



## **The College of Accountancy and Finance Summary**

### **of Development Strategy**

#### **2016 – 2021**

The College of Accountancy and Finance (hereafter referred to as the College) is an educational institution established in 2002 by a legal entity providing higher education through the implementation of the first level professional higher education study programs in the following study areas:

1. Economics;
2. Management, Administration and Real Estate Management.

The study directions implemented by the college are mutually complementary and form a unified interdisciplinary approach.

The College implements, the study program "Accounting and Finance" within the framework of the field of Economics and the study program "Entrepreneurship and Finances" within the framework of Management, Administration and Real Estate Management (hereafter referred to as the study programs).

The development strategy of the College is developed in accordance with the possibilities for its improvement, the directions of the College's activities and it covers the period from 2016 to 2021. The development priorities of the College are determined, on the basis of identification of strengths and weaknesses, taking into account the impact analysis of internal and external factors, the amount of existing and planned financial resources.

CEDEFOP indicated in its work forecasts that demand for professional qualifications will only increase by 2020 ([www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)).

Many educational consultants assert that in the future more employment opportunities will be available for specialists with the 1st level professional higher education. Vocational education will give higher employment opportunities than education that does not provide professional qualifications ([www.viaa.gov.lv/Euroguidance](http://www.viaa.gov.lv/Euroguidance)).

The European Union's Growth Strategy for Europe 2020 stresses that there is no single model of excellence in education: Europe needs a wide range of higher education institutions and each of them must strive for excellence in line with its tasks and strategic priorities ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/higher/modernisation\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/higher/modernisation_en.pdf)). One of the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy is not only to increase the role of education, but also to bring it closer to the demands of the labour market. Similarly, the EU 2020 strategic development plans highlight the need to learn and build working lives, with the focus on professional career management skills.

In the context of globalization and financial risks, the need for highly qualified specialists has grown rapidly, and it is not less important to prepare specialists in shorter period and at a lower cost, at the same time ensuring a sufficiently high quality of education.

With the development of commercial activity in Latvia, the existing companies are expanding, their structures are becoming more complex and the activities are more targeted. We are sure that setting up new companies will have a positive impact on the country's growth.

In order for a business to succeed, it must be efficient and productive, but in the long run it will not be possible to do this if the company does not have a technologically high-level accounting system that would provide true data for assessing financial position, planning and decision making. The bookkeeper's job is also interlinked with legislation and its frequent changes. This means that business and accounting professions require a high level of knowledge and continuous self-improvement, as the financial world is changing rapidly, the ability to work constructively in the professional field using the knowledge, skills and competences acquired.

The College fulfils its main task - prepares specialists for professional activities with a closer focus on ensuring labour market needs.

The study program directions are implemented on the basis of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF):

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm)) describing qualifications as a result of a learning process and defining levels and compliance with the standards of international professional organizations - the four main goals of higher education (personal development, solving problems of development of democratic society and science, meeting labour market requirements, ensuring sustainable development).

In line with the preconditions for creating a European Higher Education Area to enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of European universities, the College's study programs:

- use the opportunities provided by national legislation and European certification for the recognition of academic and vocational education, so that citizens can effectively use their competences and skills throughout the European Higher Education Area;
- practice a compatible ECTS credit system that provides both transfer and accumulation functions in lifelong learning;
- ensure recognition of foreign diploma and other educational documents in order to provide the opportunity for the student to start studies;
- there is an opportunity to offer students from other countries to acquire full or partial study programs using student and lecturer exchange programs, at the same time getting acquainted with the culture of different European countries and learning languages;
- an integrated approach is applied to change planning and implementation, ensuring unified management and coordination of change between different levels and types of education;
- everyone has been provided the opportunity to obtain high quality life-long education.

Such professions as a surgeon, an anaesthesiologist, an engineer, a lawyer, a pilot and a financial manager occupy the first 25 places in the world. A competent financier, a financial analyst always has a thorough knowledge of accounting, taxation and financial management. Due to this, one of the priorities of the College will be to improve the study programs according to ESCO recommendations.

By completing the study courses, the staff of the college analyses and respects the opinions of foreign specialists on the latest requirements for the profession of accountant and business specialist.

Promoting the European Dimension in Higher Education also means promoting mobility. The college study programs promote the participation of lecturers as well as students in international exchange programs (e.g. ERASMUS), which must continue and expand the number of partner universities. Cooperation with existing partners demonstrates mutual interest in this field, proved by the increased number of participants in exchange programs. The College's participation in the BUSINET network also offers broad opportunities for cooperation: student project weeks, summer schools, conferences and discussions about the content and outcomes of the studies that the College can support more actively. The College plans to continue cooperation with its partners in the framework of NORDPLUS projects.

The College implements professional higher education programs, therefore regular cooperation at different levels with employers is of importance.

The places of practice provide a real feedback, it helps to receive information on the disadvantages of the trainee's theoretical training, if any, and to control the level of practical competence of the program lecturers and the content of the study courses, so that there are included practical issues.

Survey of employers shows that 96% of respondents acknowledge the knowledge and skills acquired in financial and managerial accounting, taxes, computer accounting, financial indicators analysis, laws, business skills. The skills of a specialist to manage the company, the institution's financial system, assess the importance of the investment required, and the importance of loans are highly appreciated by employers. That's why the title of the study programs is "finances". 56% of respondents note that they need knowledge in management theory, employee motivation, and they must be able to assess market requirements and forecasts.

To promote professional co-operation, it is necessary to develop activities with employers and professional associations. Cooperation is already taking place with the Association of Accountants of the Republic of Latvia, the Employers ' Confederation of Latvia, other industry employers' associations, the State Employment Agency, the Accounting and Economics magazine, the "Balance" publishers, ltd "1C Franchising Fast Soft", ltd "Tilde", etc.

In order to ensure good academic environment for the program, regular development activities are required such as: systematic development of professional and pedagogical qualification of lecturers, wide involvement of students and employers in the evaluation of the study program, active participation of lecturers and students in ESF projects, conferences and seminars on business, accounting and tax issues, proficiency in English language.

Professional competence can be divided into two separate stages: acquisition of professional competence; and maintenance of professional competence.

Permanent interest and understanding of significant trends in the technical, professional and business fields are not enough, to maintain academic competence of academic staff, there must be support from the College's management and a well thought out, efficiently functioning human resources development system.

Continuous professional development allows the lecturer to develop and sustain his or her abilities that are necessary for competent work in the field of education.

In order to provide successful implementation of the programs we should continue to work on improving its technical base and the use of new technologies.

Prospects for the development of the study program "Accounting and Finance" are also linked to the creation of a joint professional bachelor program "Accounting and Taxes" with cooperation partners: the Baltic International Academy and the Siauliai State College. Prospects for the development of the study program "Entrepreneurship and Finances" are also linked to the creation of a joint professional bachelor program "International Business Management" with the Baltic International Academy and the Euro Academy, Estonia.

This will allow motivated graduates of first level study programs to continue their cooperation with the College.

The implementation of the study program directions will enable the implementation of the Latvian regional development and education mission, which will provide competitive studies, develop research in the field of economics and entrepreneurship, and promote knowledge of economic development processes in Latvia and in international labour markets.

Implementation of the study program will allow:

- To ensure access to professional higher education.
- To involve the social partners in ensuring the quality of the study field.
- To take care of preparing new specialists in conformity with the requirements of labour market, ensuring a high quality and accessible study environment.
- To develop students 'and lecturers' mobility at different levels, integrating into the European educational area; Cooperate with other universities in Latvia, the EU and the world.
- To support the initiative of students, students' self-governments, associations and other public organizations to improve studies, research, social and cultural environment.
- To inform and educate the public on the latest achievements in the study process, research, events in economics in Latvia and in the world.
- Provide opportunities for personal growth and sustainable employment for individuals.

The purpose of the college management is to maintain and strengthen its position in offering high quality education. The priority of the study direction is the professional higher education program for the development of professional competences, accessibility of studies, creation of an accessible environment for studies in accordance with modern international requirements, meeting regional needs, ensuring labour market needs.

The College's long-term strategy of the development 2016-2021 is worked out based on the policy guidelines for education and science development set out in European and policy planning documents of Latvia: the Lisbon Strategy for Education, the key principles of the Bologna Process, the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Memorandum, regulatory enactments of Republic of Latvia has been considered in the strategy.

The College's strategic objectives are:

- To prepare specialists able to work in the accounting, financial area of the company, as well as a sole trader or a self-employed person in accordance with the requirements of today's Latvian and European Union markets, using the latest advances in information technology;

- Ensure the acquisition of the first level professional higher education and fourth level professional qualification;
- To ensure the theoretical and practical readiness of the graduate in decision making, addressing specific issues arising during business and accounting and analysis of real economic operations, accounting and evaluation of financial operations;
- To prepare specialists who can use research methods in their professional work; are familiar with basic theories of humanities and economics and are able to analyse economic problems and processes;
- To prepare specialists in economic, humanitarian, mathematical and professional disciplines at a level that gives graduates the opportunity to study at the fifth professional qualification level study programs in Latvia and abroad after completing the program;
- To develop a creative approach to the learning process in emerging professionals to promote the active life positions by encouraging them to acquire new knowledge.

The College should expand contacts with other universities and colleges in Latvia and abroad for further development, especially in research activities.

The international report, 100 Accounting Change Factors Across the Globe has identified 100 factors that will create accounting uncertainty over the next five years. The most significant of them are:

- In view of the fact that entrepreneurship is adapting to an unstable environment, the accounting officer is more likely to take on a wider range of organizational responsibilities. This potential is a leverage to increase the role of accounting officer in all aspects of corporate decision-making, from strategy formulation to the completion of new business models
- It is important to show that the accounting field obviously addresses social problems. Specialists in this field are more capable of detecting and preventing minor inaccuracies in finance, as well as major system failures caused by the global financial crisis and economic uncertainty.
- There is growing confidence in the need to build reviews because they provide a comprehensive view of the company's organization's system's viability, performance and prospects. Such a holistic perspective must demonstrate the complexity of today's business and should cover the material and non-financial performance of the company's financial position and potential.
- The global expansion of companies, both in developed markets and in developing markets, emphasizes the need to acquire maximum capacity for cross-border operations, overcoming technical, linguistic and cultural challenges.
- The diversity of demands and influences requires looking at everything from training and development to employee selection. Characteristics such as entrepreneurial spirit, quest for knowledge, creativity and strategic thinking can play a much more important role in choosing a future accountant.