



**SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW ACADEMIC CAREER FRAMEWORK IN LATVIA:
A Meeting With The Ministry's Working Group To Discuss The World Bank Draft Report**

January 2022

PROJECT OVERVIEW

3 Academic Careers in Latvia



Academic careers are an important aspect of higher education policies and practice, and thus impact countries' **competitiveness** beyond the narrow field of human resources (HR) management in higher education.



Latvia has a **“fragmented” approach to academic careers**, aspects of which have developed historically but which are now **likely to hamper the development** of a dynamic higher education and research system.



Fragmentation of academic careers **results in complicated HR arrangements and processes** on the institutional level, and often fragile arrangements for individuals.



Academic careers in Latvia are a succession of individual jobs, which makes planning for such a career difficult and the academic career overall **less attractive**.



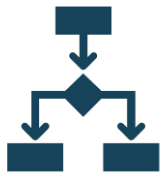
Internationalization—a major **source of “fresh thinking”** and **potential quality enhancement** in higher education—is weak and affects several aspects of academia.

4 Project Objective and Outcome



The specific objective of the project is to support the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science in reforming its academic career system by proposing a new academic career framework in line with European and international good practice, including a proposed system of academic positions and related selection and promotion processes. The new framework will be accompanied by a proposed roadmap for implementation and an analysis of legal and financial implications, also developed under the project. ”

Detailed Project Description, March 2020



Intended Outcome: Enhanced **attractiveness and efficiency** of the Latvian higher education system, in line with European and international good practice

5 Timeline: Project



Scope	Inception Phase	Diagnosis	Recommendations	Dissemination & Follow-up
Outcome	Clarity on reform goals	Authorities have a better understanding of international developments in ACs and steps needed to reform Latvia AC Framework	Authorities have a better understanding of the specific options for their future AC Framework	Joint understanding across sector regarding the new framework and next steps
Outputs	Virtual Kick-off Event “Ideas Paper”	Study Visits Information Event	Workshop: Where do we stand—where do others go? Options for Academic Career Framework Workshop: Framework and Roadmap development	Delivery of report on future Academic Career Framework Dissemination event

OVERVIEW OF THE DRAFT REPORT

7 Overview of the project phases (1)

- September 2020 – Contextual analysis of key legislations and policies:
 - status and role of academics
 - general career patterns in academia
 - selection and recruitment procedures in HEIs
 - international mobility of academics
- September 2020 – “Idea Paper” to frame the project and identify key issues
- November 2020 – February 2021 – A brief survey and two rounds of stakeholder interviews:
 - 8 group interviews, total of 26 stakeholders identified by the Ministry
 - Semi-structured interviews with around 6 key questions, more or less the same for all groups

8 Overview of the project phases (2)

- Four webinars:
 - Information event (October 2020)
 - Finland (December 2020): focus on tenure track
 - Ireland (January 2021): focus on governance of the system and on teaching and learning
 - New trends in staff recruitment and selection (May 2021): focused on a new framework for academic careers
- Meetings with the Working Group to share findings and discuss proposals as they were being developed: August 2021, January 2022

9 Key findings from stakeholder consultation (1)

At the system level:

- Main challenge: two distinct tracks for teaching and research
- Main recommendations:
 - Provide framework conditions for positions that are recognized internationally
 - Loosen the regulation on election (required now for all positions)
 - Review funding conditions to address:
 - the tight funding environment
 - the separation of external funding and budget funding, which creates disconnects in work plans and (financial) resource allocations
 - the current funding allocation model, which appears to be tightly connected to teaching hours and outdated calculation premises

10 Key findings from stakeholder consultation (2)

- Main challenges at the institutional level:
 - Lack of systematic career planning
 - Absence of permanent core staff
 - Poorly defined tasks of core academics
 - Weak internationalization
 - No mandatory retirement age
- Main challenges at the individual level:
 - Lack of predictability of academic careers
 - Lack of adequate salaries for main employment => accumulation of a series of jobs to reach a certain income level

11 Our proposal: Four principles

- Strengthen the role of full-time staff
- Reconsider the role of the election process
- Strengthen the role of information-based steering and management of academic work and careers (Ministry and HEIs)
- Facilitate staff mobility

12 Our proposal: Four possible scenarios (1)

1. *Full and comprehensive implementation in all institutions:*

- All institutions involved, all staff impacted, all aspects of academic careers implemented
- This requires a significant influx of funding and administrative and academic resources to support such a quick change.
- Risk: shortage of qualified staff

2. *Phased implementation via a pilot (that would be evaluated):*

- in certain units or
- applied to a subset of employees (risks development of an unnecessary hierarchy within institution)

13 Our proposal: Four possible scenarios (2)

3. *Incremental implementation with strategic funding, based on customized institutional plans.*

The risk is to favor the already strong institutions.

4. *Incremental implementation without additional funding:* The lack of additional funding might lead to stagnation.

14 Sketching a Roadmap

2022

Use the WB report to develop a white paper and a detailed roadmap

Identify resources and develop a Call for volunteer institutions or units

2023

Select Pilots

Establish Reference group to follow-up and support the development of pilots and strategic projects

2025-2027: Evaluate the pilots

2027-2030: Draft regulation

QUESTIONS

Setting the stage – approving the preliminary framework as a starting point for “white paper”

Levels	Teaching-oriented Position	Research-oriented Position	Qualification	Practice / Professionally-oriented Positions	Qualification
R1	Junior Lecturer	Junior Researcher	Master's degree	Part-time / Visiting Teacher (R1 or R2)	Master's degree or equivalent expertise
	Assistant	PhD Candidate			
R2	Lecturer (Docent)	Postdoctoral Researcher	PhD	External Experts (R2)	
	Assistant Professor (tenure-track)*		PhD	Junior Clinical Positions (if needed) (R1-R2)	
R3	Senior Lecturer	Senior Researcher	PhD	Senior Clinical Positions (R3)	
	Associate Professor (tenure-track)*		PhD		
R4	Professor**	(Research) Professor **	PhD	Professor of Practice/ Adjunct Professor (R3-R4)	PhD or equivalent expertise
		Research Director		Professor (fine arts) (R4)	
Red: Permanent Positions		Green: 6 years	Blue: Part-time Fixed-term		
*External Review					
**International Review					
Note: The title names are not final. The use of certain terms, such as <i>Lecturer</i> and <i>Associate Professor</i> should be carefully discussed to avoid confusion.					

First reactions?

17 Defining success – Selecting indicators

1) The aim of the ACF reform is to provide more predictable careers, decrease the fragmentation of academic work portfolio and increase efficiency of academic work. In a longer run this will happen through **strengthening the role of full-time staff**

- **How you would define the success of an ACF reform on these aspects after 5 years and after 10 years?**
- **How would you measure / identify this success (what would be the indicators)?**

2) The election (and re-election) of academic staff members has significant transaction costs. The rationality of this process in all academic and scientific position is often questioned by academics and academic leaders. This means that for securing the efficiency and quality of recruitments **the role of the election process should be reconsidered.**

- **How you would define the success of an ACF reform on these aspects after 5 years and after 10 years?**
- **What are the characteristics of a successful recruitment process?**
- **How would measure the success of a recruitment processes (what would be the indicators)?**

3) One success factor for academic careers is an increased **intentional experience and competencies** of academic workforce

- **How you would define the success of an ACF reform on this aspect after 5 years and after 10 years?**
- **How would you measure/identify this success (what would be the indicators)?**

4) The development of academic careers and of a career framework are difficult without **adequate and comparable data**

- **How you would define the success of an ACF reform on this aspect after 5 years and after 10 years?**
- **How would you measure/identify this success (what would be the indicators)?**

Take into account the risks related to these development goals!

18 Making the change - Pilots and projects

- **Where should the new academic career framework (and / or tenure track) be piloted, which aim at strengthening the role of fulltime staff? Should it be piloted at the level of -**
 - Units? or
 - Institutions?
- **What kind of recruitment processes should be piloted and for which staff categories?**
- **How could internationalization and mobility be supported by pilots?**
- **What kind of projects should be introduced to improve academic career management?**
- **What kind of system level pilots / projects should be introduced to secure adequate system level information on academic work and careers?**

NEXT STEPS

1. **23 February, 16.00 - 18.00 pm (Riga time) – an online workshop with the WG and sector representatives.**
 - a) WB experts introduce their findings and recommendations (present their final report)
 - b) Ministry presents the draft of the concept note and indicative future steps

2. **5 May (during the day or in the afternoon if online) – a dissemination event about the results of the project and the Ministry's planned interventions.**

THANK YOU
