

APPROVED

by Resolution of the Council of the University of Latvia

No. 1-48/2 of 3 February 2026

UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION POLICY

This document has not been amended

Approved pursuant to

Section 14.2, Paragraph one, Clause 7 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions

I. General Provisions

1. The purpose of the University of Latvia (hereinafter - UL) International Cooperation Policy (hereinafter - the Policy) is to support the achievement of UL's strategic objectives by establishing principles and guidelines for responsible and considered international cooperation that safeguard academic freedom, national security interests, human rights, data protection and reputational integrity.
2. The Policy applies to all UL institutions and all staff members involved in:
 - 2.1. cooperation with foreign partners;
 - 2.2. implementing research and study projects internationally;
 - 2.3. staff and student mobility;
 - 2.4. cross-border transfer of data, technology and knowledge;
 - 2.5. developing and implementing international agreements and cooperation initiatives.
3. UL defines international cooperation as activities undertaken by UL staff to establish and maintain cooperation with foreign or international institutions, organisations, higher education institutions, research centres, companies, individuals and other partners in order to promote research excellence, the quality of studies, innovation, knowledge exchange, societal impact and UL's international competitiveness.

II. Principles of UL International Cooperation

The English translation of this document was prepared with the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) and subsequently reviewed for accuracy and consistency.

4. UL builds its international reputation on sustainable excellence and the following principles of cooperation:
 - 4.1. **Selection of partners based on European values:** When identifying strategic partners, UL prioritises countries and regions that uphold the values set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union - respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights;
 - 4.2. **Assessment of international standing and credibility in partner selection:** UL assesses a partner's reputation using international reference points, including global university rankings (such as the *QS World University Rankings* and *THE World University Rankings*), recommendations from other strategic partners, and information available from professional and public sources. Cooperation is prioritised with universities ranked in the global top 500. The partner portfolio is based on quality rather than quantity;
 - 4.3. **Comprehensive, long-term strategic partnerships:** Cooperation with strategic partners is developed for the long term and spans multiple areas of university activity and academic disciplines. Joint study programmes and courses, research and education projects, consortia and shared infrastructure are developed with these partners;
 - 4.4. **Targeted representation in international associations:** UL develops international cooperation through active participation in leading international higher education and research associations and networks to strengthen academic excellence, build strategic partnerships, and advance UL's interests and reputation internationally;
 - 4.5. **Active contribution to addressing global challenges:** UL's education, research, innovation and public engagement activities contribute to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. UL promotes the well-being of Latvian society and the global community.
5. UL provides a robust support system for its international community based on the following principles:
 - 5.1. **Comprehensive support for the international community:** UL provides comprehensive, coordinated academic, social and well-being support tailored to international community members, from arrival through full participation in university life. They are successfully integrated and participate fully in the University's academic and social life;
 - 5.2. **Access to information:** Information required by UL's international community is provided in English. All documents needed for study and work are translated and made available in a timely manner;

- 5.3. **An inclusive university environment based on intercultural dialogue:** UL develops and maintains an inclusive university environment as an essential prerequisite for international cooperation. UL promotes intercultural understanding, mutual respect and acceptance of diversity. The UL community is integrated and internationally open.
6. UL provides an international study experience based on the following principles:
- 6.1. **Internationally competitive study content:** UL regularly assesses the international demand for and competitiveness of study programmes offered to international students and integrates the latest industry trends, current research, innovative teaching and learning methods, and digital solutions into the curriculum;
- 6.2. **Integration of international cooperation into the study process:** International cooperation is systematically and purposefully integrated into the study process by engaging international teaching staff, developing joint study programmes and courses, promoting professional networking among teaching staff, and developing intercultural competence;
- 6.3. **Targeted, data-driven recruitment of international students:** International student recruitment is undertaken strategically. Recruitment activities are carried out in close cooperation with international recruitment partners and agents, current UL international students and international alumni. Activities are informed by data analysis and close cooperation between study programme teams and UL's international student recruitment staff;
- 6.4. **Defined priority countries and regions for education exports:** Priority countries and regions for international student recruitment are European Union (EU) and European Economic Area countries (particularly the Nordic, Central European and Southern European countries); EU candidate countries (particularly Ukraine, Moldova and Balkan countries that uphold European values); member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); Latin America (including Mexico, Brazil and Colombia); and countries with significant Latvian diasporas (particularly the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States and Brazil);
- 6.5. **Promotion of international mobility:** International cooperation provides students and academic staff with broad opportunities for study and traineeship mobility abroad. Faculties regularly organise Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs).
7. UL conducts internationally oriented research based on the following principles:
- 7.1. **Internationally active research community:** Researchers participate actively in international networks, associations, research infrastructures, editorial boards and working groups, and attend and organise international conferences and forums. International research teams are established to conduct research in strategically important fields;

7.2. High-quality international co-authored publications: UL's internationally active research community produces co-authored publications with foreign partners, with a clear focus on Q1 and Q2 journals worldwide;

7.3. International funding for research projects with foreign partners: UL develops international cooperation with foreign partners by attracting international research funding. Participation in internationally funded programmes strengthens UL as an internationally competitive centre of research excellence;

7.4. Building the international capacity of early-career researchers: UL supports the integration of early-career researchers into the international research community. Jointly supervised doctoral programmes (*cotutelle*) are developed with foreign partners, high-quality training involving international experts is delivered, and international mobility opportunities are provided.

III. Guidelines on Security Aspects of UL International Cooperation

8. UL considers international cooperation with a foreign or international partner, institution, organisation or individual to be high-risk where there is an increased likelihood that the cooperation may threaten the security, reputation, financial interests or academic interests of UL, the Republic of Latvia or international partners.
9. UL establishes the following guidelines for security in international cooperation:
 - 9.1. **accountability and transparency:** all international cooperation processes are conducted responsibly and openly, enabling verification that cooperation partners comply with UL's internal regulations and the laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia;
 - 9.2. **risk assessment and management:** before any international cooperation begins, the partner and project risks are thoroughly assessed;
 - 9.3. **academic freedom and ethics:** UL staff retain their right to academic freedom, uphold high ethical standards and do not enter into cooperation that could restrict freedom of expression or academic independence, or facilitate misconduct;
 - 9.4. **data and technology protection:** cooperation with foreign partners protects personal data, trade secrets, technologies and intellectual property in accordance with Latvian and international laws and regulations;
 - 9.5. **alignment of international cooperation with values and standards:** cooperation is established only with partners whose activities and principles align with the values, rule of law and human rights standards upheld by UL, the Republic of Latvia and the international community;

- 9.6. **compliance with sanctions and strategic goods controls:** international cooperation is established only with partners that are not subject to national or international sanctions, and the transfer of technology and knowledge is controlled in accordance with EU law and Latvian legislation governing strategic goods.
10. Without appropriate management authorisation, UL staff must not use their position or UL's name, brand or visual identity in activities unrelated to UL that could imply UL support or involvement.
11. When assessing international cooperation, UL uses the following country risk categories for prospective international cooperation partners (Appendix):
- 11.1. Category A - "Low risk": cooperation is considered safe and standard legal and financial checks are sufficient;
 - 11.2. Category B - "Medium risk": enhanced *due diligence* is required, including checks on the partner's reputation, sources of funding and data protection safeguards;
 - 11.3. Category C - "High risk": cooperation may proceed only with UL management approval, following an in-depth risk assessment and preparation of a security plan.
12. For organisations and individuals from countries in all categories with whom international cooperation is proposed, UL verifies their identity and checks whether they appear on national or international sanctions lists.
13. For organisations and individuals from Category B and Category C countries with whom international cooperation is proposed, UL assesses the following principal risks:
- 13.1. national security risks:
 - 13.1.1. cooperation with institutions linked to political, military or intelligence structures;
 - 13.1.2. transfer of technology or data to partners outside the EU/NATO area;
 - 13.1.3. unverified partner origins or sources of funding.
 - 13.2. academic integrity and reputational risks:
 - 13.2.1. cooperation with organisations that violate academic freedom or ethical principles;
 - 13.2.2. unjustified attribution of authorship or falsification of research data;
 - 13.2.3. contract terms that restrict UL researchers' publication rights;
 - 13.3. academic ethics and freedom risks:
 - 13.3.1. cooperation with partners involved in human rights violations;
 - 13.3.2. implementation of projects without informed consent or using discriminatory practices;

- 13.3.3. failure to ensure adequate equality and an inclusive environment;
- 13.5.financial and legal risks:
 - 13.5.1. cooperation partners' inability to meet financial obligations;
 - 13.5.2. incomplete or non-transparent contract terms;
 - 13.5.3. violations of tax and export control requirements.
- 13.6.data protection and cybersecurity risks:
 - 13.6.1. transfer of sensitive information to countries with weak data protection;
 - 13.6.2. inadequately secured IT solutions in joint projects;
 - 13.6.3. misuse of access rights.
- 14. The risk assessment for each international cooperation initiative shall be conducted in the following stages and in accordance with the following basic requirements:
 - 14.1. collection, validation and submission of information and documents by the UL cooperation initiator;
 - 14.2. assessment of information and documents, involvement of the responsible UL institutions and their organisational units in the approval process, and preparation of a recommendation by the head of the relevant institution;
 - 14.3. risk assessment;
 - 14.4. decision-making by the Rector, who shall select one of the following options:
 - 14.4.1. approve the international cooperation;
 - 14.4.2. approve the international cooperation subject to conditions;
 - 14.4.3. reject the international cooperation.
 - 14.5. Risk ratings shall be determined using the risk assessment methodology set out in the UL Risk Management Regulations;
 - 14.6. Assessment of international cooperation with prospective partners from Category B and Category C countries shall be carried out by institutions, organisational units or employees designated by the Rector of UL.
 - 14.7. The Rector of UL shall ensure:
 - 14.7.1. the establishment and implementation at UL of procedures for initiating and approving international cooperation, and the review of UL's existing contractual obligations relating to international cooperation;
 - 14.7.2. the development and implementation of incident management procedures to be activated when a risk materialises, including case-by-case assessment and decisions to suspend international cooperation where breaches are identified, with such decisions reported to the UL Council and the competent external authorities;

14.7.3. that employees are informed and trained regarding implementation of, or amendments to, the Policy;

14.7.4. regular review of the country classification set out in the Appendix, at least annually or following significant geopolitical developments, taking into account:

14.7.4.1. international and national sanctions lists;

14.7.4.2. EU legislation (including export control requirements);

14.7.4.3. recommendations issued by public authorities;

14.7.4.4. internationally available risk indices;

14.7.4.5. open-source information on the partner's reputation;

14.7.4.6. the submission of an annual report to the UL Council on the results of implementing this Policy.

Country Risk Categories for International Cooperation Partners of the University of Latvia

Countries are classified into three categories (low, medium and high risk) according to the security risks associated with international cooperation. The University of Latvia (UL) uses this classification when assessing partners. The classification is not absolute; each prospective partner should be assessed individually, taking into account the institution, project and subject matter.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Examples of countries</i>
Category A - "Low risk"	Countries that should generally be considered relatively safe for cooperation, with strong rule-of-law, academic freedom and transparency indicators. Safe and reliable countries for academic cooperation: stable democracies with high standards of academic freedom and the rule of law. EU and EEA Member States and other democracies with comparable standards. These countries represent a level of cooperation risk for which <i>basic due diligence</i> is generally appropriate.	<i>Europe (EU)</i> <i>Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Greece, Malta, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania</i> <i>North America</i> <i>Canada, United States</i> <i>Oceania</i> <i>Australia, New Zealand</i> <i>Asia / Pacific</i> <i>Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan</i> <i>Other democratic countries</i> <i>United Kingdom, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Israel</i>

<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Examples of countries</i>
Category B - "Medium risk"	Countries requiring additional caution: rule-of-law and academic freedom indicators are lower than in Category A, or specific additional risks exist (for example, technology transfer or data protection). Countries outside the EU and EEA with an established tradition of academic cooperation but some security or transparency challenges. This category reflects a risk-based approach under which all other countries are treated as medium-risk.	<i>Europe and neighbouring region</i> <i>Turkey, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, North Macedonia, Moldova, Ukraine (depending on the field and security situation), Georgia, Armenia</i> <i>Asia</i> <i>India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan</i> <i>Middle East / North Africa</i> <i>Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt</i> <i>Africa (Sub-Saharan region)</i> <i>South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Namibia, Botswana</i> <i>Latin America</i> <i>Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Costa Rica</i>
Category C - "High risk"	Countries presenting significant risks, including restricted academic freedom, weak rule-of-law systems, potential sanctions, strong state control or civil-military integration, and the transfer of technology for military purposes. In this category, particular attention is paid to whether cooperation could advance not only academic but also strategic, military or technological objectives.	<i>Europe and Eurasia</i> <i>Russia, Belarus</i> <i>Asia</i> <i>China, North Korea, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Lebanon</i> <i>Africa</i> <i>Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia (in part), Chad, Central African Republic, Mali, Niger</i> <i>Latin America</i> <i>Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua</i>

The English translation of this document was prepared with the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) and subsequently reviewed for accuracy and consistency.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Examples of countries</i>
		<i>Other countries (depending on the security situation)</i> <i>Myanmar (Burma), Zimbabwe</i>