A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR SOCRATES/ERASMUS STUDENTS IN LATVIA
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Rīga 2004
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Higher Education in Latvia

The Latvian education system is structured at four levels: basic, secondary, vocational and higher education. Basic education is compulsory, lasting nine years, after which students can choose to continue their studies in either secondary schools or vocational education institutions. Study period varies according to the type of institution: three years in secondary school or one to three years in a vocational education institution. After completion of either type of secondary education, students can choose to either enter the labour market or continue their studies at a higher education institution. Graduates of general secondary, vocational secondary and 4–5 year vocational education and training programmes are eligible for admission to higher education.

The Law on Higher Educational Institutions (1995) set the framework for the higher education system in Latvia. The Law established two types of institutions: non-university and university. Universities offer both academic and professional programmes, while non-university institutions offer only professional programmes.

**Higher education falls into the following categories:**

- **Academic education:**
  - Bachelor (academic degree),
  - Master (academic degree),
  - Doctor (scientific degree);

- **Professional qualifications:**
  - Professional higher education based upon academic degrees (university-type professional higher education) – Bachelor and Master;
  - Professional higher education programmes not offering academic degrees and mainly aimed at the acquisition of professional skills (non-university higher education).

Academic programmes last three or four years for a Bachelor degree, one or two years for a Master degree; and three or four years for a Doctoral Degree.

Professional higher education is divided into first level (college programmes), and second level professional higher education. First level professional higher education programmes lead to a Level IV professional qualification; these programmes mainly train people for specific sectors of the labour market. College programmes last two or three years.

Second level professional higher education programmes lead to a Level V professional qualification (the highest professional qualification). These programmes generally last four years or longer.

### Table No. 1. Education in Latvia*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age/Years in education</th>
<th>Professional qualification levels</th>
<th>Professional qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28–21</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–18</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23–16</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>Prof. HE pr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22–15</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Prof. pr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19–12</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Academic (3–4 y.) and prof. higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>160–240 CP (4–6 y.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80–120 CP (2–3 y.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40–80 CP (1–2 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>120–160 CP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Admission requirements:
- general secondary education or basic education + 4 year secondary vocational programmes

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**State Institutions of Higher Education Eligible for Erasmus**

**Universities**

Universities cover one or more academic fields and are entitled to award degrees up to the doctoral level. The following higher education establishments are registered as universities by the Latvian Council of Higher Education:

- Daugavpils University
- Latvia University of Agriculture
- Riga Technical University
- Riga Stradiņš University
- University of Latvia

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Other State Institutions of Higher Education

Higher education institutions that do not have university status usually specialize in one or more specific fields. Most of them offer study programs at the ISCED level 6 and ISCED level 5.

- Banking Institution of Higher Education
- Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music
- Latvian Maritime Academy
- Latvian Academy of Culture
- Latvian Academy of Art
- Police Academy of Latvia
- Latvian Academy of Sports Education
- Liepāja Academy of Pedagogy
- Rēzekne Higher Education Institution
- Stockholm School of Economics in Riga
- Riga Teacher Training and Educational Management Academy
- Ventspils University College
- Vidzeme University College
- National Defence Academy

Private Institutions of Higher Education Eligible for Erasmus

Private institutions usually offer professional study programs.

- “Turība” School of Business Administration
- Latvian Christian Academy
- Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration
- “Artīstība” Higher School of Social Work and Social Pedagogic
- International Higher School of Practical Psychology
- Information Systems Management Institute
- Baltic Russian Institute
- Higher School of Economics and Culture
- Institute of Transport and Telecommunications

Organization of Studies

Academic Year

The academic year begins in September and ends in the second half of June or in the first half of July. As a general rule, it comprises 40 weeks of lectures, seminars and practical work, and is divided into 2 semesters — autumn and spring. In some universities students also have to undergo practical training in the form of an internship during the summer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Approx. ECTS grade* (approximation is unofficial)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>very high</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>izcīli (with distinction)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>teicami (excellent)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>loti labi (very good)</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>labi (good)</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>gandrīz labi (almost good)</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>viduvēji (satisfactory)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>gandrīz viduvēji (almost satisfactory)</td>
<td>E/FX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>3–1</td>
<td>negatīvs vērtējums (unsatisfactory)</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* dependant on statistics

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Autumn semester</th>
<th>Spring semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lectures:</td>
<td>Lectures:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September to Christmas</td>
<td>February to the end of May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination: December/January</td>
<td>Examination: May/June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation: Christmas</td>
<td>Vacation: Easter, summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vacation in July, August</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment

Examinations can be written or oral. In some fields e.g. medicine, practical examinations are important. Students are examined by a single examiner or by an examination board. If the student successfully passes all relevant examinations in the examination session, he/she is allowed to continue their studies in the following semester.

An examination board chaired by an academic or a professional from outside the institution conducts the final examinations. In some cases, especially if the program prepares an individual for work in a regulated profession, the final examinations may be arranged as State examinations.

Latvia’s higher education system uses a ten-point grading system, where 10 is the maximum grade and 4 the lowest passing grade. The grading system is explained in detail at http://www.aic.lv/Rp/Latv/JAUNUMI/LVsyst2004EN.doc:
**Semester Examinations**

Examination sessions take place at the end of each semester (i.e. in January and June—July). Students are usually given 3—5 days to prepare for each examination.

Students are individually examined in each subject and the total number of examinations in a semester is usually between four and six. Candidates who fail in a course (semester) examination may have the opportunity to take the examination again in the same session or later, depending on the university. In principle, an examination cannot be repeated more than twice. If a student fails, he/she has to repeat the study year. Some universities allow their students to continue their studies even if they have failed in one or two subjects. However, the student must pass the examination before the beginning of the next academic year.

**Final Examinations**

Final exams are usually arranged as joint examinations covering several subjects relevant to the main field of study.

**Language of Instruction**

The official language of instruction is Latvian. However, most institutions of higher education also offer some programs and courses in other languages. Refer to the International Office of the respective university for more specific information. Students proficient in English will comfortably cope in both educational and social settings. However, exchange students are also advised to learn Latvian in order to gain a better appreciation of the local culture.

**Recognition of foreign degrees and diplomas**

The Latvian Academic Information Centre can provide information on recognition procedures. Address: Vaļņu iela 2, Rīga, Tel. +371 7212317; http://www.aic.lv

**Learning Latvian**

Most institutions of higher education offer Latvian language courses. The University of Latvia and Riga Technical University offer intensive language courses for ERASMUS students (Erasmus Intensive Language courses) before the study year begins.

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**Coming to Latvia**

**Geography**

Latvia is situated on the east coast of the Baltic Sea, bordering Lithuania, Byelorussia, Russia, Estonia. The landscape of the country is marked by lowland plains and rolling hills, with thousands of rivers and lakes. Most of the countryside is less than 100 metres above sea level.

| Area: 64,589 sq. km or 24,937 sq. miles. |
| Regions: Kurzeme, Zemgale, Vidzeme, Latgale. |
| Total national border length: 1,862 km. |
| Length of Latvia's Baltic sea coastline: 494 km. |
| Largest lake: Lubāns, 80.7 sq. km. |
| Deepest lake: Drīdzis, 65.1 metres. |
| Longest river within Latvian territory: the Gauja, 452 km. |
| Largest river to flow through Latvian territory: the Daugava, total length 1,005 km, of which 352 km fall within Latvia. |
| Highest point: Gaiziņkalns, 311.6 metres. |

**Climate**

Latvia's weather is governed by a moderate oceanic climate, with pronounced cyclone activity and considerable precipitation. Although Latvia is small, there are frequent differences between the coast and the eastern part of the country. It is typically warmer near the sea, although there is also more precipitation and strong wind.

- **Summer:** June—August.
- **Winter:** December—March.

Summer is warm, but winter, lasting from November till mid-March, can be very cold (−25 °C). The weather in autumn and spring is relatively mild. Heaviest rainfall is observed in August. Snowfall is common in winter, especially in February. Average temperatures are: July +17 °C, February −5 °C, although some days can be very hot in summer and very cold in winter. The warmest month is July, and the coldest is January. Average rainfall in summer is 195 mm, in winter — 116 mm.

**Nature**

Latvia is situated in a nature zone between Northern and Central Europe. Latvia is a country of diverse natural landscapes. While forests cover 45 percent of the territory, Latvia also has many lakes, small rivers and rolling fields. The larger forest tracts are found in the northern part of Kurzeme, one of the few places in Europe where it is still possible to enjoy the untouched beauty and uniqueness of nature.
Latvia has a large variety of flora and fauna (approximately 27,700 species), typical for a region of mixed forests. Latvia also has the largest otter population in Europe, and there is a much greater chance of seeing the rare black stork in Latvia’s forests than in any other European country.

| Latvian: | Latvia | The name “Latvia” originates from an ancient Baltic (Indo-European) tribe — the Latgalians (in Latvian: latgāļi), who formed the ethnic core of the Latvian people. |
| Lithuanian: | Latvija | |
| Estonian: | Läti | |
| German: | Lettland | |
| French: | Lettonie | |
| Spanish: | Letonia | |
| Italian: | Lettonia | |

Political system
The Republic of Latvia was founded on November 18, 1918. It has been continuously recognized as a state by other countries since 1920 despite occupations by the Soviet Union (1940—1941, 1945—1991) and Nazi Germany (1941—1945). On August 21, 1991 Latvia declared the restoration of its de facto independence.

Latvia is a democratic, parliamentary republic. Legislative power is in the hands of a single chamber parliament — the Saeima — with 100 deputies. Parliamentary elections take place every 4 years. The head of state is the President, who is elected by the parliament for a period of 4 years. The President signs laws, nominates the Prime Minister (who heads the government) and performs representative functions.

Memberships
Latvia is a member of:
- European Union;
- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO);
- United Nations;
- Council of Europe;
- World Trade Organization (WTO);

Language
The state language is Latvian, which belongs to the Indo-European family of languages. The Latvian language is considered one of the oldest of the Indo-European (European) languages. It is a non-slavic and a non-germanic language, similar only to Lithuanian, with which it forms the Baltic language group.

Mini Dictionary
Hello | Labdien
How are you? | Kā iet?
Yes/No | Jā/Nē
Please | Lūdzu
Thank you | Paldies
Sorry | Atvainojiet
Where is...? | Kur atrodas...?
What time is it? | Cik ir pulkstenis?
My name is... | Mani sauc...
What’s your name? | Kā tevi sauc?
How much does it cost? | Cik maksā?

Population
Latvians are the indigenous people of Latvia. According to the latest census taken in 2003, the population of Latvia is 2,320,300. The ethnic composition of population has always been diverse. The largest ethnic groups are Latvians (57.6%), Russians (29.6%), Belorussians (4.1%), Ukrainians (2.7%), Poles (2.5%), Lithuanians (1.4%), and Jews (0.4%). The current ethnic composition of Latvia is largely the result of massive post-war immigration, which resulted in a fall in the number of ethnic Latvians from 77% of the population in 1935 to 52% by 1989.

Currency
The national currency is the Latvian lat (Ls). One lat equals 100 santims. There are 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 and 500 Ls denomination banknotes, and 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 santim, and 1 and 2 lat coins. The lat was introduced in October 1993 and is pegged to the SDR (International Monetary Fund unit of currencies) at a constant rate. One lat equals approximately 1.5 euros. Most shops, restaurants, and hotels in the major towns also accept credit cards, but if you travel to smaller towns, take a sufficient amount of cash with you. Cash machines can be found in most banks, major petrol stations, and at the airport and the Central Post Office in Riga. Travellers cheques and Eurocheques can be cashed in most banks. Money can be changed in banks or exchange offices. The exchange rate is almost the same in all exchange points, except the Exchange offices at the Airport.

Banks are open on weekdays from 09.00 to 17.00.
Visas

Students must have a valid passport during their stay in Latvia. Citizens of the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA), USA, Australia, Japan and certain other countries can enter Latvia with valid passports. Citizens of EU and EEA states can stay in Latvia for up to 90 days during a six-month period. For a stay that exceeds 90 days in a six-month period, students must register in the Department of Citizenship and Migration, and receive a residence permit. Additional information concerning residence permits can be obtained from the Office of Citizenship and Immigration http://www.ocma.gov.lv

Documents needed to receive a residence permit to study in Latvia:
Presentation of a valid travel document recognized by the Republic of Latvia and the following documents:
- an official application form for a residence permit;
- a photo;
- a copy of an agreement verifying that you will be studying in Latvia;
- a copy of a valid health insurance policy.

Time and Public Holidays

Latvia is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and three hours ahead when summer time is in effect (from April to October). Latvia uses the 24-hour clock (e.g. 3 pm is 15.00).

Holidays:
- January 1: New Year
- March/April: Easter (Good Friday, 2nd Day of Easter)
- May 1: Labor Day
- June 23–24: Līgo, Midsummer Night
- November 18: Proclamation of Latvian independence
- December 25–26: Christmas
- December 31: New Year's Eve

Latvia on the Web

Welcome to Latvia http://www.lv
The Latvian Institute http://www.li.lv
Riga Municipality http://www.riga.lv
Country Holidays http://www.celotajs.lv

Arrival

Whether a student arrives in Latvia by bus, train, plane or ship, an extensive public transportation system allows easy access to Rīga or other towns and rural regions.

- From “Rīga” airport
  “Rīga” airport is located 13 km south-west of Rīga. There is a special shuttle bus service — 22a — to the city center. The ride is approximately 30 minutes long and the bus leaves once every hour between 07:30 a.m. and 22:10.
  A taxi can take you to the center in 15—20 minutes at a cost of around 6—10 Ls. Allow extra time, if travelling by bus or taxi during the rush hours.
  Information service: Phone: +371 7207009, location: Departure hall, first floor.

- From the central railway station
  There are railway and bus connections to all neighboring countries. The main route from Western Europe runs to Rīga from Berlin, via Warsaw and Vilnius. The central railway station is located in the central part of Rīga (Stacijas laukums). It is a 5—10 minutes walk to get to the Old Town, the major hotels and to the University of Latvia, Rīga Technical University and Latvian Academy of Music.
  Information service: Phone: +371 118

- From the bus station
  The bus terminal is also situated in the centre of Rīga, next to the railway station. The luggage room is open from 05:30 to 23:00. Tram No 7 will take you to the centre which is just one stop ahead. If you choose to walk, it will take you 5—10 minutes to reach the Old Town.
  Information service: Phone: + 371118 (local); +3719000009 (international).

- From the ferry terminal
  The ferry terminal is about 1.5 km from the centre of Rīga. Trams N 5, 7 or 9 go to the center for the price of regular ticket (Ls 0.20). The tram stop is situated on Auskņa iela in front of the terminal. The center is two stops away.
  Information service: Phone: + 371118
  There are train or bus connections to all cities and towns in Latvia. It is approximately 40 minutes by train to go to Jelgava, 2 ½ hours by bus to Valmiera (train and bus: Ls 1.35), 3 hours to Rēzekne (train: Ls 2.38, bus: Ls 2.25—3.60), 3 hours to Ventspils (bus: Ls 3.20) or Liepāja, 5 hours to Daugavpils (train: Ls 2.32).
  For information about schedules call + 371 118. Booking train tickets in advance: + 3717216664.
Insurance and Medical Treatment, Emergency Assistance
We recommend you obtain insurance before you come to Latvia. Medical and accident insurance can also be purchased at local insurance companies: Alterna (Elizabetes iela 23, Riga), Rigas Fenikss (Vilandes iela 1, Riga), Balta (Valņu iela 1, Riga; Ģimnāzijas iela 11, Daugavpils; Sudrabu Edžus iela 15, Jelgava; K. Valdemāra 20/24, Liepāja; Brāļu Skrindu iela 11, Rēzekne; Kārļa iela 3, Valmiera), Latgarants (Strēlnieku iela 1-3, Riga), Rigas Slimokase (Skolas iela 3, Riga) or ask the International Office at the respective university to recommend a policy.

Emergency call: 03 a toll-free number to call an ambulance. In Riga: you can contact “ARS” Medical Care Centre (Skolas iela 5, tel 7201001, 7201007, emergency home service: 7201003, 7201005)

In Latvia there are state, non-profit and private hospitals. If you have to go to a hospital, the health insurance scheme will cover the costs, although you will have to pay a small charge over the first days.

Pharmacies in Latvia are called “Aptieka”, and are open on weekdays from 09:00 to 19:00 and from 10:00 to 16:00 on Saturdays.

Accommodation
Due to high demand, students should give the International Office ample notice of their intention to live in University dormitories. International students are usually housed in single rooms with a common kitchen on each floor. Linen, blankets, pillows, and kitchen utensils are provided. Rent is between 15—25 Ls per month. If students do not wish to stay at a dormitory, private housing arrangements should be made well before arriving in Latvia.

Public Transport
Riga and the biggest towns in Latvia have combinations of public buses, trams and trolley buses. Riga’s public transport system runs daily from 05:30 till approximately 23:30. Some routes have a night service once an hour. Tickets are purchased on board and cost 20 santimes. Monthly student discount tickets can be obtained from the International Relations Office at the university. Liepāja and Daugavpils also have trams, but other cities primarily rely on buses. Tickets prices vary between cities.

Post and Telephone
Latvian post boxes are colored yellow, and postage stamps can be bought in post offices or the kiosks that are scattered around all Latvian cities. The largest post offices in Riga are located at 21 Brīvibas Boulevard and 1 Station Square. Major Post offices in other cities are located in the center, typically near the central train or bus station. Telephone numbers in Latvia have seven digits.

Most public phones are operated with phonecards (telekartes). They cost 2, 5 or 10 Ls and can be bought in the outlets where the sign “Telekarte” is displayed (kiosks, stores, post offices).

Emergency Calls
Fire . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 01, 112
Police . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 02, 112
Ambulance . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 03, 112
Gas leakage . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 04, 112
Lost property . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 7086628
Road accidents . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 7377000
AIDS centre . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 7378278
Poisoning and medicine centre . . . 7014595

Electricity
220 volts AC, 50 Hz. Latvia uses European-type 2-pin plugs.

Shopping
Clothes, electronics and luxury goods in Latvia are priced at standard European levels. However, daily necessities like food and services are still relatively inexpensive. While most stores and retailers accept credit cards, small shops and kiosks only accept cash. The majority of shops are open from 9—10:00 to 18—19:00 on weekdays and 17:00 on Saturdays. Supermarkets are open from 8:00 to 22—23:00. The many different markets sell fresh products (vegetables, fruit, mushrooms, berries and dairy products, flowers) from the countryside. Typical prices. In Ls (1 EUR = 0.6 Ls): 1 kilo of beef — Ls 2.50; 1 kilo of potatoes — Ls 0.30; a loaf of white bread — Ls 0.25; 10 eggs — Ls 0.70; 1 litre of milk — Ls 0.35.

International students wanting to travel, buy fresh fruit and vegetables, make frequent telephone calls, and lead an active social life, should expect to spend at least Ls 150 a month.
Typical Latvian souvenirs include local handicrafts, works of art, ceramics, amber or coffee table books. Latvia has a number of chocolate producers, ranging from “Laima”, the oldest chocolate factory in Latvia, to the newer, and more exclusive “Emīla Gustava Chocolate Factory”.

Cultural and Leisure Activities

Student Union
Each institution of higher education has its own student union that organizes seminars, competitions, festivals, concerts, job markets, and parties. Almost every University has an active student club.
The Latvian Student Union can be found at:
Baznīcas iela 5—20, Riga, LV-1050, Phone: +371 7034673, e-mail: lsa@latnet.lv, http://www.lsa.org.lv

Sports
Latvians love many different sports. A special patriotism emerges when the world championships in ice hockey, bobsleigh or winter biathlon take place. The artificial bobsleigh track in Sigulda (some 53 km north — east of Riga) was built in 1986. It is one of only 12 artificial tracks in the world. Amateurs can go down the bobsleigh track on a rubber raft seating six persons, and with an average speed of 60 km/hr. In the a four-seat sleigh on wheels, nicknamed Mad Mix, seating a pilot, a break-person and two passengers replaces the rubber raft.

There are also a number of short skiing tracks in various parts of Latvia: Sigulda, Krimulda, Baili, Mežezers and Gaiziņkalns.
Basketball, streetball, football, volleyball, and swimming are the most popular summer sports. Latvia won four silver medals in the recent Athens Olympics. Aerobics and fitness clubs can be found in every city and town.

University students can play almost any sports either at a good professional level, or just for general fitness. Universities have a number of sporting facilities, such as an indoor swimming pool (eight lanes × 50 m), outdoor tennis courts and an indoor tennis facility at Riga Technical University, a sports ground with a few thousand seats (University of Latvia) and many others. The traditional “Kings’ Match” in basketball between the University of Latvia and Riga Technical University is the most popular inter-university sporting event.

Culture
The history of Latvian culture can be largely traced through Latvian folklore, particularly its 217,996 Latvian folk songs (dainas). In the 19th century, Krišjānis Barons, the Father of Latvian folk songs, gathered, systematized, and published them in a seven-volume encyclopaedic edition. The collection has been constantly supplemented and currently comprises approximately 5 million verses. Most of the songs have an outspoken social character, often ironic and sarcastic. Every five years Latvia holds a national song and dance festival, typically in late June, and lasting a week. The number of amateur singers and dancers is usually around 20,000. There are a number of international music and theatre festivals, such as the Opera Festival in Riga and Sigulda, the Festival of Ancient and Renaissance Music in Bauska and Rundāle, the Festival of Chamber Music in Cēsis, several Jazz and Pop Music festivals and concerts. University students participate in university choirs, folk dance groups, student bands, theatre studios and cultural activities organised by student clubs.

Riga, with less than one million inhabitants, is the heart of the Baltic region. The narrow streets, buildings from the Middle Ages, dwelling houses and numerous churches of the Old Town are worth seeing. Some places seem to belong to previous centuries. The most interesting sites in the Old town are St. Peter’s Church, Dome Church, John’s Church, John’s Court, Cat’s House, the Rīga Castle, Three Brothers, the Powder Tower, the Swedish Gate, the Freedom Monument, and numerous other places like parks, squares, museums and gardens. A unique Jugendstil (Art Nouveau) style dominates Rīga — examples can be found all over the city, but particularly in Alberta, Elizabetes, Antonijas, Vīlandes, and Strēlnieku streets. All Latvian cities have a number of museums, art galleries and concert halls.

Excursions
Students coming to Latvia are advised to also travel outside the cities. Visit Jūrmala, the “Latvian Riviera” or Sigulda, the “Latvian Switzerland”, both easy accessible by train. Jūrmala is a spa-town 25 km from Riga, stretching along the coast of the Baltic Sea. Its 30 km long sandy, golden beach and pine forests attract
holiday makers in spring and summer. The architecture of Jūrmala, with its elegant small wooden houses, has the charm of the nineteenth century. Sigulda is located in the picturesque valley of the Gauja River with hilly river banks, sandstone caves, and ruined medieval castles make this town unique.

Latvia is a country full of scenic surprises. There are a number of rural places of interest: the Slītere nature reserve in the northern part of Kurzeme, the system of lakes in Latgale, the Rundāle Palace, Jelgava castle, the Gauja National Park and the coastlines. The Rundāle Palace and Jelgava castle were constructed by the famous architect Rastrelli. The main city in the Vidzeme district is Valmiera, located on the banks of the Gauja River. An equestrian centre is located on the Burtnieka Lake. Liepāja and Ventspils have large harbours of historic interest, as well as interesting architecture dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century.

“Countryside Holiday” (Kungu iela 11, Rīga, Phone: +371 7617600; fax: +371 7830041) offers accommodation in the countryside and organises weekend trips, fishing and boat rides, horse-riding. “Latvia Tours” (Kalju iela 8, Rīga, Phone: +371 7085001, fax: +371 7080020) offers tours to the Open Air Museum, the Rundāle Palace, Sigulda, Kurzeme, Cēsis and Latgale. The Tourist Club of the University of Latvia (Raiņa bulv. 19, Rīga, Phone: +371 7227776, fax: +371 7227568, e-mail: mountin@com.latnet.lv) offers mountain climbing, mountaineering expeditions, adventure tours, skiing, water-tourism, hiking, cycling, auto-tourism, orienteering, speleo-tourism, guided tours in the Baltic States and Europe, and renting of tourism and sport equipment.

Eating and Drinking
Located by the Baltic Sea, Latvia is rich in fishing and agricultural traditions. For centuries Latvian people have favored various rye and whole wheat breads. Porridge is prepared with oatmeal, barley-grouts and pearl barley. Many different types of legumes are also popular, particularly grey peas, and pancakes made of potatoes and flour. Pork is the most common meat, usually served with boiled or baked potatoes and sauerkraut. Fish dishes include pilchard, herring, flounder, salmon and other fish. Dairy products are another staple of any traditional Latvian meal-cream, cheese and cottage cheese. Caraway cheese is generally the most popular local cheese. Most cafes, bistros, restaurants and university restaurants offer a good choice of food and drink.

Relevant Addresses
Latvian Embassies in Socrates countries

**AUSTRIA**
- Stefan Esders Platz 4, A-1190 Vienna, Austria
  - Phone: 43 1 4033112

**BELGIUM**
- 158, av. Molière, 1050 Brussels
  - Phone: 32 23441682

**BULGARIA**
- (See Poland)

**CYPRUS**
- (See Greece)

**CZECH REPUBLIC**
- 3 Hradešinská Str., P.O. Box 54, 10100 Prague
  - Phone: 420 255 700 881

**DENMARK**
- 17 Rosbaeksgade Str., 2100 Copenhagen
  - Phone: 45 39 726000

**ESTONIA**
- 10 Tõnismägi Str., 10119 Tallinn
  - Phone: 372 627 78 50

**FINLAND**
- 10 Armfeltintie, 00150 Helsinki
  - Phone: 358 9 47647244

**FRANCE**
- 6 Villa Said, 75116 Paris
  - Phone: 33 1 53645810

**GERMANY**
- Reinerstr. 40-41, 14193 Berlin
  - Phone: 49 30 82 60 02 22 110

**GREECE**
- 9 Irodotou Str., Kolonaki, 10674 Athens, Greece
  - Phone: 30 2 10 729 44 83

**HUNGARY**
- (See Austria)

**ICELAND**
- (See Norway)

**IRELAND**
- 14 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2
  - Phone: 353 1 662 16 10

**ITALY**
- Viale Liegi, 42, 00198 Rome, Italy
  - Phone: 39 0 688 41 237 (Consular Section)

**LIECHTENSTEIN**
- (See Austria)

**LITHUANIA**
- 76 M.K.Čiurlionio Str., 2009 Vilnius
  - Phone: 370 5 213 12 60

**LUXEMBURG**
- (see Belgium)

**MALTA**
- (See Italy)

**NORWAY**
- Bygdoy Allé 76, 0208 Oslo
  - Phone: 47 22 542 280

**POLAND**
- 19 Królowej Aldony Str., 03-928 Warsaw, Poland
  - Phone: 48 22 617 43 89
SLOVENIA
4 Styrmansgatan, 1st floor, S-114 54 Stockholm, Sweden
Phone: + 46-8 545 65 885

SPAIN
Elizabetes iela 11, 3. stāvs, Riga, LV-1010
Phone: +371 7320281
Fax: +371 7325005

SWEDEN
A. Pumpura iela 8, LV-1010 Riga
Phone: +371 7686600
Fax: +371 7686601

TURKEY
37 Didžioji Str., 2001 Vilnius, Lithuania
Phone: +370-5 2649570
Fax: +370-5 2123277

UNITED KINGDOM
J. Alunāna iela 5, LV-1010 Riga
Phone: +371 7774700
Fax: +371 7774707

Representative organisations in Latvia

Danish Cultural Institute
Marijas iela 13, k. 3
Riga, LV-1050
Phone/Fax: +371 7289994
http://www.dki.lv
E-mail: dki@dki.lv

The British Council Latvia
Blaumaņa iela 5a — 2
Riga, LV-1011
Phone: +371 7281730
Fax: +371 7504100
http://www.britishcouncil.lv
E-mail: mail@britishcouncil.lv

Goethe Institute
Torga iela 1
Riga, LV-1050
Phone: +371 7223704
Fax: +371 7323999
E-mail: info@goethe.lv

Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Riga
Marijas iela 13/3
Riga, LV-1666
Phone: +371 7211006; 7820089
Fax: +371 213233
http://www.nmr.lv
E-mail: info@nmr.lv

Centre Culturel Francais
Elizabetes iela 59
Riga, LV-1050
Phone/Fax: +371 7201855
http://www.ccf.lv

Higher Education Institutions Participating in the Erasmus programme

Daugavpils Universitāte
Daugavpils University
Viennibas iela 13
Daugavpils LV-5400
Latvia
Phone/fax: +371 5421606
E-mail: forel@dau.lv
http://www.dau.lv
http://www.lapas.dau.lv/forel

Latvijas Lauksaimniecības universitāte
Latvia University of Agriculture
Lielā iela 2
Jelgava LV-3004
Latvia
Phone: +371 3023685
Fax: +371 3027238
E-mail: erasmus@cs.llu.lv; foreign@cs.llu.lv
http://www.llu.lv

Rīgas Stradiņš universitāte
Rīga Stradiņš University
Dzirciema iela 16
Rīga LV-1007
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Phone: +371 7409212
Fax: +371 7471825
E-mail: SSN@rsu.lv
http://www.rsu.lv

Rīgas Tehniskā universitāte
Rīga Technical University
Kālķu iela 1
Rīga LV-1658
Latvia
Phone: +371 7089055
Fax: +371 7820094
E-mail: Jolanta.Jurevica@rtu.lv
http://www.rtu.lv
Latvijas Universitāte  
*University of Latvia*
Raiņa bulvāris 19  
Rīga LV-1586  
Latvia
Phone: +371 7034334  
Fax: +371 7034513  
E-mail: lu@lu.lv  
http://www.lu.lv

Banku Augstskola  
*Banking Institution of Higher Education*
K. Valdemāra iela 1b  
Rīga LV-1819  
Latvia
Phone: +371 7322805  
Fax: +371 7320620  
E-mail: info@ba.lv  
http://www.ba.lv

Jāzepa Vītola  
*Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmija*
Jūzeps Vītols  
*Latvian Academy of Music*
Kr. Barona iela 1  
Rīga LV-1050  
Latvia
Phone: +371 7228684  
Fax: +371 7820271  
E-mail: ms@music.lv  
http://www.music.lv/Academy

Rīgas Starptautiskā ekonomikas un biznesa administrācijas augstskola  
*Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration*
Meža iela 1, k. 2  
Rīga LV-1048  
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Phone: +371 7500256  
Fax: +371 7500256  
E-mail: sanita@rsebaa.lv  
http://www.rsebaa.lv

Sociālā darba un sociālās pedagoģijas augstskola “Attīstība”  
*Higher School of Social Work and Social Pedagogics “Attīstība”*
Eiženijas iela 1  
Rīga LV-1007  
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Phone: +371 7470917  
Fax: +371 7470937  
E-mail: airita@attistiba.lv; sdspa@attistiba.lv  
http://www.attistiba.lv

Latvijas Jūras akadēmija  
*Latvian Maritime Academy*
Kronvalda bulvāris 6  
Rīga LV-1206  
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Phone: +371 7830138  
Fax: +371 7321161  
E-mail: natalija.piotrovska@lama.lv  
http://www.lama.lv

Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija  
*Latvian Academy of Culture*
Ludzas iela 24  
Rīga LV-1003  
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Phone: +371 7140174  
Fax: +371 7141012  
E-mail: admin@lka.edu.lv  
http://www.lka.edu.lv

Latvijas Mākslas akadēmija  
*Latvian Academy of Art*
Kalpaka bulvāris 13  
Rīga LV-1867  
Latvia
Phone: +371 7332202  
Fax: +371 7228963  
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http://www.lma.lv
Latvijas Policijas akadēmija
Police Academy of Latvia
Ezermalas iela 8
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Phone: +371 7800502, 7800503
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E-mail: rector@polak.edu.lv
http://www.polak.edu.lv

Latvijas Sporta pedagoģijas akadēmija
Latvian Academy of Sports Education
Brīvības gatve 333
Rīga LV-1006
Latvia
Phone: +371 7543422
Fax: +371 7543480
E-mail: science@lspa.lanet.lv
http://www.lspa.lv

Liepājas Pedagoģijas akadēmija
Liepāja Academy of Pedagogy
Lielā iela 14
Liepāja LV-3401
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Fax: +371 3424223
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http://www.lieppa.lv

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Rēzekne
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Rīgas Ekonomikas augstskola
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Imantas 7. īņa 1
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