with industry and cotutelles, and

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			assist faculties in preparing contractual agreements with external partners. A high-level institutional body should be monitoring those partnerships.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>A.18</b> <u>Stakeholder involvement in framing and evaluating the doctorate is important</u> , among others, because the majority of doctora[...][te] holders occupy positions outside academia.	<i>Not achieved</i> as there is no structured and systematic involvement, for example, in governance of the doctorate.	<u>Stakeholder involvement in doctoral school governance should be encouraged to contribute to preparing doctoral degree holders for nonacademic careers.</u> HEIs should require doctoral schools/faculties to involve appropriate external stakeholders in the evaluation of their doctoral programs.
<i>The postdoc</i>			
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>A.19</b> <u>The postdoc is framed by appropriate policies and guidelines</u> covering, among others, recruitment procedures and the objectives of appointments. The postdoctoral position is considered part of the academic career ladder, and the institution takes responsibility for related HR issues.	<i>Not achieved.</i> The status of postdocs is left rather vague (anyone within five years of obtaining the doctorate); the explicit nature of the responsibilities attached to this position are not clearly defined or understood.	<u>The postdoc should be framed by appropriate policies and guidelines.</u> HEIs should clearly define the rights and obligations of postdoctoral fellows and treat them as part of their staff.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>A.20</b> <u>Postdocs have access to career support</u> to help them develop career objectives, whether within or outside academia.	<i>Not achieved.</i> There is no formal support that is extended to postdocs (besides the support available to all academics).	<u>Postdocs should have access to career advising.</u> HEIs should provide career advice to postdoctoral fellows to prepare them for academic and nonacademic careers.
<b>B. Academic selection and promotion</b>			
<i>The status and role of academics</i>			



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<i>System level</i>	<p><b>B.1</b> <u>System-level regulations are primarily applied to secure academic freedom and academic quality, and to promote transparency,</u> including for national and international mobility. Defining the role, status, and tasks of academics is mainly an institutional responsibility. System-level policies support healthy competition among individuals and avoid practices that lead to the marginalization of certain staff groups.</p>	<p><i>Partially achieved.</i> The current system-level regulations are causing several problems for academic careers and their institutional management. First, they are hindering the integration of research and teaching. Second, they are not allowing for the development of tenure systems (that is, the promotion of academics from one career step to another and permanent employment contracts securing academic freedom). Third, they are challenging for strategic recruitments.</p> <p>However, according to the site visits, the current national regulations enable transparency.</p>	<p><u>Initiate a policy dialog on the reform of the two-track system with the aim of overcoming a dichotomy between teaching and research.</u></p> <p>Initiate a system-wide consultation on how to strengthen the integration of teaching and research.</p>
<i>Institutional level</i>	<p><b>B.2</b> <u>The status and role of academics are considered thoroughly in institutions</u> and are reflected against the funding sources of academic work, the system-level policy and regulatory framework, international trends in academic work and careers, and the traditions of academic work and its values. Institutional managers are well-informed on the contractual arrangements (duration and type) and funding of their staff.</p>	<p><i>Partially achieved in some institutions and not achieved in others.</i> The status and roles of academics are tailored mainly in the context of external factors and funding. The management is mainly reactive to the scarce funding, changing student numbers and, sometimes, a lack of suitable candidates. The individual contractual arrangements are complex and difficult to manage in relation to academic work.</p>	<p><u>Increase the predictability and stability of contractual arrangements, and move toward long-term HR planning.</u></p> <p>Transform the time/hour-based contracts and aggregation of contracts to full-time contracts and allocation of time.</p> <p>Recruit academics who are able to fulfill research, teaching, and administrative tasks.</p>
<i>Institutional level</i>	<p><b>B.3</b> <u>Institutional policies aim for equal treatment of staff with project and budget funding, and acknowledge the equal importance of research, teaching, and administrative tasks.</u></p>	<p><i>Only to a limited extent achieved in some institutions and not achieved in others.</i> Institutional policies are considered to be fair and equal under the given circumstances (in particular, the financial constraints). However, the separation of research positions and academic positions</p>	<p><u>Gradually develop consistent working conditions and resources for budget-funded (teaching-focused) and externally funded (research-focused) staff.</u></p>

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		<p>makes the integration of the tasks difficult. In monetary terms, the externally funded research work and budget-funded academic work are valued in a highly unequal way.</p>	<p>Maintain the motivation to attract external funding.</p> <p>Ensure that there are entry (and exit) points in academic careers in all career steps.</p>
<i>General career patterns</i>			
<i>System level</i>	<p><b>B.4</b> On the national level, there is a systematic approach to career stages that allows domestic and foreign academics, ministries, and other stakeholders to compare positions among countries and institutions. This framework is flexible enough to allow institutions to engage in strategic HR management. <u>The system-level policy guarantees the mobility between academia and industry and among institutions, and supports attractiveness of careers. It also provides a solid legal framework for career structures such as tenure track or other systematic approaches to career development, and establishes clear entry and exit points for academic careers.</u></p>	<p><i>Not achieved.</i> The system-level approach provides a well-recognized and widely accepted framework for academic and research positions, and for recruitment and selection procedures. The requirements (in terms of qualifications) for different career positions are commonly known.</p> <p>However, the system-level framework prevents the institutions from developing tenure track models or other promotion patterns, and there is no defined exit point due to the absence of a mandatory retirement age.</p>	<p><u>Develop the national career framework to be compatible with international frameworks and to support mobility among different sectors (industry, public administration, etc.) within Latvian society.</u></p> <p>Anchor the national career framework to international frameworks reconciled by international funding agencies and foundations that are funding international mobility and advanced research.</p> <p>Develop the career framework to be recognized and applicable to other sectors of society.</p>
<i>System level</i>	<p><b>B.5</b> <u>System-level policies may provide resources to HEIs for strategic career initiatives, for example, with regard to young academics.</u></p>	<p><i>Achieved.</i> Dedicated resources are deployed by the central level in support of the doctorate and postdoc positions, and second pillar funding allows for the design of bonus systems and other means to incentivize staff. However, the current funding system would not provide the scope for more permanent performance-based salary systems on the institutional level.</p>	<p><u>Continue developing system-level incentives to ensure a strategic approach to HR development.</u></p> <p>Keep developing system-level policies and incentive structures that support HEIs in developing their personnel.</p>

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<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>B.6</b> <u>Institutional career patterns are realistic for most of the staff members. They are aligned with a systematic approach to career stages at the national level and they are internationally comparable.</u>	<i>Partially achieved.</i> The career patterns are dependent on open vacancies that are often dependent on retirements (or the lack of retirements) and national regulations and recommendations on the number of professors and doctoral degree holders. While positions are comparable from an international perspective, there are no structured and coherent career patterns.	<u>Ensure that individual career trajectories are predictable and compatible with formal career structures.</u>  Develop the career stages and promotion patterns into transparent and predictable direction, that is, ensure that individuals are aware of the personnel plans of their department (retirements, (re)opening and closing of positions)  Anchor the institutional career model to national career framework to ensure the functionality of academic labor markets.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>B.7</b> <u>Institutional policies ensure transparency and clarity of career patterns and promotion criteria, and maintain an appropriate balance among research, teaching, and administrative excellence.</u> Candidates and employees of HEIs are aware of promotion criteria and career progression possibilities. Institutions communicate clearly the qualifications needed for different positions to their employees and persons seeking recruitment.	<i>Partially achieved.</i> The institutional policies are closely related to national policies and, are therefore, well-known and considered to be transparent and clear. However, the collegial election as a selection method may politicize selection processes and lead to a potential conflict of interest.	<u>Maintain the transparency of institutional promotion criteria.</u>  Maintain and further strengthen the transparency of criteria and evaluation of merits.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>B.8</b> <u>Institutional policies link key aspects of academic career patterns (recruitment, promotion, remuneration) so that these support the implementation of institutional and unit-level strategies.</u>	<i>Partially achieved in some institutions and not achieved in others.</i> Because of a lack of contractual security and the volatility of academic employment (and remuneration), and the lack of a retirement age, among other aspects, career management is almost disconnected from institutional strategies in some institutions, while	<u>Ensure and communicate the alignment between institutional strategy and career framework.</u>  Develop the recruitment and incentive structures (promotions and remunerations) of academics to be aligned with institutional strategy.

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		others, nevertheless, try to link career development to institutional strategies.	<p>Make sure that the institution has an adequate number of core/strategic academic staff who are employed full-time and whose time allocation can be managed without additional contracting.</p> <p>Take the HR issues explicitly into consideration when renewing the strategy.</p>
<i>Institutional level</i>	<p><b>B.9</b> <u>Data on all staff categories</u> (including academic staff on part-time/hourly contracts) <u>are gathered and analyzed</u> to enable effective human resource development and strategic human resource management.</p>	<p><i>Partially achieved.</i> The data are collected but seldom analyzed. A more detailed analysis of different contracts of individuals could make the remuneration and careers of academics more transparent, and enable institutions to plan personnel costs for a longer time period.</p>	<p><u>Make sure that institutional leadership and middle management are aware of the contractual arrangements of their staff.</u></p> <p>Ensure that the heads of departments and deans (academic middle managers) are aware of the contractual arrangement of their academic staff and the actual volatility of full-time equivalent employees.</p>
<i>Institutional level</i>	<p><b>B.10</b> <u>Organizational structures and HR services support the career patterns within an institution.</u> HR policy is important for the development and implementation of strategies. In the context of academic careers, institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Clearly define duties and responsibilities related to HR</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for HR-related tasks</i></li> <li>• <i>Support a strategic role of the HR director</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop the competencies of HR professionals</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieved only to a limited extent.</i> As in many other countries, HR services in Latvia are in their infancy in many institutions. Personnel management is mostly reactive and deals with acute contractual/workload issues.</p>	<p><u>Prepare a midterm plan for developing HR services.</u></p> <p>Make a midterm strategy/plan for developing HR services—tasks and competencies. Take into account the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resources</li> <li>- Strategic role of HR</li> <li>- Centralization/ decentralization.</li> </ul> <p>Follow-up on implementation.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assure the quality of HR policies and initiatives</li> <li>Set indicators for measuring HR success.</li> </ul>		
<i>Selection and recruitment of academic staff</i>			
<i>System level</i>	<b>B.11</b> Recruitment plays a vital role in the strategic development of institutional profiles. Thus, the national framework steering the recruitment practices needs to allow for institutional development and differentiation. <u>National policies primarily guarantee equal opportunity for, among others, different nationalities, genders, and minorities.</u>	<i>Mainly achieved.</i> National legislation sets the framework and includes requirements concerning equal treatment. However, it also attributes an important role to elections in the selection process. The election process is typically considered to be fair, but there might be conflict of interest issues and various imponderables.	<u>Develop further national regulations to ensure equal treatment.</u>
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>B.12</b> <u>The most important way of assuring the quality of recruitments is to ensure the transparency and clarity of processes.</u> That encompasses the clarity and transparency of job definitions, selection processes, and criteria; the provision of clear guidelines (and training) and definitions on the role of different actors involved in the decision-making process; a clear definition of entry points to academic careers; and a clear policy on equity issues/affirmative actions. Applicants are made aware of the practices.	<i>Partially achieved.</i> The current system is considered to be transparent and clear, and the national framework for required qualifications and its institutional applications are quite well known. However, the election process leads to many questions and makes the final decision making a process with many imponderables.	<u>Strengthen the efficiency, transparency, and fairness of recruitments.</u>  Reconsider elections as an only instrument for selection.  Strengthen the role of institutional leadership in recruitments.  Maintain the transparency and collegiality where possible.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>B.13</b> <u>Institutions deliberately balance the selection criteria in the context of their mission,</u> acknowledging academic excellence (professional evaluation of teaching and research), organizational commitment, and fit (organizational	<i>Partially achieved in some institutions and not achieved in others.</i> Institutions are allowed to adjust the qualification criteria, and some institutions do this strategically.	<u>Communicate the selection criteria of academics to employees and candidates.</u>  Reconsider all qualification criteria in the light of the institutional strategy. Make the justifications

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	recruitment). The institutions ensure that academic units have the capacity to select their workforce in a flexible, fair, and transparent manner, to meet the requirements of external funding and to support the overall aims of HR policies.	However, the recruitment of professors and associate professors is done from a professional (and not from an organizational) perspective, so that it might not be aligned with institutional missions.	of qualification criteria public for employees and candidates.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>B.14</b> <u>Positions are advertised sufficiently broadly</u> (including, where suitable, on the international level). <u>Institutions use tools facilitating the systematic search for candidates</u> , and, where appropriate, headhunting. <u>The selection process is efficient, transparent, and not overly time-consuming</u> . Transparency of the process also extends to the candidate, who is informed about key milestones of the process. <u>There needs to be clarity on the tools used to evaluate the skills of candidates</u> (for example, lectures, evaluations by students, and assessment centers).	<i>Partially achieved.</i> The Latvian higher education system is small and closed. Thus, the advertisement probably is sufficient, if the search focuses only on candidates in the country. However, in many cases, the real selection process during early career stages is based on prior supervisor relations.  The selection process is time-consuming and involves many individuals, who often are already over[...]ly committed to committee work.	<u>Streamline the selection procedures.</u>  Identify national and international recruitment platforms.  Develop a leaner selection process by getting rid of unnecessary steps and task assignments.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>B.15</b> <u>Selection processes go hand in hand with the clarity of roles</u> (for example, of academic selection committees, including possibly stakeholders from industry, academics from other faculties, and a representative from the institutional leadership).	<i>Partially achieved.</i> Roles are clear; however, the election process is a professional (peer-based) process that does not involve other stakeholders.	<u>Strengthen the strategic role of HR services alongside institutional leaders and consider involvement of stakeholders in recruitment.</u>  Make sure that the use of (HR) services in selection process is adequately designed.  Consider involving external stakeholders in the recruitment process where adequate.

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<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>B.16</b> <u>There is a system of checks and balances</u> that ensures, among others, the strategic fit of candidates for the position, and a balance between professional and organizational recruitment.	<i>Achieved only to a limited extent.</i> The election to lower academic positions is made by the faculty council, which may take into consideration organizational aspects. However, the final decision is by voting. The election of associate professors and professors is a purely professional (peer-based) process (which can take place at an institution which is not the recruiting one).	<u>Build a system of check and balances in basic units.</u>  Reconsider the role of institutional leadership, academic community, and administration in the recruitment process, accounting for the differences of aims and processes of recruitment in different types of recruitments.
<i>Career advancement and promotion patterns</i>			
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>B.17</b> Promotion patterns are important instruments for steering academic work. <u>Institutions have clear, transparent, and well-documented promotion patterns that are aligned with the institution’s mission and profile, and clearly distributed roles and responsibilities during the promotion processes.</u>	<i>Not achieved.</i> Promotions are based on open vacancies. There are no promotion patterns for an individual to advance in his/her own career (position/post).	<u>Develop predictable, transparent, and clear promotion patterns, which could potentially include the piloting of a tenure track system.</u>  Develop predictable career patterns to the extent that the—reformed—national framework allows.  Ensure that career patterns have been communicated to employees and are aligned with realities of the organizational resource environment and individual career trajectories.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>B.18</b> Promotion patterns take into account different aspects of academic work (research, teaching, administration, and service). <u>The merits in different academic tasks are defined in a transparent and understandable manner.</u> To ensure the fairness and effectiveness of promotion patterns, <u>they are repeatedly communicated to staff members.</u>	<i>Partially achieved.</i> While there are no clear promotion patterns, election processes take into account the three aspects of academic work. However, in some cases they are not aligned with the tasks of the position (i.e. the required emphasis on research also for teaching-focused positions).	<u>Continuously improve promotion patterns via balanced, flexible, and transparent promotion criteria.</u>  Maintain the transparency of the selection criteria and selection process.  Job descriptions should be developed further to reflect a realistic (teaching) load.

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<i>Institutional level</i>	<p><b>B.19</b> <u>Career development and career advancement are part of institutional planning and strategic management, and supported by modern HR instruments</u> (for example, target agreements and skills development tools). In this, HEIs support academics in evaluating and developing their competencies required for conducting high-quality scientific work and for succeeding in their careers within their scientific community and within organizations in the higher education sector and beyond.</p>	<p><i>Partially achieved in some institutions and not achieved in others.</i> Career advancement is difficult because of the unpredictable conditions of work and the vacancy model. There are several attempts to support the career advancement of talented individuals. However, the management of careers lacks a systematic approach.</p>	<p><u>Develop a systematic approach to follow and steer career advancement.</u></p> <p>Discuss career advancement explicitly in institutional HR policies.</p> <p>Develop a systematic follow-up mechanism for the needs and shortcomings, as well as aims and dreams, of staff members.</p>
<i>International mobility in academic careers</i>			
<i>System level</i>	<p><b>B.20</b> International mobility is crucial, particularly for small higher education systems. <u>National policies support inward and outward mobility.</u> Incoming mobility can be marketed and facilitated on the national level. With respect to outgoing mobility, the return of academics and related mechanisms are taken into account, in addition to the provision of grants for outward mobility. <u>The system-level policies guarantee legal conditions conducive to the recruitment of foreign academics,</u> and ensure the availability of information in English (or, potentially, another major European language) for international staff. Further relevant aspects include support for mobility, dual career services, English-speaking contact points in the administration, support on social security issues, and other aspects of mobility support.</p>	<p><i>Not achieved.</i> The Latvian higher education system is small and closed. The language restrictions deriving from the legal framework and potentially other factors create an obstacle for the internationalization of the academic workforce. There are no systematic policies for supporting mobility.</p>	<p><u>Reconsider and revise legislation hindering mobility.</u></p> <p>Develop funding schemes to support inward and outward mobility.</p> <p>Support/encourage institutions in applying funding leading to mobility.</p> <p>Strengthen the role of English in academic labor markets (rules and regulations as well as institutional practices and tasks).</p>



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<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>B.21</b> Internationalization is one way of improving the quality of academic work. However, that impact cannot be taken for granted. It is important that <u>institutions have defined the aims related to internationalization, planned and organized the career patterns, tasks, and overall working environment</u> (including family life) <u>in a way that a foreigner without local language skills can successfully work, and have organized sufficient support structures</u> for incoming (and outgoing) staff.	<i>Partially achieved.</i> Institutions are supporting the internationalization of their staff and especially young researchers. The guest lecturer system creates a mechanism for foreign academics to work in Latvia. However, internationalization would require more attention on the strategic level and would need more resources and changes in language policies.	<u>Strengthen an organizational culture that supports internationalization.</u>  Seek resources to support internationalization.  Encourage staff members to engage in international collaboration by applying for international projects, co-publishing, and utilizing the opportunities of international staff exchange (Nord+, Erasmus+, etc.).
<i>Alignment of elements of human resource policies</i>			
<i>System level</i>	<b>B.22</b> To promote good academic work and careers, <u>job descriptions and tasks, performance appraisal, career progression, reward systems, and strategic objectives are aligned.</u>	<i>Not applicable.</i> Elements are not defined on the system level. However, because of various policies impacting and constraining academic work and careers (the six-year-rule, the election system, etc.), the national framework does not support the alignment of the different elements.	<u>Consider developing a system-level career framework.</u>  Take the HR-policy aspect into consideration (supply of competent academic labor, positive competition and diversification between institutions) when planning funding model, disciplinary structure of institutions, accreditations and qualification frameworks as well as developing research policy.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>B.22</b> To promote good academic work and careers, <u>job descriptions and tasks, performance appraisal, career progression, reward systems, and strategic objectives are aligned.</u>	<i>Partially achieved in some institutions and not achieved in others.</i> Because of the fragmented contractual nature of academic work and its funding, institutions face difficulties in aligning their policies. However, some seem more successful than others in designing coherent career patterns.	<u>Align HR practices with institutional strategy.</u>  Take HR planning into consideration in the strategy process of the institution and departments.

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<i>System level</i>	<b>B.23</b> <u>All higher education policies take into account the HR policy aspect</u> , not least because the implementation of all policies and outcomes will be ensured by, or will have an impact on, academics.	<i>Partially achieved.</i> While academic positions and key HR processes are determined by the legislation, there is no systematic and overarching approach toward academic work that is consistently reflected in higher education policies.	<p><u>Take HR issues into consideration when reforming higher education policy, funding, and legislation.</u></p> <p>Take HR policy and statistics into consideration in the planning of higher education policies. Provide clear aims for the development of academic labor markets.</p> <p>Ensure that the academics are involved (represented) in the policy formulation considering the HR issues.</p> <p>Make sure that the legislation of academic work and positions support/enables the overall aims of higher education policy.</p>
<b>C. Remuneration</b>			
<i>Regulation at the system level</i>			
<i>System level</i>	<b>C.1</b> The question as to how remuneration should be regulated at the system level and what should be regulated [...] [at] the institutional level depends on the national setting (for example, the size of the system, the political structure, and the status of academics). <u>It is advisable to regulate key questions like types of professorships and, possibly, basic principles of remuneration on the system level, while more detailed questions like procedures and institution-internal responsibilities are delegated to HEIs in accordance with the</u>	<i>Achieved.</i> Basic positions and minimum salaries are established in the law, and institutions are autonomous in determining the details of remuneration approaches.	<u>Maintain clarity on basic principles of remuneration and types of position in legislation while exploring ways to make salaries more adequate and performance oriented.</u>

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	<u>principles of institutional autonomy and subsidiarity.</u>		
<i>System level</i>	<b>C.2</b> <u>Unions can play an important role when questions like overall salary increases are addressed. As with other stakeholders, it pays [...] to involve them early on in questions of future salary models.</u>	<i>Partially achieved.</i> Unions are involved in legislative processes but not systematically in all relevant discussions on the system (and/or institutional) level.	<u>Strengthen the role of unions at the institutional level and, where appropriate, the system level, while at the same time seeking measures to enhance the capacity of unions.</u>
<i>Concept and measurement of (good) performance</i>			
<i>System level</i>	<b>C.3</b> <u>The concept of performance has to be open and reflect diversity, that is, it needs to be open to different kinds of academic performance (including, for example, artistic performance) and functions fulfilled in an academic context.</u>	<i>Achieved.</i> The election criteria reflect different dimensions of performance, and institutions with a special profile have the possibility of adapting the criteria.	<u>Maintain transparency and adaptability of election criteria while exploring diverse ways of career advancement.</u>
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>C.3</b> <u>The concept of performance has to be open and reflect diversity, that is, it needs to be open to different kinds of academic performance (including, for example, artistic performance) and functions fulfilled in an academic context.</u>	<i>Partially achieved.</i> While selection criteria covering different kinds of academic performance are determined by [...] national legislation, some institutions put a particular emphasis on research performance (also for teaching-focused positions).	<u>Ensure the integration of teaching and research functions, including in individual academic careers, at the institutional level.</u>
<i>System level</i>	<b>C.4</b> The concept of performance relates to different types of activities and functions: (a) what can be considered as performance in the narrower sense (related primarily to teaching and research), and (b) the takeover of certain functions or fulfillment of certain roles (like vice-rector or dean). Further, (c) performance-based remuneration systems tend to provide for a market allowance, awarded in the context of	<i>Partially achieved.</i> While there is no framework for PBS models on the national level, system-level regulations do not prevent institutions from establishing such models (while the financial situation might in fact create a major obstacle). Minimum salaries for some functions are determined by the law.	<u>Further develop the concept of performance by encouraging HEIs to consider—and providing incentives for—the introduction of performance-supporting measures on the institutional level.</u>

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	negotiation (which might not relate to performance in the narrower sense but is also covered by respective models). Along these lines, <u>good PBS models take different performance categories into account.</u>		
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>C.4</b> The concept of performance relates to different types of activities and functions: (a) what can be considered as performance in the narrower sense (related primarily to teaching and research), and (b) the takeover of certain functions or fulfillment of certain roles (like vice-rector or dean). Further, (c) performance-based remuneration systems tend to provide for a market allowance, awarded in the context of negotiation (which might not relate to performance in the narrower sense but is also covered by respective models). Along these lines, <u>good PBS models take different performance categories into account.</u>	<i>Achieved only to a limited extent.</i> Salaries for some functions are determined by the national framework. While there are no PBS models at the institutional level, there are some initial considerations on introducing monetary rewards for performance.	<u>Further develop the concept of, and provide incentives for, performance on the institutional level.</u> To the extent that PBS models are developed in the future, take different performance categories into account while striving to ensure an integrated approach to careers with regard to different types of academic duty (teaching, research, administrative duty, etc.).
<i>System level</i>	<b>C.5</b> <u>Countries need to have a clear approach to handling those three categories</u> (that is, academic performance, takeover of functions and roles, and market allowance)—either as part of one PBS model or as three separate ones. As usual, <u>the simpler, the better.</u>	<i>Partially achieved.</i> There is a systematic approach to one of the categories (namely, academic functions), while there is no systematic approach to, or considerations on, the other two categories or a comprehensive framework covering all three categories. However, current legislation does not prevent institutions from developing PBS models.	<u>Promote a more diverse approach to performance (beyond incentivizing academic functions).</u>  This can be communicated through sectoral consultations or capacity building and supported by incentives.
<i>System level</i>	<b>C.6</b> <u>Diverse higher education systems need to mirror diversity in their approaches to</u>	<i>Partially achieved.</i> While institutions enjoy autonomy in designing incentive systems,	<u>Consider broadening the criteria for performance allocations (“Pillar 2”) to HEIs in future to</u>

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	<p><u>performance and remuneration</u>. Some HEIs that focus strongly on research are likely to reward related individual (or collective) performance through their PBS systems. Other countries and institutions might want to use the opportunities PBS provides to counteract undesirable tendencies (for example, the neglect of teaching and service). Further, PBS models can be combined with other instruments such as performance contracts.</p>	<p>performance-based funding allocations to institutions are geared toward research, which is likely to reflect on bonus systems at the institutional level.</p>	<p><u>incentivize teaching excellence and third-mission-related activities</u>.</p> <p>This might require a broader discussion on measuring and rewarding teaching excellence.</p>
<i>Institutional level</i>	<p><b>C.6</b> <u>Diverse higher education systems need to mirror diversity in their approaches to performance and remuneration</u>. Some HEIs that focus strongly on research are likely to reward related individual (or collective) performance through their PBS systems. Other countries and institutions might want to use the opportunities PBS provides to counteract undesirable tendencies (for example, the neglect of teaching and service). Further, PBS models can be combined with other instruments such as performance contracts.</p>	<p><i>Achieved only to a limited extent.</i> Some institutions have started to develop or implement reward systems (mainly bonus systems); however, these are primarily geared toward research. Also, criteria might not sufficiently reflect disciplinary differences.</p>	<p><u>Strive to achieve a more balanced view on performance, particularly by incentivizing excellence in both teaching and research.</u></p>
<i>Aspects of model development – linking performance to models and procedures</i>			
<i>System level</i>	<p><b>C.7</b> <u>PBS systems combine fixed salary components (ensuring academic freedom and providing stability) with performance rewards</u>. The basic architecture needs to be anchored at the system level while HEIs form related models according to their strategic priorities.</p>	<p><i>Not applicable.</i> There is no framework/architecture for PBS systems in place.</p>	<p><i>The criteria will need to be taken into account in case a PBS system is going to be designed in future.</i></p>

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<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>C.7</b> <u>PBS systems combine fixed salary components</u> (ensuring academic freedom and providing stability) <u>with performance rewards</u> . The basic architecture needs to be anchored at the system level while HEIs form related models according to their strategic priorities.	<i>Not applicable.</i> There are no PBS systems in place.  While some institutions have developed or are in the process of developing bonus systems, current arrangements surrounding academic employment and remuneration make basic salary components more volatile than in comparator systems (World Bank 2017).	<i>The criteria will need to be taken into account in case a PBS system is going to be designed in future.</i>
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>C.8</b> <u>PBS systems reflect institutional strategies</u> . While performance considerations generally derive from the key functions of academic staff (teaching, research and development, and service), the emphasis needs to be put across and within these categories in accordance with strategic institutional priorities. This has to translate into the definition of performance categories and subsequent “criteria.”	<i>Not applicable.</i> There are no PBS systems in place.  However, approaches to bonus payments are aligned with institutional strategies (with both of them being geared mainly toward research).	<i>The criteria will need to be taken into account in case a PBS system is going to be designed in future.</i>  Where nucleus performance-supporting measures are under development, continue to ensure that they are aligned with institutional strategies.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>C.9</b> Further, <u>PBS systems avoid crowding-out effects</u> (that is, when intrinsic motivation is supplanted by extrinsic motivation) and support (or, at least, do not negatively impact) intrinsic motivation through the incentives they set. In particular, <u>incentive systems should not be directly linked to (every) single activity</u> , which would support the perception of the incentive as a controlling intervention and thus endanger intrinsic motivation. However, rewarding single activities on a temporary basis that can be considered as “extra” rather than a “normal” part	<i>Not applicable.</i> There are no PBS systems in place.  However, some institutions display a tendency to reward single activities that can be considered a “normal” part of academic work in a very detailed way, an approach which might jeopardize intrinsic motivation.	<i>The criteria will need to be taken into account in case a PBS system is going to be designed in future.</i>  Institutions gathering experience with bonus systems are encouraged to focus on major aspects of performance, and not to reward “small,” single activities, in order to avoid a crowding-out effect.

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	of academic work, is less likely to lead to crowding-out effects. Also, <u>institutional models that accommodate different types of individual performance enhance motivation</u> and avoid crowding-out effects.		
<i>System level</i>	<b>C.10</b> <u>Performance criteria, assessment, and the related award process need to be considered fair, transparent, and clearly structured.</u> This also applies to the use of different instruments like bonuses and temporary and permanent allowances.	<i>Not applicable.</i> Performance criteria feeding into PBS or bonus systems and related processes are not established at the system level.	<i>The criteria will need to be taken into account in case a PBS system is going to be designed in future.</i>  However, the Ministry would be encouraged to provide a forum for HEIs who have gathered experience in this area to showcase their models and trigger a broader discussion on the subject within the sector.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>C.10</b> <u>Performance criteria, assessment, and the related award process need to be considered fair, transparent, and clearly structured.</u> This also applies to the use of different instruments like bonuses and temporary and permanent allowances.	<i>Achieved</i> in institutions where a bonus system is in place ( <i>not applicable</i> to other institutions).	<u>HEIs which have gathered experience with bonus systems should maintain a transparent approach to criteria, assessment, and the related award process.</u>  These HEIs are further encouraged to showcase their approaches as part of peer learning.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>C.11</b> While <u>PBS models</u> are supposed to reflect institutional priorities, they <u>should also be “actionable,”</u> that is, their design and implementation should reflect constraints with regard to administrative processes and financial management. In practice, this favors more structured approaches (for example, multistage	<i>Not applicable.</i> There are no PBS systems in place.  However, the bonus systems at some institutions do not seem to pose particular administrative or managerial challenges. Nevertheless, it would be advisable to take these aspects into consideration as the models evolve.	<u>To the extent that HEIs with initial experience expand their performance-supporting measures, they will need to closely monitor administrative challenges.</u>  This would apply in particular to the point in time when HEIs move from a more “ad-hoc” type reward system toward a medium-to-long-term

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	salary systems with a suitable number of levels and descriptors).		model with longer-term implications for financial planning at the HEI.
<i>Institutional level</i>	<b>C.12</b> <u>Decision-making processes related to the institutional framework for remuneration need to combine adequately top-down and bottom-up elements</u> to mediate among interests and reach adequate decisions, while at the same time ensuring efficiency. HEI leadership plays a key role in the development and implementation of PBS models; however, deans are likely to fulfill routine functions like proposing staff members for awards or providing written statements for applications.	<i>Not applicable.</i> There are no PBS systems in place. However, criteria of the bonus systems at some institutions tend to be developed and applied at the central level, even though the senate plays a role in approving them.	<i>The criteria will need to be taken into account in case a PBS system is going to be designed in future.</i>  The need to balance top-down with bottom-up approaches will already prove beneficial at the inception stage, i.e., when HEIs start developing a PBS model or at least develop a systematic approach toward performance-supporting measures.
<i>Remuneration and financial management</i>			
<i>System level</i>	<b>C.13</b> <u>Financial management considerations are an integral part of the development and implementation of PBS systems.</u> This concerns, among others, a clear understanding of the available funds, the development of financial scenarios of how the PBS system (and related reserves) is likely to develop in future, and considerations regarding the pension implications of allowances. The development and implementation of PBS systems furthermore requires managerial and administrative staff members with the right competencies. On the system level, financial management	<i>Not applicable.</i> There is no framework/architecture for PBS systems in place.	<i>The criteria will need to be taken into account in case a PBS system is going to be designed in future.</i>



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	considerations need to involve the Ministry of Finance.		
<i>Institutional level</i>	<p><b>C.13</b> <u>Financial management considerations are an integral part of the development and implementation of PBS systems.</u> This concerns, among others, a clear understanding of the available funds, the development of financial scenarios of how the PBS system (and related reserves) is likely to develop in future, and considerations regarding the pension implications of allowances. The development and implementation of PBS systems furthermore requires managerial and administrative staff members with the right competencies. On the system level, financial management considerations need to involve the Ministry of Finance.</p>	<i>Not applicable.</i> There are no PBS systems in place.	<p><i>The criteria will need to be taken into account in case a PBS system is going to be designed in future.</i></p> <p>While this is already of importance at the stage where HEIs work with or develop more “ad-hoc”-type bonus systems, this criterion will be imperative when HEIs start developing comprehensive medium-to-long-term PBS systems.</p>

*Note:* a. Questions of how to provide financial incentives to HEIs, also vis-à-vis an increase in effectiveness and efficiency, have been the subject of earlier World Bank advisory work in Latvia.

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