

Creating Supportive Structures for Doctoral Candidates: The Case of the Doctoral School at the University of Latvia

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UNIVERSITY OF
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Career Paths After Earning a PhD



- **52%** of European doctoral candidates plan a career outside academia;
- **29%** have always wanted to pursue a career in higher education.

European University Association (2025)

Doctoral School of the University of Latvia

(14.07.2024.)

The goal is to provide an academic, diverse, and inclusive environment for the development of scientific excellence, where doctoral students have the opportunity to develop research thinking, creativity, and intellectual autonomy.

Main tasks: strategic development of doctoral studies, development and provision of support to all involved parties, and ensuring administrative processes.



UL Doctoral Studies in Numbers 2025

160

Number of Enrolled Students

483

Number of Doctoral Students

61

Number of Foreign Doctoral Students

36

Number of Doctoral Degree Recipients
(41 defenses have taken place)

30%

Graduates complete thesis defense within 5 years

24

Doctoral thesis submitted for defense

38

Average Age of Doctoral Degree Recipients
(38% are aged 25 – 34)

296

Number of Doctoral Thesis Supervisors

4

Cotutelle (joint PhD program) agreements

Vision of the Doctoral School

Internationally
recognised centre
of excellence

International
research
landscape

Doctoral
community

Collaborative
environment

Professional
identity and career

The Operational Pillars of the Doctoral School of UL (2025 – 2027)



PhD Student Support System for Excellence: *concept*



Quality of study programmes

- Development of a **study module (transversal skills)** for doctoral candidates;
- Support for the development of doctoral candidates' **research skills** (data collection and analysis, use of artificial intelligence tools etc.);
- **Professional development of doctoral supervisors;**
- Effective **quality monitoring** of doctoral study programmes.



The doctoral community

- Activities for informing doctoral candidates and **building an informal community**;
- **Activities with industry and public administration representatives to facilitate networking**, information exchange, and support for doctoral candidates and early-career researchers;
- **Communication initiatives** to attract potential doctoral candidates as well as to promote doctoral studies and academic research.



International cooperation

- **Mobility** initiatives, exchange of experience, research projects;
- **Financial support** mechanisms for doctoral students in joint PhD programs, covering both studies and research;
- **International promotion of doctoral programs** to attract candidates, for example through ERASMUS+ programs, summer schools, and visiting researcher opportunities.





**Thank you
for your
attention!**



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