



COLLEGE of LAW

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**SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT
ON
THE STUDY PROGRAMME
“COMMERCE”**

RĪGA, 2011

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1. PROGRAMME GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The programme of studies “Commerce” was first accredited in 2005, this accreditation being valid for 2 years. Professors Maija Šenfelde and Inese Vorončuka and Ieva Zaharāne (the latter representing the Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia) were the expert members for this study programme. Accreditation was again granted in 2007, this time for the maximum allowable term of 6 years (accreditation certificate No.027 - 1179, 20.06.2007.). Studiju programmas eksperti: Professors Vulfs Kozlinskis (chair of the committee) and Viktors Nešpors and Ieva Zaharāne (again representing the Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia) for this study programme.

Annual self-assessments of execution of the study programme and the results achieved thereby are described in [reports](#) approved by the Board of the College of Law.

The aims and objectives of the study programme are in conformity with the Framework of Qualifications for the [European Higher Education Area](#) and the 5th level of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) (ref. Regulations on the classification of education in Latvia, adopted 2 December 2008, available in Latvian only, “Noteikumi par Latvijas izglītības klasifikāciju”, MK noteikumi Nr.990).

The aim of the study programme corresponds to the mission of the College of Law, that is, to turn out, after two years of study, theoretically knowledgeable and practically oriented specialists in commerce (business) for future carriers in the national economy, taking due account of the specific characteristics of Latvia as a Member State of the European Union. Graduates gain competence to organise (set up) and to run (direct) businesses, to ensure that the enterprise and its sub-units operate effectively and profitably.

The regional branches of the College of Law respond to local needs and characteristics by adding particular courses and in regard to finding in-service training opportunities for students. The Consultative Council of the College includes employers’ representatives and takes care that the programme is constantly updated and improved to meet demands of the job market.

The objectives are:

1. To train qualified and competitive business (commerce) specialists, ensuring that they acquire knowledge relevant to this profession;
2. To give a detailed appreciation of relevant legal acts;
3. To encourage students to develop creative thinking techniques, to show initiative, to deal with unexpected situations, to apply the knowledge gained to practical activities.

Graduation from the study programme confers the professional qualification, “business specialist” (professional code – 3339 20).

Continuing development of the College of Law is based on providing access to high quality studies. This is the sole means whereby the study programme can survive and be attractive given intense competition in the field of higher education. All [study programmes](#) at the College of Law include provisions for their further enhancement.

Competitiveness of study programmes offered by the College of Law is guaranteed by a close relationship between course work and in-service training. Students are taught the strategic planning of activities, preparation of relevant documents, and they engage in role playing to simulate how an enterprise functions, these activities supplementing attendance at lectures and seminars. This programme prepares students to face real conditions post-graduation. During the course of study, students are instructed on how to compose documents necessary to create and to register an enterprise with the Register of Enterprises of the Republic of Latvia. In addition the currently topical issue of creating a microenterprise features in the study programme. As a result,

all of our graduates have been able to find appropriate jobs the crisis in Latvia notwithstanding[pursuit of these studies has induced in many students a desire to found their own company.

2. SCOPE AND ORGANISATION OF STUDIES

The study programme, “Commerce” has been created to comply with a number of Laws of the republic of Latvia, notably, On Education, On Professional Education, and On Institutions of Higher Education, as well as on the Regulation issued by the Cabinet of Ministers on First Level Higher Education.

The requirements to gain recognition as a business specialist have been set out in [Regulation No. 461](#) (2010.18.05), „*Noteikumi par Profesiju klasifikatoru, profesijai atbilstošiem pamatuzdevumiem un kvalifikācijas pamatprasībām un profesiju klasifikatora lietošanas un aktualizēšanas kārtību*” issued by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, (available in Latvian only), see for a business specialist, (profession code – 2423 07) as well as the requisite [professional standard](#) (PS 0119).

Study at the College of Law takes the form of full-time (day-time, evening) activities, as well as part-time, external study. A total of **80 credits (120 ECTS)** must be accumulated to complete a [study programme](#).

The study programme “Law” complies with **national standards** for higher professional education. Following Cabinet [Regulation No. 141](#), adopted 20 March 2001, “Regulations regarding the State Standard for First Level Professional Higher Education”, the study programme consists of:

- General studies - 20 credits;
- Specialised studies – 36 credits, including:
 - Mandatory specialist courses - 34 credits;
 - Elective study course (the student must choose the course) - 2 credits;
- Training – 16 credits;
- Preparation of the qualification paper – 8 credits.

Studies pursued following the prescribed programme also ensure sustainable development of the programme; this process is a responsible task, one which engages students, College staff and employers, and is based on co-operation.

An exchange of good practice has taken place with educational institutions **offering similar studies** in other countries (USA, Canada, Australia, Hungary, Germany, Turkey, Lithuania, Estonia, Denmark, Belgium, Great Britain, Japan): Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), Camosun College (Canada), Saxion University of Applied Science (the Netherlands), Akdeniz University (Turkey), Kwantlen Polytechnic University (Canada), etc. A comparison of the programme offered by the College of Law, and analogous programmes at a number of foreign institutions of higher learning, shows that the form and content of the programme offered by the College conforms to international standards.

Pursuit of these studies leads to development of students’ personality, and also is a process that facilitates resolution of problems encountered by a democratic society; in addition the programme is designed to meet demands of the job market.

With a view to strengthening their relationship to teaching staff students are requested twice every academic year to complete a written survey about the quality of their studies. Students are invited to give their appraisal of course content, quality, the rate of progress, the quality of the material infrastructure available to them, and, furthermore, rate the overall performance of lecturers. Results from these surveys are discussed at meetings of the Board of

the College of Law, at meetings of the teaching staff, as well as at operational meetings of the College.

Survey results are also included in the self-assessment [report](#). In academic year 2010/2011, 80% of all students participated in the autumn survey (25 respondents), and 81 % (11 respondents) took part in the spring survey.

Individual approach to study comprises:

1) students are provided with teaching materials both distributed in paper form, or electronically or as presentations and as all textbooks published by the College are electronically accessible;

2) students are afforded the possibility of regular consultation with lecturers, and lecturers tutor students individually so that they might make up past-due submissions and prepare for exams;

3) a personalised study schedule is prepared for each student who come to study at the College from other institutions of higher learning;

4) placement of students for suitable training is sought out in collaboration with employers;

5) the topic of the qualification paper is agreed by the student and lecturer, taking into account the student's level of knowledge, skills, capabilities and interests;

6) each student who expresses the wish to renew pursuit of his studies is offered the most advantageous study plan.

The didacticism of the study programme dictates that the basis for pursuit of studies is independent work by the student, which process is alleviated by regular contact with lecturers. At the start of studies students are required to master the methodology of the study programme.

An integral part of the study programme is scientific research work, which the student is involved in from the first semester onwards, first attending lectures on scientific research methodology.

[Course descriptions](#) are formulated, assessment and approval of the content takes place based upon:

1) opinions expressed by students in surveys;

2) evaluation of the results of regular progress assessments and results of qualification examinations;

3) suggestions offered by representatives of the entities at which training takes place and by employers.

Student results are regularly analysed at meetings of the Board of the College of Law, at meetings of the State Examination Committee, by the Consultative Council, general meetings of lecturers, by the Study Programme Quality Assessment Committee, by the Student Authority and at operational meetings.

3. THE STUDY PROGRAMME. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Admission to study takes place following the **regulations of the College of Law**, which are published every year, including on the [home page](#) of the College.

The study programme comprises attending lectures, seminars and practical classes. Studies are organised in a number of training modules; assessment of progress is not made

during a course, but at its end. Great importance is attached to practical work, analysing problem situations and simulations of economic conditions. Leading specialists and researchers as invited lecturers give individual lectures, or a complete lecture cycle; several guest lecturers are from abroad, from Germany, the USA, Canada, Belgium, Australia and elsewhere. Discussions, situation analyses and case studies are also part of the study programme. In order to develop their skills, students are assigned roles when acting out situations, modelling the operation of various institutions, in resolving legal cases, legal consultations. Students are encouraged to communicate, as well as they are taught how to work in groups, resolve conflicts and raise their self-confidence. Considerable emphasis is placed on being honest, on an ability creatively to apply what they have learned, use scientific research methods and develop abilities to solve problems independently.

The evaluation procedure and assessment criteria in force at the College of Law are laid down in two College regulations, “**On examination procedures at the College of Law**” (in Latvian, „**Nolikums par pārbaudījumu norises kārtību Juridiskajā koledžā**”, and, “**On assessment of student knowledge**”, (in Latvian, „**Studentu zināšanu vērtēšanas nolikums**”). Lecturers explain the criteria they follow in their evaluation of a student’s home assignments, tests, project studies, presentations and various examinations.

The expected results upon completion of a [course of study](#) at the College of Law are indicated in course descriptions accessible at the College library, as well as on the home page of the College.

Students are able to arrange consultations with lecturers, as described on the College [home page](#); in addition lecturers’ scheduled availability is posted on the bulletin board of the College. **Consultations with lecturers may be arranged either for individuals, or for groups of students.** The telephone numbers and e-mail addresses may be made available to students. At the start of their studies each group of students is assigned an e-mail account which is used for communications by lecturers, disseminating lecture materials and other important information. Lecturers are expected to give personalised guidance to students, particularly to those who have not passed tests or exams, or who may not even have sat tests or exams. At the beginning of their studies, and at the start of each course, students are familiarised with the respective aims, challenges and expected results, as well as with the criteria by which their progress shall be assessed; this is done in order more efficiently to achieve the desired outcome. In the case of distance learning all of the required basic reading materials are made available to the student, as well as the possibility of using the computer facilities located in the College library, as well as computerised access to the Internet and to a number of databases of the College.

4. THE STUDENT BODY

Admission to studies at the first level of higher professional education takes place on the basis of competition, based upon results from the following centralised examinations: of the Latvian language and one foreign language (English, German, French, Russian), excepting those persons who completed their secondary education prior to 2004, as well as those who have completed secondary education abroad, individuals with special needs and those who have received a dispensation from taking these exams. Persons who completed their secondary education prior to 2004, individuals with special needs and those who have received a dispensation from taking centralised examinations are admitted based upon documents assessing their performance in secondary education in the following subjects: the Latvian language and one foreign language (English, German, French, Russian). These evaluations are considered as the equal of results from centralised examinations for administrative purposes.

In academic year 2010/2011 8 students first enrolled in the study programme “Human Resources Management”; this represents **an decrease of 75%** when compared with the numbers

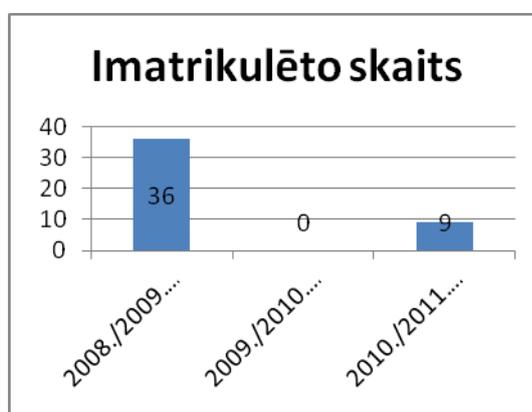
first enrolled in academic year 2008/2009. This large fall in student numbers is to be understood in the light of changes in the national economy as well as a consequence of emigration from Latvia

Table No.1

Number of 1st year students

Academic year	Number
2008/2009	36
2009/2010	0
2010/2011	9

Diagram No. 1



The number of registered students, based upon centralised examination results: in academic year **2010/2011**, compared with the number for academic year 2008/2009 **in percentage terms is the same (11%)** of applicants with centralised examination results corresponding to levels A and B. On average (over the past three years), based on all applicants, 8,5% have centralised examination results falling into the levels A; B; C, an average 40% have results with level A; B; C; D; E; F. When comparing the applicants for academic year 2010/2011 with those for academic year 2008/2009, then the number of applicants has increased (by 14%) who have not sat [centralised examinations](#).

Table No. 2

Number of new students at advanced level

Academic year	Number
2008/2009	12
2009/2010	14
2010/2011	10

Each year there are a number of students who first register for study at other than the earliest possible level. This reflects the fact the many students renew their studies after a break, or after taking an academic leave of absence, or have switched to study at the College of Law from another institution of higher education. In academic year 2010/2011, 10 students started their studies at the College at a later point in the study programme; this is 28,6% fewer than the number that did so in academic year 2009/2010 (14 students). However, when comparing student

numbers for academic year 2010/2011 with those for academic year 2008/2009 (20 students), it is noted that the number of students has decreased by 16,7 %.

For academic year 2010/2011, the College of Law has facilities in-situ to allow students to pursue study of “Commerce” in Riga.

Tabula Nr.3

Total number of students for the study programme “Commerce”

stat	Date	Full	Part-time	Total	Evening	External	E study	Riga	Gulbene	Liepaja	Valmiera	Ventspils
	01,09,2008	0	67	67	26	41	0	64	0	3	0	0
	10,10,2008	0	101	101	36	65	0	98	0	3	0	0
	01,02,2009	0	64	64	24	40	0	64	0	0	0	0
	01,09,2009	19	41	60	19	41	0	60	0	0	0	0
	10,10,2009	20	39	59	20	39	0	59	0	0	0	0
	01,02,2010	9	23	32	9	18	5	32	0	0	0	0
	01,09,2010	10	21	31	10	16	5	31	0	0	0	0
	10,10,2010	10	29	39	10	22	7	39	0	0	0	0
	01,02,2011	1	12	13	1	5	7	13	0	0	0	0
	31,08,2011	0	13	13	0	5	8	13	0	0	0	0

To date total of 113 [graduates](#) have successfully completed this study programme gaining the qualification of “business specialist”. Over the past three years the number of graduates has been 19, in academic year 2008/2009, 22, in academic year 2009/2010, 14, in academic year 2010/2011.

Out of the number of students over the past three academic years [who have interrupted](#) their studies the largest fraction are those who do so for financial reasons; over the past three years this fraction has been 54,3%. Comparison of the results for the respective academic years shows that 29,4% fewer students failed to complete the course of study in 2010/2011 than in 2005/2009. In academic year 2010/2011 when compared with 2008/2009, 75% more students who have not renewed their studies after having taken out academic leave. Based on discussions with such students we found that that this has come about principally as a result of financial difficulties, i.e. the state of the national economy, as well as to increased emigration.

Students interests are represented by the **Student Authority** (as per the College of Law dated 16.03.2001) which has functioned from the outset of studies at the College.

The role of the [Student Authority](#) is to encourage development of the social side of student life at the College and to promote a maximally effective study process. Student representatives participate in the working of the Board of the College of Law. By a decision of the Board of the College of Law (see minutes Nr.116) financial support has been allocated for the Student Authority, and conforming to the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, Para. 53, point 4, this support comprises 1/200 of the budget of the College of Law. In 2010 this sum was 2648 Ls.

Every year the College carries out a survey of its graduates. The questionnaire covers the work experience of graduates, the degree to which they continue to study at the next level, the extent to which they are able to put to practical use knowledge and skills from their studies at the College of Law. The survey is carried out electronically, by sending the questionnaire to graduates. The response from graduates each year has been considerable; their replies are carefully analysed and conclusions, presented and discussed at meetings of the Board of the College, at general meetings of the lecturers, by the committees established to assess the quality of study programmes at the College, as well as being published in the annual self-assessment

report by the College. The [survey of graduates](#) carried out in 2011 showed that 97% stated that they rated as positive the knowledge acquired at the College.

5. SUPPORT FOR AND GUIDANCE OF STUDIES

Lecturers are hired by the Director of the College of Law with whom they conclude an employment contract. An enterprise agreement may be signed with selected lecturers (mostly ones that present practical courses); these agreements specify exactly how many lectures are to be presented and their content. The Deputy Director responsible for studies and programmes has overall responsibility for the educational processes, including control of studies.

The lecturer is responsible for delivering the full content of a course as described in the course outline, and respecting its overall place in the study programme. The lecturer must present high quality lectures, guide students to achieve success in their studies, as well as choose a good methodology and theoretical content. He is also obliged to ensure that students have access to and as necessary receive appropriate and adequate study materials/ The lecturer's performance is judged by the extent to which students master theoretical concepts, practical skills as well as by their ability successfully to integrate into the job market.

Delivery of a [study programme benefits](#) from the participation of highly qualified specialists. Out of all of the lecturers involved in study programmes (based on a weighting by credit points) **50%** have the College of Law as their principal place of employment, out of which **50%** are **elected academic staff**. Part-time lecturers deliver 50% of the courses in study programmes. With regard to the total number of lecturers involved with the course of studies (including full-time and part-time lecturers) 51,8% are elected academic personnel, whereas 48,2% are lecturers at the College who have not been elected to an academic position. In academic year 2010/2011, when compared with academic years 2009/2010 and 2008/2009, the number of academic staff has risen by 25%. Out of the total academic staff, in academic year 2010/2011, **12,5% of lecturers have a doctors degree**. In academic year 2010/2011, when compared with the situation in academic years 2009/2010 and 2008/2009, the fraction of lecturers with a doctors degree has increased by 28.8%.

The proportion of academic personnel involved in delivery of the programme, weighted by credit points, is 46,4% thus, the proportion of lecturers involved in delivery of the programme who are not elected academic staff is 53.6%.

60 % of the academic personnel are in the age bracket 25 - 44, 40 % , in the age bracket 45 – 64.

Highly qualified guest lecturers from Latvia and abroad are invited to the College in the interests of enhancing the study programmes. Guest lecturers have presented a wide variety of individual lectures or entire courses, covering such topics as challenges faced by businesses arising from the present economic situation, taxes and levies; students have been able to take part in training on how to be an “effective manager” thereby developing management and collaboration skills. Students have participated in the seminar series “Business seminars” offered by Jānis Roze, a leading business consultant specialising in psychology and business development. These seminars were held jointly with the Business Education Centre and addressed topics such as “Quality and sales”, “Team motivation”, “Developing an original business strategy”, etc. Furthermore lectures address the psychology of management, economic development issues specific to Latvia in regard to globalisation, business negotiations and the role of intermediaries. Lectures have been given by I. Zālīte (Head of Personnel, AS „Pasažieru vilciens”), Henriks Danusēvičs (President, Latvian Traders Association), J. Bolis (lawyer, specialist in mediation, from the USA), John Leober (Switzerland), and Dr.oec. Boris Heimānis. The study programme features guest lectures on topical issues given by representatives of large enterprises, banks, from the Business Study Centre.

Management of the study process at the College is based on democratic principles. The relations between students, academic staff and other College personnel are businesslike and democratic, based on mutual respect, a spirit of cooperation and readiness to assume responsibility.

Democratic principles underpin management of studies and in taking certain decisions.

Student opinions and demands are taken into account particularly when adopting fundamental decisions. Surveys are regularly made on the performance of lecturers; in these surveys students are asked to recommend improvements to the study process. Lecturers are informed of these observations and suggestions and act upon them.

The [Student Authority](#) at the College of Law aims at facilitating cooperation between students, lecturers and the College administration, at the same time as engaging students in taking decisions at the College and furthering its development.

The views of academic personnel, other College staff and students are regularly expressed at meetings of the Board of the College of Law, at meetings of the Consultative Board, the Committee for quality assessment, as well as at weekly departmental meetings. As mentioned above, this is accomplished by carrying out anonymous surveys of the opinion of academic staff.

The internal institutions of the College and weekly operational meetings have allowed the College, over the past eleven years, to avoid disharmony and major conflicts. During this entire time only four complaints were received about a negative result attributed in a State final examination; these complaints were then reviewed by a special ad-hoc committee. Students are afforded the possibility of launching an appeal in case of dissatisfaction with procedural aspects of the State examination process.

In case of a conflict arising, students first discuss the issues with the lecturer, or with the member of staff responsible for studies, as well as with the head of the department concerned, and with the programme director. Staff of the study department act as interlocutors for the administration, students and lecturers. It is usually the case that, after listening to the views of all parties concerned, it is possible rapidly to resolve these situations. Several staff members of the study department have attended and received certificates for completion of a course on **mediation**; these professional skills have been put to good use to resolve conflicts in a positive manner.

The College administration is democratic and always available to be addressed by students; a written complaint submitted by a student to the Director of the College must be acted upon (usually no later than three days after receipt). A mailbox, clearly identified as to its purpose, may be used for deposition of student recommendations and suggestions for improvements, as well as for deposition of written complaints and letters from students.

6. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (CREATIVE) WORK OF ACADEMIC STAFF AND STUDENTS

Lecturers at the College of Law strive regularly to upgrade their professional and pedagogic qualifications, either by studying for higher degrees, or by membership of various working groups, managing projects, attending special courses and seminars.

Several College lecturers are following doctoral studies, and at present preparing doctoral dissertations, at the University of Latvia, at the Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), the Riga Stradiņa University, the BA School of Business and Finance and at the School of Business

Administration „Turība”, notably I. Lūce, L. Mizovska, G. Šmaukstele, A. Brika – Dravniece, I. Bāra, J. Jakubāne.

Research carried out by academic staff of the College is related to their daily work and professional competence.

Academic personnel involved in implementation of study programmes regularly raise their professional qualifications, participate in various seminars dedicated to raising professional qualifications, [scientific conferences](#), carry on [research](#) and participate in divers projects including projects financed by the EU. As of academic year 2011/2012, participation became possible in ERASMUS mobility projects (opportunities are open to both students and lecturers).

With a view to raising the qualifications of its lecturers the College of Law organises every year a number of scientific conferences, including every two years an international conference. These conferences are held in collaboration with other institutions of higher education in Latvia (Riga Stradiņa University, Rezekne Higher Education Institution), as well (Mykolas Romeris university, Nord University (Tallinn), University of Stuttgart (Germany), Caucasus University (Georgia), the Latvian Academy of Sciences, the Latvian Law Society, the Baltic Centre for Strategic Studies, and other Institutions.

With a view to enhancing the mobility of its lecturers, lifelong learning and language skills necessary for sustainable development of the College of Law, to raise its international visibility and recognition as a modern prestigious institution, the College each year arranges free courses for its lecturers on informatics and language training.

Raising their professional qualifications, participation in creative activities and carrying out research are reflected in the CV of each lecturer; these curriculum vitae are accessible at the personnel unit of the College.

Scholarly investigations are carried out by students as part of their programme of study. As part of their studies students are obliged to write term papers and essays, and at the end of the study programme a qualification report. Every two years the College of Law holds a scientific conference with student participation, the proceedings of which are published by the College. In all 13 **students** from this study programme have taken part in these [conferences](#). Every year the Committee evaluating the oral defence of qualification reports recommends that the best reports be published (in revised and abbreviated form). After graduation these selected authors take part in a [conference](#) specially held for this purpose to bring their findings to a wider audience.

Proceedings of Conferences held by the College of Law:

1. First Year membership of the European Union, personnel management and legal issues: Student Conference Proceedings. Riga: College of Law, 2005, 66pp.
2. First Year in the European Union: Current Legal Issues. Proceedings of the International Conference, 29-30 April 2005, Riga: the Latvian Academy of Sciences; Mykolas Romeris University; College of Law, 2005, 464 pp.
3. Scholarly papers of the College of Law - 2006, Riga: College of Law, 2006, 319pp.
4. Third Year within the European Union: Topical Problems in Management of Economics and Law: Proceedings of the International Conference, 27-28 April 2007, Riga: the Latvian Academy of Sciences; Mykolas Romeris University; College of Law, 2007, 344 pp.
5. Scholarly papers of the College of Law - 2008.- Riga: College of Law, 2008, 240pp.
6. The Fifth Year as European Union Member States: Topical Problems in Management of Economics and Law. Proceedings of the International Conference, 8-9 May

2009, Riga: the Latvian Academy of Sciences; Mykolas Romeris University; College of Law, 2009, 416 pp.

7. Scholarly papers of the College of Law - 2010.- Riga: College of Law, 2010, 176pp.

8. The Seventh Year as European Union Member States: Economics, Politics, Law. Proceedings of the International Conference, 6-7 May 2011, Riga: the Latvian Academy of Sciences; Baltic Centre for Strategic Studies, Riga Stradiņa University; College of Law, 2011, 376 pp.

9. Scholarly papers of the College of Law - 2012 (in preparation).

Lecturers at the College of Law have, beginning in 2001 until 2011, published [a total of 22 textbooks](#)

College lecturers actively develop [methodological materials](#), and in the context of study programme a total of 28 such materials were produced between 2008 and 2011; these are available for study at the library of the College of Law and, for [students, electronically](#).

Dr.sc.habil.pol., Dr.iur. Tālavš Jundzis (a lecturer and Director of the College) has worked in research projects (from 2008 onwards), and is an expert on law for the Latvian Council of Science. He is also an expert for the Latvian Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre (Latvian acronym AIKNC) as is a visiting professor at the Riga Stradiņa University and at the Baltic International Academy.

Lecturer Ph.D I.Lūce acts as an expert for the Latvian Education Quality Public Service (Latvian acronym IKVD), as regards assessment of educational institutions, examination centres and educational study programmes as implemented/ In 2010 I. Lūce was an expert for the Project, "Vocational subject teachers and the head of the practice of theoretical knowledge and practical competence promotion"

7. ORGANIZATION OF TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK FOR GRADUATES

In-service training is an integral part of study programmes at the College of Law. It is organised to be compatible with the aims and goals of study programmes and corresponds to the professional qualification of a personnel specialist. In-service training accounts for 16 credit points; it is scheduled to take place at the end of the second year of study and takes place at an establishment whose activities correspond to the students specialised field of study. Student in-service training is regulated by the Law on Professional Education, a number of Cabinet regulations and the **Statute on [In-service Training of the College of Law](#)**.

At the end of the training period the student is required to submit a report on his experience, counter-signed by a representative of the place at which training took place; this report is assessed by a Committee appointed by the College.

Students choose their places for in-service training to be either at local authority enterprises, or in the private commercial sector, such as at banks and other credit institutions. A number of students have established their own businesses, such as those offering business advice, bookkeeping services, or have registered themselves as self-employed, and undergo in-service training at these businesses.

The College of Law, with a view to providing its students with the possibility of undergoing in-service training, has concluded a number of co-operation agreements, notably with SIA „Adros Baltija”, SIA „Altera”, SIA „Rembox”, SIA „Aizdevums.lv”, SIA „Kimona”, SIA „Dumbrāja autoserviss”, A/S „ELKO Grupa”, A/S „Drogas”, SIA „Komitex”, A/S

„Swedbank”, SIA „Camelle”, SIA „Skrīveru saldumi”, A/S „Valmieras stikla šķiedra”, SIA „Vind”, SIA „Palsmane”, A/S „Rietumu banka”, A/S „PrivatBank”.

In order that the quality of in-service training be improved, each year, by means of cooperation of students, graduates, employers and lecturers, the tasks undertaken by students during their in-service training are reviewed and assessed in the light of current job market demands.

Once a year employer representatives are invited to take part in the evaluation of study programmes, assessing the programme in its entirety, as well as course-by-course, and the academic results obtained thereby (knowledge, skills, competence).

Summarizing results from surveys of a number of employers we have recorded 86% response as Good, and 4% response as Very Good. Thus we conclude that employers consider that the study programme provides graduates with knowledge and skills that are appropriate to meet current job market demands. In particular employers have emphasised graduate acquisition of legal knowledge. A summary of survey findings is included in the annual [self-assessment report](#).

8. THE LIBRARY OF THE COLLEGE OF LAW

The library of the College of Law is a unit at this institution of higher learning and it targets students at the College, lecturers and other staff of the College of Law. Part of the library holdings are physically located at the regional centres of the College of Law, i.e. in Liepāja, Ventspils, Valmiera and Gulbene.

The library of the College of Law was duly accredited, receiving the status of an official local level library (accreditation certificate Nr.6., 12.07.2005.). The principal function of the library is hold the most up-to-date textbooks and scholarly literature, with current information on entrepreneurial activities and politics, as well as access to relevant specialised data bases.

The user accessible area at the library comprises 199 m², there is provision for students to take away literature on loan in order to work at home; there is also provision to send loan materials through the post. A reading space with 45 work places, of which 17 have computers has been set aside for users. The library facilities are open for use not only by College students and staff, but also graduates and any interested party.

Financial support for the library was provided by the founders of the College of Law, complying with the Law on Libraries as well as with Cabinet regulations on financial resources for libraries: expenses per user were Ls 12.67 (in 2010), Ls 21.42 (in 2009), Ls 25.50 (in 2008). Over the past three years the sum of Ls 10633.77 was used to acquire books and periodicals with a total of 2306 new acquisitions. Presently the library collection comprises 21 490 books acquired for a total expenditure of Ls 67 783.49; it is important to note that 22% of the collection are gifts, whose value is not included in the quoted figure. Recent acquisitions include (all of the following are in Latvian, excepting one in English): Ruperte I. „Uzņēmuma vadīšana (Business management)”, Kēnigs M. „Cilvēktiesības (Human rights)”, Dombrovska L. R. „Cilvēkresursu kapitāla vadība (Human capital management)”, Voļskis E. „Pensiju sistēmas darbības pamatnostādnes (Essential elements of pension systems)”, Dubkēvičs L. „Organizācijas kultūra (Organisational culture)”, Uzulāns J. „Risku vadība projektu kontekstā Management of risk within projects)”, „Vadīt komandas (Team leadership)”, „Mainiet veidu, kā vadāt pārmaiņas (Change the way change is managed)”, Belbins R. M. „Darba krāsas (The colour of work)”, V.Praude „Finanšu instrumenti” (Financial instruments, 2 books), Preppernau J. „Windows Vista Step by Step”, Uzulāns J. „Projektu vadīšana mūsdienu apstākļos: Microsoft Office Project (Contemporary project management)”, V. Praude „Mārketing: Teorija un prakse (Marketing: theory and practice)” (in 2 volumes, 3rd edition).

The College regularly publishes its own textbooks (all in Latvian), including “EU Law” (in two editions), “The Lisbon Treaty and the Constitutional foundation of the European Union”, “On Mediation”, “Sources of Latvian law: texts and commentary, 2nd volume, sources deriving from the periods of Polish and Swedish rule”, “Administrative Law”; these textbooks are principally used by students at the College. The textbook by I. Klierere “Applied Informatics” has been reprinted 5 times.

To address the needs of students and lecturers, the College library each year subscribes to a number of specialised periodicals (in Latvian): „Biznesa Psiholoģija (Business psychology)”, „Jurista vārds (Legal letters)”, „Mans Īpašums (My property)”, „Kapitāls (Capital)”, „Bilance (Balance sheet)”, „Pārvaldnieks (Administrator)”, etc.

The library subscribes to the database of normative acts of the Republic of Latvia (Letonika.lv), and to the portals of Letonika and *Latvijas Vēstnesis* (the official journal of the Republic of Latvia) in order to provide an essential foundation for the study process at the College. There is access for a trial period to the following foreign databases provide by VAS „Kultūras informācijas sistēmas”: **RUBRIKON**, an encyclopaedic dictionary; the **EBSCO** database, Academic Search Complete (a full-text database for the humanities and social sciences); **EMERALD**, (business management and library sectoral information); **CAMBRIDGE**, (a full-text database consisting of publications in legal journals); as well as the Latvian online informatics resources, **Nozare.lv** and **Leta.lv**.

Locally accessible databases and computer hardware is continuously being updated as parallel activities. A total number of 28 computers are installed in the library (use by the librarian, user area and at the regional centres); in addition there is a scanner, 7 printers and 5 copy machines. This infrastructure is adequate to sustain work of the librarian and meet student needs. Details of the printed holdings of the College library are entered in a database in the form of an electronic catalogue accessible by users. The catalogue contains more than 18 000 entries covering printed works, electronic resources and other documents. The catalogue considerably alleviates finding and delivering literature to students.

A total number of 863 users, of which 803 were students, 12 graduates and 48 lecturers at the College and other staff were registered for the current academic year. During the past year there were 17 453 visits with requests for assistance; the average number of loans extended per student is 54,25, essentially textbooks and methodological materials which represents a 2,16 turnovers of the library collection. Visitor requests for bibliographical information resulted in preparation of 1 387 bibliographical certificates.

The opening times of the library are timed to coincide with the schedule for lectures and meets user demand – the library is open 5 days a week.

The library contains a permanent display of publications by College of Law lecturers over the time period 2000 - 2011, with 230 printed works on display. The display of new monthly acquisitions of books has over the past year shown a books with 82 separate titles. The display of current publications by the College of Law is updated regularly.

In 2001 development was begun of a database to meet internal College needs in regard to registration of student data in the MS Access environment, and based on a file server. The system is continuously being updated and improved meeting changes in demand by the College of Law. The system contains data on student progress, payments, orders, etc. In 2008 the system was transferred to the **MS Server** and is accessible via the home page of the College. Students are able, [using a password, to enter their profile](#) via the home page, where they can read news relevant to their studies.

In 2010 when the option of distance studies (e-learning) was introduced by the College, it became superfluous to start using Moodle, or any other new informatics tool, as in this case it

would be necessary to introduce part of the existing information in two separate servers. Therefore new capabilities were added to the existing: students are able to see their [course schedule](#) on the home page, at their marks for home assignments and tests, e-materials are accessible via, as well as the option to send the lecturer an electronic file with test answers, together with brief contents.

In the same way, lecturers using their password may enter the [home page](#), to see the state of play in his courses, including e-student submitted replies to tests, and enter assigned marks together with brief remarks. The system also provides the option of creating, electronically, a set of test questions that the student may deal with at his own convenience.

9. INFRASTRUCTURAL SUPPORT FOR THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The College of Law is financed by its founder, in conformity with the minimum costs per student incurable for implementing an educational programme as decreed by the Cabinet. Study at the College is against payment of a fee. The Board of the College of Law sets the tuition fee and other fees. The payment of fees, in part or in full, may be dispensed for some students on the basis of a decision by the Board of the College.

The financial resources at the disposal of the College are made up of: tuition fees; own income; foreign contributions; donations and gifts by physical or legal persons; credit taken out from banks or other credit institutions.

Studies at the College are supported by the material technical infrastructure owned by SIA "College of Law". This infrastructure comprises: overhead projectors (3); televisions (3); screens (7); an interactive whiteboard (1); boards (special) (8); telefax machines (4); copy machines (12); printers (21); scanners (2); computers (65); laptop computers (16); tape recorders (2); document binding machines (2); document destruction machines (1); lamination device (2); acoustic systems (3); amplifier (1); video cameras and photo cameras (2); audio un video apparatus (5); Dictaphones (1); video projectors (6).

The College of Law uses part of the premises of the Riga State Technical College (560 m²) on the basis of a lease agreement to implement study programmes

Studies are pursued at the regional centres of the College of Law by a lease agreement concluded with the 8th Secondary School in Liepaja and the 1st Secondary School in Valmiera for administrative office space, room for the library and lecture rooms, whereas the agreements in the case of Gulbene and Ventspils are with the 2nd Secondary School and the State Secondary School. respectively.

The reading room of the College of Law in Riga is equipped with 14 computers and 7 laptop computers. The reading room is on occasion used for practical informatics sessions and to hold conferences.

Two computer equipped rooms are available at the Liepaja centre with a total of 16 computers, whereas in Ventspils two rooms are available with 20 computers; there are 18 computers and other ancillary equipment in the cases of Gulbene and Valmiera.

All computers have full multimedia capabilities that includes a stereo sound system and recording from a microphone. Computers are connected together in a local area network and have access to rapid network memory. Computer classrooms are equipped with software and hardware that allows the following educational activities:

- Computer science including use of the Internet;
- Mastering foreign languages through use of multimedia capabilities;
- Other courses provided that these rely on specialised software.

All of the class rooms in Riga, as well as in the regional centres in Gulbene, Liepaja, Valmiera and Ventspils have been renovated and modernised.

Those pursuing their studies in Riga have access to the sports hall which the College of Law has leased from the Riga State Technical College, and to a bowling facility.

The College has concluded a cooperation agreement with the Riga State Technical College and with Riga Stradiņa University about the possibility of placing our students in their dormitories. Up to now, all student wishes for living in dormitories have been thus satisfied. In case of need lecturers, foreign guest lecturers and foreign students can be accommodated in these dormitories.

10. QUALITY ASSURANCE & WARRANTY. INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

A **Committee to assess the quality of study programmes** has been established at the College of Law. Lecturers, students, employers are addressed by this Committee. The principal task of this committee is to expand and improve study programmes offered by the College. It is crucial that the Committee formulates detailed measures to enhance implementation of study programmes, based upon an analyses and evaluation of the strengths and weakness of how programmes are actually being followed. Enhancing study programmes is within the sole remit of the Board of the College of law. In-house measures to ensure quality education are part of the [strategy](#) for study programme development by the College of Law for 2012-2017.

Academic personnel are evaluated on a yearly basis through surveys of student satisfaction. The survey questionnaire is improved year-on-year; students express appreciation of various aspects of the performance of lecturers on a scale of 1-5.

The quality of the educational process, its strengths and weaknesses is evaluated and presented in the [annual self-evaluation reports](#) by the College.

The quality of graduates from this programme offered by the College of Law is reflected in the fact that all have successfully entered the job market (this information based on a survey of graduates).

Every year a joint effort, involving students, graduates, representative of employers and lecturers, is mounted with a view to improving the relevance of topics selected for in-service training, as well as its relevance to current needs of the job market.

The present national economic situation is an opportune time for establishing a new business and start commercial activities. The knowledge acquired via this study programme is sufficient that graduates might start up their own company or work as a self-employed person, as well as to plan and set up a successful business.

Graduates from the Commerce study programme offered by the College of Law are well placed to find employment since they have acquired a quality education covering both business fundamentals and legal issues.

Graduates of the College of Law are afforded the possibility of continuing studies at a number of Institutions of Higher Education in Latvia with which the College has an agreement, for example: the [Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration](#), [Riga technical University](#), the School of Business Administration „Turība”, the Baltic International Academy, the Higher School of Social Technologies, Ltd.

Latvia is Member State of the European Union and its citizens, i.e. students have excellent prospects to work and study in other EU Member States. The College of Law has trained specialists who have proven themselves to be competitive in the EU job market. A

number of graduates have started businesses not only in Latvia, but also abroad (in the UK, Ireland, Germany, and elsewhere).

Active collaboration takes place in the context of the study process with representatives of employers, other institutions of higher education. Similarly, guest lecturers are invited both from Latvia and from abroad.

Most students following this programme work full-time; this leads to additional links being established with the College. At the close of their studies students undergo in-service training; this allows them to develop a link with employers.

With a view to enhancing external collaboration, principally with employers, the committee to evaluate state final examinations (examination of the qualification report) includes representatives of employers and specialists in the field. Potential topics for these qualification reports are discussed with committee members. Specialists from the field are invited to take part in carrying out self-assessment of the study programme.

Two representatives of employers are elected to the Board of the College of Law for a two-year term, in conformity with article 11.7 of the Statute of the College. A number of cooperation agreements are in force for continuing study: the School of Business Administration „Turība”, the Baltic International Academy, the [Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration](#), the Higher School of Social Technologies, Ltd, Riga Technical University and other Institutions.

Cooperation agreements (dealing with student and lecturer exchange, organisation of conferences, etc.) have been signed with several Institutions of Higher Education: the Rezekne Higher Education Institution, the Riga Business College, the School of Business Administration „Turība”, Riga Technical University, Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration, the College of Business Administration, Riga Stradiņa University, Riga Teacher Training and Educational Management Academy.

The College has concluded **cooperation agreements with a number of foreign Institutions of Higher Education:** Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), the University of Antalya (Turkey), Telford College in Edinburgh (Great Britain), the Eszterházy Károly College (Hungary).

The College of Law actively participates in exchange of experience with foreign Institutions in the USA, Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Australia and elsewhere. The College is an active member of the Latvian College Association.