# TOWARDS A NEW ACADEMIC CAREER FRAMEWORK FOR LATVIA

## ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GOOD HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACF | Academic career framework |
| DG REFORM | Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support |
| DORA | San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment |
| EU | European Union |
| EUA | European University Association |
| GoL | Government of Latvia |
| HEA | Higher Education Authority |
| HEIs | Higher education institutions |
| HR | Human resources |
| LHEI | Law on Higher Education Institutions |
| LSA | Law on Scientific Activity |
| MoES | Ministry of Education and Science |
| RAS | Reimbursable Advisory Services |
| RI(s) | Research institute(s) |
| R&D | Research and development |
| SRSP | Structural Reform Support Programme |
| THEA | Technological Higher Education Association |
| WB | World Bank |

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the result of the World Bank's (WB) third engagement (2020/2022) with relevant stakeholders in Latvia, supported by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM). Building on the previous engagement (2013/2014, 2016/2018), it supports the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) in its efforts to reform the academic career system by proposing scenarios in line with European and international good practice along with an implementation roadmap.

The methodology included a contextual analysis of key legislations as well as policies, and the analysis explores four main areas: the status and role of academics, general career patterns in academia, the selection and recruitment procedures of higher education institutions (HEIs), and the international mobility of academics.

A brief survey and two rounds of stakeholder consultations (semi-structured interviews) explored the strengths and challenges of the existing system, any anticipated need for changes and risks related to a process of reform.

Three webinars were organized to explore 1) the introduction of the tenure system in Finland; 2) the steering mechanisms in Irish higher education, and 3) European trends in staff recruitment and promotion that demonstrate a shift away from the use of bibliometrics to evaluate staff performance, based on the experience of Flanders, the Netherlands, and Norway.

The team also held several meetings with a high-level working group that had been established by MoES. The WB team provided examples of international good practice, technical expertise, and support to the working group which had been in the process of developing iterations of a future academic career framework (ACF). The team also responded to specific requests from the MoES such as producing an "Ideas Paper" to frame the project from the start of the engagement and participating in a discussion on evaluating the equivalency of a PhD (included as appendix 2 to this report). The third engagement concluded with a dissemination conference.

Stakeholder consultations revealed the following weaknesses of the current academic career system:

- At systems level, there are two distinct tracks for teaching and research. What is required, is to provide framework conditions for positions that are recognized internationally and to relax the regulation on election (currently required for all positions). Funding conditions should be reviewed in order to address funding constraints, the separation of external funding and budget funding — which creates disconnects in work plans and (financial) resource allocations — , and the current funding allocation model, which appears to be rigidly tied to teaching hours and outdated calculation premises.

- At institutional level, the development of academic careers is obstructed by a lack of systematic career planning, an absence of permanent core staff, the poorly defined tasks of core academics, weak internationalization, and the lack of a mandatory retirement age.

- At individual level, the main challenges are the lack of predictability with regard to academic careers and adequate salaries to deliver on core responsibilities (teaching or research). As a result, academic staff take on a number of (often unrelated) jobs in order to reach a desired level of income.

Four key principles and their associated risks were identified:

- *The role of full-time staff should be strengthened.* The aim of this reform should be to strengthen the core academic faculty and to limit the precariousness of academic careers. To manage the risk of neglecting other staff, the employment conditions of part-time and hourly-contracted faculty should be as transparent as possible, including the principles guiding consecutive fixed-term contracts.

- The desirability of the election process should be reconsidered. This process is widely considered suboptimal, time-consuming, costly, and lacking in transparency. The purpose of elections should be carefully reconsidered (especially in the case of junior positions, part-time positions, and short-term contracts) and the election procedure itself should be reviewed and aligned with international best practice. To mitigate the risk of any negative impact on the sector's democratic and collegial culture, the role of academics (other than academic managers) should be secured by increasing their participation in the strategic planning process within their respective working units.

- *Information-based decision-making and the management of academic work and careers should be promoted.* Both the MoES and HEIs should be collecting and analyzing staff data in order to ensure that policies and institutional decisions are evidence-based. To mitigate the risk of increased reporting and inconsistent data collection, the process should be planned in collaboration with institutional representatives to ensure that it is done economically, and that collected data be used to support institutional decision making.

- *Increase internationalisation and mobility by addressing several obstacles.* Institutional plans that facilitate outgoing academic staff mobility should be considered. Attention should also be paid to returning academics and options for their smooth re-integration into the Latvian system. To mitigate the risk of unequal treatment, individuals could be offered the possibility of planning and conducting a mobility period without having to make any unfair sacrifices. Gender- and family-related factors in particular should be taken into account. The incoming mobility of non-Latvian staff should also be made a priority. Both incoming and outgoing mobility are mechanisms that ensure and enhance the quality of a higher education system.

The report provides recommendations on the structure of new academic career framework that is internationally recognizable, takes into account the potential integration of the higher education and research sectors, and covers professionally-oriented positions. The option of introducing tenure track positions leading to full professorship after a probation period and interim evaluation is integrated into the framework. The report concludes with four possible implementation scenarios:

1. The first scenario proposes the *full and comprehensive implementation* of reform across all institutions. Its success will depend on a significant influx of funding as well as an increase in administrative and academic resources.

2. In a second scenario of *phased implementation*, reform is 1) either piloted (and evaluated) in certain units or 2) applied to a subset of employees. The latter option implies risks regarding the sustainability of externally funded tenure-track positions and the development of an unnecessary hierarchy of positions within institutions.

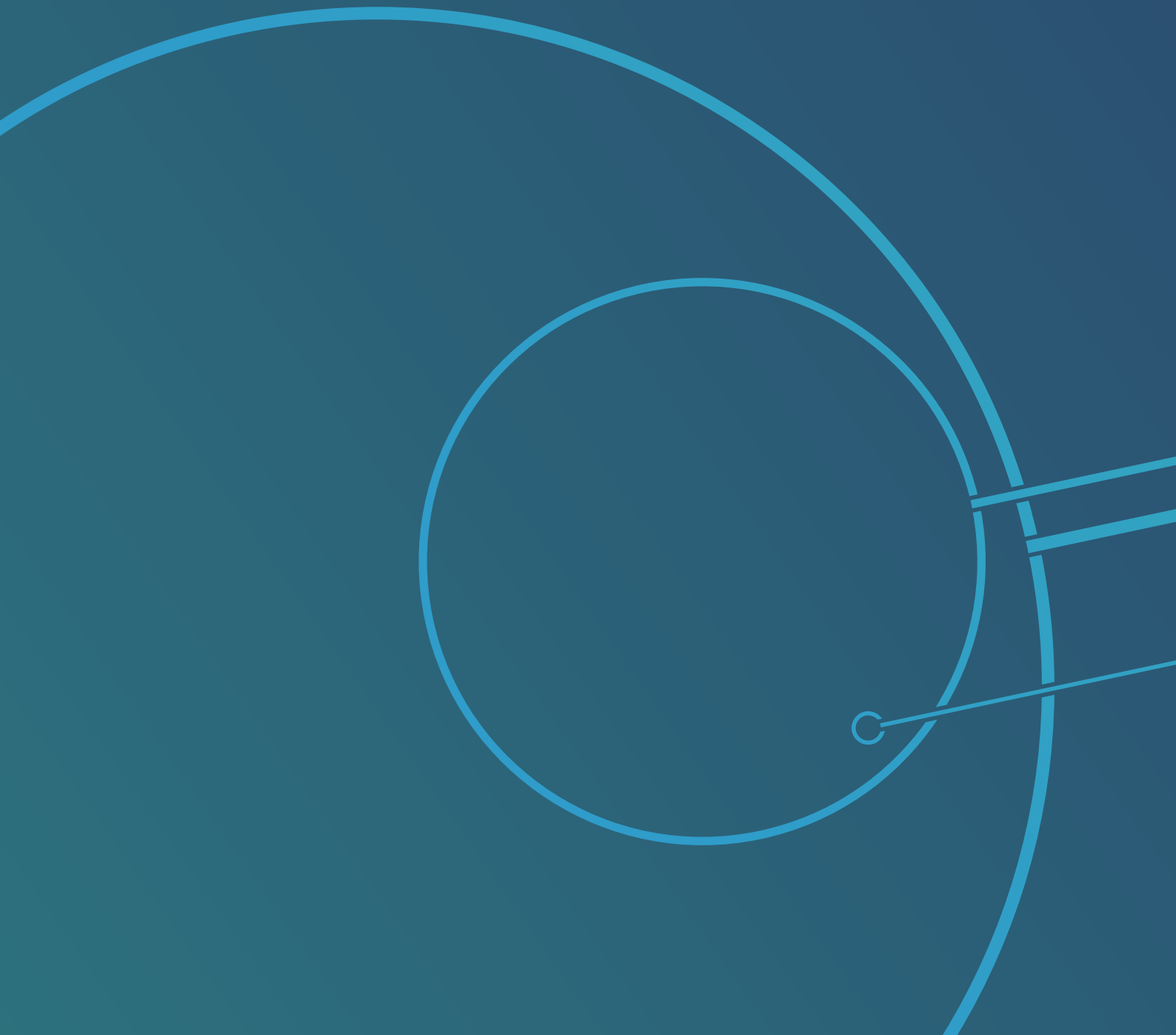
3. The third scenario is characterized by an *incremental implementation with strategic funding* based on customized institutional plans. Here, the risk would be the natural inclination to favor already strong institutions.

4. A variation of the third scenario would be *incremental implementation without additional funding*. The risk here is that a lack of additional funding might lead to stagnation.

After a detailed discussion of each scenario, this report concludes with a roadmap that stresses the need to encompass the career reform in a larger policy change and support it with adequate funding. This roadmap is called "Roadmap 1.0" since the first action for government, along with stakeholders, is to develop a more comprehensive roadmap "2.0", building on the steps listed in table 4.

# 1

# INTRODUCTION



**In recent years, Latvia has made significant progress in reforming its higher education system.** However, stakeholders are of the opinion that Latvia's system of academic careers, which features two distinct tracks for teaching and research in which the former predominates, needs to be modernized and benchmarked against peer systems and international best practice.

**There are also additional challenges to the reform of academic careers.** These include, but are not limited to, the fact that permanent positions have only recently been introduced; the development of PhD programs in line with international practices has only been on the agenda for the last couple of years; postdoctoral positions prolong the precarious phase of academic careers, and the "exit point" from an academic career into retirement requires clarification. Despite these challenges, the situation is improving and in recent years the issue of academic careers has been actively addressed by both institutions of higher education and government. Given the fact that the design of academic careers within a system/framework is an important determinant of the attractiveness and efficiency of any higher education system, Latvia's academic career framework (ACF) warrants continuous attention and development. Generally, all developments are intimately connected to the structural and financial development of the national higher education system and international academic labour markets.

## 1.1 LATVIA AND THE WORLD BANK GROUP

**Since 2013, the World Bank has supported the government of Latvia (GoL) with a succession of advisory studies** focused on performance at different levels of the higher education system. As part of this process, the WB delivered two "engagements"[1] consisting of three phases.

The first engagement (2013–14) was the Latvia Higher Education Financing Reimbursable Advisory Services (RAS), which focused on the development of *performance-based, system-level funding*. In the summer of 2015, the government approved the new financing model, the introduction of which was accompanied by a much-welcomed increase in funding for the higher education sector.

The second engagement comprised two phases. The first was implemented in 2016–17 and focused on the internal funding and governance of universities. The second phase was implemented in 2017–18 and focused on the doctorate and academic careers.

Combined, the two RAS engagements proposed far-reaching performance improvements ranging from system to individual academic level.

With regard to academic careers the team produced, as in the case of other topics, 1) a status quo report; 2) a report on international good practice, and 3) a report containing recommendations.

The previous engagements found that 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. This fragmentation results in complicated human resource arrangements and processes on the institutional level, and often fragile arrangements for individuals. As a result, academic careers in Latvia are a succession of individual jobs, which makes career planning difficult and academic careers less attractive. Furthermore, internationalization - a major source of fresh thinking and potential quality enhancement - is weak and affects several aspects of academic life.

1. In the administrative terminology of the World Bank, Reimbursable Advisory Services (RAS).

**Regarding the methodology used, intensive exchanges with various stakeholders were a cornerstone of the WB's engagement in Latvia.** During all phases, WB teams consulted (and regularly informed) a wide range of stakeholders in higher education. These included the Council of Higher Education, representatives from both HEIs and research institutes (RIs), the associations of students and young researchers, trade unions, and various principals of the Latvian government. Several institutions were closely involved in the second engagement and supported the project by providing comprehensive background information and engaging in discussions with the WB team during site visits.

**Stakeholder consultations were conducted by means of technical workshops and dissemination events.** The Latvian government published all major outputs in both Latvian and English. In addition, results were integrated directly into higher education policy making. The WB team discussed key findings directly with different representatives of the Latvian government — in particular those who are involved in the implementation of higher education programs funded by the European Union (EU). The final phase of the second project focused on capacity building through peer-learning events in the Latvian higher education sector.

**Previous WB engagements have also had a significant impact beyond Latvia's borders.** The WB team and representatives of both the Latvian government and the higher education sector have shared their experiences and findings with colleagues abroad through, for instance, contributions to Lithuania's OECD accession event and a workshop on academic careers in Tartu, Estonia (during Estonia's EU Council Presidency). The findings of the WB engagement on academic careers were confirmed by an EU-funded report, "Development of the Human Capital for Research and Innovation in Latvia," published in 2020.[2]

## 1.2 PROJECT CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

**Academic careers are an important aspect of higher education policies and practice.** A high-quality academic workforce provides major input of high-quality research, publications, and teaching. It is also a major item of any higher education system's expenditures. It follows that the overall success of an higher education system depends on well-selected, supported, and motivated academics. As a result, countries compete in developing attractive academic career opportunities, research environments, and efficient human resources (HR) policies. While these strategies are some of the main ways in which employers promote their image, they are also avenues for 1) supporting national and institutional higher education strategies and their implementation, and 2) helping to attract "the best and the brightest" into the academic profession, both locally and globally.

**That said, Latvia is currently unable to exploit the benefits of a dynamic and predictable academic-career system.** The reason for this can be attributed to three systemic issues: fragmentation, the lack of career paths, and weak internationalization.

1. **Fragmentation of teaching and research:** In Latvia's higher education system, research and teaching careers are structurally unintegrated. This is mainly the result of a "dual legislation" approach regarding academic work, careers, and positions. This structural division of scientific and academic positions impacts the work and remuneration of individual academics. An academic's work portfolio often includes several contracts on research and teaching duties and holistic work descriptions under one contract are atypical. While this contractual arrangement amounts to a low risk for the employer, it makes strategic personnel management and planning difficult and hinders the predictability of academic work.

2. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e84a9d0f-b98a-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1

2. **Lack of a predictable career path:** In recent years, academic careers in Latvia have in reality been a succession of individual jobs, which makes it difficult for individuals to plan and pursue a career. The lack of predictability makes academic careers overall less attractive. This difficulty stems from portfolio work and from the time-limited restriction according to which all academic appointments at HEIs are confined to six years. **Weak internationalization:** The current structure of academic careers in Latvia combined with a strict language policy creates challenges in international recruitment efforts. This further complicates the development of a labour market for academics in a small country such as Latvia.

**In 2019–20, the Latvian MoES and higher education sector combined efforts to focus on the implementation of the recommendations regarding doctorates which resulted in the development of a new model for the "third cycle."** However, in light of persistent issues related to academic careers in Latvia's higher education system and given the recommendations proposed by the second WB engagement, the MoES concluded that the existing legislative framework prevented higher education institutions from adopting attractive and predictable career paths or other career development strategies. The MoES also proposed changes in university governance to improve institutions' agility. As a result, a system framework is required in which the development of a new career system needs to be prioritized.[3]

**As integral part of its role, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) coordinates the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP).**[4] The SRSP provides customized support to EU countries for institutional, administrative, and growth-enhancing reforms. The GoL's request for support led to an engagement with the WB focused on academic careers in Latvia. Under the SRSP, this engagement aimed to address the abovementioned "persistent issues" by supporting the MoES' efforts to design an ACF intended to enhance the attractiveness and efficiency of the Latvian higher education system. The analysis of the status quo, comparative international experience, and the recommendations that resulted from the previous WB engagement on academic careers served as a useful point of departure to develop the ACF in close cooperation with key stakeholders.

**The specific objective of the engagement is to support the MoES in reforming its academic-career system by proposing a new ACF in line with European and international best practice, including a proposed system of academic positions and related selection and promotion criteria and processes.** The new framework is accompanied by a proposed roadmap for implementation and an analysis of legal and financial implications, also developed as part of the project.

## 1.3 PROJECT METHODOLOGY

**The third engagement began in June 2020 and comprised four stages.** After the first stage, the remaining stages were conducted concurrently. The four stages were 1) desk research; 2) events

3. "Description of Problem" in MoES' Request Details, submitted to the Structural Reform Support Service (currently known as DG REFORM) in October 2019. This document was provided by the MoES and is not publicly available. Wherever possible, official translations of legal documents were used for analysis. In cases where official translations of entire documents or individual amendments were not yet available, unofficial translations were commissioned by the World Bank team. Titles or extracts from documents translated by the authors are indicated as 'translated by the authors.'

4. The mission of the Directorate General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) of the European Commission is to provide support for the preparation and implementation of growth-enhancing administrative and structural reforms by mobilizing EU funds and technical expertise. Latvia has requested support from the European Commission under Regulation (EU) 2017/825 on the establishment of the Structural Reform Support Programme ("SRSP Regulation"). The request has been analyzed by the Commission in accordance with the criteria and principles referred to in Article 7(2) of the SRSP Regulation, following which the European Commission has agreed to provide support to Latvia in conjunction with the World Bank and under the conditions set in the Umbrella Administrative Agreement between the European Commission and the World Bank, Contract No REFORM/GA2020/007.

and stakeholder consultations; 3) study tours, and 4) workshops. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, stages 2–4 were conducted virtually.

**Desk research.** The first stage of engagement focused on desk research with two deliverables: an "Ideas Paper" and an analysis of Latvia's legislative framework regarding higher education institutions.

- **"Ideas Paper":** During the drafting phase of the project description, the MoES proposed the delivery of an "Ideas Paper" during the first 2–3 months of the engagement. The MoES informed the DG REFORM of this and requested the deliverable from the WB. The MoES had envisioned this deliverable to contain initial considerations (and questions to be decided) on the future ACF. The WB confirmed that, while it was not part of the initial request or the high-level description, the document could be prepared as part of the engagement and complement the consultations scheduled for months 3–4 (autumn 2020) of the project timeline.

- **Legislative analysis:** The WB team conducted an analysis of the legislation directly related to academic careers. The MoES supported the analysis by compiling and making available a list of the relevant legislation and other documents at the beginning of the engagement. Documents deemed relevant but which were not available in English, were translated.

**Events and stakeholder consultations.** To prepare this final report, consultations with sector stakeholders, inter alia through workshops (output 3) and interviews, were important. Stakeholder consultations were conducted in two stages. During the first stage, the WB team scheduled nine meetings—between November 2020 and January 2021—and interviewed department representatives, vice rectors across research and academic programs, and MoES representatives. A survey was also conducted to reflect the perspective of the broader stakeholder community. During the second stage (March–April 2021), additional vice rectors were interviewed as well as directors of institutes, members of associations, and other department representatives.

**Toward the end of the consultation period the working group established by the MoES and tasked with the development of an ACF submitted a request to the WB team for an analysis of strategic approaches and risks related to evaluating the equivalency of a PhD.** This request expressed interest in current practices in European higher education in general as well as possible approaches for implementing a suitable policy/procedure in Latvia. Appendix 2 addresses this request.

# 2

# POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

## 2.1 POLICY CONTEXT

**Recently, the MoES established the goals of both higher education and science policies for the period 2021–2027.** The document, "Zinātnes, tehnoloģijas attīstības un inovācijas pamatnostādnes 2021–2027. Gadam" ("Guidelines for Science, Technology Development and Innovation for the years 2021–2027"),[5] outlines six policy priorities:

1. Excellence in science
2. Research for society
3. Integration of higher education and research
4. Digital transformation and open science
5. Implementation of the smart specialization strategy
6. Innovation: to stimulate development, to promote implementation.

Consequently, the main tasks for policymakers would be to:

- Reduce institutional fragmentation of the research and development (R&D) system and improve the efficiency of the management of universities and scientific institutions and their resource sharing.
- Develop a system of performance funding to strengthen the research profiles of universities in order to increase success in attracting external funding.
- Increase the attractiveness of academic careers and introduce a tenure-track system.
- Improve the quality of doctoral education and increase the number of doctorates.
- Improve the collaboration and integration of Latvian researchers at international level and in global science while supporting the mobility of researchers, including from outside Latvia, in order to attract talents from abroad.
- Promote the mobility of academic staff, including researchers, in the business sector.
- Develop and strengthen the culture of entrepreneurship and innovation in higher education, thereby also promoting entrepreneurship with a view to increasing career options.
- Increase R&D funding from multiple sources.

**The abovementioned priorities and tasks are based on recommendations provided by several recent national and international reports on higher education and science in Latvia[6]**

5. See https://likumi.lv/ta/id/322468-par-zinatnes-tehnologijas-attistibas-un-inovacijas-pamatnostadnem-2021-2027-gadam (title and text translated by the authors).

6. "Study on open science and the development of a policy road map" (2020; translation by the authors), https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/zinatne/P%C4%93t%C4%ABjums-Atv%C4%93rt%C4%81_zin%C4%81tne_2.pdf; European Commission, European Semester: Country Report — Latvia 2020, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1584543810241&uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0512; and European Commission, European Semester: Country Report — Latvia 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/2019-european-semester-country-report-latvia_en.pdf; European Commission, Specific Support on the development of the human capital for research and innovation in Latvia (2019), https://op.europa.eu/lv/publication-detail/-/publication/e84a9d0f-b98a-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-106068252; and Specific Support to Latvia. The Latvian Research Funding System (2018), https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/report/H2020%20PSF_Specific%20Support%20Latvia_Final%20report.pdf; and University of Latvia, "The Diaspora of Latvian Scientists: Networks and Capabilities. Study Results" (2018, in Latvian), https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/statistika/petijumi/LU-SPPI-DMPC_Zinatnieku-diaspora-2018.pdf.

**as well as the recommendations and proposed solutions contained in recent national policy documents.**[7]

The document *Izglītības attīstības pamatnostādnes 2021.–2027. gadam "Nākotnes prasmes nākotnes sabiedrībai" (Education Development Guidelines 2021–2027 — "Skills for the Future Society")*[8] states the following four general aims of education:

1. The training of highly qualified, competent, and excellence-oriented pedagogues and academic staff.
2. Providing a modern, high-quality education focused on the development of skills that are highly valued in the labor market.
3. Support for everyone's growth.
4. The sustainable and efficient management of the education system and its resources.[9]

The most essential planned reforms in higher education relate to:

1. Strengthening the quality of academic staff and ensuring a sustainable academic career path:
   - Developing and implementing a new ACF
   - Strengthening strategic and effective governance and management of HEIs

2. Promoting excellence in higher education:
   - Developing a quality assurance system for higher education
   - Consolidating the system by inciting institutional mergers
   - Transitioning to cyclical institutional accreditation starting from 2024

3. Changing the governance of HEIs:
   - Establishing a system for public funding allocation related to the development strategies of HEIs and monitoring their implementation.

### 2.1.1 Implementing Policy Changes

**Higher education and science are labor intensive in the sense that the quality of their outputs, outcomes, and impacts strongly correlate with the quality and competences of their workforce.** To the extent that higher education and science policies are eventually implemented by academics, this implementation relies on their competence, work environment, motivation, and resources. Furthermore, the main goals of higher education and science policies should be taken into account when developing an ACF; conversely, HR policies should be considered when defining the aims of higher education and science policies.

**Government policies are usually conceived in a specific political environment. They reflect the context and time in which they are formulated and are often dependent on a specific balance of political power in addition to being the product of political analyses in a changing environment.** By contrast, the timespan of a career framework is longer. Therefore, a framework

7. The conceptual report "On the introduction of a new doctoral model in Latvia" (2020), http://tap.mk.gov.lv/lv/mk/tap/?pid=40488284; the informative report "Monitoring of the smart specialization strategy: Second report" (2020; translation by the authors), http://tap.mk.gov.lv/mk/tap/?pid=40479055; the informative report "Monitoring of the smart specialization strategy" (2018; translation by the authors) http://tap.mk.gov.lv/lv/mk/tap/?pid=40427624, and World Bank Support to Higher Education in Latvia. Academic Careers, vol. 3., 2018, https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/103901524227639207/academic-careers.

8. https://likumi.lv/ta/id/324332-par-izglitibas-attistibas-pamatnostadnem-2021-2027-gadam (title and text translated by the authors).

9. Translated by the authors.

should be prepared based on academic excellence, professional development, and best HR practices while taking into account policy aims. On a generic level, a range of principles have been identified in international literature and integrated in the analysis of the WB team in Latvia.[10] These principles include fairness, predictability, transparency, consistency, accountability, and international credibility.

## 2.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

**An analysis of the relevant legislations performed in August 2020 informed the development of a draft ACF and provided an overview of the relevant legislation and their implications for academic careers.** The criteria used for assessing these implications were developed as part of the most recent engagement of the WB's advisory services. These criteria were grounded in the relevant research literature, an analysis of examples of good practice, and the expertise of the WB's team members in the field.[11] Since then, the legislative framework in Latvia which is applicable to higher education institutions and research institutes was updated (in 2021).

**The analysis conducted of relevant legislations explored four main areas:** 1) the status and role of academics; 2) general career patterns in academia; 3) the selection and recruitment procedures of HEIs, and 4) the international mobility of academics. These four areas were supplemented with further analyses of the coherence of the legal framework.

**Three sets of legislations are relevant to the Latvian higher education sector in general and academic careers in particular.** These are: 1) basic laws with a broad scope; 2) laws pertaining exclusively to higher education and science, and 3) various other regulations. Several laws other than those devised specifically for the higher education and science sector provide important framework conditions for academic careers (on this, see also LHEI Section 10 (1)), including the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, the Official Language Law, the Labor Law and the Education Law). Regarding higher education legislation in the narrow sense, Latvia has two main laws. Although the Law on Higher Education Institutions (LHEI) contains the majority of provisions pertaining to the higher education sector, several issues in the field of research are covered by the Law on Scientific Activity (LSA) (see also LHEI Section 60 (2)). These two laws are complemented by several regulations that have been issued by cabinet ministers and which spell out certain general provisions in those laws.

**Considerable changes to the legal framework that applies to academic careers came about as a result of a constitutional court ruling on fixed-term contracts in HEIs.** In 2019, the Constitutional Court ruled that provisions contained in Section 27 (5) and Section 30 (4) of the LHEI were unconstitutional. These provisions had stipulated that all employment contracts for the positions of professor and associate professor have a fixed duration of six years.[12] While conceding that these provisions had a legitimate objective in the sense that they aimed at the promotion of greater public welfare by ensuring that the most suitable candidates were recruited to academic positions, the court found the implied restrictions on the constitutional right to the free choice of employment and workplace to be disproportionate when measured against

10. See Arnhold et al. 2018. Focus on Performance. World Bank Support to Higher Education in Latvia. Volume 3: Academic Careers. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Accessible at: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/103901524227639207/pdf/125532-v3-WP-P159642-PUBLIC-Focus-on-performance-World-Bank-support-to-higher-education-in-Latvia.pdf

11. Arnhold et al. 2018. Focus on Performance.

12. The judgment was handed down on June 7, 2019, in case No. 2018-15-01, "On Compliance of Section 27 (5) and Section 30 (4) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education with the First Sentence of Article 106 of the Satversme of the Republic of Latvia."

art.106 of the Constitution which states "Everyone has the right to freely choose their employment and workplace according to their abilities and qualifications."

**Since January 2021, the provisions that guaranteed a fixed six-year employment contract for professors and associate professors no longer exist.** Contracts for these positions are now permanent. Select HEIs have also launched a tenure system for professorial positions.

**Another legislative change which is relevant to academic careers relates to the composition of academic staff within HEIs.** Historically, several provisions stated the selection criteria for candidates in the next stage of the recruitment process, some of which may have constrained the possibilities of (especially smaller) institutions to engage in strategic recruitments.[13] Previously, the LHEI determined that:

- Each HEI has to offer at least five study programs, for which at least 30 doctoral degree holders are required (10 in the case of theology), and for which it is required that five should offer a doctoral degree in the respective scientific area (LHEI Section 8 (6) 1)).[14]

- There have to be five elected (associate) professors for each study program, of which three need to have the expert status conferred by the Latvian Council of Science (LHEI Section 55 [3]; see also Reg. 320). In the case of vocational arts programs, at least five academics should offer a doctoral degree (LHEI Section 55 (3)).

- At least 40 percent of the elected academics of a HEI must possess a doctoral degree, a ratio which rises to 50 percent for academies and 65 percent for universities (LHEI Section 3 [1] and 3 [3]; see also LHEI Section 26 [7]).[15]

**While provisions related to the first two points remain valid, the third provision** (section 3 of the LHEI) **was updated, expanded, and renamed** to include a typology of four HEIs in Latvia. Previously, it focused on HEIs without differentiating between them.

13. Similar requirements apply to scientific institutes where at least five researchers with a doctoral degree have to be elected to academic positions and 10% of researchers must hold a doctoral degree in the institute's particular field of research (LSA Section 28 [2[ [1[ & [2]).

14. Different requirements apply to different HEIs depending on geography (LHEI Section 8 [7] [1]).

15. In addition, the number of academic staff members with a doctoral degree also influences the amount of funding allocated to HEIs (see, for instance, Reg. 994 17.3).

3

# SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

## 3.1 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

**Two rounds of interviews were conducted.** The first round comprised eight group interviews consisting of a total number of 26 stakeholders (for the full list of institutions see Appendix 5). The second round consisted of five, more focused interviews with 10 stakeholders. The stakeholders in the first round included former and current rectors and vice rectors, directors of research institutes, senior researchers and representatives of labor union and student associations. As such, they represented the sector. In the second round, the interviewees were selected for their capacity to provide recommendations for the future.

### 3.1.1 Interviews: Round 1

In the first round, the following themes were discussed:

1. Current practices related to academic careers in HEIs and RIs
2. Strengths and challenges of the current ACF
3. The ideal future framework
4. The integration of academic and research careers
5. Benefits of a new ACF that would recruit new talents
6. National career steps and categories
7. The possibility/feasibility of implementing tenure-track appointments in the Latvian context.

**This report approaches these themes from several perspectives. Under each theme, it distinguishes between system-level and institutional-level issues and discusses academic careers and researchers' careers separately (where possible).** The interviews explored the strengths and challenges of the existing system as well as any foreseen needs for changes and risks related to a reform process.

#### Strengths and challenges of the existing system

**The main challenge of the current ACF relates to the unpredictability and limited financial resources at institutional level in both subsectors.** At RIs, salaries are typically based on project funding and, as such, for specified duration, which make both HR planning and individual career planning difficult. At universities, the uncertainty and contingency of academic careers is mainly the result of volatile teaching loads and contract hours. In summary, the risk presented by uncertain resources is mitigated by individual academics who develop their careers while trying to minimize the consequences of ever-changing external conditions. One of the main challenges, therefore, is underfunding of the system and issues related to providing stable and full-time employment to academics and permanent personnel in order for them to deliver on the core functions of institutions, namely teaching and research (including the management of research groups and externally funded projects).

**The current higher education system is based on contracted hours rather than on a monthly or annual allocation of working hours and could be described as a "shopping basket model" in which an individual staff member adds several contracts to his or her "basket" in order to reach a certain income threshold.** The model has its strengths. It makes the management (control) and measurement of performance easier because each activity is contracted and managed individually; it creates workload flexibility for individuals who can adapt their workload to their individual life and career conditions while enabling them to choose tasks which they consider interesting. It also makes salary top-ups possible since individuals can simultaneously

take on additional contracts and/or externally funded projects and have multiple institutional affiliations. In some cases, contract-based agreements also increase mobility within the system and facilitates knowledge transfer. That said, the advantages of such a "shopping basket" model are outweighed by its disadvantages.

**There are three disadvantages of this model which have multiple implications for academic work.** Firstly, "supplemental academic work" results in unpredictable academic careers and uncertain academic work and income. This is true even for those academics who can top-up their salaries and build a portfolio which is predictable. In addition, academic promotions (elections) are disconnected from "full employment." Secondly, although contracted academic work provides a measure of accountability, it does not provide an opportunity for either performance or workload management since one's basic income is based on individual contract hours. Thirdly and most importantly, current practices encourage academics to work as individual entrepreneurs and not as institutional entrepreneurs since their employment hinges on tasks-based contracts rather than on reciprocity and a moral contract between individual and host institution. The contractual nature of academic work also makes the management of workloads, career planning, and strategic HR planning difficult (if not impossible).

**Although contracting and managing academic work is practical at a unit-level, the Latvian model generates disadvantages at institutional- and systems-level.** Firstly, there is a mismatch between institutional education/research tasks, the personnel needed to execute these tasks and available funding. In the current (financial) environment, many interviewees expressed the belief that contracting is the only way of getting things done.

**Secondly, elections to all academic and scientific positions create avoidable transaction costs.** Many interviewees referred to the problematic role of the Professors' Council and the (unavoidable) transaction cost involved in the election of individual staff to all positions. Many interviewees also asserted that election to positions for which there is no funding or for which there are no competitive candidates creates transaction cost that could be avoided by a simplified selection procedure.

### Foreseen needs for changes and risk related to reform

Since for some time the system has experienced tight financial constraints, it is difficult for stakeholders such as institutional leaders to envisage alternatives to the current system and institutional practices without substantial financial investment in the development of the system. Nevertheless, stakeholders proposed the following changes at system-level:

- Review the size and shape of the system with due consideration of regional universities and institutional setting in capital area
- Consider integrating research institutes into the HEIs (as had been recommended in earlier projects)
- Integrate teaching and research tasks
- Reconsider the evaluation of academics' six-year terms and the use of the election procedure for all positions
- Regulate only the positions of professor and associate professor
- Provide long-term strategic planning of human resources in academia
- Implement tenure-track (full-time) positions
- Reconsider the existing language policy
- Increase HEIs' autonomy with regard to deciding staff categories and criteria
- Benchmark academic titles against international best practice.

**To summarize the results of the first round of interviews: many stakeholders mentioned long-term strategic planning and more institutional autonomy as priority concerns. They also suggested reform of the regulation of the highest academic positions and easing up the regulation of lower positions as well as the need to initiate and fund full-time (professorial) tenure-track positions.** In addition to these, many interviewees were supportive of a ACF that would allow international comparability, facilitate the recruitment of international staff, and allow career transfers between HEIs and research institutes.

**The interviewees also provided insightful ideas regarding the successful implementation of reform as well as the possible risks associated with it.** There was general consensus that reform should be based on a long-term vision rather than the addition of a number of "on top of" or "additional" regulations. A sufficiently long transition period should be allowed for and funding for implementing changes should be secured.

**It is evident that all issues related to the development of academic careers (individual level), academic career models (institutional level), and the ACF (system level) are tied to funding and external conditions such as, among others, the political context and labor market.** At individual level, the main challenges with the current system are its lack of predictability and adequate salaries (for main employment); at institutional level, the development of academic careers is challenged by the lack of systematic career planning, the absence of permanent core staff and the poorly defined tasks of core academics, while at system level some challenges related to the development of an acceptable ACF include the need to develop the career framework in a direction that would provide loose framework conditions for positions and a loosening of regulation(s) related to election.

### 3.1.2 Interviews: Round 2

**Following the first round of interviews, a second round was organized to discuss the findings of the stakeholder consultations and to further deepen the understanding of the challenges facing the development of a comprehensive ACF.** Three main topics of discussion emerged from the interviews and they related to funding, elections, and steering.

**In addition to the tight funding environment, the separation of external funding and budget funding creates disconnects in work plans and (financial) resource allocations.** In both subsectors, HEIs and RIs, core funding and external funding are allocated and used separately. This distinction is due, in part, to the rules and regulations of funding bodies, and in part the result of a lack of financial planning and management capacity at the departmental and institute level. This causes problems at the individual level. In many cases, salaries are defined differently and hours for teaching and research tasks are contracted separately. At the institutional level, there is also a lack with regard to the allocation of resources between disciplinary units and tasks. Another finance related issue that was discussed by many interviewees is the current funding formula of HEIs. It appears to be tightly connected to teaching hours and outdated calculation premises.

**With respect to the challenges of the current elections and career system, a recurring theme was that open positions were seldom connected to secured full-time employment. In addition, elections are also applied in all recruitments including junior positions and part-time employment. These practises challenge the rationality of elections** and partially explains the unpredictable nature of academic careers.

**Latvian HEIs are, at least in theory, autonomous to practice their own employment policies.** However, the perception of many interviewees is that government regulations on academic

careers and positions change frequently and that changes are often implemented without sufficient transition periods.[16] Furthermore, it was said that there is not enough information about the average overall salaries, work times, and workloads for individuals and/or institutions. The national language policy was discussed during the second round of interviews since it has implications for institutional autonomy and staffing. This policy requires Latvian as the language of instruction.

**Interviewees provided ideas for addressing issues related to funding, elections, and steering.** Additional funding (for instance, in the form of postdocs or tenure-track positions) was cited as the main way to revitalize the system. However, other ideas were presented in discussions about existing challenges. Firstly, some respondents believed that the integration of funding streams would be important for more strategic management and long-term planning. It was also proposed that the funding formula of HEIs should be reconsidered. Lastly, salaries were discussed, and the notion of a basic salary model emerged as well as the possibility of top-ups.

**The discussion surrounding elections and recruitment was tightly connected with the discussion of employment.** One seemingly simple, and likely effective, approach to improve transparency and predictability in the recruitment process is to connect the election process and vacancies to *actual* tasks. This linkage would involve some financial risk-taking and require designing job descriptions towards holistic academic tasks. In addition, it would mean a separation of recruitment decision from "promotions" and six-year evaluations. A significant number of stakeholders also supported the establishment of a chair system.

**Institutional stakeholders also provided some recommendations for the development of steering at system level while strengthening institutional autonomy and decreasing their regulation.** Most interviewees considered the idea of creating a national ACF commendable. A further suggestion was the introduction of an upper limit for work (contracted hours) instead of regulating minimum salaries and hours.

### RECOMMENDATIONS EMERGING FROM STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

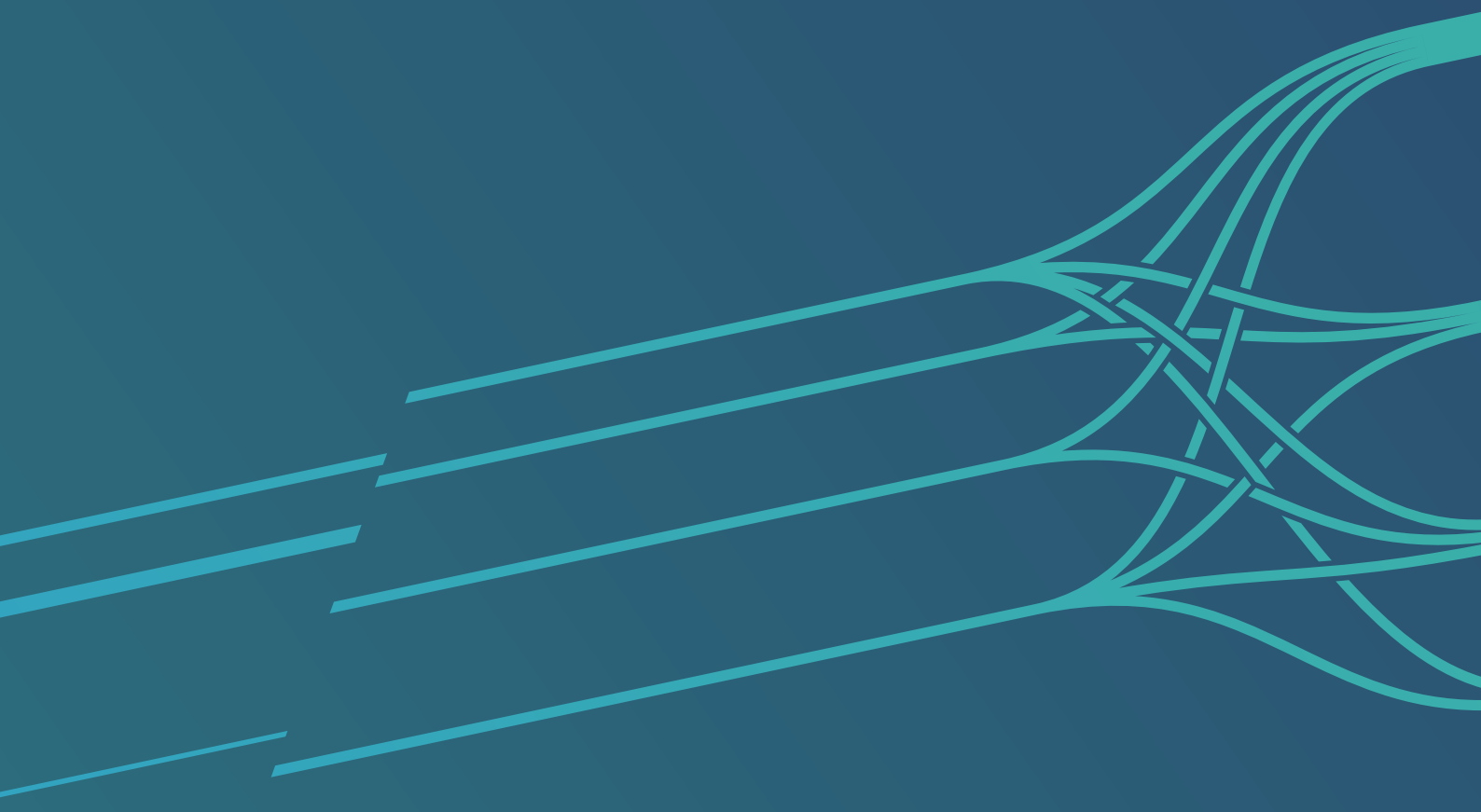
Stakeholder interviews were a critical component of the process for developing an ACF and delivered three main outcomes about the way forward: firstly, at the *individual level* the framework should facilitate the predictability of an individual's career and earnings; secondly, at the *institutional level* the framework should introduce the employment of full-time staff, follow and manage the number of employees in different career stages, emphasize autonomy by deregulating certain personnel issues, provide a predictable and sustainable framework for staff development, and, most importantly, assist in personnel planning; thirdly, at system level the career framework should provide a set of standards that could be used for comparing institutions, planning pilots and funding, supporting internationalization, academic excellence, increasing efficiency of the system, and facilitating the integration of the different types of institutions (HEIs & RIs), if needed. As such, the following development paths that would likely lead to more predictable, better managed and steered academic careers, have been identified:

- A well-managed transition from tasks- and contract-based management towards a framework with full-time employment positions.
- A well-managed transition from election-based recruitment towards selection (for junior positions) and the use of external experts (for senior positions).
- Strengthening the autonomy of institutions while providing a clear framework for academic positions and careers.
- Career integration over the sectorial border and the possibility of career transfer through international mobility and practice-oriented positions.

16. The MoES informed the WB team that the current cabinet "Regulations on the Procedure for the Evaluation of Professors and Associate Professors" is about 10 years old. There are no regulations pertaining to lecturers and assistant professor (docents). There is also no salary ceiling. While working hours are not set, regulations indicate the minimum and maximum hours allowed and each HEI has autonomy to set salary and working hours.

# 4

# STUDY VISITS



## 4.1 LESSONS EMERGING FROM THREE WEBINARS

The webinars were chosen in discussion with the MoES. The virtual visit to Finland was proposed by the World Bank team as an appropriate case study of a change in academic careers. The second virtual visit to Ireland was proposed by the MoES who was interested in seeing how a national strategy can drive change. The third one was proposed by the World Bank team and sought to bring to Latvia the current discussions regarding new ways of evaluating academic staff performance.

### 4.1.1 Finland

**The virtual visit to Finland focused on providing participants with insights into how, from the perspective of several stakeholder groups, the country's ACF has gradually evolved.** These stakeholders were researchers, academic unions, employers, and the MoES.

**In the Finnish context, five main conditions enabled the development of an ACF:**

- Attention to how a reform is implemented is just as important as the reform itself. Top-down reforms are often unsuccessful.
- The implementation of the tenure-track system in Finland lacks national coordination, as a result of which a variety of approaches exist — which could have been avoided with better coordination.
- Recognizing differences across disciplines ensures that reform is adapted to various circumstances.
- Given the general inertia of higher education systems, it is essential to prepare for a long and slow process of change in institutional culture(s). In the case of Finland, it took 10 years to implement reform.
- A follow-up evaluation study is useful to moderate tensions between different actors and prompt the continuous improvement of reform.

**In developing an ACF for Latvia, the abovementioned lessons can be considered regardless of differences between the two countries' financial and legislative contexts.** In every reform there are winners and losers. Often only the loudest voices are heard — even if these individuals or organizations do not represent the majority of stakeholders or the aims of the reform. As such, it is important to divide and evaluate reform in smaller parts such as pilots and/or experiments and to devise a roadmap for a long-term development, with short- and medium-term stages and objectives. Following up on changes, as well as reporting transparently on their successes and failures, will strengthen the legitimacy of the reform and its implementation.

**DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC CAREER FRAMEWORK:**
**Recommendations from a dialogue with counterparts in Finland**

The successful reform of academic careers must be considered at four levels: the individual, the disciplines/departments, the university, and the system as a whole.

1. At *individual level*, career models must be connected to the development of the individual and geared towards increased individual competence, including leadership skills. Young researcher careers must be attended to in order to ensure a good research pipeline and research capacity.
2. At the *discipline/departmental level*, reform must take disciplinary differences into account. The Finnish career model allows departments to allocate teaching loads to academic staff in a way that is both fair and adapted to departmental needs.
3. At the *institutional level*, career models should aim to:
   - Limit academic inbreeding and ensure diversity of recruitment (by, for instance, broadening the pool of potential external candidates)
   - Allow for different definitions of excellence (teaching, research, administration, and so on and so forth)
   - Ensure that the final responsibility for recruitment and promotion is vested in the highest authority. Universities should have the autonomy to make their own recruitment decisions. A typical process would include external evaluators who evaluate each candidate and make a proposal to the faculty council who decides on the best candidate. The rector should make the final decision.
4. At the *system level*, academic career models should ensure that:
   - All actors in the system agree with respect to evaluating academic performance. This includes the ministry, research funding organizations, and universities.
   - Institutions should be able to respond dynamically and with agility to a changing environment. For example, measuring teaching loads as contact hours has been shown to limit teaching innovation in the classroom. The Finnish example, on the other hand, demonstrates that when teaching hours are no longer counted as contact hours, pedagogical innovation and cooperation between academic staff flourish.

### 4.1.2 Ireland

**The virtual visit to Ireland had two main objectives:**

1. To examine the implementation of the National Strategy (obstacles as well as success indicators) and the impact it has had on institutional culture with a specific focus on teaching and learning, learning analytics, academic staff workloads, and academic staff development.

2. To discuss the steering of the system including the respective roles of the Department (Ministry) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA), which is a buffer body between the Department and the institutions, as well as that of representative bodies such as staff unions, the Irish Universities Association, and the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA).

Although these objectives were only indirectly related to the terms of reference for this project, they held some interesting lessons in how a small country is able to devise and implement a national strategy and how to manage change successfully.

**The study visit to Ireland produced four main lessons for the way forward in developing an ACF for Latvia:**

1. The potential of non-governmental coordination of development activities

2. The adaptiveness of the framework for careers of academics working in different realms of academic work: research, teaching, and more applied fields such as continuous learning and third-stream activities

3. The importance of balancing regional, national, and international aims and objectives

4. The importance of coordinating steering across governmental sectors (education, science, employment, competitiveness, skills, technology, and R&D).

**In developing an ACF for Latvia, the abovementioned lessons can be taken into consideration regardless of differences in administrative traditions.** Clear benefits can be derived from supporting institutional collaboration between HEIs — for instance, in teaching and learning development, HR-management, and the development of joint support and mentoring programs for doctoral students and early career researchers. In addition, disciplinary-based collaborations could be supported.

**DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC CAREER FRAMEWORK:**
**Recommendations from a Dialogue with Counterparts in Ireland**

1. Successful reform should be based on a long-term, national strategy with clear objectives and targets, including a sustained commitment to quality higher education.
2. It is advisable that the Ministry, agencies, and relevant institutions make frequent use of international experts and international benchmarking.
3. The Ministry should establish clear conditions that will allow institutions to work optimally. It should be focused on the "big picture" to ensure that the system functions efficiently. Agencies and associations should work with individual institutions.
4. Providing seed funding to institutions would incentivize change.
5. It is recommended that all major actors, including students, are consulted on the proposed policy development. This consultation should be conducted systematically at both the system and institutional levels to ensure a change process which is inclusive and consensual.
6. It is important that all the organizations within a system, such as the Ministry, associations, and unions, employ staff with expertise who can contribute to policy development.
7. Relevant associations and agencies should publish good practice guides.
8. To help embed change, the sector should promote communities of practice.
9. The change process should be promoted by an external and internal quality assurance approach which is enhancement-oriented in order to examine how well both the system and each institution deliver on the national goals.
10. Policy development should be based on a solid database which is jointly owned by the government agency and HEIs.

### 4.1.3 Flanders, the Netherlands, and Norway

**The central objective of the third webinar was to discuss how staff recruitment and promotion are organised against the background of new trends in performance appraisal which encourage steering away from purely quantitative indicators in measuring research productivity and staff performance.** The seminar provided an overview of current trends in assessment with reference to three case studies — Flanders, the Netherlands, and Norway.

**In recent years, universities, policymakers, and research funders have launched several initiatives to reassess how research performance should be measured — a re-examination which was initially triggered by the Open Science movement.** Presently, the conversation is shifting to a holistic assessment of academic careers rather than simply an assessment of its research component and to emphasize qualitative, rather than quantitative, measurements. In many countries the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) is gaining ground as a leading document in developing new promotion patterns and criteria for the evaluation of academics' work performance. DORA's key tenet is to "not use journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an individual scientist's contributions, or in hiring, promotion, or funding decisions."[17] In practice, the Declaration has a significant impact on developing academic careers. It encourages researchers who serve on committees that make decisions about funding, hiring, tenure, or promotion, to base their assessments on scientific content rather than on publication metrics, and to promote the use of personal/supporting statements that provide evidence of the impact of individual publications. Overall, it questions the use of journal impact factors as an indicator of individual assessment and supports the use of multiple sources and qualitative data for assessment of the academic excellence of an individual. The higher education systems of the Netherlands and Flanders are among those in Europe that have started to implement the DORA declaration while Norway is considering doing so.

**In 2019, the EUA conducted a survey on career assessment among 260 respondents from 31 countries.** The subsequent report[18] revealed that research was the main aspect being assessed through the use of bibliometrics. Interestingly, the most important metric used was "Journal Impact Factor" even though that metric was initially not designed to be used as a measure of individual performance. However, realizing that important changes were taking place in the domain of performance management, the EUA examined 10 case studies in an attempt to understand just how practices were changing. Two general principles were identified in all three case studies:

1. **Top-down and bottom-up dynamics:** Universities are increasingly initiating change by ensuring an interplay between top-down and bottom-up dynamics. Typically, staff leverage existing networks in the university to bring the issue to the attention of leadership who respond supportively by removing as many obstacles as possible. Often, leadership will create a task-and-finish group to develop criteria within the framework of the institution's medium- to long-term strategic vision and to provide resources for training and awareness events.

2. **Joint responsibility:** There is also increasing recognition of the fact that change is a responsibility shared by the university and other actors in the system. That said, the higher education system has to change in order to align policies with the legal framework and to provide capacity for universities to set their own evaluation criteria.

17. San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment: https://sfdora.org/read/

18. Saenen, Bregt, Anna Hatch, Stephen Curry, Vanessa Proudman, and Ashley Lakoduk. 2021. *Reimagining Academic Career Assessment: Stories of Innovation and Change*. Brussels: European University Association. https://www.eua.eu/resources/publications/952:reimagining-academic-career-assessment-stories-of-innovation-and-change.html

The case studies presented in the third WB webinar confirmed these findings.

**Main lessons learned for developing an ACF for Latvia:**

1. The new approach in higher education requires institutional cultural change, by which we mean a considered combination of top-down support from leadership and bottom-up initiatives from individual and collective staff.

2. A joint-up approach with universities, government and funders will ensure a consistent approach to academic careers. Because academic careers are international, it is important to monitor international developments.

3. Career narratives (instead of the traditional CV) have become important, but they must be based on solid evidence.

4. Reform should allow universities to emphasize teamwork and social engagement in both research and teaching.

5. The approach to reform should be tailored to each university and indicators used must align with the specific university's medium- to long-term strategic vision.

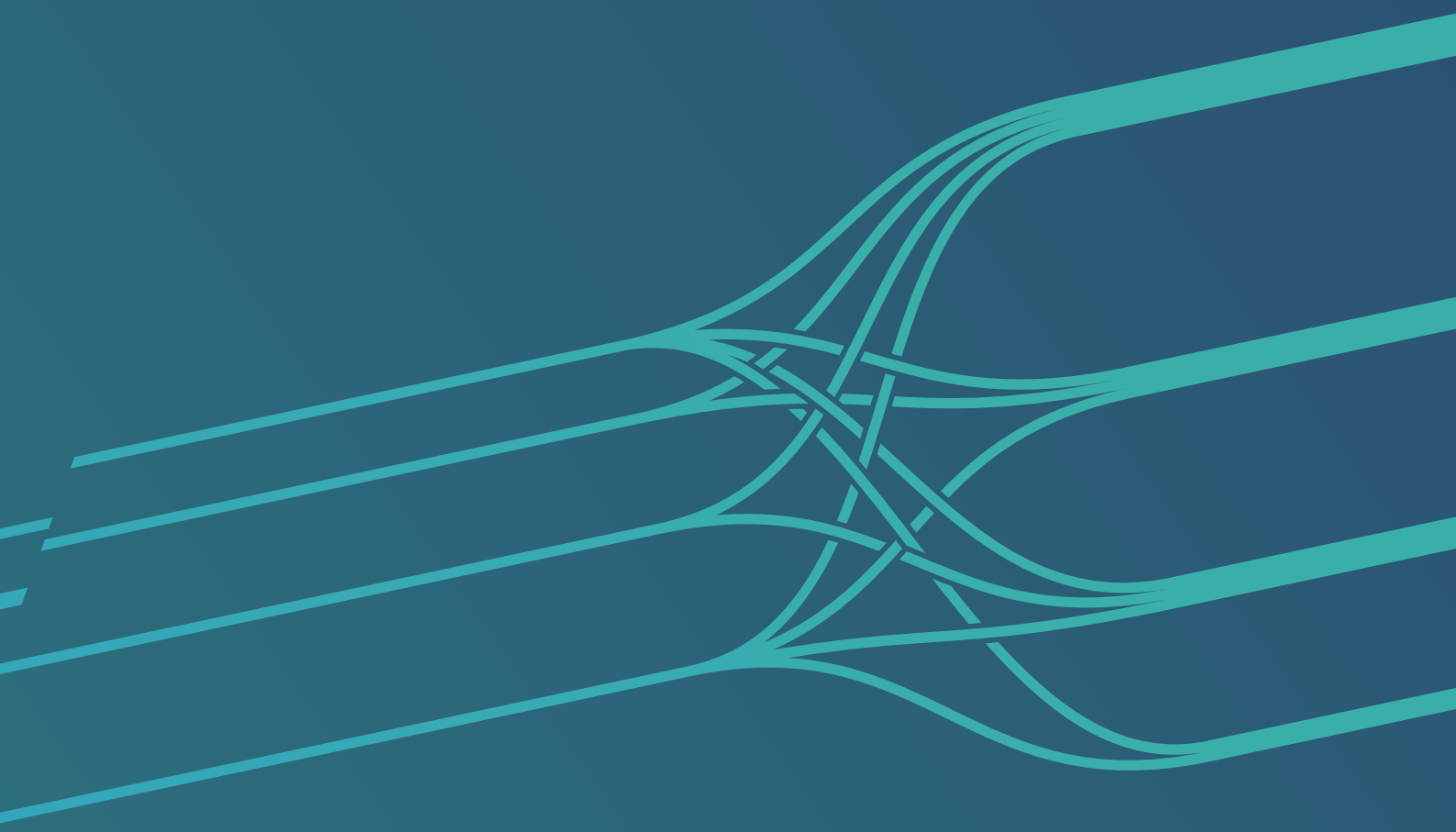
**DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC CAREER FRAMEWORK**
**Recommendations from a Dialogue with Counterparts in Flanders, the Netherlands, and Norway**

In order to develop academic careers in Latvia, two recommendations in particular should be bore in mind:

- The ACF and its associated criteria cannot be developed in a vacuum. Rather, the framework and criteria require collaboration between different agencies and HEIs.
- The overall ACF needs to be broad enough to allow institutional and disciplinary differentiation.

# 5

# RECOMMENDATIONS



## 5.1 DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC CAREER FRAMEWORK IN LATVIA

**Stakeholder interviews, international (virtual) study visits, as well as other consultations, provided key insights or lessons for the development of an ACF in Latvia.** Four key recommendations emerged:

1. Strengthen the role of full-time staff
2. Reconsider the role of elections
3. Strengthen the role of information-based steering and management of academic work and careers
4. Strengthen internationalisation through HR-planning as well as the promotion of both incoming and outgoing mobility

**These recommendations are supported by studies of systems that have developed an ACF.** Regardless of the ACF that has been implemented, these principles remain relevant and important for ensuring transparency and flexibility within the framework, as well as for providing a future development landscape for the system. In the following paragraphs we briefly elaborate on each of the four key recommendations listed above.

***Recommendation 1: Strengthen the role of full-time staff.*** In many major European and Anglo-Saxon higher education systems (for instance, Australia, the UK, and the USA), universities are increasingly facing the problem of the casualization of work and fragmented academic careers. In higher education, temporary staff have always had the positive function of bringing fresh ideas from various parts of society while easing the workload of full-time academics. However, for decades now there has been a widening gap in many higher education systems between tenured staff and casual, temporary staff. There have also been multiple attempts to manage this development and to avoid the formation of an academic precariat.[19] Based on stakeholder consultations, it seems that the entire academic workforce in Latvia has, until very recently, been a precariat in the sense described by Kimber because a large proportion of academic staff have had to constantly face uncertainty regarding their career path and income. This short-term horizon may lead to academics becoming noncommittal and careless which hinders the development of pedagogical work and the cultivation of competences and good institutional practices.[20] As such, the aim of any ACF reform should focus on strengthening the academic core faculty, overcoming current problems, and avoiding the global challenge of precariat academic work. In the end, universities depend on their full-time staff and the reforms

**DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC CAREER FRAMEWORK:**
Human Resource Planning

**Strengthening the role of full-time staff must be based on thorough HR-planning.** Latvia's ACF should be developed such that all HEIs and RIs have 1) transparent and predictable personnel plans and 2) structures to support core faculty and tasks. At five-year intervals, every institution should define its core tasks and establish targets for employing full-time personnel to perform these core tasks. The MoES could support this strategy by introducing incentives for long-term personnel planning and targets for full-time employment. Full-time positions require new ways of allocating funding. If there is no new funding available for HEIs and RIs, the funding needed to increase the number of full-time positions can, to some extent, be obtained by reallocating funding used for hourly-based teaching. However, in the current financial environment, the major avenue for actualizing full-time employment is external funding and the combination of research and teaching positions. This, in turn, requires risk-taking at the unit- and institutional-levels as well as strengthened competency in financial planning. It is evident that, regardless of the financial situation, there will always be teaching duties that are contracted on an hourly basis or as part-time employment. For this reason, policy makers should consider creating the role of Professor of Practice and/or Adjunct Professor while other academic positions should be used mainly for full-time employment.

19. Kimber, Megan. 2003 'The Tenured "Core" and the Tenuous "Periphery": The Casualisation of Academic Work in Australian Universities.' *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management,* 25(1), 41–50.

20. Leathwood, Carole and Barbara Read 2020. 'Short-Term, Short-Changed? A Temporal Perspective on the Implications of Academic Casualisation for Teaching in Higher Education'. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 1–16. DaOI: 10.1080/13562517.2020.1742681

cannot be implemented without considering academic freedom and the collegiality of staff who work at institutions.[21]

***Recommendation 2: Reform the use of elections.*** In general, many academic staff view the election procedure as an important tool for ensuring transparency and fairness in the selection of candidates.[22] However, it is widely acknowledged among institutional stakeholders that the election process does not support the optimal selection of new recruits, in addition to which the process is time-consuming, costly, and its transparency questionable. The purpose of the election procedure should be carefully reconsidered, especially in the case of junior positions, part-time positions, and short-term employment. Currently, the election procedure partly serves the function of checking and validating academic qualifications and is not consistently linked to genuine employment requirements. The election procedure, if used, should be based on an (international) academic evaluation and only when a candidate is genuinely recruited for long-term (or permanent) employment. While the recruitment criteria, election procedures, academic evaluation, and performance schemes should be aligned, they should nonetheless be kept as distinct processes. To support the autonomy of institutions, transparency of the process and to avoid transactions cost, the role of the Professor's Council (and CoHE and senates in its selection) should be reconsidered. However, even if election procedures are not applied, the selection for senior academic positions should always be based on a transparent external (international) evaluation of the candidate's qualifications and eligibility.

***Recommendation 3: Strengthen the role of evidence-based steering and management of academic work and careers.*** Interviews revealed that stakeholders viewed the current situation as only one solution to the challenge of efficiently utilizing existing resources. However, this finding may be indicative of insufficient knowledge regarding the status of employees and their respective workloads. Based on the study visits, a database of workloads, working hours, and remuneration is the best way to substantiate advocacy for reform and enable a proportional and relative understanding of the "necessary requirements" for effective HR-planning. As such and similar to the annual working time reform in Finland, the Latvian reform of academic careers should be based on continuous development and formative, incremental assessment of the reform. One of the success factors in the reform of academic careers is to ensure that everyone involved in the reform process has adequate knowledge of academic personnel, their workloads, qualifications, employment, and remuneration. Data on academic work are needed to follow up on the reform and to set mid-term targets. To guarantee the existence of a sufficient knowledge base for the development of an ACF, the MoES should consider collecting system-wide data on personnel. Data collection should be compatible with the new ACF and be collected for each career step. Ideally, the same data collection principles should be followed in HEIs and RIs.

***Recommendation 4: Strengthen internationalisation through HR-planning and the promotion of both incoming and outgoing mobility.*** To benefit from internationalization, institutions should devise their own strategic plans for internationalization. The academic labor market in Latvia is relatively small and the number of international academics, low. In developing an ACF for Latvia, internationalization and the possibility of mobility in different phases of an individual's academic career should be considered. Institutional plans that facilitate and motivate academic staff mobility should be considered. Additional attention should be paid to returning academics and their needs when it comes to re-integration into the Latvian higher education system. Additionally, the limitations imposed on incoming mobility by the legal framework concerning the use of the Latvian language needs to be revisited. Based on a previous study of international good

21. Clark, Burton 1998. *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities: Organizational Pathways of Transformation. Issues in Higher Education.* New York: Elsevier.

22. Arnhold et al. 2018. *Focus on Performance.*

practices (with specific emphasis on a careful analysis of Latvian higher education),[23] any small higher education system will benefit from national policies that guarantee legal conditions conducive to the recruitment of foreign academics, but this requires recognition of the fact that legal language restrictions create an obstacle for the internationalization of the academic workforce.

## 5.2 RISKS

**As mentioned above, risks implied in the proposed recommendations should be carefully considered. Below, we consider five of the most prominent risks.**

1. **Strengthening the role of full-time academic staff may result in other employees being neglected.** Although the strengthened role of full-time faculty is likely to be key to a sustainable and predictable career framework and personnel management, it is important to acknowledge that there is a risk of marginalizing other employees. To manage this risk, the working conditions of part-time and hourly-based faculty should be as transparent as possible, including the principles guiding consecutive fixed-term contracts.

2. **A reconsideration of the role of elections could risk diminishing the sector's democratic and collegial institutional culture.** Although recruitment practices should be efficient and effective, it is important to acknowledge the value of collective decision-making in recruitment efforts. As such, academic profession and collegial practices should be maintained as an important part of the recruitment process. This is especially important in recruiting senior academics and full-time employees. While short-term employment could be managed through a more standard managerial process, key recruitments should be performed based on external academic review and a collegial body, such as a standing council or an ad hoc committee, which should have an important role in evaluating and comparing candidates' suitability based on review reports. The international trend suggests that collective bodies play a minimal role in influencing personnel and financial issues. However, the role of academics (other than academic managers) should be safeguarded by increasing their participation in the strategic planning process within their respective working units.

3. **Strengthening the role of information-based steering and management of academic work and careers includes the risk of increased reporting and data collection which may overlap and be inconsistent with institutional reporting and reporting for external stakeholders** (such as the EU). As such, when introducing a statistical follow-up of career steps, employment, and salary scales, information should be made transparent and open; the rationale for data collection should be communicated to the institutions, and only relevant data should be collected. Data collection should be planned in collaboration with institutional representatives in order to ensure that it is done economically and that the collected data can be used to support institutional decision-making.

4. **Strengthen internationalisation through HR-planning and outgoing mobility poses the potential risk of unequal treatment of individuals in recruitment and excessive individual sacrifices for individual career advancement.** Measures for promoting outgoing mobility should be introduced while ensuring that there is a realistic possibility that individuals can plan and conduct a mobility period without having to make unfair sacrifices. Gender- and family-related dimensions, in particular, should be taken into account.

5. Strengthen internationalization through incoming mobility entails the possible risk of rejection of members of society who are concerned that the Latvian language might be

23. Arnhold et al. 2018. *Focus on Performance.*

marginalized. While this is a legitimate concern, it needs to be balanced with the benefits that internationalization can bring with respect to enhancing quality of research and teaching.

In table 1 below, the main recommendations for developing a Latvian ACF are listed along with the actions needed to implement these at system- and institutional-levels and the risks identified.

**TABLE 1** Recommendations, Actions, and Risks for Developing a Latvian ACF

| Recommendation | Target | System level actions | Institutional actions | Risks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Strengthen the role of core faculty** | Increase the ratio of full-time employees | Provide recommendations and set targets for full-time employment | Develop a personnel strategy for full-time academic staff | Creating a division between first and second rank academics |
| | Integrate research and teaching | Reconsider the funding formula and provide recommendations on content of work for different career positions | Develop financial management and salary systems aligned with work tasks | |
| | Institutionalize the role of hourly-based teachers and PoP | Introduce regulation/recommendation on minimum hours for academic positions to avoid 0-hour contracts. Provide a minimum workload for permanent and six-year positions | Create a departmental plan for hourly-based employment and map out the needs for professors of practice/ adjunct professors | |
| **Reconsider the role of elections** | Decrease the transaction cost of recruitments | Reconsider the need of election for academic position lower than associate professor/senior researcher | Transparently communicate the practices for elections and connect election procedures to genuine employment possibilities | Negative impact on democratic culture |
| | Decouple recruitment and periodic evaluation | Introduce regulation that clearly decouples the periodic evaluation and recruitments | Provide clear and transparent communication on institutional performance-based evaluation schemes and promotion criteria | |
| **Strengthen steering by using information** | Introduce national statistics on salaries and full-time employment | Establish transparent and systematic data collection practices on salaries and employment by developing a data-collection manual | Collect and report data, develop a faculty handbook<br>Consultation on the development of the data collection manual would ensure that collected data both support institutional management and serve the system development accountability of the institution | Creating additional reporting |
| | Introduce national career framework and statistic on career steps | Provide national career framework and aligned statistical follow-up | Implement and apply national framework. Collect and report data | |
| **Strengthen internationalisation through HR-planning and mobility** | Internationalization of academic staff and HE-system | Account for mobility in developing an ACF<br>Revising system-level legislation/ regulation hindering mobility | Establish practices for mobility, returning employees and international recruitments<br>Include a section on internationalization (recruitment and mobility) and a personnel strategy | Unequal treatment of the candidates. Excessive individual sacrifices |

*Source:* World Bank

## 5.3 CAREER FRAMEWORK

**The MoES has established a Working Group that is developing a detailed ACF for Latvia.** The WB has provided its heuristic analysis of the ACF based on the abovementioned suggestions and concomitant risks. Although this framework does not yet contain detailed information on the conditions of employment in Latvia, recent legislative changes, promotion criteria or the national translation of titles, it does provide an overall idea of the framework that can be used for planning sustainable personnel structure for academic work and careers. It is important to note that as far as the design of the ACF is concerned, there are several additional factors that should be taken into consideration which are not covered in this report. On this, see figure 1.

**FIGURE 1** Additional Factors to Consider in the Design of an Academic Career Framvework for Latvia


*Source:* World Bank

**As mentioned before, the draft ACF is based on a combination of stakeholder consultations, virtual international site visits, prior technical assistance delivered by the WB and, most importantly, the work of the ACF Working Group under the auspices of the MoES.** The European four-stage career framework served as an overall template to classify career stages. The recommended career framework integrates academic titles and career steps in HEIs and RIs (table 2). However, the career framework considers the duality of both academic work and the missions of universities: teaching and research. It reflects the reality that in both types of institutions — HEIs and RIs — there may be research- and teaching-oriented positions **but that all academics should nonetheless both teach and conduct research**. In addition, the framework reflects the importance of clinical- and practice-oriented positions. The framework also allows for the incorporation of developing positions that are based on probation (tenure-track). Table 2 provides a scale of seven positions. Although these are found in many countries, Latvia may want to select from among these the ones that are most relevant (See figure 2 for a simplified proposal). The implementation scenarios of the ACF are discussed in section 6.

**TABLE 2** Classification of Career Stages in the Proposed Latvian ACF

| Levels | Teaching-Oriented Position | Research-Oriented Position | Qualification | Practice/Professionally-Oriented Positions | Qualification |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| R1 | Junior Lecturer | Junior Researcher | Master's degree | Part-time/Visiting scholar (R1) | Master's degree or equivalent expertise |
| | Assistant | PhD candidate | | | |
| R2 | Assistant professor (non-tenure track/docent) | Postdoctoral Researcher | PhD*** | Visiting scholar (R2) | PhD or equivalent expertise |
| | 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) | |
| | | Research Director | | Professor (fine arts) (R4) | |

Permanent positions Six years Part-time, fixed term

*Source:* World Bank

*Notes:* The title names are not final. The use of certain titles such as *lecturer* and *associate professor* should be carefully considered in order to avoid confusion.
* External review
**International review
*** In some teaching-oriented cases there may be a need for transition time for a requirement of PhD in career levels 2 & 3.

**Teaching-oriented positions include core positions that are necessary to implement the institutions' educational mission.** Since the teaching mission has a long-term perspective, these positions are by their very nature either permanent or nominations for a six-year term. The R1 position of Junior Lecturer is an exception to the rule that most permanent academic faculty members should be in possession of a PhD. Junior Lecturer positions are heavily teaching-oriented in such subjects as mathematics, languages, or scientific methods as part of undergraduate studies. The R1 Level could also include the position of Assistant whose work would include teaching but also allow for the possibility of conducting research (for instance on the basis of a 50:50 ratio).

***Assistant Professor (docent)*, at the R2 Level, is a teaching position which requires a PhD-level education and includes research tasks as well as supervision of undergraduate studies.** As an intermediate position it allows an individual to conduct research in order to qualify for a future (permanent) position. *Senior Lecturer* is a teaching position that includes responsibilities for a subject area and requires a well-established research portfolio and in-depth knowledge of the relevant research field and methods. It is worth noting that *Associate Professor* could be an alternative title for this position. In this report, *Senior Lecturer* is used for the sake of clarity, that is, to make clear the distinction between this role and tenure-track positions. The *Senior Lecturer* also serves as *Principal Investigator* (PI) in research projects and s/he actively develops his/her field. *Professor* (R4) is a leading and internationally recognised academic in a specific subject area.

**Research-oriented positions allow institutions to apply for and utilize external funding and to recruit temporary staff.** The scale of these positions follow the same logic as the teaching-oriented positions. Although they are called "research positions," they should also include some teaching duties. Unlike teaching positions, however, research positions are fixed term by nature and permanent only in instances where there is continuous research work being conducted. The *Junior Researcher* (R1) positions are postgraduate positions in which doctoral research is the main task of an employee (PhD candidate, for 3–5 years) or part of a task (*Project Researcher* for a period of at least one year). The R2 position is a fixed-term position of 3–5 years for a *postdoctoral researcher*. This position is primarily intended for increasing an individual's competence and qualifications. *Senior Researcher* or, alternatively, *Associate Professor*, is an established R3 position. (The title *Senior Researcher* is used for clarity, to clarify the distinction between this position and tenure-track positions).

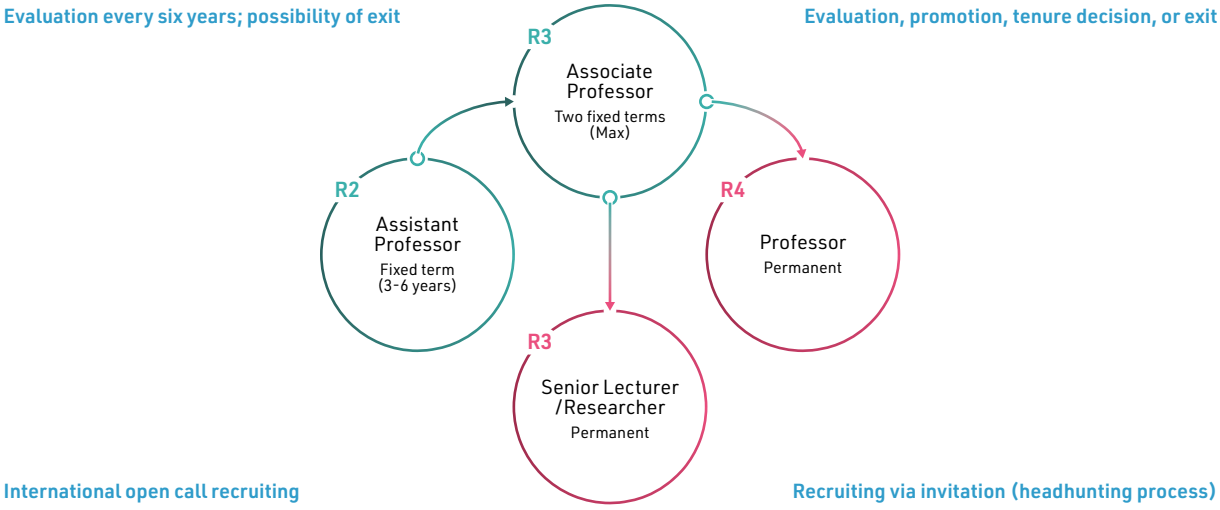
***The Senior Researcher* serves as a PI and s/he typically leads a research group.** The *Senior Researcher* participates in the supervision of Masters students and acts as (secondary) supervisor of PhD candidates. The R4 Level in the research-oriented position is a professorial position which can also be defined as *Research Professor* in cases where it does not include significant responsibilities for postgraduate degree education. A *Professor* is typically an internationally evaluated and permanent position. In contrast, a *Research Director* is an R4 Level position which is typically a fixed-term position that mainly entails duties of managing and leading high-level research centres or institutes. The *Research Director* and *Professor* should have comparable qualifications although these qualifications can be evaluated internally and the evaluation can emphasize the research and management merits respectively.

**The career framework for researchers also recognises the need for part-time and professionally oriented positions.** Tasks that are not conducted by full-time academics typically fall under the part-time positions of *Visiting Teacher* and *External Expert*. The distinction between full- and part-time positions is important because it clarifies the structural composition of staff within institutes. "Clinical Teachers" are included in this category since they are often part-time positions established on different terms. The position of *Professor of Practice* should also be established in order to facilitate the entry of qualified experts from industry, the public sector, and other sectors into the world of academia. The position *Professor of Practice* is typically a part-time, fixed-term position.

**In addition to "core positions", tenure-track positions can be used as an alternative for recruiting professors or to strategically steer and profile the research agenda in the institution and reward talent.** The tenure system is based on three steps: *Assistant*, *Associate*, and (full) *Professor*. The position of *Assistant Professor* is assigned to the second career stage. In many higher education systems (particularly in leading research universities) the position of *Assistant Professor* is fixed at Career Level 3.[24] Considering the labour market situation in Latvia, we propose that the *Assistant Professor* position is placed on Career Level 2 (parallel to *Docent* and *Postdoctoral Researcher*).

**Tenure-track positions (R2–R3) that involve *Assistant* and *Associate Professor* are based on probation periods and include the possibility of promotion when an individual has acquired the qualifications for the next career level.** The promotion criteria can be teaching- or research-oriented. However, the criteria of full professorship should be attained equally in both orientations. The candidate can be recruited to all levels and the candidate is evaluated for promotion after six years or earlier, upon the candidate's requests. The candidate can be tenured as (full) *Professor* or at the level of *Associate Professor*, either as *Senior Lecturer* or *Senior Researcher*. Institutions may also have positions of *Distinguished Professors* if this is desired. It must be bore in mind, however, that this is not an official professional title but recognizes distinction in the individual's field.

**FIGURE 2** A Simplified Framework for Tenure-Track




*Source:* World Bank

## 5.3.1 Selection

**Based on stakeholder consultations, it is recommended that selection to positions on career steps R1–R2 should be performed according to the institutional regulations of autonomous institutions.** This selection process has several advantages: increased autonomy, additional flexibility, and the reduction of unnecessary transaction costs. This selection process also applies to the positions of *Senior Lecturer* and *Senior Researcher* at Level 3 and to all practice-oriented positions. For tenure-track positions and (full) *Professor*, it is recommended that recruitment be conducted on the basis of national regulations in order to avoid system-level confusion

24. Schiewer, Hans-Jochen, Christian Jehle, and Katrien Maes (2014). *Tenure and tenure track at LERU universities: Models for attractive research careers in Europe.* LERU, League of European Research Universities.

(see 4.1.1 Finland) and to maintain the international standard for recruiting professors through international open calls[25], for instance. However, in exceptional cases, an invitation procedure can be used for professors (R4). The invitation procedure should always require an international external review.

Selection to the professorial position is performed in three stages:

1. **Internal evaluation:** Conducted by an independent, internal committee established by the institution that creates a shortlist of candidates after having verified that there are no conflicts of interest between the candidates and committee members. The committee may also have external members to secure objectivity and disciplinary expertise.

2. **External evaluation:** Conducted by an external commission or independent reviewers who have been nominated by the institution and who evaluates the scientific qualifications of shortlisted candidates.

3. **Selection of recommended candidate:** Conducted by an internal committee, which selects the most suitable candidate for the position from among those recommended by the external evaluation commission. As part of the selection process, and in order to preserve collegiality, the shortlisted candidates could be asked to present a public talk. The internal committee could ask the audience for their views on the candidate. The recruitment decision is made by the institution based on the recommendation of the internal committee.

### 5.3.2 Retirement

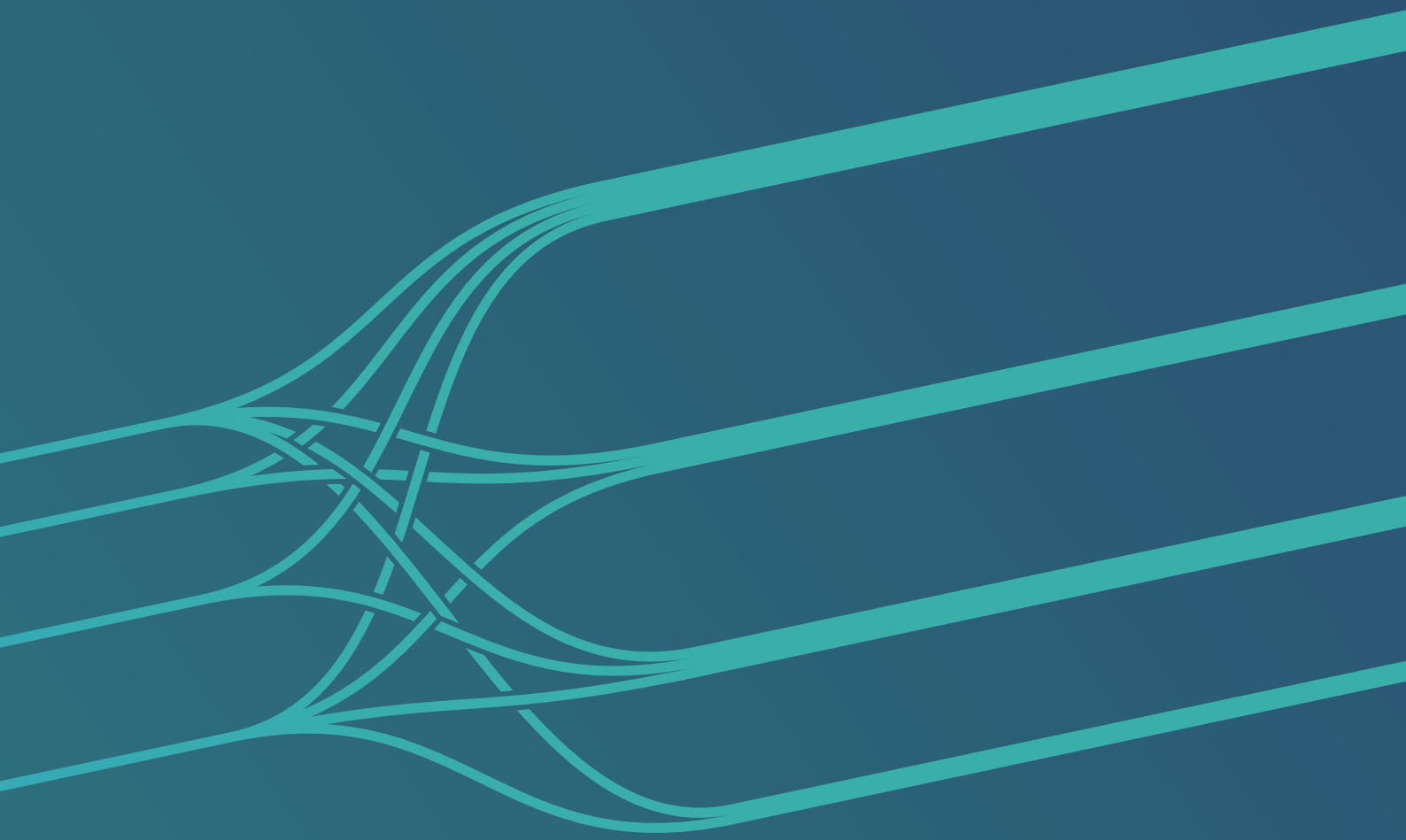
**It is recommended that retirement age and pension policies be discussed nationally and that institutions explore the feasibility of developing "emeritus policies."** The recommended transition of the system away from temporary and part-time positions towards permanent, full-time employment requires an end point for careers which should be regulated at system level. However, retirement does not necessarily imply ignoring the skills, competences, and network capital that senior employees have accumulated. Institutions are therefore recommended to develop emeritus policies to retain these assets.[26]

25. Through international open calls Latvians working outside Latvia as well as international talents can be targeted. However, especially for recruitment of international experts to full professor's positions, competitive remuneration would be essential.

26. Arnhold et al. 2018. *Focus on Performance.*

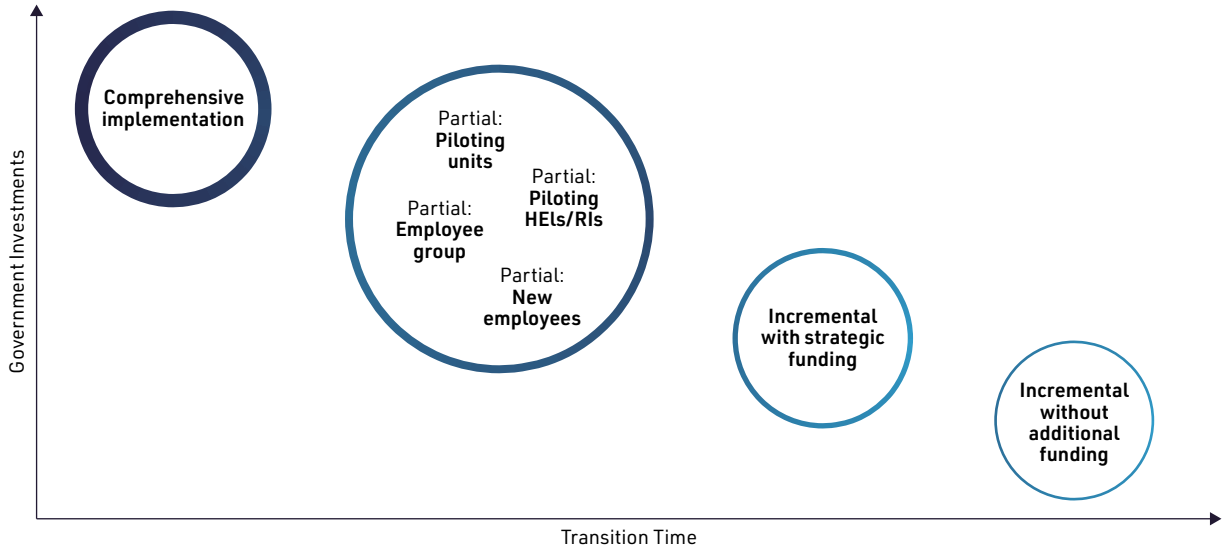
# 6

# SCENARIOS /IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES



**In this section, four different scenarios or "implementation strategies" for an ACF are presented.** Previous sections focused on recommendations regarding the overall principles for developing a new ACF (section 5.1), the risks related to these principles (section 5.2), and the structure of a new career framework being developed by the WG (section 5.3). It is important to emphasize that all reforms require investments of financial and human resources. Different scenarios of implementation have different implications for government expenditure and the time needed to transition to a higher education system with a reformed ACF. The implementation strategy also has an impact on the risks related to the reform. The scenarios are illustrated in figure 3.

**FIGURE 3** Scenarios for Implementing the New Academic Career Framework




*Source:* World Bank

## 6.1 SCENARIO 1: FULL AND COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION

**This scenario assumes that all institutions are subject to the proposed reform and that they will actively participate in the implementation of the reform.** The career framework will be implemented immediately and the reform will impact all academic staff members. It will cover all aspects of the framework (that is, titles, career steps, selection, promotions, and criteria). This, in turn, implies that all institutions would have sufficient administrative and academic resources to implement the reform as well as adequate financial reserves to meet the new standards. That said, the transition time can be established individually for different institutions depending on their own plans and proposals as well as existing competencies and financial reserves.

**Comprehensive reform would require substantial investment in the higher education system and could lead to a situation where a qualified workforce is not available for all institutions.** In addition, it would require substantive investment in HR competencies and a new management culture.

## 6.2 SCENARIO 2: PHASED IMPLEMENTATION

**Designing a phased implementation of the new ACF is the second scenario.** The initial implementation can be based on pilot units or target a subset of employees. In the latter case, one criterion for implementation may be employees' positions or employment status, such as new/experienced.

**DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC CAREER FRAMEWORK:**
The Evolution of Denmark's System

Denmark has been developing its academic career system by implementing national guidelines and memoranda that describe the career system. It has reduced institutional variation and also standardized academic careers and employment contracts. The memoranda have focused on challenges regarding academic careers similar to those experienced by Latvia. The main changes introduced by the memoranda are:

- **1993:** Strengthening the role of teaching in academia by introducing a typology of positions which divides positions into ordinary positions (teaching-oriented), part-time teachers and supplementary appointments (temporary research positions), and by introducing measures to strengthen pedagogical competencies.
- **2000:** Further strengthening the teaching requirement–individuals teach *and* do research–and abolishing research-only positions. Temporary "ordinary" academic positions have also been introduced.
- **2005:** Strengthening the role of universities in defining staff positions, introducing postdoctoral positions, and removing the regulation of teaching responsibilities for senior staff members. Temporary research positions were reintroduced (with substantial funding for postdocs).
- **2007:** Adjusting the system to include separate teaching- and research-oriented tracks due to institutional mergers of universities and sector research institutes.
- **2013/15:** Re-introducing the idea that all academics should do research *and* teach; introducing tenure-track.
- **2020:** Introducing promotion possibilities for exceptionally qualified mid-rank staff, maintaining research- and teaching-oriented tracks (in which all teach), and introducing mandatory teaching portfolios.

National guidelines have been implemented on the basis of institutional pilots.

*Sources:*
1. Christiansen, Frederik. V. 2016. 'Stillingsstrukturens betydning for samspillet mellem forskning og undervisning' Dansk Universitetspædagogisk, Tridsskrift, 21.
2. https://newsroom.au.dk/en/news/show/artikel/ny-stillingsstruktur-for-videnskabeligt-personale/
3. Frølich, Nicolene, Kaja Wendt, Ingvild Reymert, Silje M. Tellmann, Mari Elken, Svein Kyvik, Agnete Vabø, and Even H. Larsen 2018. 'Academic career structures in Europe: perspectives from Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Austria and the UK'. Report number 2018:4. Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education.

**Reform can be implemented partially by limiting it to a certain group of employees or by applying it to new employees only.** Stakeholders interviewed by the WB team suggested both options. The new ACF can be implemented so that it would apply only to new employees (or employees who choose to participate). This approach would lead to a gradual implementation of a comprehensive reform. It is important to note, however, that in the case of Latvia choosing between "new" and "old" staff is not practical because employees may have multiple affiliations and full-time employment is the exception rather than the rule. As such, it is likely to be in almost everyone's best interest to participate in the new system and implement the new framework.

**Phased implementation may apply only to a certain employee group.** The implementation of new type of careers could be introduced, for instance, starting with externally funded "new strategic tenure-track positions" or by identifying "core positions." In both cases, institutions would require additional funding. The strength of this option is that the most important open-ended full-time positions could be identified and their cost estimated relative to current personnel expenses. The development of strategic positions and the main duties of universities would also strengthen the profiles of universities. However, there are also significant risks associated with this scenario such as the sustainability of externally funded tenure-track positions and the development of an unnecessary hierarchy between positions within each institution.

**Phased implementation can be based on pilots.** Piloting has several advantages. Firstly, the investment required to implement a pilot is relatively low and the cost of implementation can be estimated more accurately than in the case of a comprehensive implementation. In addition, entities participating in the pilot can be selected based on their willingness, competence, and strategic importance. Pilot units can also be observed closely and the functioning of the new ACF (and its relation to the old one) carefully and precisely monitored. Furthermore, pilots could be attached to other policy initiative such as mergers. Piloting could be performed by units within existing HEIs or by existing HEIs and RIs. The advantages of pilots performed by units include the possibility of allowing several institutions to develop their practices while enabling the testing of the framework in several disciplinary and institutional settings. By comparison, piloting

by institutions would allow for the observation of how an institution as a whole can reform its practices. An additional advantage of piloting institutions is that the parallel existence of dual practices in one institution would be avoided.

**DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC CAREER FRAMEWORK:**
Launching a New Funding Instrument in Germany

In 2016, the German Federal government launched an investment programme which will run for a total of 15 years, ending in 2032. By introducing a system of funded tenure-track positions the program aims to:

- Make the journey towards a lifelong professorship more transparent and predictable.
- Increase the number of professorships in Germany.
- Revitalise the system.
- Change the culture of German universities by establishing and consolidating an additional career path that leads to professorship.
- Encourage the enhancement of HR structures for the entire academic workforce.
- Improve equal opportunities and the reconciliation of family and work life.

The funding instrument is based on applications submitted by each university's executive boards. Universities receiving the funding must have:

- Decided to introduce a tenure-track career path
- Demonstrated that it has a strategic plan to improve the personal development of junior academics and all academic staff
- Presented an "HR concept" development status and development plan
- Commit to cover the expenses of permanent positions after the funding period.

The funding is paid to universities in the form of a lump sum and covers personnel expenses and material costs. In addition, the funding includes a strategic "bonus" to cover expenses related to structural change.

*Source:* https://www.tenuretrack.de/en/the-tenure-track-programme/the-federal-government-lander-programme

## 6.3 SCENARIO 3: INCREMENTAL IMPLEMENTATION WITH STRATEGIC FUNDING

**Under this scenario, implementation could be based on customized institutional plans supported with strategic funding based on clear national aims.** The government could then consider the institutions' HR-plans. This aim could be accompanied by strategic funding to support the institution in achieving its aims or to reward the institution for implementing successful HR policies. The aims could include, for instance, minimum working hours for all established positions, the ratio of full-time employees in the full-time equivalent workforce (FTEs), the development of faculty handbooks, and other HR plans. Strategic planning could be connected, for instance, to the HR Excellence in Research Award or a similar national initiative.

**DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC CAREER FRAMEWORK:**
The European Commission's Human Resources Excellence in Research Award

For nearly two decades the European Commission has been promoting the implementation of a European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers adopted in 2005. These documents are key elements in the EU's policy to improve researchers' careers. As a concrete tool to facilitate implementation, the Commission has introduced the HR Excellence in Research Award–an award which any public or private university or research institution can apply for. Institutions need to complete the following five stages in order to earn the award.

- Conduct an internal analysis
- Publish an action plan or implementation strategy
- Receive acknowledgment from the European Commission and receive the HR Excellence in Research badge
- Perform a self-assessment after two years
- Conduct an external assessment every four years.

*Sources:*
1. https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter-code-researchers
2. https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/node/5765/#hrs4r-tabs-tab-1-name
3. Hooley, Tristram, John Marriott, and Ellen. Pearce 2013. 'HR strategies for researchers: a review of the HR Excellence in Research Award implementation activities across Europe.' Cambridge: CRAC.
4. Siekkinen, Taru, Elias Pekkola, and Kari Kuoppala 2015. 'The EU Human Resource Strategy for Researchers and the working conditions of Finnish fixed-term researchers.' Journal of the European Higher Education Area, 2015(3), 111-142.

## 6.4 SCENARIO 4: INCREMENTAL IMPLEMENTATION WITHOUT ADDITIONAL FUNDING

**Under this scenario, implementation can be completed incrementally *without additional government investment*.** This scenario is not recommended because it is too risky. The government would only provide a new framework for steering, reporting, and data collection in which universities would follow their own strategic plans to develop their staff. There would be no additional incentives to develop institutional career models and implementation would rely on recommendations and steering based on evidence. Table 3 presents a summary of the strengths and challenges associated with each of the four scenarios.

**TABLE 3** Advantages and Disadvantages of Implementing each of the proposed ACFs

| Scenario | Strengths | Challenges |
|---|---|---|
| Comprehensive | Short transition time | Requires significant investments; lack of HR capacity; deficit of qualified work force; risk of implementation failure |
| Partial (new employees) | Predictable; low immediate risks | Two parallel systems |
| Partial (staff category) | Predictable; supports institutional profile and/or profiling | Creation of unfair academic ranks; |
| Partial (pilots) | Predictable; based on voluntary change; supports autonomy | The learning and dissemination of new competences/practices takes time; requires external funding |
| Incremental (strategic funding) | Supports autonomy; is based on institutional planning. | Institutions have different competencies and capabilities to pilot an ACF; risk that it may further strengthen strong institutions. |
| Incremental (no additional funding) | Increases transparency and comparability of employment; provides a starting point for future investments | Additional reporting and frustration linked to the introduction of new categories; risk of stagnation. |

*Source:* World Bank

7

# ROADMAP

**The recommended ACF and development principles are aimed at the creation of more predictable, transparent, and sustainable academic careers.** The recommendations are based on an idea of knowledge-based development and financial sustainability. A fragmented system cannot be changed overnight. As such, the new ACF should be codified and applied to both sectors. In addition, data collection of personnel structure and employment should take career stages into account.

**With strategic funding, institutions should be required to develop personnel strategies, establish individual goals, and express their willingness to pilot the ACF.** Pilots would be financed by the MoES and will emphasize the role of full-time employment (work time allocation rather than multiple affiliations/contracts), new selection procedures (international evaluations, tenure-track procedure), the integration of HEIs' and RIs' career frameworks, and the establishment of practice-oriented positions of Professor of Practice.

Based on this report and the mapping of the status quo in Latvian higher education system the following roadmap is provided for the government to coordinate the implementation process. The roadmap aims to facilitate the initiation of institutional change and establish a regulative and structural framework for the Latvian higher education system. This roadmap is called "Roadmap 1.0" since the first action for government, along with stakeholders, is to develop a more comprehensive roadmap "2.0", building on the steps listed in table 4.

**TABLE 4** Roadmap 1.0

| Steps | Timeline | Output | Aim |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1a. Implementation plan | Spring 2022 | "White Paper/Concept Note" | Establishing mid- to long-term targets for the reform of AC |
| 1b. Planning and securing resources | 2022 | Financial instruments (linked to other reforms) to initiate institutional change in HR-issues<br>Roadmap 2.0 | Securing the resources for reform |
| 2. Planning and selecting pilots and strategic development projects | 2023 | Pilot institutions or units selected. Projects selected | Establishing a mid-term programme to support the change<br>Exemplify and test the desired change |
| 3. Establishing feedback and monitoring systems | 2022 – 23 | Selected indicators and manual for data collection on staff<br>Nominations of a reference group | Avoid "project logic" and secure sustainability of the reform |
| 4.Evaluating outcomes | 2025/2027 (depending on the length of the project and pilot funding) | Analysis of collected data and institutional development plans from pilots and other institution<br>Report of reference group | Re-evaluate the "white paper" and make necessary changes |
| 5.Drafting new regulations | 2027/30 | New integrated regulation on ACF | Codify and generalize change |

*Source:* World Bank

**The roadmap is dependent on funding being available for the reform (for instance, structural funds, budget funding) and parallel ongoing reforms in the higher education sector.** The working group recommends that the reform of academic careers and HR in universities be seen as an integral part of all ongoing structural, institutional, and legislative reforms.

**As a first step the team proposes that the government utilizes this consultative report to develop a "white paper" on the ACF (see recommendations on development principles 5.1 and foreseen risks 5.2).** In effect, the white paper would include "Roadmap 2.0", which would be the updated version of the roadmap described above in table 4. The white paper, based on the stakeholder hearings and consultations, would include

1. a career framework proposal (see section 5.3)
2. proposed qualitative and quantitative targets for the reform (see section 5.1)
3. a more detailed plan for implementation based on the scenarios presented in this document (see section 6)
4. a plan for securing resources for selected policy measures, and
5. detailed aims for the reforms and instruments used for partial/incremental implementation.

**The WB team recommends that the implementation be based on selected pilots and incremental strategically funded development projects.** This means that the government should put out a call for piloting institutions or units as well as set up a funding instrument to support institutional change.

**Planning of the pilots and strategically funded development projects, based on Roadmap 2.0, should, as a second step of implementation, start as soon as possible.** The pilots should be integrated carefully into other ongoing reforms in the sectors (consolidations, funding, internal governance) and strategic funding should be used by institutions to strengthen their personnel planning and to meet the quantitative and qualitative goals set in the white paper. (See appendix 4 for more detail on aspects of the pilots that should be considered).

**As a third step, the team further recommends that the government (for instance as an internal project) establishes a reference group for follow-up and support of the development of pilots and strategic projects.** This reference group would comprise a mixture of members, such as former institutional leaders and international experts (for an example, see appendix 3). The role of the reference group would be

- to follow up on implementation and to monitor the projects and pilots
- to participate in the continuous formative evaluation of pilots and projects (that is, to provide feedback on the plans, reports, and other outputs of projects with the aim to ensure that they are connected to the overall aim of the reform and follow good international examples)
- to ensure the sustainability of partial and incremental implementation.

**As a fourth step, the team recommends that, following the "experimental phase" of the implementation (which is expected to last 3–5 years), a careful assessment of the projects and pilots should be done.** The aim of the evaluation would be to develop an adequate database of qualitative assessments of the pilots and projects for the finalization of the ACF and possible legislative changes related to it (in 2027–30).

APPENDIX1

# IDEAS PAPER: SUMMARY

**According to previous studies,[27] academic careers in Latvia are shaped by two basic factors: the autonomy of HEIs and the legislative and administrative features of the country's academic landscape.** To start with the autonomy of HEIs, comparative studies conducted by international agencies[28] show that Latvian HEIs have a high degree of autonomy, especially in terms of staffing. For instance, Latvian HEIs, both public and private, are allowed to open and close vacancies, define the content and number of positions, and define their salary system, including its performance-based components. In practice, however, institutions strictly follow regulations, funding, and public policies that form the practical administrative framework for HEIs. This approach is particularly true of public institutions. The Latvian characteristics of personnel policies in higher education consist of multiple administrative and regulatory details and traditions such as

- Separate legislation pertaining to science and higher education impact job descriptions and faculty structures.
- Insufficient funding determines that the overall salary level of academics and academic managers complies with minimum salaries set out in regulations.
- The minimum quantitative targets set for PhD holders and professors have an impact on personnel planning.
- The selection procedures closely follow the national tradition based on elections, the qualifications framework, and the policies of the Council of Higher Education.
- A system of a renewable six-year term for academic positions has created a unique career system without permanent academic positions.
- The lack of a retirement age has had a negative impact on the termination of careers and the career prospects of young researchers and academics.
- The national regulation on the doctoral degree (before the current reform) partly disconnected the doctorate from the institutional educational policies and personnel practices.
- Language regulation has had an impact on the status of non-Latvian-speaking staff.

**In other words, while the formal staffing autonomy in Latvia is high, the actual autonomy that is exercised is somewhat weak or intermediate, at least in some public institutions.** The main reasons for this are limited financial resources and national labor policies.

27. Arnhold et al. 2018. *Focus on Performance* and Arnhold, Nina, Elias Pekkola, Vitus Püttmann, and Andrée Sursock, 'Academic Careers in Latvia: Reforms in a European Context.' In *Research Handbook on Managing Academics*, edited by Cláudia Sarrico, Maria Rosa, and Teresa Carvalho. Cheltenham and Camberley, UK and Northampton, Mass., USA: Edward Elgar Publishing. Forthcoming.

28. OECD 2016. 'Education in Latvia.' Paris: OECD Publishing. This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD; Pruvot, Enora, and Thomas Estermann 2017 *University Autonomy in Europe III. The Scorecard 2017.* Brussels: European University Association, and Crosier, David, Peter Birch, Olga Davydovskaia, Daniela Kocanova, and Teodora Parveva. 2018. *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Academic Staff — 2017.* European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice. Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union, hereafter referred to as Eurydice 2017 and accessible at: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/modernisation-higher-education-europe-academic-staff---2017_en

**That said, the general landscape is changing.** For instance, the MoES has taken initial steps to reform PhD education in Latvia. Professors and Associate Professors can be permanently employed after the Constitutional Court struck down the six-year rule. Furthermore, the current government is implementing governance reforms comprising changes to the internal governance structure of universities and to the institutional status of some universities and reforming the career framework so that it encompasses both the higher education and science sectors. In addition, several initiatives to modernize personnel management and remuneration practices have been launched in HEIs.[29]

### Institutional Context: Higher Education Institutions

In 2019, there were 6 universities, 21 higher education institution and academies, 17 state colleges, 8 private colleges, and 2 branches of foreign HEIs in Latvia.[30]

### Staff in Higher Education Institutions

During the period 2018–19, there were 5,136 academic staff employed in the state-funded HEIs of whom 4,195 had their primary place of employment at an HEI. Of those, 593 were professors and 1,194 were researchers and senior researchers. There were 4,575 general staff.

Of the number of academic staff whose primary place of employment was a HEI, 6 percent were under 30 years of age, 49 percent were aged 30–39, 24 percent were aged 40–49, and 16 percent were 64+ years old.

Latvian state-funded HEIs employ a significant proportion of women, namely 2,312 or 55 percent, of whom 259 are professors and 568 are leading researchers.

In the private HEIs, there were 1,138 academic staff over the same period of whom 511 had their primary place of employment at an HEI. There were 438 general staff. The gender ratio is similar to that of state-funded HEIs: 284 women, of whom 37 are professors and 17 are leading researchers.[31]

The following are the state-funded HEIs arranged by decreasing number of students:

1. University of Latvia (UL)
2. Rīga Technical University (RTU)
3. Rīgas Stradiņš University (RSU)
4. Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LULST)
5. Daugavpils University (DU)
6. Rēzekne Academy of Technologies (RAT)
7. Latvian Academy of Sport Education (LASE)
8. Liepāja University (LiepU)
9. BA School of Business and Finance

29. For example, the European Social Fund (EFS) programs for 2014–20, specifically objective 8.2.3, which aims at better governance within HEIs including the review of remuneration principles and practices for academics; objective 8.2.2, which aims at strengthening the capacity and competence of academic staff members, and objective 8.2.1, which aims at the development of competitive study programs in European Union languages and joint doctoral programs.

30. See *Pārskats par Latvijas augstāko izglītību 2019. gadā. Galvenie statistikas dati (Review of Latvian higher education in 2019. Key statistics)*: https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/media/2122/download, p 5 (title translated by the authors).

31. According to the draft "Izglītības attīstības pamatnostādnes 2021.–2027. gadam "Nākotnes prasmes nākotnes sabiedrībai"" ("Education Development Guidelines 2021–2027 — "Skills for the Future Society"). See https://likumi.lv/ta/id/324332-par-izglitibas-attistibas-pamatnostadnem-2021-2027-gadam (title translated by the authors).

10. Latvian Academy of Culture (LAC)
11. Art Academy of Latvia (AAL)
12. Latvian Maritime Academy (LMA)
13. Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (VeUAS)
14. Vidzemes University of Applied Sciences (ViUAs)
15. Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music (JVLAM)
16. National Defense Academy of Latvia (NDAL).

The two largest, state-funded universities, the University of Latvia (UL) and Riga Technical University (RTU), employ more than 50 percent of academic staff, including researchers.

### Scientific Institutions and Research Institutes

**According to the Law on Scientific Activity,32 scientific institutions include "research institutes, higher education institutions, commercial companies, and other institutions whose articles of association, by-law or constitution refer to scientific activity and participation in the process of acquiring and improving scientific qualification and that are registered in the register of scientific institutions."** Currently, there are 23 state-funded and 48 privately funded scientific institutions in Latvia.[33] The following are the state-funded scientific institutions arranged, decreasingly, by the amount of state funding they receive:

1. University of Latvia (UL)
2. Rīga Technical University (RTU)
3. Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis
4. Rīgas Stradiņš University (RSU)
5. Daugavpils University (DU)
6. Institute of Solid-State Physics, University of Latvia
7. Latvian State Forest Research Institute "Silava"
8. Latvian Biomedical Research and Study Centre
9. Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LULST)
10. Latvian State Institute of Wood Chemistry
11. University of Latvia — Institute of Mathematics and Computer Science
12. Institute of Food safety, Animal Health and Environment "BIOR"
13. Institute of Agricultural Resources and Economics
14. Institute of Electronics and Computer Science
15. Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (VeUAS)
16. Institute of Horticulture
17. Liepāja University (LiepU)
18. Rēzekne Academy of Technologies (RAT)
19. Vidzemes University of Applied Sciences (ViUAs)
20. Art Academy of Latvia (AAL)
21. Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music (JVLAM).

In addition, the Latvian Maritime Academy (LMA) and the Latvian Academy of Culture (LAC) both possess the status of "scientific institution" although neither receives core scientific funding. Instead, they receive performance-based funding for their scientific research outputs.

32. https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/107337.

33. https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/zinatniskas-institucijas.

**The Latvian National Scientific Activity Information System (NZDIS)[34] compiles information on Latvian scientific institutions, researchers, research infrastructure, projects, and research results.** The number of institutions has recently declined mainly as a result of legislative changes that now allow universities as organizations to register as research performers (before that only some of their subunits had this status). According to the Law on Scientific Activity, a scientific institution should have at least five PhD holders in the relevant field of science.[35]

**In addition to scientific institutions, the Law on Scientific Activity recognizes scientific institutes and divides them into four categories:**

1. Public agency
2. Derived public entity
3. Structural unit of a higher education institution
4. Private law legal entity or its structural unit (founded as a state or local government capital company).

The following are the state-funded scientific institutes arranged, decreasingly, by the amount of the state-budget funding they receive:

1. Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis
2. Institute of Solid-State Physics, University of Latvia
3. Latvian State Forest Research Institute "Silava"
4. Latvian Biomedical Research and Study Centre
5. Latvian State Institute of Wood Chemistry
6. University of Latvia — Institute of Mathematics and Computer Science
7. Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health, and Environment (BIOR)
8. Institute of Agricultural Resources and Economics
9. Institute of Electronics and Computer Science
10. Institute of Horticulture

## Staff in Scientific Institutions

**The number of research personnel36 employed on a full-time basis (in state-funded and private scientific institutions) has increased minimally** — from 5,396 in 2013 to 5,806 in 2018. The largest proportion of researchers work part time. In 2018, only 25 percent of researchers were employed on a full-time basis. At the same time, although the renewal of research human capital has been significantly promoted (in 2018, 50 percent of research-oriented staff was younger than 44), the total ratio of researchers in Latvia is still critically low — only 46 percent of the European average in 2018. The small number of researchers is not enough to develop stable links and knowledge flows with industry and organizations, to be fully involved in EU-wide projects and programs, and to ensure the mobility needed for knowledge transfer.[37]

34. https://sciencelatvia.lv/#/pub/home.

35. https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/107337-law-on-scientific-activity

36. According to the Law on Scientific Activity: scientists; research technical staff; research attending staff. In English also known as "research personnel" or "R&D staff."

37. "Zinātnes, tehnoloģijas attīstības un inovācijas pamatnostādnes 2021–2027. gadam" ("Guidelines for Science, Technology Development and Innovation for the Years 2021–2027"). See https://likumi.lv/ta/id/322468-par-zinatnes-tehnologijas-attistibas-un-inovacijas-pamatnostadnem-2021-2027-gadam (title and text translated by the authors).

APPENDIX 2

# REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTERING AN ACADEMIC CAREER: PHD

## Background

The Latvian Higher Law states that, in order to be recruited for a professorship, a candidate is required to hold a doctoral degree and to have at least three years of experience at an associate professor or at full professor level. The exemption from this rule are professorships in the arts, which have specific arts-related requirements.

In 2021, several proposals were submitted for discussion by the Education and Science Commission of Parliament which challenged the requirement of a PhD degree in all fields. The main objective of these submissions was to open the competition for professorship (Professor, Associate Professor, or Docent) at a higher education institution in Latvia to persons without a PhD degree who have at least three years of work experience at an Associate Professor or Professor level at a HEI in Latvia or abroad. These proposals foresaw that the latter case would be limited to "allied countries" (for example, countries from the EU or NATO) and that candidates would have to hold a Latvian (or dual) citizenship which is recognized in accordance with the Citizenship Law. These submissions also mentioned a "comparable scientific and pedagogical experience" to that which is required by the Law on Higher Education Institutions and corresponding government regulations but without specifying the conditions for recognition or the institution that would have the authority to confer such recognition.

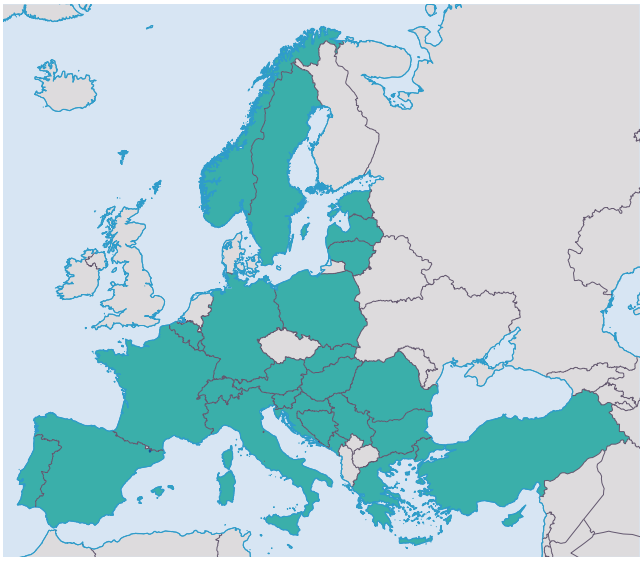
## State of Play in Europe

The requirements to enter the higher education system are quite important for the quality of any higher education system. In the majority of European countries, the minimal requirement to enter the system is a doctorate — as is shown in red in figure A2.[38] In the countries in blue, the doctoral degree is not required of academic staff.

The *Eurydice* report, which provides the best European overview on the topic, states:

> The extent to which the doctorate is legally required may vary according to the type of higher education institution and/or sector. In general, in countries with several types of institutions that involve different academic staff categories, the doctorate is more commonly required at universities than at institutions outside the university sector … In around a quarter of all European higher education systems — namely the German-speaking Community of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Malta,

**FIGURE A2** Doctoral Degree as a Legal Requirement for Accessing Certain Academic Staff Categories, 2015–16



*Source:* Eurydice 2017 3.

38. *Eurydice* 2017 33.

> the Netherlands, Finland, the United Kingdom and Iceland — top-level regulations do not formalise the doctorate as the minimum qualification for any academic staff category. However, most of these countries indicate that while not a legal requirement, the doctorate still plays an important role in an academic career. For example, in the Netherlands, despite institutional autonomy, all research universities require a PhD for all new scientific positions.

The report goes on to observe that, when looking at the available data (rather than legislation), it is possible to identify

> a cluster of six higher education systems — namely Germany, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Finland and Switzerland –, where more than 90% of university professors hold a doctoral degree ... In five higher education systems, the proportion of university professors with a doctoral degree is situated between around 60 % and 80 %. These are Croatia, Ireland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Norway.[39]

In other words, where the doctorate is not required by law, it is nevertheless a norm, particularly in the university sector. This requirement is closely linked to the notion that a doctoral education prepares individuals for an academic career which combines both research and teaching and ensures that teaching is informed by the most up-to-date research findings.

Academies at fine arts and other art-related institutions are exceptions, particularly if they are stand-alone, specialized institutions. However, if they are part of the university sector or of a university, arts professors would be expected to hold a doctorate because they would be teaching at least some theoretical courses and not just practice-based courses. They would also be subject to traditional academic career requirements based on publications, research output and funding, and other factors.

### Policy Analysis and Proposal

1. **Brain circulation in a higher education system is quite important; however, it should not imply a lowering of the system's recruitment standards.** While it is essential that Latvia's ACF allows for cross-border movement, the practices and norms on which academic careers are based must be recognized internationally. Across Europe, these practices and norms require that full professors at universities must hold a doctorate. Exceptions to this rule can be made at lower levels of the academic ladder. It is extremely rare that academics in Western Europe do not hold degrees unless they are technicians or support staff in the sector or teach in professional and vocational HEIs (as is the case in Ireland, Germany or the Netherlands, with their strong professional higher education sector).

2. **Employment policies regarding foreign nationals should not differ from the recruitment policies that apply to Latvian citizens.** Without a doctoral degree, it is very difficult to evaluate a candidate's application for an academic profession. Generally, if a candidate possesses good track and research funding records, they hold a doctoral degree. In other words, a good scientific record, in general, with solid internationally indexed publications, whether European or American patents or a decent H-index, goes hand in hand with having a doctoral degree.

3. **It is essential to preserve, in academic and non-academic careers, the title of PhD which is becoming central in knowledge-based societies.** Establishing an equivalency can lead to

39. *Eurydice* 2017 33 – 4.

downgrading the PhD and runs counter to major international trends that view the PhD as the gold standard. A doctorate is not equivalent to some metrics. It should be a body of work on one subject which has made a significant contribution to the field, as spelled out in the Salzburg recommendations. It should be noted that the Salzburg Recommendations are now part of the agreement within the Bologna Process, which Latvia signed on to.

4. **Every exception to this rule may lead to further widening of the rule in the future, which might become a threat to the quality level of higher education in Latvia.** However, two other alternative routes to the doctorate might be created: 1) recognition of prior learning (RPL) and 2) thesis by publications. RPL at the doctoral level is accepted by (some) French universities. The process is quite rigorous and requires that a candidate shows s/he has published a body of work on one topic which has made a significant contribution. The "thesis by publication" is becoming current in some scientific fields and might be useful to Latvia. It is also tightly regulated by those universities that offer this option. In either case, it is the university alone that decides whether or not to confer the PhD.

5. **The best option for staff without PhD is to follow the framework as explained in section 5.3.**

6. **If a PhD equivalency process cannot be avoided, it should respect the following principles:**

    a. It should be based on a combination of criteria to ensure appropriate qualifications: having been a principal investigator in a specified number of research grants; having a minimum specified number of publications in top international, peer-reviewed journals indexed in such data sets as Web of Science or Scopus; having provided doctoral level advisory work to PhD candidates; presentations at international conferences; invitations as keynote speakers at international conferences, and other factors. It is strongly advised that a combination of all these criteria should be required.

    b. It should identify the processes and the institution responsible for certifying the equivalency.

    c. It should be non-discriminatory. It is unlikely that limiting this possibility to foreigners from "allied countries" and those holding a Latvian (or dual) citizenship would withstand legal scrutiny. In other words, if the PhD requirement is lowered for some, it will be lowered for everyone.

APPENDIX 3

# THE IRISH INSTITUTIONAL DIALOGUES

## Introduction

This appendix is provided as an example of how strategic institutional goals and new initiatives are developed and supported in Ireland. The example is provided to illustrate the international dimension of the evaluation and could be adapted to pilot a new academic career framework for Latvian institutions.

## Background

As of November 2021, the higher education sector in Ireland consisted of eight universities, five technological universities, two institutes of technology, four colleges of education, and several small (partly) publicly funded colleges and private third-level colleges.

The Higher Education Authority[40] is responsible for setting up annual "institutional dialogues" with each institution to discuss how they are meeting the specific goals set out in the National Strategy. For the period 2018 – 2020 these objectives were:

1. Providing a strong talent pipeline combining knowledge, skills and employability which responds effectively to the needs of national enterprise, public service and community sectors, both nationally and regionally, and maintains Irish leadership in Europe for skill availability.

2. Creating rich opportunities for national and international engagement which enhances the learning environment and delivers a strong bridge to enterprise and the wider community.

3. Promoting excellent research, development and innovation that have relevance, growing engagement with external partners and impact on the economy and society while strengthening the country's standing to become an Innovation Leader in Europe.

4. Significantly improving the equality of opportunity through Education and Training and recruiting a student body which reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population.

5. To demonstrate consistent improvement in the quality of the learning environment with a close eye on international best practice through a strong focus on quality and academic excellence.

6. To demonstrate consistent improvement in governance, leadership, and operational excellence.

These key priorities served as the foundation for system development, informed investment decisions and provided the basis on which to build greater transparency and accountability in the future.

Each priority or system objective was accompanied by high-level targets and indicators. The individual HEI's response to these targets and indicators were aggregated to compile a national picture as part of a separate data collection exercise which was also managed by the HEA.

40. The Irish higher education system is governed by the Ministry for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is a governmental buffer body between the Department and the HIEs. There is no such buffer body in Latvia but its role could be played by another type of institution.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) was requested to lead this process and was assisted in this regard by external advisors.

### The role of the external advisors

The panels conducting the institutional dialogues were composed of international experts and former Irish institutional leaders, assisted by HEA staff. The external advisors were asked to:

1. Review the draft mission-based performance compact of those HEIs assigned to them.
2. Advise on the extent to which there is evidence that HEIs are demonstrating a responsiveness to the System Performance Framework.
3. Advise on the extent to which there is evidence that HEIs have plans to improve performance through better strategic planning and management.
4. Advise on the extent to which there is evidence that in proposing a response to the framework and national need, institutions are being appropriately strategic and ambitious with reference to their published or planned institutional strategy, mission and goals.
5. Review the HEA's Innovation and Transformation Fund 2018 proposals of those HEIs assigned to them.
6. Participate in a short pre-meeting briefing session in respect of the process and individual HEI submissions.

As part of the meetings with the HEIs and HEA Senior Management Team and under HEA Chairpersonship, advisors were asked to participate in meetings and lead discussion with those HEIs assigned to them in respect of:

1. Mission-based performance compacts
2. Innovation fund proposals
3. Other areas of merit or concern that advisors or HEA senior management might wish to raise with HEIs
4. Any other policy issues relating to either individual institutions or the sector as a whole.

Following the meetings with HEIs, advisors were asked to assist in the preparation of individual feedback statements for HEIs.

1. HEA staff took short notes at each meeting to assist advisors in feedback preparation
2. Advisors were asked to liaise with the HEA in the finalization of individual HEI feedback in the days following meetings
3. Sources: Advisory Note for External Advisors, 2018; HEA's contribution to the OECD seminar on institutional performance agreements in higher education, 15 November 2021.

APPENDIX 4

# Q&A ON THE PILOTS AND STRATEGICALLY FUNDED PROJECTS

The recommendations in this report were discussed with the Working Group set up by the ministry. Several questions regarding implementation were raised during the discussion. Appendix 4 presents them as a list of questions and answer which can be utilized during the implementation process.

Questions about the pilots:

- What kind of budget is needed for those units volunteering for a pilot?
- What should be the optimal size of the unit piloting the new framework?
- At national level, what should be the scale of the pilot that would allow a credible evaluation, that is, how many people and/or how many units?
- What is being piloted — tenure track? Within what timeframe? What aspects could be evaluated in such a short time frame — recruitment, negotiating the contract, performance evaluation? There is a need to test a few aspects within a very limited timeframe of two years.

The scope of pilots and projects are dependent on available resources. Pilots require more funding than individual projects. For instance, if new types of positions (such as tenure-track) are piloted, funding needs to be secured from external and institutional sources for several years while in the long run the position will become a permanent item in institutions' personnel budget — see the example of Germany.

If the framework is piloted holistically in an institution or a unit (that is, it includes all key aspects of a new career management policy), the piloting could be part of a center of excellence initiative or structural reform of the institution which would receive earmarked funding for HR-development and recruitments.

Alternatively, the projects could concentrate on the development of some institutional practices, planning and data collection as well as the harmonization of the titles and career steps (see table 1). Projects could focus on any of the following aspects:

1. Developing a personnel strategy for full-time academic staff
2. Developing financial management and salary systems aligned with work tasks
3. Developing a departmental plan for hourly-based employment and mapping out the needs for Professors of Practice/adjunct professors
4. Developing transparent practices for selection as well as connecting election procedures to genuine employment possibilities (that is, having one applicant for a position does not warrant an election)
5. Developing clear and transparent communication on institutional performance-based evaluation schemes and promotion criteria
6. Developing a faculty handbook

7. Developing a data collection process and its use for HR-management

8. Implementing and applying the national framework

9. Establishing practices for mobility, returning employees and international recruitments

10. Including a section on internationalization (recruitment and mobility) in the personnel strategy

### Questions concerning the substance of the projects/pilots

2.1 Mobility should be both incoming and outgoing: the language policy limits both the incoming mobility and the internationalization of the system. Revisiting the language policy is essential for enhancing the quality of the system.

Mobility of Latvian academic staff is crucial for the internationalization of academic careers in Latvia. There should therefore be possibilities for international mobility which can be integrated into an individual's academic career path. This means that in planning and implementing mobility an individual's return to Latvian higher education should be as seamless as possible. The career framework should also allow international recruitments and incoming mobility which means that teaching in English or other foreign languages should be made possible for positions other than those of visiting teachers.

2.2 How can a collegial process (and an international dimension) be preserved for recruitment if the role of elections is reduced? This is particularly important in the context of the current governance reform, which eliminates some elective posts.

The collegial dimension in recruitment can be guaranteed by securing the role and representation of staff (and students) in preparation of calls, interviewing candidates, and making proposals about selection from among qualified candidates.

2.3 Regarding the importance of having a core of full-time staff and how to implement this reform in the current context where funding for teaching and research derives from two sources, how will such a reform be incorporated into one employment contract?

This is a crucial question that includes aspects of personnel planning, financial management and funding. In order to successfully combine the funding sources, departments need to be large enough to cope with the financial risk related to an individual project and recruitment. Full time (permanent) academic staff can have a "performance target" for securing funding for their own salary or/and for the salary of a member of their team. This amounts to a combination of institutional resources (mainly for teaching and basic research) and external funding (research, applied research, consultancy and so on and so forth). The time span of the activity needs to be longer than a year because of the "volatility" of project funding. The performance target should be assessed by, for instance, utilizing a mean of three years. Academics can also have different job descriptions and the allocation of working time as well as performance measures can vary over time.

2.4 How many different academic titles could a small country support?

The ACF provided in this report is a broad framework which includes the most typical types of position identified in stakeholder consultations. In principle, in a small higher education system there should be research- and teaching-oriented positions in all career steps; there should

be a slot for practice-oriented positions and promotion mechanisms (tenure track). The fewer the titles, the better. However, sometimes it is more informative to have different titles in order to distinguish between, for instance, a university junior lecturer in languages from an assistant in social sciences since their day-to-day work and career aims are probably very different.

### 2.5 The importance of data collection

An adequate knowledge database on personnel structure, academic staff, contracts and positions as well as remuneration and recruitments is the only sustainable way of ensuring impactful and informed personnel development.

#### Questions concerning the evaluation of pilots

- Should it be based on quantitative or qualitative data?
- What should the success factors be? For instance, the number of applicants per position; number of international applicants; whether or not institutions have concrete career plans (recruitment processes, performance, the nature of the staff contracts and a good balance between teaching and research)?
- Should all the indicators be the same for all universities?
- What happens to staff who were recruited during the pilot phase once a pilot is evaluated negatively?

The evaluation should be based on qualitative and quantitative indicators. Ideally, some national quantitative and qualitative follow-up-indicators would be selected that could then be applied to institutional development plans, projects and evaluations. In addition, institutions could propose their own assessment criteria in addition to such national indicators. The assessment of individual academics and institutional processes should be kept distinct. For instance, well managed, transparent and fair handling of an exit from academic career is one of the stress tests of tenure track processes. When piloting long-term investments such as the recruitment of permanent professors, the pilot needs to be part of the personnel planning of the institutions. It cannot be considered only as a project.

APPENDIX 5

# LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS

The stakeholder consultations were held with representatives of the following institutions:
Latvian Academy of Science;
Association of the State Research Institutes;
Latvian Council of Science;
Association of Latvian Young Scientists;
University of Latvia;
Riga Technical University;
Riga Stradiņš University;
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies;
Daugavpils University;
Rēzekne Academy of Technologies;
Liepāja University;
Ventspils University of Applied Sciences;
Vidzemes University of Applied Sciences;
Latvian Academy of Sport Education;
BA School of Business and Finance;
Latvian Academy of Culture;
Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Musics;
Art Academy of Latvia;
Latvian Maritime Academy;
RISEBA University of Applied Sciences;
EKA University of Applied Sciences;
Turība University;
Stockholm School of Economics in Riga;
Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees (LIZDA);
Council of Higher Education;
Saeima Education, Culture and Science Committee.