



UNIVERSITY  
OF LATVIA

Practical

HAND-

BOOK

for International Students



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# RECTOR'S WELCOME

Established in 1919, the University of Latvia, the only comprehensive university in Latvia, has been a national centre of higher education for almost a century. Today it is a place uniting the brightest academic minds, innovative research and exciting study process. The University of Latvia is ranked in THE and QS world university ratings, and it has been awarded QS four star excellence label in 2015.



The UL aspires to become one of the leading universities in Baltic Sea region. Outstanding academic staff, programmes highly appreciated by employers, versatile research and cooperation opportunities form the foundation of our graduates' success.

To implement its development goals, the UL constructs the new Academic Centre in Torņakalns, which will provide a study and research space setting a high benchmark of excellence among the universities of the world. Contemporary technologies in laboratories and auditoriums, sustainable energy solutions, convenient, accessible and attractive working environment will yield the opportunities to improve study content and interaction among different spheres of science. The UL Academic Centre will grant the area for team science and shared studies, and open prospects to advance versatility of our study programmes and research directions toward the priorities of raising the quality of life and society development. This work will serve as a foundation for growth of Latvia throughout the next development cycle of global economy and technologies.

We are sure that the world class studies and research, the increasing number of international fellow students and dynamic student life, as well as welcoming, friendly and safe local environment in Riga city will make your stay at the UL an unforgettable experience and a great contribution to your future.

Experience University of Latvia!

*Prof. Indriķis Muižnieks*  
*Rector of the University of Latvia*  
*Full Member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences*

# EXPLORING LATVIA



Latvia is the central country of the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), located in northeast of Europe on the east coast of the Baltic Sea. It consists of fertile lowland plains and moderate hills, with most of its territory less than 100 metres above sea level. It has an extensive network of rivers, thousands of lakes and hundreds of kilometres of undeveloped seashore lined by pine forests, dunes, and continuous white sand beaches.

The official state symbols are the flag, the coat of arms and the national anthem. The oak tree, linden tree, amber, white wagtail, two-spotted ladybird, daisy, the river of destiny – Daugava are also used to symbolize Latvia.

Latvia is a parliamentary democratic republic. The head of state is the President, elected by Parliament for 4 years. The Parliament holds the legislative power and consists of 100 deputies elected every 4 years.

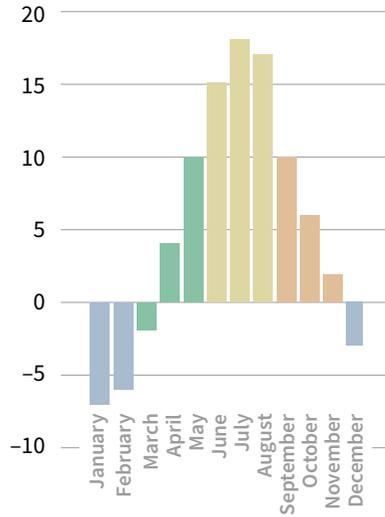
Facts and figures



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## Climate

Moderate climate with four distinctive seasons. Summers are usually dry, sunny and warm with temperatures sometimes exceeding +30 °C. Spring and autumn often bring variable weather with sun and rain on the same day. Winter lasts from December to March and usually there is snow. Sometimes, in January and February the temperature may drop even below – 25 °C. Weather forecast: [www.meteo.lv](http://www.meteo.lv).



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## Languages

The official language is Latvian. It belongs to the Baltic group of the Indo-European family of languages. Its closest and only living relative is Lithuanian (Latvian is a non-Slavic and non-Germanic language). Russian, English and German are also widely spoken in Latvia.



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## Public holidays

**January 1 –  
New Year's Day**

**March/April –  
Good Friday and  
Easter**

**May 1 –  
Labour Day**

**May 4 –  
Restoration of  
Independence Day**

**June 23 to 24 –  
Midsummer  
celebrations**

**November 18 –  
Republic of Latvia  
Independence Day**

**December 24 to 26 –  
Christmas**

**December 31 –  
New Year's Eve**





## CAPITAL CITY - RIGA



Riga is the capital of Latvia. With 704 400 inhabitants, Riga is the largest city of the Baltic States and a home to over one third of Latvia's population. The city is an important seaport and a major industrial, commercial, cultural and financial centre of the Baltic Sea region. The city lies by the Gulf of Riga, at the mouth of the river Daugava. Riga has been founded in 1201 and is a former Hanseatic League member. Riga's historical centre is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, noted for its *Art Nouveau/Jugendstil* architecture and the 19<sup>th</sup> century wooden architecture. City centre has numerous great examples of *Art Nouveau* architecture, as well as a medieval old town. The city was the European Capital of Culture in 2014, along with Umea in Sweden. It



hosted the 2006 NATO Summit, the Eurovision Song Contest 2003 and the 2006 IIHF Men's World Ice Hockey Championship. European Union's office of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) is located in Riga.

As one of the key economic and financial centres of the Baltic States, the city is served by Riga International Airport – the largest airport in the Baltic States. The largest export enterprises represent spheres of wood, IT, food and beverage manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, transport and metallurgy.

Administrative division of Riga consists of six administrative entities: Centra, Kurzemes, Ziemeļu, Latgales, Vidzemes and Zemgales priekšpilsētas (suburbs).



RIGA

## HOW TO GET HERE?

Suggestion to choose one of the four basic means of transportation.



Image from Riga International Airport archive



### Riga International Airport

(*Starptautiskā lidosta Rīga*), which is about 10 km southwest of Riga, you can take bus No. 22 to get from the airport to the centre (ticket can be bought at a kiosk “Narvesen” or from the driver). Check the price on Riga City Transport Office *Rīgas Satiksme* website:

[www.rigassatiksmelv](http://www.rigassatiksmelv)



### Riga Central Station

(*Rīgas Centrālā dzelzceļa stacija*), which is also located in the centre of Riga (*Stacijas laukums*), about 5–10 minutes' walk from the Old Town.



## Riga International Coach Terminal

(*Rīgas starptautiskā autoosta*), situated in the centre, next to the train station, 5–10 minutes' walk from the Old Town.



**The ferry port Riga Passenger Terminal** (*Rīgas pasažieru osta*) is some 1.5 km away from the very centre of Riga. Take trams No. 5, 6, 7 or 9 and ride two stops. The tram stop nearest to the port is situated on Ausekļa iela in front of the terminal.





## UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA

The University of Latvia, initially Latvia Higher School, was founded on September 28, 1919 on the basis of the former Riga Polytechnic Institute (established in 1862). In 1923, this school received its current name – the University of Latvia (*Universitas Latviensis*). In the period between 1919 and 1940, the University of Latvia was the major centre of higher education, science and culture. The former building of Riga Polytechnic Institute at Raiņa bulvāris 19 serves as the symbol of the University until today. The University of Latvia is the first of classical universities in the history of Latvia, and follows the slogan *Scientiae et Patriae*. In the course of time, other higher educational establishments – Latvian University of Agriculture, the Latvian Academy of Medicine, Riga Technical University separated from the University of Latvia and became well-known centres of education and research. As Latvia regained its independence, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia confirmed the Constitution of the University of Latvia on September 18, 1991. It stated that the Higher School is “a state establishment

of academic education, science and culture, which serves the needs of Latvia and the people". Alongside with the Constitution, the flag, the anthem, the University's emblem, the Rector's chain and the official garments of the Rector, Vice-Rectors and deans were renewed as attributes of the University of Latvia.



#### More information:

[www.university.lv](http://www.university.lv)



latvijasiuniversitate



lvuniversity



universitatelv

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## Contact us

### Department of Student Services

Department of Student Services ensures centralized service and support to UL students, informs and consults regarding study options, process and regulations, scholarships and study loans, social matters, assists in residence permit and visa procedures. It is responsible for the enrolment of prospective students at UL and student hostels for international students.

Department of Student Services issues references and verifications on student status and other study information upon request, provides transcripts of records and diploma supplements, student cards, LUIS (University of Latvia Information System) password and login, assists in elective course choice and registration.

### Contacts

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#### Director of Department of Student Services:

**Jānis Saulītis**

 Raiņa bulvāris 19, room 124  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1586  
 +371 67034801  
 [janis.saulitis@lu.lv](mailto:janis.saulitis@lu.lv)

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#### Head of International Relations:

**Aline Gržibovska**

 Raiņa bulvāris 19, room 134  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1586  
 +371 6703997  
 [ad@lu.lv](mailto:ad@lu.lv)

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#### Head of International Mobility Unit, contact person for outgoing exchange students:

**Natālija Ivanova**

 Raiņa bulvāris 19, room 134  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1586  
 +371 6703968  
 [natalija.ivanova@lu.lv](mailto:natalija.ivanova@lu.lv)

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#### Office hours:

Monday 10:00–12:00

Wednesday 10:00–12:00

Thursday 15:00–18:00

# Information for

## exchange students

## degree students

### International Mobility Unit

The staff of the International Mobility Unit serves as support to incoming and outgoing exchange students, represents them in relevant Latvian government agencies, and cooperates with other University's departments.



#### Office hours:

Monday 9:00–11:00

Tuesday 15:00–17:00

Wednesday 9:00–11:00

Thursday 15:00–18:00

### Contact person for incoming exchange students:

Beāte Ramaņa-Lo Bello

 Raiņa bulvāris 19, room  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1586

 [beate.ramina@lu.lv](mailto:beate.ramina@lu.lv)

### Contact person for incoming exchange students:

Ieva Ģerģe

 Raiņa bulvāris 19, room 125  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1586

 [ieva.gerge@lu.lv](mailto:ieva.gerge@lu.lv)

### Contact person for International Credit Mobility program and Latvian government scholarships:

Sintija Maculeviča

 Raiņa bulvāris 19, room 125  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1586

 [sintija.maculevica@lu.lv](mailto:sintija.maculevica@lu.lv)

### Admission unit

Admission unit provides centralized service and support to UL students and applicants, informs and consults on study opportunities, guide applicants through admission, assists in residence permit and visa application procedures. It is responsible for the enrolment of prospective international students at UL.



#### Office hours:

Monday 9:00–17:00

Tuesday 9:00–17:00

Wednesday 9:00–17:00

Thursday 9:30 – 18:00

Friday 9:00–17:00

### International student advisor for full time degree students:

Ervīns Lipšāns

 Raiņa bulvāris 19, room 121  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1586

 +371 67034408

 [ervins.lipsans@lu.lv](mailto:ervins.lipsans@lu.lv)  
[studies@lu.lv](mailto:studies@lu.lv)

### Contact person for incoming degree students:

Gunita Ēķe

 Raiņa bulvāris 19, room 121  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1586

 +371 67034408

 [gunita.eke@lu.lv](mailto:gunita.eke@lu.lv);  
[studies@lu.lv](mailto:studies@lu.lv)

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# Information for

**exchange students** **degree students**

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**Contact person for incoming exchange student visas and accommodation questions:**

**Marta Vilkausa**

 Raiņa bulvāris 19, room 125  
Riga, Latvia, LV-1586

 [marta.vilkauša@lu.lv](mailto:marta.vilkauša@lu.lv)

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## **Faculties and coordinators of international affairs**

Each faculty has a coordinator of international affairs, who assists international exchange students with information about the courses offered in the respective study field.

Contact information is available here:

[www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/coordinators](http://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/coordinators)



# ENROLMENT AT UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA

Information for **degree students**

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## Admission checklist

In order to be accepted for degree studies at the University of Latvia, students have to complete admission steps:

- Apply in the system;
- Fulfil requirements;
- Submit application;
- Applicant has to be approved by programme director and AIC (diploma recognition);
- Legalize required documents for visa/residence permit;
- Copy of residence permit (for non EU citizens);

Deadlines and more detailed information about admission process:

<https://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/degree/admission/>

## **Citizens of non-EU countries have to complete applications at least two months before the beginning of studies, these two months include:**

- Approx. one month to receive AIC (Academic Information Centre) decision of diploma recognition;
- One month for applicants to obtain visa and arrive to Latvia, afterwards the applicants have to apply for residence permit in Latvia.

## **Citizens from countries with additional assessment have to complete applications at least three months before the beginning of studies, these three months include:**

- Approx. one month to receive AIC (Academic Information Centre) decision of diploma recognition;
- Week to send documents from Latvia to applicant's homeland;
- 45 days to obtain the decision of residence permit.

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## Registration week

The semester starts with the registration week, which is held in the last week of August/January.

During the registration week, degree students: register for study semester, courses, sports activities in the UL Information System (LUIS) or at Student Services. Former students may revoke their student status and current students can apply for the academic leave of absence.

### Academic calendar

The academic year begins in September and is over towards the end of June or in the first half of July (40 weeks of lectures, seminars and practical work, mainly divided into 2 semesters). After the study period, the exam session follows in January and June/July.

More information: [www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/calendar](http://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/calendar)

### Grading system

Grade	Explanation	Estimated corresponding ECTS grade
<b>10</b>	(with distinction)	A
<b>9</b>	(excellent)	A
<b>8</b>	(very good)	B
<b>7</b>	(good)	C
<b>6</b>	(almost good)	D
<b>5</b>	(satisfactory)	E
<b>4*</b>	(almost satisfactory) * last passing grade	E/FX
<b>3-1</b>	(unsatisfactory)	Fail

### Courses at the University of Latvia

The general language of instruction at the University is Latvian, however, faculties offer more than 500 courses taught in English for international degree, exchange students and generally any individual interested in attending some courses.

The majority of courses are taught together with local students. Each semester, the University of Latvia offers regular Latvian and Russian language courses for international students.

The provisional course list for exchange students is available on the University's website: [www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/courses](http://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/courses)

The provisional course list for degree students is available on the University's website: [www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/degree/study/](http://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/degree/study/)

If a person wishes to attend some courses from the UL study offer, he/she can register as a course attendee. A course attendee can register for one or several

study courses, and after a successful completion receive a certificate confirming his/her study results in the respective course(/s). To become a course attendee, a person needs only to have reached secondary education level, which gives access to higher education. Please note – only EU/EEA/Swiss citizens and EU temporary (valid for the study period) or permanent residence permit holders are allowed to take courses as course attendees.

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### **Credits**

While the higher education institutions in Latvia have not fully transferred to using ECTS, the University uses national credit points, which are based on the number of contact hours. One Latvian credit point equals 1.5 ECTS points.

### **Cross credits**

The students coming to the University of Latvia with previous university experience can transfer some of their academic credits by submitting the transcript of records and application to the programme director. The better the previous study programme compares with the programme offered at the UL, the more credits can be transferred.

University of Latvia accepts transfer students, who wish to move from their home institution to UL and obtain a degree here. Only those having studied for at least 1 year and obtained at least 60 ECTS points may be considered as transfer students. The programme director decides the level of studies that the student may enter into, and the amount of credits that can be transferred.

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### **Language courses**

According to the national regulations of Latvia, all international students must learn Latvian language. Therefore, Latvian language course in amount of 4 credit points (one semester) will be included in the programme curriculum. Extra language courses are available at the UL Language Centre for an additional fee.

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### **Centre for Applied Linguistics**

The Centre for Applied Linguistics at the Faculty of Humanities, the University of Latvia, is a multi-lingual structural unit providing quality language courses for local and international undergraduate and upgrading their language skills in English, French, German, Latvian, Russian, Spanish and Swedish, or any other languages taught at the Faculty of Humanities.



Visvalža iela 4a

Rīga, Latvia, LV-1443

+371 67034803, +371 67034805

For more information about the courses, please contact **Margarita Spirida**

E-mail: [margarita.spirida@lu.lv](mailto:margarita.spirida@lu.lv)

### Examination

The examination dates are set by the lecturer/professor, where students are usually given 3–5 days to prepare for each examination. Candidates who fail in a course (semester) examination, can generally retake the exam during the examination session.

N.B. Students are charged for retaking the examination.

According to the course requirements implemented by the respective lecturer/professor, study achievements may be evaluated by the students' active participation in the class work, class attendance, various examination types (written/oral assignments).

The final examination period usually takes place in January and June (the whole month is devoted to examination session). Final examinations may be held on specific dates within the entire examination session (in some cases, exchange students are allowed to take exams before Christmas/during the last weeks of the study semester).

# ENROLMENT AT UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA

Information for **exchange students**

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## Admission checklist

In order to be accepted for exchange studies at the University of Latvia, student's home university has to send a nomination by April 15 for autumn semester/full academic year, and by October 15 for spring semester.

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## Required application documents

(to be submitted online):

1. Copy of the passport/ID;
2. Copy of the latest Transcript of Records (in English);
3. Certificate of English language proficiency, at least B1 level (some programmes require B2).

International students should apply for exchange studies online by May 15 for autumn semester/full academic year, and by November 15 for spring semester.

After receiving the application documents from all prospective exchange students, International Mobility Unit (IMU) contacts the respective faculties in order to receive their acceptance.

Approximately 1.5 months after the application deadline, the accepted exchange students receive the official acceptance emails with online acceptance letters.

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## Registration week

The semester starts with the registration week, which is held in the last week of August/January.

Exchange students register at the IMU and participate in the activities organized by the Erasmus Student Network (ESN). The Introduction meeting takes place on the Friday of the registration week, during which the IMU offers a short orientation course for all international exchange students. The meeting is approximately 1.5 hours long and includes topics related to the University, student life, study process, and other useful information. Moreover, during the Introduction meeting students are given the list of the available courses.

**Academic calendar**

The academic year begins in September and is over towards the end of June or in the first half of July (40 weeks of lectures, seminars and practical work, mainly divided into 2 semesters). After the study period, the exam session follows in January and June/July.

More information: [www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/calendar](http://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/calendar)

**Grading system**

Grade	Explanation	Estimated corresponding ECTS grade
<b>10</b>	(with distinction)	A++
<b>9</b>	(excellent)	A+
<b>8</b>	(very good)	A
<b>7</b>	(good)	B
<b>6</b>	(almost good)	C
<b>5</b>	(satisfactory)	D
<b>4*</b>	(almost satisfactory) * last passing grade	E
<b>3-1</b>	(unsatisfactory)	F

**Courses at the University of Latvia**

The general language of instruction at the University is Latvian, however, faculties offer more than 500 courses taught in English for international degree, exchange students and generally any individual interested in attending some courses.

The majority of courses are taught together with local students. Each semester, the University of Latvia offers regular Latvian and Russian language courses for international students.

The provisional course list for exchange students is available on the University's website: [www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/courses](http://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/courses)

The provisional course list for degree students is available on the University's website: [www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/degree/study/](http://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/degree/study/)

Registration for courses must be completed during the first two weeks of each semester.

As the procedure of the registration for courses differs from faculty to faculty, student has to consult the international coordinator of the respective faculty.

N.B. Course cancellation is possible only within the deadline set by the international coordinator of the respective faculty.

At the end of the study period, student will receive a transcript of records, which will consist only of the courses that the student has registered for and successfully passed.

**Credits**

While the higher education institutions in Latvia have not fully transferred to using ECTS, the University uses national credit points, which are based on the number of contact hours. One Latvian credit point equals 1.5 ECTS points.

**Language courses**

Each semester, exchange students have an opportunity to study Latvian and Russian languages starting from the beginners' level. The courses are held twice a week and 6 ECTS are awarded for each. In addition, exchange students with previous knowledge are welcome to learn other languages offered by the Faculty of Humanities.

**Centre for Applied Linguistics**

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-  Visvalža iela 4a  
Riga, Latvia, LV-1443
-  +371 67034803, +371 67034805

For more information about the courses, please contact **Margarita Spirida**  
E-mail: [margarita.spirida@lu.lv](mailto:margarita.spirida@lu.lv)



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### Examination

The examination dates are set by the lecturer/professor, where students are usually given 3–5 days to prepare for each examination. Candidates who fail in a course (semester) examination, can generally retake the exam during the examination session.

N.B. Students are charged for retaking the examination.

According to the course requirements implemented by the respective lecturer/professor, study achievements may be evaluated by the students' active participation in the class work, class attendance, various examination types (written/oral assignments).

The final examination period usually takes place in January and June (the whole month is devoted to examination session). Final examinations may be held on specific dates within the entire examination session (in some cases exchange students are allowed to take exams before Christmas/during the last weeks of the study semester).

# PRACTICAL INFORMATION

## Wi-Fi and University network



All students of the University of Latvia (UL) have free access to the University's Wi-Fi connection after receiving the username and password from the International Mobility Unit or Department of Student Services. The UL Wi-Fi connection is available in all the University's premises, including the dormitories (with an exception of the student hotel "Prima"). You can also access the Internet in many public places (wherever you see a "Wi-Fi" sticker on display), in the Internet cafés and, of course, from the Internet providers (e.g. Lattelecom, TELE2, LMT, BITE).

With the UL login and password, students access the UL Information System (LUIS), where all the study and personal information of a student is stored, and electronic information sources offered by the UL Library.

## Accommodation



The UL has two dormitories, which are located outside the city centre (approx. 15 min. by trolleybus): **"Prima"** (single, double and triple rooms (EUR 100–270 per month)); and **"Rēznas"** (double rooms (EUR 100 per month)).

### "PRIMA"

Mazā Lubānas iela 6  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1019  
 +371 67112260, +37129175674  
 [prima@lu.lv](mailto:prima@lu.lv)

### "RĒZNAS"

Mazā Lubānas iela 11  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1019  
 +371 67216221

More information: [www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/accommodation](http://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/accommodation)

Alternatively, a student can seek private housing and explore options for rent independently.

## Canteen



Students will find canteens in each UL faculty, offering hot and cold meals, snacks and beverages.

### Special lunch menu

is available daily for approx

EUR 2.50–3

The average price  
for lunch is around

EUR 5

### Opening hours

in most of the faculties are

from 8.30 am to 8 pm

Free Wi-Fi available

## Student card



The student card is a document proving the status of being a student at the University of Latvia. **The student card allows you to use University libraries' resources, participate in sports activities** offered by UL Sports Centre, receive discounts for public transport, cinema, museums, etc. Students apply for the student card after registration, taking a photo at the Department of Student Services. The student card is issued 1 to 2 weeks after student's matriculation.

### Department of Student Services

 Raiņa bulvāris 19, room 125

Rīga, Latvia, LV-1586

 +371 67034444

 [studentu.serviss@lu.lv](mailto:studentu.serviss@lu.lv)



#### Office hours:

Monday 8:30–12:30 13:00–17:00

Tuesday 8:30–12:30 13:00–17:00

Wednesday 8:30–12:30 13:00–17:00

Thursday 9:30–13:30 14:00–18:00

Friday 8:30–12:30 13:00–17:00



## Library

The Library of the University of Latvia is the largest (2 million volumes in different languages) accredited higher education library of national significance, the main information resource centre for studies and research at the University of Latvia. The UL has 13 library branches devoted to the specific fields of interest and Academic Library. The student card is also used as the library card. It ensures access to the Library of the University of Latvia, as well as other libraries in conformity with their regulations, for example, National Library of Latvia, Library of Riga Stradiņš University, Scientific Library of the Riga Technical University, etc. Since 2006, the libraries of the University of Latvia offer to order, reserve and prolong the borrowing period of books electronically in the Union Catalogue.

N.B. There is a fine for late return of books!

Students are welcome to use opportunities offered by the UL Library of Natural Sciences.



### Library of Natural Sciences

 Jelgavas iela 1  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1004  
 +371 67033933  
 [dabasbibl@lu.lv](mailto:dabasbibl@lu.lv)

Office hours  24/7

For more information on services,  
contacts and locations, visit:  
[www.lu.lv/eng/library](http://www.lu.lv/eng/library)



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## UL Sports Centre

The sports life of the University is organised by the UL Sports Centre (Aspazijas bulvāris 5, room 120), which offers training in various sport disciplines e.g., basketball, football, volleyball, floorball, athletics, chess, aerobics, table tennis, physical health exercises, athletic gymnastics and physical therapy exercises, etc.

The attendance fee: approx. EUR 20–30 per semester.

Each year, students are welcome to compete in the University's Cup and enjoy the Athletics Day, various sports events, football events, aerobics festival, streetball tournament, etc.

If you like football, you are more than welcome to join the International students' football team "ET". "ET" has won the UL Championship on several occasions!

More information: <http://www.lu.lv/eng/services/sport/>



## Buddy programme

The University of Latvia and Erasmus Student Network (ESN) provides exchange students with local buddies (mentors), who can help international students to become adapted in the new study environment and provide practical advice about everyday life in Latvia. ESN buddies are regular students of the University of Latvia, who are willing to assist newcomers on a voluntary basis.



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## Culture exchange programme

The main objective of the Culture exchange programme (CEP) is to promote stronger amity between Latvian and foreign students by mutual introduction to unique aspects of foreign cultures. It is organized by Students' Council of the University of Latvia.

CEP offers an unforgettable cultural cocktail. Throughout the programme, students meet other students from all over the world, they educate each other about their culture, cuisine, national art and music. The Culture exchange programme duration is three months in each semester, and participation is completely free of charge. Meetings are usually held twice a month.

## Emergency phone numbers



A toll-free emergency number, the operator will connect with the necessary emergency service, also serves as the number for fire brigade – **112**



Police – **110**



Ambulance – **113**



Gas or carbon  
monoxide emergency –  
**114**

## Public transport



Public transportation in the city consists of trams, trolleybuses and buses. The e-ticket (*e-talons*) can be bought in kiosks, but it is possible to purchase a one-trip ticket from the driver.

As students receive a discount for tickets, each student should apply for his/her own personalized e-ticket at the service centre of Riga Public Transport Office *Rīgas Satiksme*. To do so, student will need either UL student card or a certificate confirming the student status at the University of Latvia (can be obtained at the Department of Student Services, Raiņa bulvāris 19, room 125).

Prices, routes and timetables are available at Riga Public Transport Office *Rīgas Satiksme* website: [www.rigassatiksme.lv](http://www.rigassatiksme.lv)

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## Postal services



Stamps can be bought at post offices and kiosks, and some bookstores. When sending postcards or letters, students should look for a yellow box labelled *Latvijas Pasts*.

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## Opening a bank account



The University of Latvia has an agreement with SWEDBANK. If a student wishes to open a bank account he/she has to contact the International student coordinator for assistance.

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# Information for

**exchange students** **degree students**

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### International Mobility Unit

**Marta Vilkauša**

 Raiņa bulvāris 19, room 125  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1586

 +371 67034406

 [marta.vilkausa@lu.lv](mailto:marta.vilkausa@lu.lv)

### Admission Unit

**Ervīns Lipšāns**

 Raiņa bulvāris 19, room 121  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1586

 +371 67034408

 [studies@lu.lv](mailto:studies@lu.lv)

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## Telephone



Mobile telephone service providers, prices and terms are available on each respective company's website:

[www.lmt.lv](http://www.lmt.lv)

[www.tele2.lv](http://www.tele2.lv)

[www.bite.lv](http://www.bite.lv)

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## No smoking



Students should avoid having their cigarette in public places like clubs, bars, cafés, bus stops, playgrounds, parks, as well as places, designated with a notice “NESMĒKĒT 10 M NO IEEJAS” (Do not smoke 10 m from the entrance). These notices can be found by the main entrances of schools, public buildings, etc.

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## Alcohol



Open containers of alcohol are restricted in all public places. Alcohol use outdoors in Riga is permitted only in summer cafés and beer gardens. Shops are forbidden from selling alcohol during night, i.e., between 22.00 and 08.00.

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## Costs of basic food products\*



- A loaf of bread – EUR 0.7.–1.20
- 1 kg of cheese – EUR 5.50–15
- 1 kg of potatoes – EUR 0.5
- 1 kg of meat – EUR 6
- 1 chocolate bar (100g) – EUR 1.20
- 1 l of milk – EUR 1
- 0.5 l of beer – EUR 1–2 in a shop / EUR 2.20–3.70 in a bar
- 1.5 l of mineral water – EUR 0.7

All supermarkets have special weekly discount programs.

*\* the prices may change*

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## Further tips



- Take care with contents of your pockets and personal belongings in crowded places and public transport.
- Never leave your belongings unattended in pubs and restaurants.
- Don't forget to use safety belts, while seated in a car.
- When driving a car, have headlights on at all times, including daytime.
- Penalties for driving over the blood alcohol limit (0.5) include a heavy fine and jail sentence.

# RESIDENCE PERMIT AND LONG-TERM VISA

Information for **degree students**

Students are advised to carefully read the information on the UL website, instructing how to apply for the residence permit: [www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/degree/visas](http://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/degree/visas).

Decisions about visa and issue of residence permits are passed by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) [www.pmlp.gov.lv/en](http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/en)

It is student's own responsibility to prepare all the necessary application documents.

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## **Citizens of EU, EEA and Switzerland**

Degree students, who are Union citizens and reside in the Republic of Latvia for more than 90 days, counting from the first day of entry, must register at the OCMA and receive a registration certificate. See: [www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/degree/visas](http://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/degree/visas)

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## **Citizens from visa-free countries**

There are several countries (besides EU, EEA and Switzerland), whose citizens do not need visa to enter Latvia and can reside in the Schengen Area up to 90 days within a half year.

If a student remains here longer than 90 days starting from the first day of arrival within a half year, student has to apply for the residence permit at the OCMA.

N.B. When taking non-direct flights to Latvia, it is highly recommended to choose the flight route, where Latvia is the first Schengen entry country.

The list of visa-free countries is available at: [www.am.gov.lv/en/service/4714](http://www.am.gov.lv/en/service/4714).

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**Checklist:**

1. Receive the invitation number for residence permit from your University coordinator upon the arrival in Latvia;
2. Arrange the meeting at the OCMA (tel.: +371 67829750);
3. Present a passport (valid at least 3 months after the planned departure date from Latvia) and submit application documents at OCMA.

Please, see the list of documents here:

[www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/degree/visas/noneucitizens/01](http://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/degree/visas/noneucitizens/01);

4. Receive the decision on the residence permit issuance after 45 days (it is possible to speed up the process for an extra fee);
  5. Arrange a meeting at the OCMA (tel.: +371 67829750) and withdraw the residence permit by presenting the passport, a life and health insurance policy valid in Latvia and a copy of statement on fluorography or x-ray results (original must be presented) issued by a competent health care institution in Latvia. State fees for issuance of residence permit card in 10 working days – EUR 14.23 or in 2 working days – EUR 28.46 (State fee may be paid only with payment card).
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**Citizens of other countries**

After the invitation (prepared from UL coordinator) is approved at the OCMA:

- Students from countries with additional assessment must apply for the residence permit at the Embassy of Latvia in their country of residence;
- Other country citizens may enter Latvia with a visa and submit the documents for residence permit on the arrival in Riga, but UL suggests to apply at the embassy, as well.

The following students are advised to contact the coordinator at UL:

- If there is no Embassy of Latvia in your country of residence;
- If you are a citizen of a country that requires visa to enter Latvia, however, you have a valid residence permit in one of the Schengen countries.

List of all Embassies of Latvia around the world: [www.mfa.gov.lv/en/mission](http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/mission)

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### Other nationals with EU residence permit

Degree students (non-EU citizens), who already have a residence permit from other EU country, can remain in Latvia no longer than 90 days within half a year. If a student stays longer than 90 days starting from the first day of arrival, he/she has to apply for the Latvian residence permit at the OCMA.

There is an option that UL coordinator submits the documents for the residence permit in person at the OCMA, but it is not possible for all countries. Please consult the coordinator on the eligible countries. Then student needs to send all required documents (originals or notarized copies) for residence permit to coordinator of the University of Latvia via regular or express mail.

More information: [www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/degree/visas](http://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/degree/visas)

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### Extension of residence permit

A residence permit is normally granted for one year at a time. Extension of a residence permit must be completed before the existing residence permit expires. Please be aware that the waiting time for extension of a residence permit takes up to 3 months. It is highly recommended to inform UL coordinator at least 3 months before residence permit expires to obtain a new invitation for extension. If a student applies at least 45 days before expiry of residence permit, it will be free of charge (only refers to master and PhD students), but if less time remains, then a student must pay the state fee (see table below). The student is entitled to remain in Latvia while the residence permit is being processed.

After the invitation is approved, the student or UL coordinator can submit the following documents for the extension of residence permit:

- invitation document (prepared by UL coordinator);
- residence permit application form <http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/en/home/services/residence-permits/applications.html>;
- copy of passport (original must be presented). Passport should be valid at least 3 months longer than the planned term of residence permit;
- one photo;
- document confirming the necessary subsistence (at least EUR 430 per month).

- Document – official (original) statement issued by bank with a stamp and a signature of representative person and also a copy of bank card;
- Document confirming the place of accommodation in Latvia (if there are any changes of address);
- copy of study agreement (original must be presented);
- state duty payment receipts for the examination of submitted documents, if less than 45 days remain before expiration date on residence permit card (see the price table below).

Prices for examination of the documents for requesting a temporary residence permit:

- Within 45 days – free of charge (refers to master and PhD students)
- Within 30 days – EUR 71.14
- Within 10 working days – EUR 213.43
- Within 5 working days – EUR 355.72



# RESIDENCE PERMIT AND LONG-TERM VISA

Information for **exchange students**

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## Citizens of EU, EEA and Switzerland

Exchange students who do not plan to reside in Latvia for more than 12 months do not need to register at the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA).

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## Citizens from visa-free countries

There are several countries (besides EU, EEA and Switzerland) whose citizens do not need visa to enter Latvia.

If student needs to remain in Latvia for more than 90 days, after arrival in Riga he/she has to apply for a long-term (D-type) visa at the OCMA.

N.B. In this case, when taking non-direct flights to Latvia, it is highly recommended to choose the flight route, where Latvia is the first Schengen entry country.

It is also possible to apply for visa at the Embassy of Latvia before coming to Latvia.

The list of visa-free countries is available at: [www.am.gov.lv/en/service/4714](http://www.am.gov.lv/en/service/4714).

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## Citizens of other countries

Exchange students from the countries, whose citizens need a visa to enter Latvia, have to apply for a long-term visa in person at the Embassy of Latvia at their country of residence (outside Schengen Area).

The following students are advised to contact the coordinator of the UL:

1. If there is no Embassy of Latvia in student's country of residence;
2. If a student has a valid residence permit in one of the Schengen countries (e.g., student is a citizen of Algeria living/studying in France with a valid residence permit issued in France);
3. **Application procedure**  
International Mobility Unit will provide a student with an invitation number for the long-term visa. Student has to go to the Embassy of

Latvia or OCMA, show the invitation number and submit the following documents:

- Copy of passport (valid at least 3 months after planned departure date from Latvia);
- D-visa application form;
- Photo;
- Valid health insurance (must be valid for the whole Schengen Area and for the whole period of stay in Latvia; the minimum amount insured is EUR 42,600);
- University of Latvia Acceptance letter;
- Document confirming the necessary subsistence (minimum of 430 EUR/month);
- Document confirming student's accommodation address in Latvia.

List of all Embassies of Latvia around the world: [www.mfa.gov.lv/en/mission](http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/mission)

More detailed information: [www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/visas/](http://www.lu.lv/eng/istudents/exchange/visas/)





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## Health insurance

All international students must have a valid life and health insurance. For EU citizens – at least European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) is required.

Your life and health insurance policy has to ensure at least the following costs related to health care services:

- emergency medical assistance;
- treatment of aggravated chronic illness;
- transport to the closest medical facility providing the services mentioned above;
- transportation costs to return the patient to his/her country of residence in the event of a serious illness or death.

**For students who apply for the residence permit or long-term visa** the minimum limit of insurer's risk of own account indicated in the policy should not be less than **EUR 42 600**, it must be valid in Latvia (for exchange students, for the entire Schengen area), and for the period of student's stay in Latvia. If the validity date of the policy expires during student's stay in Latvia, the existing policy must be extended or a new policy purchased.

The University of Latvia has an agreement with the insurance company ERGO. You can purchase health insurance from this company for one year.

N.B. For exchange students this insurance can be purchased only as an additional insurance, as it is valid only in Latvia.

### Insurance costs:

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#### *Non-EU citizens*

EUR 161.40

#### *EU citizens with EVAK card*

EUR 130.20

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Price includes discounts and free doctor appointments.

N.B. Health insurance is obligatory for process of obtaining a residence permit/ long-term visa.

If you wish to apply for health insurance provided by the insurance company ERGO and have more questions, please contact International student advisor by email: [studies@lu.lv](mailto:studies@lu.lv) or visit Raiņa bulvāris 19, room 121.

Other insurance companies providing health insurance policies according to the above mentioned requirements: Gjensidige ([www.gjensidige.lv](http://www.gjensidige.lv)), BTA ([www.bta.lv](http://www.bta.lv)), AON ([www.aon.com/latvia](http://www.aon.com/latvia)), etc.



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## Vaccination

No mandatory vaccinations are required for entering Latvia. If student plans on hiking in the countryside or in the forests between March and October, a vaccine against tick-borne encephalitis is advisable.



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## Clinics

### Health Center 4

*(Veselības centrs 4)*

 Krišjāņa Barona iela 117  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1012  
 +371 67847100

### ARS Health Center

*(Medicīnas sabiedrība ARS)*

 Skolas iela 5  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1010  
 +371 67201007

### Medtour Clininc Group, Railway Health Center

*(Veselības centrs "Dzelzceļa poliklīnika")*

 Gogoļa iela 3  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1050  
 +371 67200335



## Dental clinics

### Denta

#### 24 hours dental clinic

(Klīnika "Denta")

 Brīvības bulvāris 230  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-  
 +371 67553339

### Rīga Stradiņš University Institute of Stomatology

(Rīgas Stradiņa Universitātes stomatoloģijas institūts)

 Dzirciema iela 20  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1007  
 +371 67455586

### LatviaDental clinic, Dental Estetika LTD

(Klīnika "Dental Estētika")

 Antonijas iela 8-1  
Rīga, Latvia, LV-1010  
 +371 67280826

**In case of emergency** call **112**, a toll-free number.  
The operator will connect you with the necessary  
emergency service.

General information on health care is available at National Health Service:  
[www.vmnvd.gov.lv](http://www.vmnvd.gov.lv)

# LEISURE

## Trips to neighbouring countries

As Latvia is located in the very middle of the Baltic States, it is quite easy to travel to Lithuania and Estonia. There is a good bus connection with the biggest cities (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda, Siaulai in Lithuania, and Tallinn, Johva, Narva, Parnu, Tartu in Estonia).

More information: [www.autoosta.lv](http://www.autoosta.lv)  
[www.ecolines.net](http://www.ecolines.net)  
[www.eurolines.com](http://www.eurolines.com)  
[www.simplexpress.eu](http://www.simplexpress.eu)  
[www.luxexpress.eu](http://www.luxexpress.eu)

A ferry travels to Stockholm. More info: [www.tallinksilja.com](http://www.tallinksilja.com)

Students who have their passport with them (not ID), can obtain a visa and use the opportunity to visit Russia (visa costs approximately EUR 70 and is ready within 8–9 working days), or Belarus (visa costs approximately EUR 50 and is ready within 6 working days).



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## Cinema

### **Kino Citadele**

📍 13. janvāra iela 8, Rīga  
[www.forumcinemas.lv](http://www.forumcinemas.lv)

A huge multiplex cinema showing the latest Hollywood blockbusters offers a wide choice of movies (up to 15 movies shown simultaneously), comfort and enormous screens.

### **Cinamon**

📍 Shopping centre “Alfa”  
Brīvības bulvāris 372, Rīga  
[www.cinamonkino.lv](http://www.cinamonkino.lv)

### **Multikino**

📍 Mūkusalas iela 71, Rīga  
[www.multikino.lv/lv/sobrid](http://www.multikino.lv/lv/sobrid)

### **K. Suns**

📍 Elizabetes iela 83/85, Rīga  
[www.kinogalerija.lv/ksuns.php](http://www.kinogalerija.lv/ksuns.php)

Specialises in intellectual cinema.

### **Splendid Palace**

📍 Elizabetes iela 61, Rīga  
[www.splendidpalace.lv](http://www.splendidpalace.lv)

This cinema offers a very diverse programme with an emphasis on European cinema. Many Western movies reach Latvia earlier than its neighbour countries.



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## Museums



More information:  
[www.muzeji.lv](http://www.muzeji.lv)

### ***The Ethnographic Open-Air Museum***

This popular museum seeks to showcase everyday Latvian life from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The museum was founded in 1924 on parklands bordering a beautiful lake shore on the outskirts of Riga.

### ***Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 1940–1991***

The museum reveals Latvia's history from 1940 to 1991 during occupations by both the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.

### ***Art Museum Riga Bourse***

The former Riga Stock Exchange is transformed in a wonderful art museum.

### ***Riga Art Nouveau Centre***

The Riga Art Nouveau Centre is the only museum in the Baltics that presents a complete picture of the historical heritage of *Art Nouveau* and offers an authentic environment for discovering and savouring *Art Nouveau* in an early 20<sup>th</sup> century apartment in Riga.

### ***Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation***

This is one of the oldest museums in Europe, dedicated to the history of Riga from its foundation to 1940.

### ***Latvian National Museum of Art***

Museum is the largest depository of professional art in Latvia, a focal point in collecting, preserving and popularizing the cultural values in Latvia and foreign countries. It regularly organizes art exhibitions, educational activities and cultural events.

### ***Latvian Museum of Natural History***

This museum was founded in 1845, its expositions are devoted both to the Latvian and international natural worlds. The exposition is divided into six sections: Geology, Botany, Zoology, Anthropology, Nature Protection, and Palaeontology.

### ***Turaida Museum-Reserve***

Protected monument of culture established in 1988 and embracing the centre of Turaida.

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## Opera

More information:  
[www.opera.lv](http://www.opera.lv)

The Latvian National Opera (LNO) is located in the centre of Riga (Aspazijas bulvāris 3). The LNO puts up nearly 200 productions per season and prepares on average six new productions. The basic repertoire of the Opera includes the majority of the golden classics, the productions of which often turn into surprising and bold long-term projects, such as Richard Wagner's tetralogy. Prices range from EUR 3 to EUR 85. Full time students and ISIC cardholders, upon presenting their card, have a 15% discount (excluding premieres). The LNO also offers tours of the opera building – a unique architectural masterpiece of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The tour guides will lead you through the interior of the building and talk about the life and times of the opera. Tours are conducted in Latvian, Russian, English, and German. Tickets: EUR 8, students: EUR 6.80, minimum group size: 10. Register by calling +371 67073820 or by sending an email to [education@opera.lv](mailto:education@opera.lv)



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## Theatres

Usually the theatre plays in Latvia are in Latvian, and some also in Russian. In most theatres, students are offered a discount, just be prepared to show your student card.

More information about plays and ticket prices on:  
[www.bilesuparadize.lv](http://www.bilesuparadize.lv)  
[www.bilesuserviss.lv](http://www.bilesuserviss.lv)



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## Going out

In Riga, everyone can find a place to relax, either with a coffee, cocktail or a beer. Riga offers many different places, most of which are located in the Old Town. Side by side visitors can find trendy cocktail bars and beer pubs. There are also some alternative districts emerging all over Riga like Miera iela, Spīķeri, Kalnciema kvartāls, each offering a particular flavour of local atmosphere. If students feel like dancing, there are also many places offering a versatile range of music.

# FIND YOUR FACULTY



## **Faculty of Computing**

Raiņa bulvāris 19, Rīga

## **Faculty of Law**

Raiņa bulvāris 19, Rīga

## **Faculty of Medicine**

Raiņa bulvāris 19, Rīga

## **Faculty of Theology**

Raiņa bulvāris 19, Rīga

## **Faculty of Biology**

Jelgavas iela 1, Rīga

## **Faculty of Chemistry**

Jelgavas iela 1, Rīga

## **Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences**

Jelgavas iela 1, Rīga



**Faculty of Business, Management  
and Economics**

Aspazijas bulvāris 5, Rīga

**Faculty of History and Philosophy**

Aspazijas bulvāris 5, Rīga



**Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art**

Jūrmalas gatve 76, Rīga

**Faculty of Humanities**

Visvalža iela 4a, Rīga



**Faculty of Physics,  
Mathematics and  
Optometry**

Zelļu iela 25, Rīga



**Faculty of Social Sciences**

Lauvas iela 4, Rīga



# ENGLISH-LATVIAN DICTIONARY

Hello – Sveiki! / Čau! (informal)  
Good morning – Labrīt!  
Good afternoon – Labdien!  
Good evening – Labvakar!  
Good bye – Uz redzēšanos! / Visu labu!  
(formal) Atā! / Čau! (informal)  
Thank you – Paldies  
Please – Lūdzu  
How are you? – Kā tev iet? (informal);  
Kā Jums klājas? (formal) I'm  
doing fine – Man iet labi  
My name is ... – Mani sauc ...  
Yes – Jā  
No – Nē  
Excuse me – Piedodiet / Atvainojiet  
I do not speak Latvian – Es nerunāju  
latviski  
I speak Latvian – Es runāju latviski  
I don't understand – Es nesaprotu  
Can you help me? – Vai tu vari man  
palīdzēt?  
What are you doing tonight? – Ko tu  
šovakar darīsi?  
Cheers – Priekā!  
I love you – Es tevi mīlu  
Taxi – Taksometrs  
Bus/coach – Autobuss  
Shop – Veikals  
Police – Policija  
Currency exchange – Valūtas maiņa  
Hotel – Viesnīca  
Pharmacy – Aptieka  
Hospital – Slimnīca

## Grocery list

Bread – maize  
Butter – sviests  
Cheese – siers  
Milk – piens  
Curd – biezpiens  
Sour cream – skābais krējums  
Sweet cream – saldaiss krējums  
Coffee – kafija  
Tea – tēja  
Fruits – augļi  
Potatoes – kartupeļi  
Rice – rīsi  
Buckwheat – griķi  
Oat flakes – auzu pārslas  
Sausage – desa  
Pork – cūkgaļa  
Beef – liellopa gaļa  
Chicken – vistas gaļa  
Smoked meat – kūpināta gaļa  
Fish – zivis  
Salmon – lasis  
Dumplings – pelmeņi  
Juice – sula  
Nuts – rieksti  
Flour – milti  
Sugar – cukurs  
Salad – salāti  
Pasta – makaroni

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