



Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies

Quality Management System description and assurance plan

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1. Justification of the quality management system

Quality management system of the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (hereinafter referred to as LLU) is based on basic principles and requirements of the international standard “Investors in Excellence Standard” enabling organizations to achieve high performance.

“Investors in Excellence Standard” (IiE) is a framework for continuous improvement and assessment of all main areas of activities. The standard is used by organisations around the world to identify the best solutions to achieve excellence and ensure that organizations continuously improve the areas that are most important to customers, employees and other stakeholders.

IiE covers all areas of activities due to a comprehensive approach that allows it to act as “an umbrella” for coordination of large-scale improvement initiatives.



An organisation using IiE standard requirements have ensured a range of priorities which include:

- Improvement of financial management
- Cost reduction and increased efficiency
- Greater customer and employee focus with increased satisfaction
- New markets secured through external recognition.

Because the model of excellence is associated with every aspect of an organization's operations, IiE certification provides the organization's management and customers with reasonable confidence in the organization's abilities and performance.

The standard is designed as a guide on the way to excellence to meet the needs, wishes and expectations of each organization.

2. Principles of excellence

The principles of excellence are the basis of the standard "Investors in Excellence" and the investor (organization) in excellence is able to demonstrate through its activities and external evaluation (certification) how these principles of excellence are incorporated and actually work in the investor's excellence management system.

- Leadership: the investor in excellence has leaders who define and communicate what is most important to the organization and are personally involved in ensuring that all the necessary resources are available and prioritized to achieve successful results.
- Customer driven: the investor understands his clients excellently and knows how the organisation performs in relation to the needs and requirements of the clients
- Balanced positive results: the investor has implemented a range of reliable and flexible measurement systems that provide a balanced view of the organisation's overall performance.
- Processes: the investor has defined and continuously improves the organization's performance system in order to provide customers with products and services of appropriate quality.
- Evidence-based management: the investor has implemented an effective and logical reporting and decision-making system based on reliable and objective evidence.

- Involvement of employees: The investor excels in developing and promoting the potential of employees and other stakeholders so that everyone in the organization can become the best.
- Cooperation: the investor optimizes performance by working with its customers and other stakeholders to achieve the goals and ensure successful performance of the organization.
- Causes and consequences: the investor in excellence analyses the relationship between what is done and what is achieved to ensure sustainability.
- Continuous improvement: the investor has implemented a culture of learning, continuous improvement and innovation.
- Responsibility and integrity: the investor in excellence can prove to its partners that the organisation performs according to high standards in the internal environment, markets and in the society as a whole.

3. LLU guidelines for implementation, maintenance and improvement of the Excellence Standard and basic principles of excellence – vision, mission, values and strategy

Vision

Vision is a declaration of a future long-term goal for an organisation.

LLU vision: **Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies is one of the leading universities of science and technologies in the Baltic Sea region, specializing in the sustainable use of natural resources aimed at the enhancement of quality of life for society.**

The vision of the university is to become one of the leading universities of science and technologies in the Baltic Sea region. The territorial approach is chosen taking into account:

- the geographic location of the university.
- economic sectors which the university provides intellectual potential for and conducts research, the presence of the most significant resources in the Baltic Sea region.
- the necessity to promote the international competitiveness of related economic sectors focusing on the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region's companies.
- relationships with international universities and research institutions, including those in the Baltic Sea region.

Mission

A mission is a statement of how a vision is intended to be achieved.

LLU mission: **To develop internationally competitive intellectual potential on the basis of excellence in research, application of research findings in the national economy, high quality of education and effective management of the university.**

There are four strategic goals to achieve the mission of the university:

1. to achieve excellence in research specialisation areas.

2. to promote the application of fundamental and applied research results in the national economy.
3. to provide high quality study and lifelong education services.
4. to provide an efficient university management system. The university's activities will contribute to the development of an internationally competitive intellectual potential. The intellectual potential in this case is both knowledge and people who will use this knowledge.

Values

The university, its employees, students, graduates and stakeholders understand, respect and observe the common values that are expressed in the words of confidence (in other words "creeds") and action principles (in other words "maxims").

Values as confidence (creed):

- **Scientific approach:** We believe that scientifically grounded knowledge is the main driving force of development. We develop such knowledge giving our contribution to the development of Latvia and the whole world.
- **Creativity:** Our employees and students create, maintain and improve an environment that inspire and support ideas and innovations which result in original and significant works and solutions
- **Freedom of opinion:** Ideas and knowledge are the result of diversity and exchange of opinions. The university is the place where everyone has the freedom of opinion and expression, as well as different opinions should be listened to and respected.
- **Openness:** It is important for us that everyone who is willing to receive and create knowledge, to develop new ideas and get involved in creativity would have a sense of belonging to the university. We are open to opinions, ideas, knowledge, open and mutually enriching cooperation that is rooted in tolerance and prevents discrimination.
- **Sustainability:** We are aware of our responsibility for what is happening in the world around us. Responsibility for us means being able to see challenges, to search, find and implement sustainable solutions based on scientific knowledge. Every solution is found and implemented in accordance with ethical and moral principles.

Values as principles for action (maxims):

- **Purposefulness:** We set meaningful goals, we search for the ways to achieve them, and we put effort into achieving them.
- **Responsibility:** We take responsibility for our words and deeds, we act in full understanding of the goals and results to be achieved, we ensure succession and we are responsible partners.
- **Honesty:** Our employees and students are conscientious and committed, with a high sense of responsibility.
- **Improvement:** We believe that achievements and excellence are the result of continuous improvement of ourselves and our processes.
- **Cooperation:** We encourage cooperation between all levels and areas of activity for employees, students, graduates and partners.

Strategy

LLU Development Strategy 2015 - 2020 is a medium-term planning document. The strategy is based on the vision, mission and goals of LLU, which were determined by assessing the situation, future opportunities and challenges. The development of the strategy was based on topical planning and action policy documents of Latvia and the European Union in 2015, especially the RIS3 guidelines of the Latvian Smart Specialization Strategy, as well as Latvian regulatory enactments, the requirements of which must be observed when developing planning documents.

The strategy contains four chapters:

1. Long-term future vision
2. Research programme
3. Education programme
4. Management improvement programme

The **research programme** includes an outline of the university's scientific specialisations and research fields, research aims and descriptions of their relevance to the European Union, national, regional policies and planning documents, substantiation of specialization selection in relation to the needs of the national economy, specifically regarding sectors included in the Smart Specialization Strategy for Latvia, action plans, performance assessment indicators and their values.

The research programme includes:

- Human resources development plan for researchers.
- Plan of target cooperation improvement.
- Plan for participation in the application competition of EU Research and Innovation Programme "Horizon 2020" and other research and innovation support programmes and technology initiatives.
- Plan for increasing the number of international publications.
- Knowledge and technology transfer management improvement plan.

The **education programme** includes objectives for the university education, substantiation of specialization selection in relation to the sectors mentioned in the Smart Specialization Strategy for Latvia, action plans, performance assessment indicators and their values.

The education programme comprises:

- Development plan of study programmes on offer.
- Human resources development plan for academic staff.
- Plan of target cooperation improvement.

The **management improvement programme** is comprised of the aims and action plans including the plan of institutional development to improve performance and management efficiency, as well as the plan of infrastructure development and use.

The management improvement programme includes:

- Plan of institutional development to improve performance and management efficiency.
- Plan of infrastructure development and use.

The strategy was approved by the decision of LLU Senate. LLU Rector ensures the assessment of the progress in achieving the goals and the update of the plan of measures to be implemented in the next period at the level of each structural unit of the university.

4. Quality Management System policy

The policy and objectives of the Quality Management System have been defined on the basis of LLU guidelines for the implementation, maintenance and improvement of the standard of excellence and the basic principles of excellence.

Quality management system:

1. LLU Quality Management System is based on LLU Strategy and organizational values defined in it, as well as on the requirements of the international standard “Investors in Excellence”, implementation of the university’s vision and mission based on setting strategic goals and monitoring the progress towards those goals and envisage continuous development.
2. LLU Quality Management policy is focused on the provision of modern quality improvement and excellence-oriented studies and research work, covering the entire Baltic region, as well as expanding its scope beyond the countries of the Baltic region in the future.
3. LLU Quality Management policy is based on the following basic principles:
 - Leadership and setting ambitious and realistic goals.
 - Unity in achieving university goals.
 - Stakeholder involvement in the improvement of university products, services and processes.
 - Observance of the principles of social responsibility.
 - A positive cooperation approach.
 - An evidence-based approach to decision making.
4. LLU quality policy is aimed at creating favorable and development-friendly institutional environment for those who link their creative and professional development with LLU.
5. LLU develops and implements study programmes and research activities, actively cooperating with stakeholders and taking into account the wishes and needs of stakeholders. LLU stakeholders are:
 - Current students, prospective students, graduates.
 - Employees.
 - Other educational institutions (secondary education, secondary professional, higher education) both in Latvia and on the scale of the Baltic States.
 - Research institutes and other organisations related to scientific activities.
 - Employers.
 - Industry experts and organizations.
 - The state.
6. In order to implement the quality policy, LLU develops its human resources and the intellectual capacity of the university, implements a responsible financial management policy and continuously works on the improvement of the university management system, study process and research work.

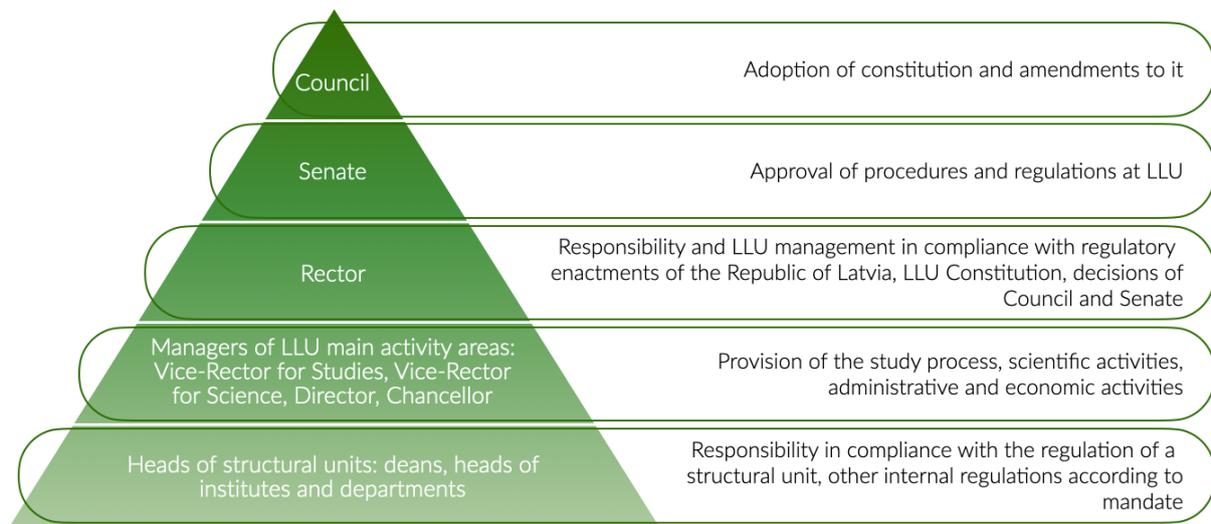
Aims of the Quality Management System:

1. Maintain the quality management system and its compliance with the requirements of the international standard "Investors in Excellence", ensuring a continuous improvement process.
2. Ensure the implementation of strategic goals.
3. Continuously improve satisfaction levels of all stakeholders.

5. Quality Management System management model

LLU operational planning, organizational management and performance management system is based on the conditions related to the “organizational hierarchy” and the “document hierarchy”, and consequently this system consists of interconnected subsystems – the Operational planning and Organizational management system and the Performance management system.

- The basis of the Operational planning system at LLU is formed by the development strategy of the organization and its appendices, in which the strategic priorities and goals of the university are defined. In addition, LLU develops detailed action plans that identify, describe and initially structure the actions to be taken to achieve the goals set at the level of LLU organization.
- The Organization management involves managing of processes of activities and sub-activities, their sequences and definition of executors, etc., as well as implementation and change. Currently, both Operational planning and its management are based on the organizational structure of LLU, determining what the successive activities, their sub-activities, executors, necessary resources, type of implementation, deadlines, mutual interaction should be, which, in general, form a comprehensive process structure, which determines how the organisation’s units operate and interact to achieve the pre-defined goal of this collaboration in the most effective way.
- The performance management system of a scientific institution is based on the use of already developed processes in practice, control, analysis and motivation mechanisms, i.e., work performance is organized according to previously developed and described processes, respecting the delegation of rights and responsibilities to those responsible for the process and results. The performance management system is closely related to the use of results-based management methods, control and motivation mechanisms and systems, and its successful operation requires that there are organizationally and administratively appointed persons who are responsible for the application of performance management system and principles.



6. Structure and hierarchy of documents

1st level – LLU management documents:

- LLU Constitution.
- LLU Regulation for the Council.
- LLU Regulation for the Senate.
- LLU Regulation for the Election of the Rector.
- LLU Regulations for faculties.
- LLU Regulations for departments / institutes.
- LLU Regulations for research institutes.
- LLU Regulations for structural units.
- LLU Regulation of student self-government.
- LLU Regulation for the elections of student self-government.
- LLU Regulation of Council of Counsellors.

2.nd level – strategic and planning documents, their implementation and control of implementation

- LLU Development Strategy 2015-2020.
- Cascading results of LLU Development Strategy goals (research goals of the strategy are analysed and approved by the LLU Board of Science and education goals of the strategy are analysed and approved by the LLU Board of Studies)
- Rector's regulations and decisions.
- Mission, vision, values.
- Quality policy.
- Risk management policy.
- Human resources policy.

3rd level – Regulatory documents of organisation's basic activity

- Documents describing basic activity (descriptions of procedures, internal regulations and external regulatory enactments).

4th level – Regulatory documents of organisation’s support functions

- Documents describing support process (descriptions of procedures, internal regulations and external regulatory enactments).

5th level – Support elements

- Methodologies.
- Handbooks.
- Data bases.
- Forms and templates.
- Register of internal regulatory documents.
- Register of external regulatory documents.

7. Process management and monitoring

LLU Quality Management system defines 19 main processes, which are grouped into 3 groups:

Management processes:

- Decision making, implementation and the control of execution.
- Strategy development, update and the control of execution.
- Ensuring the management system improvement process.
- Internal control.

Processes of basic activity:

- Provision of study process.
- Provision of scientific work.
- Provision of distance learning.
- Provision of lifelong education.
- Provision of attraction of international students, admission and the study process of international students.
- Provision of international cooperation.

Support processes:

- Management and development of human resources.
- Management of financial resources.
- Provision and maintenance of infrastructure.
- Management of documents.
- Dealing with applications and complaints.
- Provision of communication.
- Maintenance and renovation of the fundamental library.
- Provision of procurement procedure.
- Provision of services for a fee.

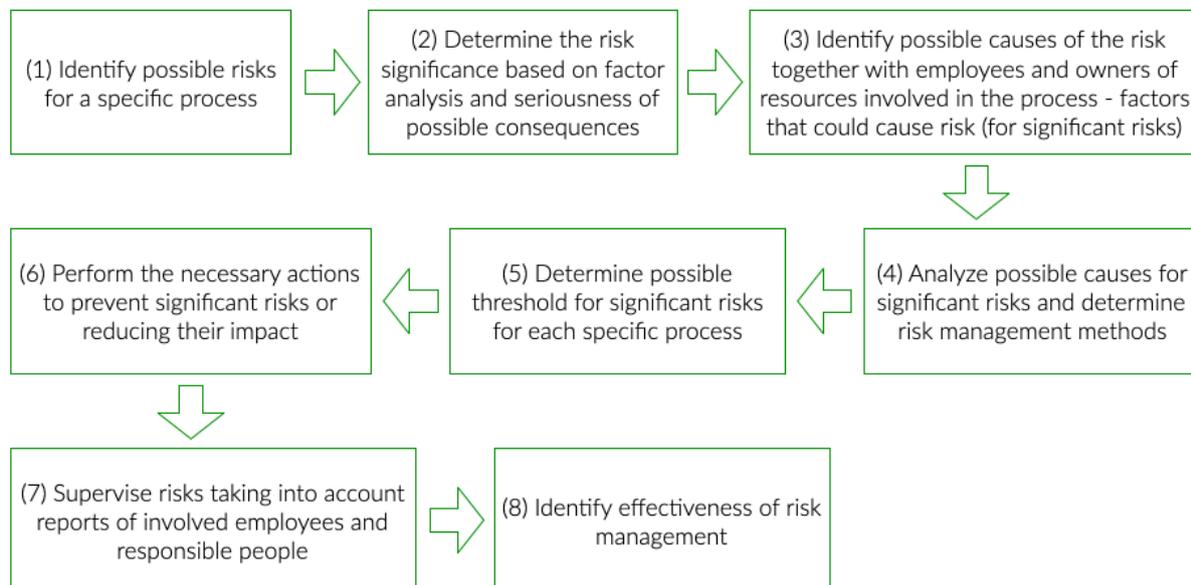
Measurements of operational efficiency of key processes, sources of data and information for measurement, regularity of data collection and measurement, the person responsible for the collection, compilation and analysis of the necessary data are determined.

8. Risk management and assessment methodology

LLU has determined the risk management policy. The goal of the risk management policy at Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies is to implement and improve the vision, mission and strategy at all levels of the organization:

- Risk management is a continuous, structured and coordinated process at all levels of the organization to identify, assess and report on potential threats and opportunities that may affect the organization's operations and the achievement of its objectives.
- Risk management identifies, analyzes and controls the risks that are essential to achieve the objectives
- Risk management increases the probability of achieving goals and reduces uncertainty and unreasonable decision-making to achieve organizational goals
- Risk management methodology reduces financial, etc. inefficient and irrational use of resources, as well as future losses in case of adverse events, as well as reveals opportunities for improvement of the organization's operations and development opportunities
- Identified risks reduce the subjectivity of internal audits, because process risks, solutions to prevent them and action plans are defined and identified

Risk management process:



Risks are identified for each key process, the significance of risks are assessed and the management procedure for significant risks is determined in order to prevent or reduce the severity of the consequences, if this risk occurs.

9. Management policy of human resources

The human resources management strategy is a complex plan designed to ensure the implementation of LLU mission and strategic goals based on the human resources use strategy,

The strategic planning process uses goal-oriented human resource management, the main basic principles of which are the following:

- transfer of the highest level goals to the lower levels;
- setting of individual goals for each employee;
- decision making, involving all LLU employees;
- the measurement / standard of each goal is clearly defined;
- regular evaluation of the achieved result.

Main tasks for ensuring human resource management policy:

- establish and maintain a standardized job description system:
 - to determine the mandatory required level of education and specialty for each position in accordance with the professional standard;
 - to standardize job descriptions taking into account the professional qualifications, skills and specifics of the job required for the position;
- to improve the staff recruitment process by attracting educated, competent and loyal academic and administrative staff;
- to improve the process of staff performance and management evaluation;
- to promote ongoing staff professional development, growth and career development;
- to improve the staff social guarantee and reward system;
- to promote a safe, healthy and psychologically favorable work environment;
- use the possibilities of information systems for more efficient personnel management and administration

The activities of LLU employees and management are based on the LLU Code of Ethics, the basic principles of which are: honesty, loyalty, accuracy, objectivity, openness, equality.

10. Quality management system assurance plan

Action plan for the operation and development of the quality management system:

1. Award of IiE certificate.
2. Interim evaluation of the system operation results from the point of view of implementation of strategy plans.
3. Identification of system improvement activities to ensure the achievement of the strategy's objectives (if relevant).
4. Improve the process of measuring stakeholder satisfaction in order to increase the satisfaction, as well as to collect, compile and analyze, as far as possible, as much data and information as possible on the needs, desire and expectations of all stakeholders.
5. Make changes in the system of internal regulatory documents taking into account the specified activities (Paragraph 3) and the need to improve the system (Paragraph 4).
6. Carry out internal quality audits on the compliance of processes and the operation of the management system with IiE, internal and external regulatory documents
7. Perform a regular repeated IiE certification audit (1 x 2 years).