



DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education for 2023-2027

REGISTERED AT LASE
under No. 135
Date: 08.12.2023.

APPROVED
at LASE Council meeting on
December 7, 2023, Protocol No. 51

APPROVED
at LASE Senate meeting on
December 7, 2023, Protocol No. 5

REGISTERED AT LASE
under No. 124
Date: 27.09.2023.

UPDATED
at LASE Council meeting on
September 14, 2023, Protocol No. 44

REGISTERED AT LASE
under No. 119
Date: 30.08.2023.

UPDATED
at LASE Senate meeting on
August 29, 2023, Protocol No. 1

PROJECT APPROVED
at LASE Senate meeting
Chair of the Senate Prof. U.Grāvītis
on January 14, 2021, Protocol No. 5

Riga, 2023



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	3
1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY PROCESS AND STUDY ENVIRONMENT	11
2. SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY AND INNOVATIONS	15
3. INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL COOPERATION	21
4. DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SPORTS ENVIRONMENT	22
5. OPTIMIZATION OF THE STRUCTURE AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMY	24
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF THE LASE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR 2023-2027	30
APPENDICES	47

INTRODUCTION

The Latvian Academy of Sport Education (LASE) is an academic and professional state higher education and science institution, founded on September 6, 1921. It operates in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the LASE Constitution and the regulatory enactments regulating its activity. LASE is the only sports higher education institution in the country that will guarantee the unity of studies and scientific research work in sports science and health care in sport, based on the “*Latvian National Development Plan for 2021-2027*”, the “*Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030*”, the “*National Industrial Policy Guidelines for 2021-2027*” (NIPG), the “*Science, Technology Development and Innovation Guidelines for 2021-2027*” (STDIG), the “*Education Development Guidelines for 2021-2027*” (EDG), the “*Smart Specialization Strategy*” (RIS3), the “*Digital Transformation Guidelines for 2021-2027*” (DTG), the “*Sports Policy Guidelines for 2022-2027*” (SPG), the “*Regional Policy Guidelines for 2021-2027*” (RPG) and the “*Public Health Guidelines for 2021-2027*” (PHG), for students to obtain academic and scientific degrees, professional qualifications and promote innovations in sports science and health care in sport. LASE, as a higher education institution of applied sciences, is a higher education and research institution that implements higher education programmes of all levels in accordance with higher education standards. Furthermore, LASE is a scientific institution registered in the register of scientific institutes on May 9, 2006, with No. 172075. LASE activity reviews are reflected in the annual self-evaluation reports that are publicly available on the Academy’s website **lspa.lv**.

The “*Development Strategy of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education for 2023-2027*” is based on the evaluation of the achieved strategic goals within the “*Development Strategy of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education for 2015-2020*” and on the current goals and tasks defined in the aforementioned external planning documents, the opinion of the foreign scientific evaluation, the joint opinions of the international expert group for the evaluation of study directions, as well as the vision based on the analytical reports about the future development trends in the study process, science and the labour market. Compared to the previous strategic planning period, in this period, more attention has been paid to providing high-quality educational opportunities in the education of sports specialists and health care specialists in sport, in order to promote the development and realization of their potential throughout life, and to build their ability to change and responsibly manage the constant changes in society and the national economy and for promoting excellence in scientific research and increasing the social and economic value of research.

LASE plans and strategies that are applicable to the specific activity stage of the strategy are considered as an integral part of the LASE Development Strategy for 2023-2027, for instance:

- Modernization and Internationalization Strategy of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education for 2021-2027 ¹(approved at the LASE Senate meeting on May 14, 2020, Protocol No. 9).
- Development Strategy of the Sports Branch Library of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education for 2023-2027 ²(approved at the LASE Senate meeting on May 11, 2023, Protocol No. 9).

¹ (Available: https://lspa.lv/files/senate/decisions/2020/05/LSPA_Internacionalizacijas_strategija.pdf)

² (Available: https://www.lspa.lv/files/2023/Bibliot%C4%93kas%20Strategija_2023.pdf)

- Development Plan of LASE Human Resources for 2018-2024 (approved at the LASE Senate meeting on March 1, 2018, Protocol No. 7) (Appendix 1).
- Study Programme Development and Consolidation Plan of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education for 2018-2024 (approved by LASE Senate on March 1, 2018, Protocol No. 7) (Appendix 2).
- Development Plan of LASE Sport Pedagogue Education for 2018-2024 (approved by LASE Senate on January 11, 2018, Protocol No. 5) (Appendix 3).
- Communication and Publicity Plan of LASE Pedagogue Education for 2018-2024 (approved at the LASE Senate meeting on January 11, 2018, Protocol No. 5) (Appendix 4).
- Development Plan of Doctoral Study Programmes of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education (2021-2027) (approved at the LASE Senate meeting on October 1, 2020, Protocol No. 2, updated on December 21, 2020) (Appendix 5).
- Development plans of study directions (Appendix 6).

LASE vision: While preserving the historical identity, to become an internationally recognized higher education institution in the field of Health and sports science of “Medicine and Health Science”, functioning as the coordinating centre of these fields on a national scale.

LASE mission: To create, accumulate and transfer knowledge based on research and innovation to students with the aim of creating a harmonious, intellectual and physically developed society, as well as promoting physical activity and the popularity of sports.

The **main goal** of LASE operation is to provide students with the opportunity to obtain higher academic and higher professional education and training, to develop sports science and research in health care in sport, to cultivate culture in order to preserve the intellectual and physical potential necessary for the Republic of Latvia (LR), promoting and ensuring the harmonious development of the nation.

The operational **goals** of LASE:

1. to develop study, research and lifelong learning programmes that provide the human resources necessary for the future development needs of the national economy, state and society in the field of strategic specialization of the Academy in accordance with the requirements of the labour market, as well as to promote the growth of those involved in the education process into ambitious, creative, responsible and competitive members of society.
2. to carry out applied research, as well as to ensure the transfer of knowledge and technology through innovations and lifelong learning processes in the relevant economic sectors in the strategic specialization area of the Academy, promoting their ability to dynamically adapt to changes in the external environment.
3. to provide the state, national economy and society with high-quality educational content and knowledge in the strategic specialization areas of the Academy.
4. to promote multidisciplinary and build cooperation, attracting various partners, participating in various projects and implementing various activities and initiatives in accordance with this goal, providing legislative and policy planning proposals, etc.
5. to ensure the sustainable development of the Academy as a national and internationally recognized institution of higher education and science, to implement

activities and various projects based on economic basis, creating and commercializing intellectual property and attracting the funding necessary for development in other ways.

LASE values: people, openness, creativity, striving for excellence in education and science, academic freedom.

The main **target groups** of higher education provided by **LASE** – persons and organizations with similar interests and needs in the field of education, sports and health care:

- 1) future and current students (youth, persons with special needs, adults).
- 2) target groups of adult education (graduates, academic staff, general staff and education, sports and health care specialists, as well as other interested parties).
- 3) target groups of indirect interested parties (educational, sports and health care and other organizations).

According to the Latvian classification of branches and sub-branches of sciences determined by the Cabinet of Ministers, the **strategic specialization of LASE** is “Health and Sports Sciences” included in the branch of sciences “Medicine and Health Sciences”, which are related to sports and health care in sport, including individual services.

Planning and implementation of the operation of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education in the period from 13.12.2022. until 31.12.2025. and thereafter is implemented in accordance with the regulatory documents governing the operation of LASE, as well as the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers No.903 from 13.12.2022. “On the Reorganization of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education” and other regulatory documents, so that the Academy continues to exist as a separate educational institution (a separate structural unit), while being part of the structure of Riga Stradiņš University, as directly subordinate to the Rector, following an equivalent model as BA School of Business and Finance. According to the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers No.903 "On the Reorganization of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education" from December 13, 2022, after the reorganization of LASE, starting from January 1, 2026, Riga Stradiņš University takes over and implements:

- the study programmes implemented by the Academy in the accredited study direction "Health Care" (Professional Bachelor's study programme “Physiotherapy” and Professional Master's study programme “Health Care Specialist in Sport”) and the accredited study direction "Education, Pedagogy and Sports" (Professional Bachelor's study programme “Sport Science” and Professional Master's study programme “Sport Science”).
- licensed study programmes implemented by the Academy within the framework of the specific support objective 8.2.1. "Reducing Fragmentation in Teacher Education Study Programmes and Strengthening Resource Sharing" of the operational programme “Growth and Employment” (1st level Professional higher education study programme "Sport and Education Specialist", Professional Bachelor's study programme "Health, Physical Activity and Safety" and joint Doctoral study programme "Sport Science").
- takes over the employment relations with the academic and general staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes mentioned in the

previous subpoints, as well as ensures equal principles in the allocation of wages, workload, and social guarantees.

After the approval of the LASE consolidation plan for the consolidation of LASE in the RSU structure, as of 01.01.2026. it is necessary to review the Development Strategy of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education for 2023- 2027 according to the up-to-date situation and future trends in higher education in Latvia.

The development, update and implementation evaluation processes of the LASE Development Strategy are carried out in accordance with the developed “*Procedure for the Development, Update and Implementation Evaluation of the LASE Development Strategy*” (07.03.2023.)³ approved by the LASE Senate and Council, as well as the document “*Strategic Planning Guidelines for State Administrative Institutions*” (2022) developed by the State Chancellery.

Description of the Current Situation

The Latvian Academy of Sport Education has existed for more than 100 years as a national-scale higher education and research institution with specialization in sport and health science and sport pedagogy. The Latvian Academy of Sport Education was opened on September 6, 1921, as the Latvian Institute of Physical Education by the order of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia and the Minister of Education. On November 5, 1991, the Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Latvia changed the name of the higher education institution to the Latvian Academy of Sport Education (LASE). According to the amendments to the Law on Higher Education Institutions adopted by the Saeima on June 8, 2021, a new LASE Constitution was developed and approved according to the procedures specified in the LASE Law on May 25, 2022, Protocol No. 1.

LASE is the only sport science and health institution in Latvia with a large number of academic staff, which provides sport education and professional development of coaches in Latvia and sport science support for Olympic sports. LASE has four main directions of scientific research: a) Sport, sport education and socialization, b) Promotion of public health – physical activity as a means of preventing non-infectious diseases in people of different ages, c) High performance sport, and d) Socio-economic aspects of sport.

In 2019, the overall rating of LASE in the international evaluation of scientific institutions (2013-2018) is 2 (satisfactory); however, it is higher than the rating (1) in the previous evaluation period. During this evaluation period, LASE did not receive funding for science from the state budget, but invested its resources in the development of science. LASE has succeeded in improving research infrastructure and equipment, while also making some thoughtful and targeted European structural fund investments, carrying out the organizational restructuring of research structural units and laboratories, as well as starting the operation of a new research centre. In the evaluation, this has been awarded with 2 points for the quality of the research environment and infrastructure. The quality of research results is still mostly at the national level, and more efforts should be made in the future to promote further growth and improve the quality of research conducted and the economic impact of scientific activity. Evaluating the potential of LASE, the commission gave a rating of 2 for development potential, and it is very important that the Latvian state supports the further development of LASE, since the social impact of the scientific work made on

³ (Available: https://www.lspa.lv/files/2023/Strat%C4%93%C4%A3ijas_izstr%C4%81des_k%C4%81rt%C4%ABba_09.02.2023_word_doc.pdf)

sports, health and physical activity is very important for society. This is recognized with a rating of 3 (good) for the social impact of scientific activity.

The recommendations of international experts in the consolidated report of the international evaluation of scientific institutions⁴ and in the reports of study directions are the basis for strategic planning of LASE studies and research, as well as public involvement. LASE has recognized the potential contribution to some of the investment priorities of the Smart Specialization Strategy, namely modern education, promoting physical activity. Providing a modern education system in the field of sport and health is also an area where LASE can make a valuable contribution. Today, there is a worldwide belief that “physical activity is medicine”, an important element of public health education and interventions to improve the quality of life and well-being of the population, and to prevent obesity and chronic diseases as people age. Sport science also has the potential to contribute to technological products, ICT solutions and their development in physical activity, and monitoring of the training process and performance. LASE has the innovation potential to contribute to all these areas, but cooperation with higher education institutions in the fields of medicine, engineering, ICT and with partners in the industry is also encouraged, so that the significant contribution of LASE to the implementation of the Smart Specialization Strategy⁵ (RIS3) is also possible in the future.

The main challenges and issues to be solved in 2021-2027 in the education system of Latvia⁶ have been determined as follows: insufficient attractiveness and competitiveness of the teaching profession, weak generation of pedagogues and academic staff; as education offer that is insufficiently relevant to modern needs; insufficiently inclusive and emotionally safe environment in educational institutions; unequal educational opportunities in urban and rural educational institutions; low learning motivation and involvement of all parties in adult education; lack of skills required in the labour market; insufficient digital skills of society; incomplete data management and education quality management at the educational institution and national level; inadequate network of educational institutions in general and higher education to ensure high-quality education. Current challenges and issues to be resolved in society and the community of higher education institutions have marked several development trends that directly affect LASE as well. Global development trends are characterized by the consolidation process of higher education institutions based on economic calculations, where the basis of cooperation is the sharing of resources of higher education institutions, as well as the rational use of infrastructure maintenance and staff costs. In Latvia, the consolidation process of higher education institutions is very fast and takes place in all areas at the same time, which creates risks of losing part of the competence in the field of strategic specialization for the consolidated higher education institutions because of a hasty process.

In 2021, in accordance with the typology of higher education institutions set in the Law on Higher Education Institutions, LASE is included in the group of higher education institutions of applied sciences, and the direction of strategic specialization of LASE is determined in 2022: medical and health sciences (thematic groups of

4 International Evaluation of Scientific Institutions' Activity. Consolidated Report. (Available: <https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/media/10721/download>)

5 Smart Specialization Strategy (Available: https://www.izm.gov.lv/sites/izm/files/ekosist_kopsavilkums_ris31.pdf)

6 Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of June 22, 2021, No. 436 "On the Guidelines for the Development of Education 2021-2027". (Available: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/324332>)

education – health care, individual services, including sports science)⁷, as well as the LASE Council is established in 2022.

The number of students in Latvia in the 2022/2023 academic year in Latvian higher education institutions decreased by 2.6%, according to the data collected by the Central Statistical Bureau. In turn, the number of students at LASE decreased by 2.4% in 2022. The decrease shows the impact of the geopolitical situation, the war in Ukraine and the pandemic years. The geopolitical situation, the consequences of the pandemic and the resulting rapid rise in inflation in 2022 reduced student solvency, creating a justified risk of a larger number of students dropping out. The decline in purchasing power of the population in the second half of 2022 and the beginning of 2023 may have a negative impact on student solvency in the 2023/2024 academic year, and this may also contribute to a decrease in the number of students studying at the expense of natural persons. Moreover, high inflation and changes in the allocation of funding from the state budget to higher education institutions in the future may create serious challenges in ensuring the financial flow of LASE. The pandemic clearly demonstrated that digitalization processes are increasingly important in higher education, both in studies and in research. Digitalization processes also create economic benefits for both the higher education institution and all involved parties. Pandemic restrictions have greatly contributed to the development of digitalization of LASE, as it was necessary to ensure continuous remote studies. Even after the pandemic, there is a current demand for remote studies, therefore it is necessary to continue to develop the digitalization of LASE management and the study process.

The “Science, Technology Development and Innovation Guidelines for 2021-2027”⁸ stipulate that there is a need for closer integration between higher education and research, a more strategic approach to research and to the development for the advancement of human capital, and resource sharing within each institution. Research-based studies are of greater importance, as a knowledge base must be established and new knowledge must be gained to ensure high-quality and research-based education, promote research excellence, and develop a skilled, smart, and creative society. This creates challenges for improving the competence of academic staff. Furthermore, promoting research excellence is improving the capacity of researchers to communicate research results in internationally highly rated scientific journals relevant to the fields of the centres of excellence. Promoting research excellence also affects the improvement of the model for promoting academic staff employment, generation, motivation, and student involvement in research.

In order for people to be successful both at work and in life, in the future they will need both higher-level skills and a comprehensive set of skills, which includes cognitive, social and emotional skills, as well as skills needed to perform a certain job, therefore the priority of the Latvian government is modern, high-quality and labour market-oriented education⁹. As a means to improve the international competitiveness of Latvian higher education institutions and to implement the plan of the Recovery and Resilience Facility mechanism of the European Union, significant higher education reforms have been initiated and implemented in recent years, for instance, determining the typology of higher education institutions, merging of higher education institutions, changing the management system, implementing a new academic career model, but

⁷ Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of June 21, 2022, No. 449 "On the Strategic Specialization of State Higher Education Institutions". (available <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/333471>)

⁸ Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of April 14, 2021, No. 246 "On the Guidelines for Science, Technology Development and Innovation for 2021-2027". (available <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/322468>)

⁹ OECD (2020), OECD Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Latvia: Developing Latvia's Education Development Guidelines 2021-2027, OECD Skills Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ebc98a53-en>.

for each policy activity at the national level, it is also necessary to assess the necessary financial resources and evaluate the sustainability of the funding source. At the end of 2022, preparatory work for the reorganization of LASE to include it in the science university ecosystem were begun, but the consolidation plan and the cooperation agreement of the parties involved (MoH, MoES, RSU, LASE) has not been approved as stipulated by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 903, as well as the impact of the reorganization on the further development of the field of sports and health care in sport, and the long-term benefits of the national economy have not been studied.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis of LASE

Internal Factors	
Strengths (+)	Weaknesses (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LASE is the only sport science institution in Latvia with a significant number of academic and scientific staff in the fields of sport science and health care in sport ● Experienced, qualified, professional academic and scientific staff in sport science and health care in sport ● Stable dynamics of the number of students, the number of admitted students varies within 10% ● Student-centred, research-based and practice-based approach to the field of sport ● Professional study programmes important for the development of the national economy of Latvia ● Full-cycle studies in the strategic specialization direction – sport science ● A unified and professional academic and scientific activity that ensures the transfer of knowledge to students and plays an important social role in promoting the health, physical activity and sports among people in Latvia ● Long-term and stable cooperation with employers, providing students with potential job opportunities and quality internships in sport science and health care in sport with an interdisciplinary approach in the fields of pedagogy, sports and health care ● Experience and opportunities in building local and international contacts in sport science and health care in sport, and in project implementation ● A modern Health Care in Sport Research Centre with available free capacity provides scientific and academic staff, students and cooperation partners with opportunities to conduct scientific research in sport science and health care in sport ● Extensive infrastructure for ensuring the study process in the field of sports ● A very wide of information about Academy's processes is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Insufficient research in sport and education development and/or policy selection, cooperation with the fields of pedagogy, sport and health care to identify relevant research areas, necessary technologies and possible innovations ● Insufficient generation of academic staff and researchers, competition and progress towards effective indicators in the attraction of projects, interdisciplinary cooperation with other higher education institutions, cooperation partners of the industry in the creation of research and publications ● Students dropping out in undergraduate programmes and a small number of foreign students ● Study programmes include small-volume study courses ● Insufficient integration of digital solutions in academic and scientific activity and in management of digital data in the provision of the study process ● Insufficient use of internationally recognized systematic improvement of pedagogical and scientific activity and professional competence of academic and scientific staff ● High study load of academic staff, insufficient support system in the preparation of projects and scientific publications, low capacity of administrative staff ● Scientific activity mainly in national level short-term projects ● Achievements in the quality of scientific activity are episodic ● Insufficient capacity for project preparation and implementation, small groups of scientists



<p>available in the digital environment and on social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LASE Sports Branch Library is unique in Latvia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remuneration corresponding to the lowest monthly salary rate of academic staff • Outdated infrastructure • Limited available financial instruments for infrastructure renewal and modern development of the study environment • Some of the available information is not transparent and does not correspond to modern communication standards (for example – an outdated website)
External Factors	
Opportunities (+)	Threats (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The growth of Latvia envisages increasing the training of highly qualified specialists, emphasizing competence, research and innovation-related development in higher education • For the purpose of ensuring the achievement of the goals set by the EU “Sustainable Europe until 2030” and the “National Development Plan 2021-2027”, higher education is being modernized to improve equal access to inclusive and high-quality education, ensuring the development of skills necessary for the digital economy, while evaluating the potential negative external impact of digital infrastructure, the development of scientific activity and innovation potential, and the implementation of the principle of lifelong learning • As a result of the consolidation, sharing of infrastructure and teaching staff of Riga Stradiņš University (RSU), as well as consolidation of administrative costs with RSU • The EU strategy and the Recovery and Resilience Plan of Latvia¹⁰ envisage the modernization of the material and technical supply of higher education and science institutions, and increasing the efficiency of resource use, ensuring equal access to higher education, improving the quality of studies and scientific activities, increasing resources and opportunities in the planned scientific university ecosystem • State policy promotes international cooperation and competitiveness of higher education and science, as well as physical activity and sports as a means of maintaining quality of life and health • Interdisciplinary cooperation and scientific development of pedagogy, sports, health care is connected with the needs of society, national economy development and market, participation in national and international scientific and educational projects is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible loss of academic autonomy and identity as a result of consolidation • The negative impact of the consolidation process of the higher education institution of the field on the future development of the field of sport • By joining RSU as a separate structural unit, there may not be enough resources to maintain a separate identity of LASE <p style="text-align: center;">Low state funding for higher education and science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of a unified vision of science in mid-departments and poorly developed cross-sectoral cooperation between pedagogy, sport and health care, an unstable order from the sports industry for researching the development needs of the sports industry • Limited financial resources for provision of academic staff resources and academic staff generation, increase in the average age of academic staff and slowed down generational change • Limited available financial instruments for the renewal of infrastructure and modern development of the study environment, there is no experience in applying innovation commercialization instruments in the field of sport • Unfavourable demographic trends in the country can lead to a sharp decrease in the number of students • Unstable funding for research that is unpredictable in long-term • Changes in legal/regulatory acts, especially those that negatively affect students in Latvia • Insufficient centralized exam results for prospective

¹⁰ Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of April 28, 2021, No. 292 "On the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism Plan of Latvia". (available: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/322858>)

<p>stimulated, promoting international recognition and long-term cooperation, in the creation and commercialization of innovative services and products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizing the need for research in sport science and health care in sport science and practice, improving cooperation and modernization of infrastructures in sport science and health care in sport, promoting the attraction of Doctoral students, research in Latvia, attracting Latvian and foreign partners, state funding, financial resources of European projects and private entrepreneurs, for instance, “Horizon Europe HEALTH” 	<p>students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development trends of the industry will contribute to the shortage of highly qualified specialists
--	--

The **main directions** of LASE operation are:

- implementation of high-quality higher education and research activities;
- transfer of technology and knowledge, commercialization and implementation of innovations in the sectors of national economy corresponding to the areas of strategic specialization, promoting their ability to dynamically adapt to the needs of society and changes in the external environment;
- interdisciplinary and international cooperation, promoting the implementation of internationally relevant and important educational and scientific knowledge and methods in the operation of LASE, as well as the dissemination of LASE research results in the international academic environment;
- implementation of economic activity corresponding to the specialization of LASE;
- popularizing sports in society to ensure its health and well-being;
- coordination of higher education and science in the fields of pedagogy, health and sport science and sports in the Republic of Latvia, also participating in the planning of improvements in the sector, including the provision of legislation and other initiatives.

Strategic Directions of LASE Development:

1. Development of the study process and study environment.
2. Scientific activity and innovations.
3. International and national cooperation.
4. Development of student sports environment.
5. Optimization of the structure and infrastructure of the Academy.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY PROCESS AND STUDY ENVIRONMENT

The **goal** of the study process at LASE is to provide students with internationally recognized, modern, unique, high-quality studies, to develop innovative research in sport science and health care in sport, integrating it into a modern study process, which would promote the preparation of competent and competitive sport and health care specialists in the field of sport for the Latvian and international labour market.

The goal envisages the improvement of both the study content and process, as well as the environment and resources to ensure an internationally recognized, modern and high-quality educational offer at LASE. In the conditions of digital transformation, when the importance of technology in the improvement of resources and the provision of the study content and process, and the study environment is increasing, the ability

of LASE staff and future specialists to adapt both to changes and to the growing and changing digital skill requirements should be promoted. The impact of the crisis caused by the “Covid-19” infection has accelerated the digital transformation at LASE as well. Although the remote work and education process has become a reality, the crisis has also revealed the limitations of the current digital maturity in the development of the study process and environment at LASE. The digital skill gap of the parties involved in the existing study process is becoming topical, as it is necessary to improve the level of digital skills of the parties involved in the study process and to further develop the digitalization of LASE. Digital skills are interdisciplinary skills, the quality of which in the process of digital transformation depends on opportunities of students to study, the ability of graduates to compete in the labour market and fully participate in the processes of society. Furthermore, the integration of digital solutions in the study process is increasingly important, for instance, computer simulations, simulation laboratories (creating a study environment for providing a simulation-based educational approach, implementing interdisciplinary simulations, virtual reality, simulators, simulator role-playing games, virtual patient, virtual equipment, etc. chatbots, machine learning and machine translation and its integration into the content of study programmes, voice synthesizers), and for integration of students with special needs in the learning process, the use of digital solutions (chatbots, etc.) for teaching users of digital solutions. Currently, the technical provisions of the digital study process are insufficient.

Analysis of the Development of the Study Process and Study Environment

Based on the implementation indicators and data analysis of the “*LASE Development Strategy for 2015-2020*” and the issues identified in the development analysis of the study process and study environment, the following issue solutions are proposed:

- measures to prevent the negative effects of weaknesses: to attract external public and private financial resources, creating a motivating environment for the gradual renewal of staff and infrastructure, as well as by strengthening the field of sport, in cooperation with national and international partners, to systematically develop tools for the commercialization of innovations in the field of sport and health care in sport, as well as to gradually consolidate low volume study courses in study programmes, and to integrate digital solutions into the study process;
- measures to mitigate threats: to strengthen national and international cooperation, increasing the share of revenue from other natural and legal persons, to strengthen the export of study programmes, increasing the number of foreign students, to inform and educate society about the role of higher education in sport and its importance in the prosperity of the country, e.g., in promoting public health, increasing life expectancy and quality.

To achieve the goal of LASE – a unique, high-quality, research-oriented study offer and high competitiveness of graduates, specific **action directions and tasks** have been set:

- **RV1 – to create** an opportunity for students to obtain high-quality 1st and 2nd level professional higher education in the field of sport and health care, as well as academic higher education (Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctoral degree), preparing competent and competitive professionals in the field of sport, health care and sport science, national defence;

- **RV2** – in cooperation with employers, **to develop, improve and modernize** flexible, competency-based study programmes that meet the requirements of the labour market and the needs of future professions, and are mutually recognized in Latvian and foreign higher education institutions, providing students with an optimal study environment according to the level of scientific development and Latvian cultural traditions, expanding inclusion in the competitive labour market and creating opportunities for harmonizing studies, work, physical activity, folk and high-performing sport and family life;
- **RV3** – **to activate** cooperation with graduates of LASE, cooperation partners with municipalities in the development of study programmes, quality assurance and communication with society in the development of the study environment, ensuring the preparation of competitive specialists necessary for the needs of the national economy;
- **RV4** – **to ensure** the selection of study and research work according to the interests and abilities of an individual, taking care of the preparation of young sport scientists, thus ensuring the opportunity to be included in the academic processes of the world, as well as to offer the society the acquired scientific and professional knowledge, methods and research results, promoting the integration of the latest scientific achievements into the study process;
- **RV5** – **to promote** the internationalization process of LASE studies and improve its coordination;
- **RV6** – **to provide** more opportunities for students to acquire additional skills abroad during their studies, promoting cross-border cooperation and participation of the best students in mobility programmes, thereby improving the quality of education;
- **RV7** – **to create** new interdisciplinary or joint study programmes with Latvian higher education institutions or international excellence programmes with foreign higher education institutions, implementing a campaign to attract applicants abroad, promoting the implementation of internationally relevant and important educational and scientific knowledge and methods in the operation of LASE;
- **RV8** – **to integrate digital solutions into the study process**, improving the availability of digital study tools, providing the opportunity to participate in the LASE study process online, as well as recording and making video recordings of this process, opening part of the study courses in open access and popularizing them as examples of good practice, using the solutions offered by technology for the examination of students, for the evaluation of study work in the study process, and for the personalization of the study process, creating a study environment for ensuring a simulation-based educational approach, limiting plagiarism (an automatic system for recognition plagiarism), integrating the automatic plagiarism recognition system into the study environment and the examination information system, implementing study process analytics solutions and using these solutions to provide support to students of various levels in order to prevent premature dropping-out of studies, and to monitor the quality of studies;
- **RV9** – **to ensure** digital data management in the study process;
- **RV10** – **to motivate** the academic staff of LASE for excellence in studies and research, to increase the quality of human resources, to balance the age structure of the academic staff, involving young teaching staff in academic work;
- **RV11** – **to improve** the digital skills of the academic staff, allowing to supplement the existing ones and to acquire new skills and abilities;
- **RV12** – **to promote** the creation of a support system for improving the Latvian and foreign language competencies of the academic staff and students;

- **RV13 – to promote** the further education of the adult target group, expanding cooperation with other higher education institutions, scientific research institutions and educational institutions, participating in further education events;
- **RV14 – to promote** the development of sport science, health care and sport education, high-performing sport, folk sport and adapted sport according to the interests of the population;
- **RV15 – to strengthen the identity of LASE** in the dimension of Latvia, as well as the common European Higher Education Area and in the world, cooperating and promoting the exchange of students and academic staff between Latvian and foreign higher education institutions.

The fulfilment of the mission of LASE in education strengthens human capital in Europe, thereby promoting the social importance of sport, complementing the aspects of European sport and economy, promoting the welfare of society.

In order to achieve the goal put forward in the development of the study process and study environment and the result indicators of the study process set in Table 1 – an increase in the number of foreign and Latvian students, an increase in the number of foreign guest tutors, a significant increase in the number of persons involved in lifelong learning, further education and professional development, the study process at LASE is implemented in accordance with the mission, vision, main goal and established development directions of LASE, promoting the further development of the study process and study environment, improving the material and technical supply of the student-centred study environment of LASE, ensuring the growth of quality in the preparation and professional development of competent professionals in the field of sport, health care and sport science, strengthening future national and international inter-institution cooperation, promoting the development of new cross-sectoral programmes, based on compliance with the areas of the smart specialization of Latvia „Smart materials, technologies and engineering systems” and „Biomedicine, medical technologies, biopharmaceutics and biotechnologies”, creating a global human capital of sport and health care specialists in sport that is rooted in Latvia. The implementation of the integration of studies and research into the study process will promote the preparation of young sport scientists and health care in sport, thus ensuring the opportunity to be included in the academic processes of the world, as well as to offer to offer the society the acquired scientific and professional knowledge, methods and research results, and promote their transfer into practice, and also to promote the internationalization process of LASE studies and improve its coordination.

Table 1

Development Indicators of the Study Process and Study Environment

Action Directions	Main Indicators	Indicator in 2022	Indicator in 2025	Goal in 2027
RV1	Increase in the total number of graduates	200	> at least 2% every year	> at least 2% every year
RV2	Reduction in student dropout rates	50.1% complete their studies	> at least 2% every year	> at least 2% every year
RV3	Employment of graduates one year after studies	96%	98%	98%
RV4	The number of projects involving students	1	2	3
RV5	The number of foreign students from the total number of students having a budget seat	5.3%	> at least 1% every year	> at least 1% every year
RV6	The number of students involved in mobility	3.4%	> at least 3% every year	> at least 3% every year

Action Directions	Main Indicators	Indicator in 2022	Indicator in 2025	Goal in 2027
RV7	Joint study programmes	-	1	1
RV8	Digital solutions in the study process	1	2	3
RV9	Digital solutions in the management of the study process	1	1	2
RV10	Proportion of persons with a Doctoral degree elected to academic positions within the academic staff who are employed full-time (proportion)	60%	65%	70%
	Involvement of young teaching staff in academic work/the number of those elected	4	2	2
	Satisfaction level of involved parties (% of total number of academic staff)	-	77%	83%
RV11	Improvement of digital literacy of the academic staff (% of total)	20%	45%	85%
RV12	Professional development courses for improving language competencies	1	1	2
RV13	Persons involved in lifelong education, further education, and professional development	1135	> at least 5% every year	> at least 10% every year
RV14	The number of projects (partnerships, etc. projects)	1	1	2
RV15	The number of foreign guest tutors from the total number of tutors	8.6%	> at least 1% every year	> at least 1% every year

The educational offer of LASE will become even more qualitative and oriented towards the development of skills that are highly valued in the labour market. The education of sport and health care in sport specialists requires an effective synergy of national economy and education. The involvement of employers in ensuring the quality of the study process, both by being included in the management of LASE study directions – in the development of study programmes and quality assessment, as well as in the implementation of the study process – in conducting study courses and internships, promotes the formation of a global human capital of sport and health care specialists that is rooted in Latvia, and the provision of workplaces for young specialists.

As a result of the consolidation of RSU – LASE, the quality of studies will be increased, the main reference-points of its improvement and modernization are competence-based education and digital transformation, strengthening of research-based studies, improvement of study programme content compliance with requirements of the field and data-based study quality assurance – a culture of continuous improvement. As a result of the consolidation, the consolidation, improvement and content modernization of similar study programmes will be carried out in accordance with the “Internal and External Consolidation Plan of Riga Stradiņš University”.

Highly qualified academic staff ensures the fulfilment of the mission of LASE. The management of LASE stimulatingly evaluates the excellence of the academic staff and takes care of the needs of work, study environment, further education and social welfare. Strengthening the quality of the academic staff and ensuring a sustainable academic career is a priority, as it is necessary to create and implement a new academic career model at LASE, and it is also necessary to strengthen strategic and effective study management and leadership.

In promoting the excellence of LASE, one of the priorities is the implementation and development of the study quality monitoring system, in order to be able to gradually

move to cyclic institutional accreditation starting from 2024. Improvement of the LASE study management model – ensuring financing related to the development strategy of LASE and monitoring of the implementation of the strategy.

One of the priorities is the improvement of communication between **academic** staff and students, which is implemented to achieve the goals and tasks of the higher education programme, as well as to promote the quality of the scientific work, development of methodological work and self-education of the academic staff. One of the prerequisites for ensuring the quality of studies is greater availability of diverse information and study materials for students.

The quality of the study process is ensured by the unity of studies and science. Every representative of the academic staff of LASE participates in the study process and carries out scientific research work. Attracting foreign guest professors is also encouraged, offering these positions mainly to the best professionals in their field. LASE will also expand its position in attracting foreign students.

2. SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY AND INNOVATIONS

Scientific research activity at the Latvian Academy of Sport Education takes place within the framework of a scientific institution (it is registered in the register of scientific institutions). In order to improve the thematic specialization and cooperation (with other scientific research institutions, as well as institutions and companies of the public and private sector) of LASE as a scientific institution, the Health Care in Sport Research Centre and the Sport Science Research Laboratory have been established. Their profile and goals are directly related to the study directions of LASE and the research work of academic staff and Doctoral students established so far.

Science and research in interdisciplinary research in the field of health and sport. Research related to health and sport are carried out in sport physiology, sport medicine, biomechanics, sport management, social sciences and humanities.

Scientific operation of LASE can be evaluated in connection with the following main dimensions:

- connecting research with the study process (study goals and results);
- scientific activity carried out by tutors and researchers of LASE in accordance with the main directions of scientific research of LASE, the main scientific directions of the departments, scientific interests of tutors (also within the framework of cooperation between Doctoral or Master's students and tutors – scientific advisors) or research projects, in which tutors and researchers of LASE are involved (including in cooperation projects with other higher education institutions or scientific institutions), as well as custom studies carried out in commercial interests.

The connection of research with the study process is characterized by the research work of tutors, which provides prerequisites for improving and updating the content of study courses, as well as for developing the research skills of students. Departments play an important role in both mentioned aspects of linking studies and research.

Medium-term goals:

1. To achieve the result of the international evaluation of scientific institution activity, which exceeds the average indicators.
2. To strengthen the material and technical supply of science and research and the professionalism of human resources in order to interest the cooperation of

representatives of various research directions in Latvia and Europe, which will contribute to the creation of joint projects and scientific publications, as well as the professional experience and growth of staff.

3. To introduce a motivating set of systems that will promote the attraction of Doctoral students and the continuation of their careers in research, the attractions of foreign researchers and the professional development of existing researchers.

The main directions of scientific research at LASE:

1. Sport, sport education and socialization.
2. Promotion of public health – physical activity as a means of preventing non-infectious diseases in people of different ages: folk sport, children and youth sports, adapted sport.
3. High performance sport.
4. Socio-economic aspects of sport.

Analysis of scientific activity and innovation development:

The opinion of international experts on the main issues of the scientific activity and innovation development of LASE is attracting and retaining new graduates of Doctoral programmes, systematic and long-term cooperation between the academic, research and business sectors, as well as strengthening innovation capacity in the private sector.

Funding depends on the European structural and investment funds (ESIF) and provides only a short-term financial stimulus without ensuring long-term sustainability of policy instruments. The low level of base funding, accompanied by uneven disbursement rates in the ESIF, which provides the majority of research funding, does not encourage systematic activity and the attraction of qualified researchers. High fluctuations make it impossible to attract human resources, long-term commitment, and career planning, which requires long-term financial commitments.

The structure of an academic career differs from the “career ladder” of a researcher, as national legislation separates higher education academic and research academic positions. Academic positions do not conform to a single, defined set of tasks. Usually only one candidate applies for a position. Furthermore, the compatibility of linked salary and different career systems is not so simple, although the system does provide flexibility and rapid career growth.

In this context, the goal of the government to increase the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) researchers by 2027 is ambitious, given that the number of Doctoral students and graduates has decreased significantly in recent years, as Doctoral studies do not seem attractive to potential students.

In previous years, the availability of scholarships during Doctoral studies was relatively low, forcing students to work full-time outside of academic work. Improvements in this area are expected in the next period, as Doctoral grants in the amount of EUR 1792 per month will be available both within the framework of the European Union structural funds and the RRP academic grants.

The attraction of researchers from abroad depends on the overall attractiveness of the research system and the reduction of obstacles, for instance, the requirements set by national laws faced by the foreign academic staff, as well as the uncompetitive salary levels where positive trends are expected in the coming years similarly to Doctoral studies. For example, when implementing RRP and/or SSO 1.1.1.9. post-

Doctoral grants, the rates per unit are aligned with the Horizon Europe MSCA rates, thus making these grants attractive to foreign researchers as well.

The interest of companies and sports institutions in health and sport science is moderate compared to their potential. In general, research in health and sport science and innovations in the Latvian business sector are quite limited.

However, there have been signs of progress and interest in recent years that provide a basis for further development.

The emergence of new research ideas is hindered by the lack of entrepreneurial skills and competencies among the academic staff. Currently, investments are being made in developing the entrepreneurship and language skills of the staff of LASE, which could facilitate the involvement of researchers in project management.

There is also a low level of cooperation between the academic and business sectors. There are some collaborative activities of the business sector, but there is a lack of systematic processes and strategies to ensure that these activities achieve maximum benefit.

Scientific quality, impact on the health and sport science branch

The scientific quality of LASE is contributed by individual academics, whose research and publications have very good quality standards in terms of originality and importance. Works of this level are published by international publishers or journals with the strictest publication standards.

Most of the publications of the academic staff are published in the proceedings of international conferences, which are indexed in the *Web of Science* database.

The scientific publication of LASE – “*LASE Journal of Sport Science*” – is indexed in the European journal citation database ERIH PLUS of humanities and social sciences, and it has been included in its database since 2015, thus providing the opportunity for tutors and students to prepare and submit publications. The journal has the *Digital Object Identifiers* (DOI) number that determines the circulation of the publications of the journal in the global virtual network. In the future, the journal will be submitted for re-evaluation in the *Scopus*, *Ebsco* and *Web of Science* databases.

Scientific projects are submitted but rarely approved. More often, LASE participates in projects as a cooperation partner.

Cooperation in health and sport science with state institutions responsible for the sport and health sector continues. Negotiations have started with the Latvian National Armed Forces about the need for health and sport research for soldiers.

Research environment and infrastructure of the institution

The attraction of financial resources and the development of human resources are planned. The number of researchers in terms of FTE has increased to 10 FTE. It is planned to attract specialists – sports doctor, cardiologist. A financial support system for active researchers has been developed.

The Health Care in Sport Research Centre is one of the most modern in the Baltics, and it supports the availability of research services and strives for high professional quality of service provision. Students are involved in research; unfortunately, the workload of students outside the study process does not contribute to the timely execution of research quality. Advice is provided to academic staff in relation to science hardware. Equipment has been purchased to enable research in health and sport science. To ensure international research, the creation of patents and the preparation of publications, the material and technical supply of LASE is

strengthened, and targeted human resources development is carried out – promoting the growth of intellectual potential at the higher education institution.

If necessary, within the framework of specific projects, other Latvian specialists from other scientific institutions (cooperation agreements, projects) and foreign specialists (cooperation agreements, projects) are attracted.

Insufficient technical staff and administrative support hinder project submission and quality execution. At the moment, the hindering factors have been identified and the qualified staff of the administrative department has been strengthened (project coordinator, accountant, jurist, clerk).

LASE is able to provide an internationally comparable excellent research environment for high-level international research in the field of health and sport science.

The opportunities identified in the analysis of scientific activity and innovation development will be used to create new innovative products and activate the transition to high-tech industries and products, for instance, the development of closer research cooperation is a prerequisite in the creation of various interdisciplinary projects, the development of research and interdisciplinary final products with other higher education institutions and research institutes in Latvia, especially within the framework of the Academic Doctoral higher education programme „Sport Science” and also with higher education institutions and research institutes of the European Higher Education Area, as well as when conducting market-oriented research, attracting other sources of funding. A prerequisite for the creation of new innovative products, for example, in the promotion of public health, is the continuous improvement of the scientific infrastructure for sport science and health care in sport, by attracting state funding within the framework of base, performance financing and projects, within the framework of European projects, and within the framework of contractual work, by attracting financial resources of private entrepreneurs, as well as integrating the requirements and needs of the national economy into science and study programmes of LASE.

To achieve **the goal of the scientific activities and innovation development** of LASE, specific **action directions and tasks** have been set:

- RVZ1** – to carry out applied research, as well as to ensure the transfer of knowledge and technology in the relevant sectors of the national economy in the field of strategic specialization of the Academy through innovations and lifelong learning processes, promoting their ability to dynamically adapt to changes in the external environment;
- RVZ2** – to provide the state, national economy and society with high-quality knowledge in the fields of strategic specialization of the Academy;
- RVZ3** – to develop research programmes that, in accordance with the requirements of the labour market, provide the human resources necessary for the future needs of the development of the national economy, state and society in the field of strategic specialization of the Academy;
- RVZ4** – to promote interdisciplinarity and build cooperation, attracting various partners, participating in various projects, providing legislative and policy planning proposals, etc.

In order to solve the problems identified in the analysis of scientific activity and innovation development, the following problem solutions are proposed:

- measures to prevent the negative effects of weaknesses: by increasing both qualitative and quantitative indicators (Table 2), LASE plans to obtain base funding for sport science and health care research at LASE in the field of sport, thus financially ensuring finances for the purchase of scientific databases, as well as the implementation of scientific research. For the implementation of these goals, it is also planned to attract other sources of funding; increasing the full-time equivalent (FTE) for both researchers and, gradually, the majority of teaching staff (FTE from 0.3 to 0.5) for performing scientific work within one workload; gradually improving the scientific infrastructure of LASE for conducting innovative scientific research in sport and health care in sport, also attracting state funding, financial resources of European projects and private entrepreneurs, as well as cooperating with other scientific universities.
- measures to mitigate threats: increasing the quantitative indicators of scientific articles – publications in the *Web of Science* and *Scopus* databases (see Table 2), developing the environment for carrying out scientific activity and increasing the full-time equivalent (FTE) for both researchers and, gradually, the majority of teaching staff (FTE from 0.3 to 0.5) for performing scientific work within one load; implementing into practice various innovative technologies for learning physical activity and sport training, sport and health; raising the prestige of the sport and health care in sport industry in the society, actively informing the public about discoveries within them and their practical application in everyday life (scientific conferences, seminars, continuing education courses, continuation of the Researchers' Night traditions, etc.) as a guarantor of human health and personality formation; gradually expanding the opportunities for attracting young specialists to research, providing additional funding for the work done in research, ensuring the participation of young specialists in international conferences, research projects and exchange programmes.

Table 2

INDICATORS OF SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY

Action Directions	Main Indicators	Results Indicators		
		Indicator in 2022	Indicator in 2025	Goal in 2027
RVZ1	Research projects	2	2	3
RVZ2	The number of defended Doctoral Theses	6	3	4
	The number of registered patent applications	0	1	1
	Scientific articles indexed in <i>Web of Science</i> and/or <i>Scopus</i> databases	7	12	26
	Scientific articles in a publication included in another indexed database	27	24	20
	The number of Q1 and Q2 articles in <i>Scopus</i> database	2	4	13
	Monographs	1	1	1-2
	Articles or chapters in monographs	1	1	1-2
RVZ3	The number of academic staff and scientific technical staff in terms of FTE	10	12	15
	The number of Doctors of Science working at the institution as a % of the academic staff	65%	75%	85%

Action Directions	Main Indicators	Results Indicators		
		Indicator in 2022	Indicator in 2025	Goal in 2027
	The number of young researchers involved (entering employment in a given year)	1	2	2
RVZ4	Cooperation agreements in science and research (contract research) (concluded per year)	3	3	5

In order to achieve the goal of LASE, specific **tasks for ensuring the research and innovation environment** have been set:

- **to establish** the Latvian Sport Science Centre in cooperation with the Sports Department of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) of the Republic of Latvia, functionally consolidating with the Latvian Olympic Committee (LOC), the Latvian Paralympic Committee (LPC), the Latvian Olympic team (LOT), the Latvian Sports Federations Council (LSFC), Murjāņi Sports Gymnasium, Olympic centres and sports federations in sport science, as well as research in cooperation with other higher education institutions and research centres of Latvia, Europe, especially Baltic, Scandinavian and world countries;
- **to strengthen** close cooperation with sports federations, municipalities and sectors of national economy to create innovation and high value-added products and technologies, and to effectively coordinate the development of science and sport education industry, and health care in sport;
- **to strengthen** the material and technical supply of the LASE Sport Science Research Laboratory and the Health Care in Sport Research Centre, which will promote research in public health and high-performance sport. To find out the possibilities of improving the quality of life of the population at all age stages and to promote the creation of innovations in sport biomechanics, recreation, ergonomics, sport physiotherapy, it is planned to involve full-time researchers in the perspective;
- **to create technological** solutions in the creation of an effective knowledge and technology transfer system.

The diverse forms of cooperation will create prerequisites for the implementation of such research directions in sport science and health care, in which the development of the industry is also possible, using the experience and knowledge gained by specialists involved in such research, and will ensure the implementation of research results in economic activity, thereby guaranteeing the reflection of long-term interests of sport and health care in sport industry in the research directions.

3. INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL COOPERATION

The **goal** of LASE in international and national cooperation is to strengthen and develop cooperation with higher education institutions of Latvia and other countries for the implementation of international projects in the field of education, science, sport, health, infrastructure, and culture, providing internationally recognized high-quality studies, developing innovative research in sport science and health care in sport, and integrating it in the process of their studies.

Strategic action directions and tasks:

- RVS1** – to promote the mobility of students and academic staff, creating an environment of institutional cooperation, concluding bilateral cooperation agreements, attracting guest professors, thereby increasing the quality of higher education, and strengthening its importance.
- RVS2** – to implement the exchange of academic, scientific, sport, health, and cultural experiences at the international level, promoting the export of LASE study programmes and the use of foreign languages.
- RVS3** – to implement International Summer School programmes, international intensive programmes, and to organize international seminars.
- RVS4** – to popularize LASE education abroad by working in the Higher Education Export Association, participating in educational exhibitions, and informing about study opportunities at LASE.

Relevant, competence-based, competitive studies recognized in Latvia, the Baltic States, and abroad, ensuring an optimal and open study environment in accordance with the level of scientific development and the cultural traditions of Latvia.

Promoting the export of LASE study programmes is a set of measures: promoting recognition of the education obtained at LASE, increasing its quality, and ensuring a student-centred environment, in which studies take place. Promoting the recognition of the education obtained at LASE is related to the achievements of LASE in science and the development of science at the Academy, which in turn contributes to the improvement of the quality of studies and its growth. Tutors of LASE are in demand at foreign higher education institutions, professors of LASE participate in the creation of international textbooks and collective monographs, which are used in their study courses by students of higher education institutions in other countries, and graduates of LASE are a sought-after workforce in the global labour market. The result of the set of measures to promote the export of LASE study programmes is a gradually increasing number of foreign students. LASE annually invests in promoting the export of study programmes, as well as creates study programmes to provide the necessary specialists for the growth of the national economy, for example, sport physiotherapists and adapted physical activity specialists.

Table 3

Development Indicators of International and National Cooperation

Action Direction	Main Indicators	Indicator in 2022	Indicator in 2025	Goal in 2027
RVS1	Academic staff involved in mobility	8%	> at least 3% every year	> at least 3% every year
RVS2	Events for academic, scientific, sport, health, and cultural experience exchange	3	3	5
RVS3	International Summer School programmes, international intensive programmes, and international seminars	1	1	3
RVS4	Popularization of LASE education abroad	1	1	3
RVS5	Activities in international scientific, academic, and professional organizations	7	9	11

LASE has submitted documents for the ERASMUS Charter of Higher Education 2021-2027 (ECHE) awarding contest. Participation in ERASMUS+ education and sport programmes is a part of the Academy's strategy, which allows for the modernization

and internationalization of study programmes of all cycles. Increasing the quality of mobility of students and academic staff, participation in international higher education projects is support for the internationalization of a united European Education Area.

Within the framework of the *ERASMUS+* programme, student mobility takes place in Bachelor's and Master's study programmes. In the future, LASE plans to activate Doctoral-level study mobility, incl. creating joint higher education programmes with other higher education institutions in Latvia and abroad, which will be facilitated by the already implemented participation of foreign tutors in the supervision and consulting of Doctoral Theses of Doctoral students at LASE.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SPORTS ENVIRONMENT

Sport is an important part of the lives of LASE students, which largely determines their professional preparation. Physical activities contribute to the development of high-performance sport, improve health, and quality of life.

The sport work of LASE is organized, coordinated, and implemented by the Department of Sport of LASE, and the association „LASE Sports Club” in order to create an environment and opportunities for an athletic and spiritual growth of students within the study process, thus promoting professional preparation for further activity in sport and promoting the recognition of the Academy in Latvia and abroad.

The development of LASE student sport is organized in cooperation with the Latvian University Sports Federation, sports federations, the Latvian Olympic Committee, the Latvian Paralympic Committee, the Latvian Olympic Academy, the Latvian Olympic Team, other higher education institutions of Latvia, municipalities, sports schools, etc. sport organizations.

Goals of the development of student sports environment:

- Providing opportunities for improving the skills of students of the Academy, LASE teams and individual athletes.
- Preparation of athletically, theoretically and practically prepared sport specialists, improving the knowledge and skills of students in organizing sports events and the training process.
- Promotion of a physically active lifestyle of tutors and employees.

Strategic directions and tasks of the development of sports environment at the Academy:

1. High-performing student sport:

RVSV1 – To promote the creation of LASE teams in various team and individual sports, supporting cooperation with other institution to provide students with the opportunity to improve their sportsmanship by competing in international and Baltic-wide sports competitions.

RVSV2 – To ensure the participation of LASE teams and individual athletes in the Latvian Universiade and other Latvian or international competitions.

2. Folk sport:

RVSV3 – To provide an opportunity for the students, tutors and support staff of the Academy to participate in events of the Academy that promote a healthy lifestyle and health, e.g. in skiing, skating lessons, adventure competitions, etc., and to stimulate athletic activities outside of LASE, e.g. the Olympic day, the international Rimi Riga Marathon, etc..

RVSV4 – To promote the improvement of professional knowledge and skills of LASE students by involving them in the organization and judging of sports events, incl. in adapted sport, children and youth sports activities.

3. Children and youth sport:

RVSV5 – To popularize and create an opportunity for children and youth to engage using the infrastructure of LASE, promoting the skill development of young athletes.

4. Adapted sport:

RVSV6 – to promote and **encourage** the participation of LASE students – persons with special needs – in LASE sports events of general profile.

Table 4

Indicators of Student Sports Environment Development

Action Directions	Main Indicators	Indicator in 2022	Indicator in 2025	Goal in 2027
RVSV1	The number of LASE teams (the number of combined teams)	15	17	23
RVSV2	Participation in international student competitions	1	1	3
RVSV3	University events of LASE promoting a healthy lifestyle and health	1	2	5
RVSV4	Involvement of students in organizing and judging sports events, incl. in adapted sport	4	6	16
RVSV5	Sports activities for children and youth	2	3	6
RVSV6	Participation of persons with special needs in LASE sports events of general profile	12	15	24

5. OPTIMIZATION OF THE STRUCTURE AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMY

The basis of the organization and development of LASE operation is the JOINT TEAMWORK of academic staff, general staff and students, and its development is facilitated by cooperation with state institutions, higher education institutions in Latvia and abroad, companies and professional organizations.

LASE is a university-type higher education institution that specialized in the creation of human resources and innovations necessary for the development of the national economy, state, and society in accordance with the demand of the sport and health care industries, and the developmental needs of the state.

The main directions of LASE operation are to ensure its sustainable development as a national and internationally recognized institution of higher education and science in sport science and health care.

Goal: optimization and modernization of the structure and infrastructure of the Academy in order to ensure the sustainability and quality development of a modern study and science infrastructure that is relevant to the current situation. Thus, creating the opportunity for students to carry out internationally recognized high-quality studies, combining them with developed and innovative research in the field of sport science and health care in sport, improving the supervision of higher education acquisition and the financial utilization process at LASE, promoting the internationalization processes in ensuring the competitive operating capacity of LASE in the fields of studies, science and innovation in sport and health care.

The optimization direction of the Academy's structure:

- To strengthen LASE as a higher education institution of the applied sciences type that educates and prepares competent specialists in the fields of sport and health care.

- To continue to implement and attract a larger number of scientific projects, tutors with scientific degrees and talented young scientists, as well as activating cooperation with foreign higher education institutions, including for the implementation of joint inter-university study programmes.

Action directions and tasks for the optimization of the structure and infrastructure of the Academy:

RVSIO1 – To continue to improve the study, research, and work environment in cooperation with the LASE Council, providing optimal conditions for the students, academic and support staff of the Academy.

RVSIO2 – To develop the modernization and renovation of sports bases, incl. athletics arena, stadium, shooting range.

RVSIO3 – To plan and develop the creation of a new LASE study and sports complex to strengthen the unity of science and practice.

RVSIO4 – To improve the living conditions of students at the LASE student dormitory.

RVSIO5 – To improve the material and technical supply (incl. technological solutions), using European Union structural funds and financial opportunities of projects, state, and private investment programmes, etc. funding sources, activating, and increasing the role of every LASE academic and other staff in these processes.

RVSIO6 – To strengthen the economic management of LASE (incl. digital management) and infrastructure management, evaluating its operational efficiency and implementing technological solutions.

RVSIO7 – To strengthen the informative provision of studies, science and creative work (incl. the Library).

Strategic tasks for the structure optimization:

In order to improve and develop the initiated processes and to implement organizational and structural reforms in accordance with the goals and tasks of LASE operation:

RVSIO8 – To optimize the consolidations of structural units, incl. departments, their management and employee utilization processes for further development of LASE operation;

RVSIO9 – To develop the operation of the LASE Health Care in Sport Research Centre and the Sport Science Research Laboratory;

RVSIO10 – To strengthen the operation of the LASE International Communication Centre;

RVSIO11 – To promote the operation of the LASE Information Technology and Technical Support Centre.

Table 5

STRUCTURE AND INFRASTRUCTURE OPTIMIZATION INDICATORS OF THE ACADEMY

Action Directions	Main Indicators	Indicator in 2022	Indicator in 2025	Goal in 2027
RVSIO1	Assessment of the study, research, and work environment	-	3	4
RVSIO2	Modernized and renovated sports bases	-	-	1
RVSIO3	A new LASE study and sports complex	-	-	1
RVSIO4	Insulation of the LASE student dormitory	-	-	1

Action Directions	Main Indicators	Indicator in 2022	Indicator in 2025	Goal in 2027
RVSI05	Increase in the material and technical supply (incl. technological solutions) compared to the previous year	-	15%	25%
RVSI06	Digital management solutions of the economic activity of LASE	-	1	1
RVSI07	Addition to the collection of the Library (increase compared to the previous year)	10%	10%	15%
	Increase in technological solutions in the services of the Library compared to the previous year		10%	15%
RVSI08	Consolidated structural units	1	1	3
RVSI09	The number of services offered by the LASE Health Care in Sport Research Centre and the Sport Science Research Laboratory	1	2	9
RVSI010	Digital solutions in the operation of the LASE International Communication Centre		1	3
RVSI011	Digital solutions in the operation of the LASE Information Technology and Technical Support Centre.		1	2

Assessment of the Financial Position of LASE

Insufficient funding for higher education in Latvia (only 1.4% of GDP)¹¹, the geopolitical situation, the war in Ukraine, as well as the impact of the pandemic years have caused an increase in the price of energy resources and other resources, as well as LASE was not allocated basic funding for scientific activity in the previous planning period, which in general has created a chronic lack of investment for LASE research work and the development of the material and technical supply. Within the framework of the RSU – LASE consolidation process, in accordance with the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 903 from 13.12.2022. “On the Reorganization of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education”, RSU was given the right to conduct a comprehensive audit of LASE. RSU audit was ordered to the auditing company SIA “Grant Thornton Baltic”, which obtained information about the financial position, real estate, supply of financial resources of LASE, as well as internal processes at LASE. A full assessment of the financial position can be obtained from SIA “Grant Thornton Baltic”, and the main conclusions are as follows:

- The most important assets in the balance sheet of LASE are its fixed assets, mainly land and buildings. As of 31.12.2022., the most significant part, 81% of the capital, consists of equity of LASE, which basically consists of the results of budget execution of the previous reporting years. Total assets of LASE have a decreasing trend (on average 9% per year), mainly due to a decrease in current assets.
- The most significant part of assets of LASE consists of long-term investments, which occupy an average of 83% of the asset structure with an increasing share trend, and as of 31.12.2022., the amount of long-term investments reached the

¹¹ OECD (2023), Education at a Glance 2023: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/e13bef63-en>.

amount of EUR 4.59 mil. The most significant part of long-term investments consists of fixed assets (99.9% of long-term investments on average during the analysed periods).

- The current assets of LASE are mainly made up of money. The absolute liquidity ratio is high and ranges from 0.59 to 0.68.
- The equity of LASE on 31.12.2022. reached the amount of EUR 4.16 mil.
- The revenue of LASE has decreased from EUR 5.0 mil. to EUR 3.6 mil. during the analysed period, as projects have been completed, and therefore capital expenditures have been reduced by an average of 85%
- The funds of LASE (revenue) are mainly directed to cover current expenses, and after covering current expenses, LASE practically has no funds left for making capital investments for maintenance and development of the material and technical supply, development of science, etc. activities.
- The actual financial stability indicator of LASE is high and constant – on average 81%, indicating a high proportion of own capital in the total capital, and relatively insignificant risk of financial stability. The proportion of liabilities in the balance sheet varies from 17% to 21%, respectively.
- The existing balance from own revenue at the end of 2022 is EUR 84 430.

More than 40% of the budget of LASE consists of own revenue. In 2022, a significant part of the revenue of LASE is directed to staff compensation, therefore the amount of funds to cover other expenses remains limited (21%), and there is a lack of funds for the maintenance and development of the material and technical supply.

Action directions and tasks of the Academy in financial development:

RVSIO12 – To attract the financial resources of the European Union and other foreign financial aid structural units to promote the further development of LASE operation;

RVSIO13 – To attract financial resources from the private sector to promote the further development of LASE operation;

RVSIO14 – To increase the efficiency of the use of budget funds.

Table 6

STRUCTURE AND INFRASTRUCTURE OPTIMIZATION INDICATORS OF THE ACADEMY

Action Directions	Main Indicators	Indicator in 2022	Indicator in 2025	Goal in 2027
RVSIO12	Amount of European Union and other foreign aid funds (EUR) attracted for the operation and development of the Academy (invested in the specific year)	268 672	2 610 000	4 500 000
RVSIO13	Amount of private sector financial resources (EUR) attracted for the operation and development of the Academy (invested in the specific year)	-	15 000	30 000
RVSIO14	Efficiency assessment of the use of state budget funds (average balance left of assets)	No balance left	No balance left	No balance left

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE OF LASE

The governing bodies of a higher education institution founded by the state – a derived public entity – are the Council, the Senate and the Rector of the Academy, as



well as the Constitutional Assembly and the Academic Arbitration Court. **The Council** is the collegial highest decision-making body of the state higher education institution, which **is responsible for the sustainable development of the state higher education institution**, and the strategic and financial supervision, as well as ensures the operation of the state higher education institution in accordance with the goals set in its development strategy. **The Council protects the autonomy of the state higher education institution**, as well as respects the academic freedom of the academic staff and students and promotes its implementation. The Council of LASE is a collegial institution that operates in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions and its own regulations, as well as acts as an instrument of good corporate governance in accordance with the Corporate Governance Code of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Latvia. According to Section 14² of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the competence of the Council of the Academy includes the following blocks of issues:

1. The Council approves the Constitution of the Academy;
2. The Council approves the development strategy of the Academy and monitors the progress of its implementation;
3. The Council approves the budget and financial plan of the Academy, as well as annual reports;
4. The Council supervises the operation of the cooperation and financing agreement between the Academy and the state;
5. The Council monitors the operation of internal control and risk management systems, reviews their compliance and operational efficiency;
6. The Council approves the policies defining the management processes of the Academy and the general principles of their operation;
7. Other issues can be decided upon the proposals by the Rector;
8. In accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the Council approves the Regulations on Rector Election, conducts the selection of rectors, nominates candidates for the Constitutional Assembly, concludes and employment agreement and evaluates the work of the Rector.

In accordance with the Corporate Governance Code of the Ministry of Justice on good corporate governance, the Council of LASE takes into account the majority of the recommendations in its activities:

1. An up-to-date strategy has been created for LASE, which defines the goals of the organization and the direction towards long-term value-growth;
2. An internal culture and ethical code of conduct has been developed for LASE, which serves as a standard of behaviour for the management and employees of the organization;
3. LASE has an internal control system (for instance, quality management system, audit commission), the effectiveness of which is monitored by the Council;
4. LASE identifies, assesses and monitors risks related to its operation, and once a year, the Council reviews the report of the Rector on risk policy and implemented risk management measures;
5. The Council of LASE has access to an external auditor who independently and objectively evaluates the operation of the organization.

One of the main functions of the Council of LASE is to monitor the progress of the implementation of the Strategy of LASE. The Strategy of LASE is the main development planning document of the Academy, which is used in planning LASE

budget, and making investments in accordance with the tasks provided for in the Strategy.

The monitoring of the LASE Strategy implementation is carried out by the Council of LASE in accordance with the following procedure:

1. Within two months after the end of the current fiscal year, the Rector of LASE submits a report to the Council of LASE on the fulfilment of the strategic goals and tasks set in the LASE Strategy, as well as the performance indicators achieved in the previous year, also including a deviation analysis in the report;
2. Within three weeks of receiving the report, the Council of LASE reviews the report and, based on the information contained in the report, evaluates the performance of the Rector of LASE for the previous calendar year, as well as prepares suggestions for the correction of the goals, indicators and tasks included in the LASE Strategy (if applicable);
3. The shortened version of the report on the achievement of the goals, tasks and performance indicators defined in the LASE Strategy is published as part of the public annual report of LASE;
4. After the annual evaluation of the strategy, the report is sent to the Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter – MoES), and a meeting of the Council, the Rector and MoES is organized (a presentation).

In order to ensure the effective operation of the Council of LASE, parallel to the above-mentioned implementation progress monitoring measures of the LASE Strategy, the Council of LASE conducts a self-evaluation of the operation of the Council of LASE in accordance with the Guidelines for the Self-Evaluation of the Operation of the Council of LASE approved by the Council of LASE on November 8, 2023.

By April 30 of the current year, the Council of LASE, taking into account the functions of the Council defined in the Law on Higher Education Institutions, as well as based on the above-mentioned progress evaluation of the LASE Strategy and the results of the self-evaluation of the operation of the Council of LASE, the Council of LASE draws up and approves the Activity Plan of the Council for the current year, determining the tasks, deadlines and responsible persons.

In order to ensure the accountability of the review of the Council of LASE for the performance of the above-mentioned critical functions of the Council of LASE, achievable indicators are set for the Council (see Table 7).

Table 7

Achievable Indicators for the Council of LASE

Target Group	Name of the Indicator	Official Person Responsible for Goal Achievement	Initial Value of the Indicator	Indicator Achieved Within the Year	Data Source and Data Acquisition Methodology
Goals of Corporate Governance	Evaluation of the report on the implementation progress of the LASE strategy and proposals for corrections	The Council	-	1 report	The Strategy of LASE and the progress reports of the management of LASE

	Self-Evaluation Report of the Council of LASE	The Council	-	1 report	The Self-Evaluation of the Operation of the Council of LASE
	The plan of the Council of LASE for the current year, including the performance of the Council's functions set by the Law on Higher Education Institutions	The Council	-	1 work plan	Protocol on the approval of the work of the Council

Latvian Academy of Sport Education

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE LATVIAN ACADEMY OF SPORT EDUCATION

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR 2023-2027

1. Strategic Direction of LASE Development *Development of the Study Process and Study Environment* DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Tasks to be performed within the framework of the strategic direction of LASE development *Development of the Study Process and Study Environment* :

No.	Formulation of the Task	Responsible Structural Units	Deadline and Result	Funding Sources or Resources
1.	To create an opportunity for students to obtain 1 st and 2 nd level professional higher education in the field of sport and health care, as well as academic higher education (Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degree), preparing competent professionals in the field of sport, health care and sport science;	<i>Department of Studies and its structural units</i>	<i>Annual increase in the number of students by 2%</i>	<i>MoES (1st, 2nd pillar), own revenue</i>
2.	To develop , in cooperation with employers, flexible, competency-based study programmes that meet the requirements of the labour market and the needs of future professions, as well as are mutually recognized by Latvian and foreign higher education institutions, providing students with an optimal study environment according to the level of scientific development and cultural traditions of Latvia, expanding inclusion in the competitive labour market and creating opportunities to harmonize studies, work, high-performing sports and family life;	<i>Department of Studies and its structural units</i>	<i>1 programme in 2023</i>	<i>Own revenue and third-party funding</i>
3.	To improve cooperation with municipalities and communication with society in the development of the study environment, ensuring the preparation of specialists necessary for the needs of the population;	<i>Department of Studies and its structural units</i>	<i>Annual increase of specialists prepared according to the agreement from 0.5% - 1%</i>	<i>Own revenue and third-party funding</i>



4.	To ensure the selection of study and research work in accordance with the interests and abilities of the individual and in accordance with the strategic goals set by LASE, taking care of the preparation of young sport scientists, thus ensuring the opportunity to be included in the academic processes of the world, as well as to offer the acquired scientific and professional knowledge, methods and research results to the society, promoting integration of the latest scientific achievements into the study process;	<i>Department of Studies and its structural units, Department of Science</i>	<i>Annually for all students according to the scientific work plan</i>	<i>MoES (1st pillar), own revenue and third-party funding</i>
5.	To promote the internationalization process of LASE studies and improve its coordination;	<i>International Department</i>	<i>Annually 1-2 new cooperation agreements, 2 events</i>	<i>MoES and own revenue</i>
6.	To provide greater opportunities to students to acquire additional skills abroad during their studies, promoting cross-border cooperation and the participation of the best students in mobility programmes, thereby improving the quality of education;	<i>International Department, Department of Studies</i>	<i>Annual increase of mobility participants by 2%</i>	<i>MoES, ESF and own revenue</i>
7.	To switch to the ECTS credit system, ensuring the amount of students' independent work that meets ECTS requirements and improving communication skills of students;	<i>Department of Studies, Councils of Study Directions</i>	<i>Implemented in all study programmes in accordance with the legislation</i>	<i>Own revenue</i>
8.	To establish the study results to be achieved in each study programme and transform the structure of the programmes in such a way as to ensure the achievement of study results;	<i>Councils of Study Directions, International Department</i>	<i>Constant improvement in all study programmes</i>	<i>MoES and own revenue</i>

9.	To create new interdisciplinary or international programmes of excellence;	<i>Councils of Study Directions, International Department</i>	<i>1 programme in 2027</i>	<i>MoES, ESF, own revenue</i>
10.	To create joint degree programmes with foreign higher education institutions, starting a campaign to attract applicants abroad;	<i>Councils of Study Directions, International Department</i>	<i>1 programme in 2027</i>	<i>MoES, ESF, own revenue</i>
11	To promote the preparation and management of study courses in English or other widely used languages;	<i>Department of Studies and its structural units</i>	<i>Annually according to the schedule of the study plan (at least 20 study courses)</i>	<i>Own revenue</i>
12.	To motivate LASE staff for excellence in studies and research;	<i>Rector's office, Department of Studies, Department of Science</i>	<i>Performance funding twice a year</i>	<i>Own revenue, MoES (2nd pillar)</i>
13.	To promote the creation of a support system for improving Latvian and foreign language competencies of students and academic staff;	<i>Lifelong Learning Centre</i>	<i>Annual continuing education opportunities 1x per week</i>	<i>Own revenue</i>
14.	To promote further education studies by expanding cooperation with other higher education institutions, scientific research institutions and educational institutions, participating in further education events;	<i>Department of Science</i>	<i>1-2 cooperation agreements and events every year</i>	<i>Own revenue and third-party funding</i>
15.	To promote the development of sport science, health care and sport education, high-performance sport, folk sport, and adapted sport according to the interests of the population;	<i>Councils of Study Directions, Sports Club</i>	<i>2 scientific research projects and 1 event annually</i>	<i>Own revenue, MoES, ESF, ERDF projects</i>
16.	To strengthen the identity of LASE in the dimension of Latvia, as well as the joint European Higher Education Area and in the world, cooperating and promoting the exchange of students and academic staff between Latvian and foreign higher education institutions.	<i>International Department</i>	<i>2 events annually</i>	<i>Own revenue, MoES</i>

Quality Management System Assurance Plan

The internal quality assurance management system of LASE is based on the basic principles and requirements of the international excellence standard “Investors in Excellence”.

The internal quality assurance management plan of LASE, including academic integrity and ethics assurance:

- Receiving the certification and recertification of the excellence standard (“Investors in Excellence”) every 2 years;
- Interim evaluation of the operation of the internal quality assurance management system and its further improvement, taking into account the achievement of the goals set in the strategic plans;
- Conducting an internal quality assurance audit on the compliance of processes and management system operation with internal and external regulatory enactments and the excellence standard (“Investors in Excellence”);
- Improvement of internal documentation to ensure continuous improvement of areas most important to stakeholders;
- Increasing the satisfaction of the needs, wishes and expectations of stakeholders by improving the process and tools for their determination;
- Implementation of the anti-plagiarism electronic system.

2. Strategic Direction of LASE Development **Scientific Activity and Innovation** DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Tasks to be performed within the framework of the strategic direction of LASE development **Scientific Activity and Innovation**:

No.	Formulation of the Task	Responsible Structural Units	Deadline and Result	Funding Sources or Resources
1.	To establish the Latvian Sport Science Centre in cooperation with the Department of Sports of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, including health care in sport by functionally consolidating with the Latvian Olympic Committee (LOC), the Latvian Paralympic Committee (LPC), the Latvian Olympic Team (LOT), •the Latvian Sports Federations Council (LSFC), Murjāņi Sports Gymnasium, Olympic centres and sports federations in sport science, as well as research in cooperation with other higher education institutions and research centres of Latvia, Europe, especially Baltic, Scandinavian and world countries;	<i>Department of Science</i>	2026 <i>Number of scientific employees: 22 (FTE)</i>	<i>Own revenue, third-party funding, MoES (budget of the sports industry), ESF</i>
2.	To strengthen close cooperation with sports federations, municipalities and sectors of national economy to create innovation and high value-added products and technologies, and to effectively coordinate the development of science and sport education industry and health care in sport .	<i>Department of Science and Department of Studies</i>	<i>Constantly Cooperation projects (agreements) 2026 At least 5 contract jobs</i>	<i>Own revenue, third-party funding, MoES (budget of the sports industry), ESF</i>
3.	To strengthen the material and technical supply of the LASE Sport Science Research Laboratory and the Health Care in Sport Research Centre, which will promote research in public health, folk and high-achievement sport. To find out the possibilities of improving the quality of life of the population at all age stages and to promote the creation of innovations in sport biomechanics, recreation, ergonomics, sport physiotherapy, it is planned to involve full-time researchers in the perspective.	<i>Department of Science</i>	<i>Permanent Cooperation projects (agreements) In 2026 – the number of registered patents – 5 32 scientific articles published in the international databases Thomson Reuters Web of Science, Scopus, Index Copernicus, Sport Discus</i>	<i>Own revenue, third-party funding, MoES, ESF</i>



			<p>10 ERDF projects, national research programmes, projects, market-oriented research, LCS grants, etc. 4 young scientists (in FTE terms)</p>	
--	--	--	---	--

3. Strategic Direction of LASE Development **International and National Cooperation** DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Tasks to be performed within the framework of the strategic direction of LASE development **International and National Cooperation**:

No.	Formulation of the Task	Responsible Structural Units	Deadline and Result	Funding Sources or Resources
1.	To promote the mobility of students and academic staff, attracting guest professors, thereby increasing the quality of higher education, and strengthening its importance.	<i>International Department</i>	<p>2026 - 3 Number of foreign students from the total number of students - 10% Number of foreign guest tutors from the total number of tutors 5-10%</p>	Own revenue, MoES
2.	To implement the exchange of academic, scientific, sport, health, and cultural experiences at the international level, promoting the use of foreign languages in LASE study programmes.	<i>International Department</i>	3 exchange programmes within projects	ESF (incl. Erasmus+)

3.	To implement International Summer School programmes, international intensive programmes, and to organize international seminars.	<i>International Department, Department of Science, Department of Studies, Lifelong Learning Centre</i>	2026 - 1 summer, 3 international seminars	<i>ESF (incl. Erasmus+), third-party funding, own revenue</i>
4.	To popularize LASE education abroad by working in the Higher Education Export Association, participating in educational exhibitions, and informing about study opportunities at LASE.	<i>International Department</i>	2026 - 2-3 events	<i>Own revenue, MoES, third-party funding</i>
5.	To participate in the operation of international scientific, academic, and professional organizations, promoting the connection of higher education, science and entrepreneurship.	<i>International Department, Department of Science, Department of Studies</i>	<i>Participation in at least 6 international organizations</i>	<i>Own revenue, third-party funding</i>

4. Strategic Direction of LASE Development **Development of Student Sports Environment** DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Tasks to be performed within the framework of the strategic direction of LASE development **Development of Student Sports Environment:**

No.	Formulation of the Task	Responsible Structural Units	Deadline and Result	Funding Sources or Resources
1.	To promote the creation of LASE teams in various sports, supporting cooperation with other institution to provide students with the opportunity to improve their sportsmanship by competing in international and Baltic-wide sports competitions.	<i>Sports Department</i>	<i>Constantly</i>	<i>LASE Sports Club and third- party funding</i>

2.	To ensure the participation of LASE teams in the Latvian Universiade and other Latvian or international competitions.	<i>Sports Department</i>	<i>Constantly 22 teams</i>	<i>LASE Sports Club and third-party funding</i>
3.	To provide an opportunity for the students, tutors, and staff of the Academy to participate in events of the Academy that promote a healthy lifestyle and health, and to stimulate athletic activities outside of LASE.	<i>Sports Department</i>	<i>Constantly</i>	<i>LASE Sports Club and third-party funding</i>
4.	To promote the improvement of knowledge and skills of LASE students by involving them in the organization and judging of sports events.	<i>Sports Department</i>	<i>According to the Sports Club and LASE event plan</i>	<i>LASE Sports Club and third-party funding</i>
5.	To promote and encourage the participation of persons with special needs in LASE sports events of general profile.	<i>Sports Department</i>	<i>According to the Sports Club and LASE event plan</i>	

5. Strategic Direction of LASE Development **OPTIMIZATION OF THE STRUCTURE AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMY** DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The basis of the organization and development of LASE operation is the JOINT TEAMWORK of academic staff, general staff and students, and its development is facilitated by cooperation with state institutions, higher education institutions in Latvia and abroad, companies and professional organizations.

LASE is a university-type higher education institution that specialized in the creation of human resources and innovations necessary for the development of the national economy, state, and society in accordance with the demand of the sport and health care industries, and the developmental needs of the state.

Goal: optimization and modernization of the structure and infrastructure of the Academy in order to provide students with the opportunity to acquire internationally recognized high-quality studies, combining them with developed and innovative research in the field of sport science and health care in sport, improving the supervision of higher education acquisition and the financial utilization process at LASE, promoting the internationalization processes in ensuring the competitive operating capacity of LASE in the fields of studies, science and innovation in sport and health care.

Strategic directions of the optimization:

- To strengthen LASE as a higher education institution of the applied sciences type that educates and prepares competent specialists in the fields of sport and health care.

- To continue to implement and attract a larger number of scientific projects, tutors with scientific degrees and talented young scientists, as well as activating cooperation with foreign higher education institutions, including for the implementation of joint inter-university study programmes.

Strategic tasks for the structure optimization:

In order to improve and develop the initiated processes and to implement organizational and structural reforms in accordance with the goals and tasks of LASE operation:

- **To optimize** the consolidations of structural units, incl. departments, their management and employee utilization processes for further development of LASE operation;
- **To develop** the operation of the LASE Health Care in Sport Research Centre and the Sport Science Research Laboratory;
- **To strengthen** the operation of the LASE International Communication Centre;
- **To promote** the operation of the LASE Information Technology and Technical Support Centre;

Strategic tasks for the infrastructure optimization:

- **To continue** to improve the study, research, and work environment, providing optimal conditions for the students, academic and other staff of the Academy.
- **To develop** the modernization and renovation of sports bases, incl. athletics arena, stadium, shooting range.
- **To plan and develop** the creation of a new LASE study and sports complex to strengthen the unity of science and practice.
- **To improve** the living conditions of students at the LASE student dormitory.
- **To improve** the material and technical supply, using European Union structural funds and financial opportunities of projects, state, and private investment programmes, etc. funding sources, activating, and increasing the role of every LASE academic and other staff in these processes.
- **To strengthen** the economic management of LASE and infrastructure management, evaluating its operational efficiency.

The management improvement plan will be developed based on the analysis and recommendations of the World Bank.

Financial health of the higher education institution (HEI):

Diversity of income sources

Sources of income of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education in the last five years, which make up the total budget of the Academy as follows:

- 1) state funding - approximately 45%;
- 2) own income - approximately 33%;
- 3) financing within the implemented projects (CCFI, ESF, etc.) – approximately 20%;
- 4) income from other natural and legal persons – approximately 2%.

LASE plans to increase the share of income from other natural and legal persons in its income structure by purposefully developing strategic partnership between LASE and professional associations, NGOs, municipalities, sports federations, and private entrepreneurs, thus attracting funding as a partner in promoting public health.

Financial stability and transparency

In the last five years, the financial stability of LASE is manifested with a slightly increasing trend, although the amount of funding from the state budget remains unchanged. Two factors play an important role in this matter:

- 1) each year, the amount of own revenue remains approximately at the level of previous years, as the number of students remains unchanged, but cooperation with third parties is activated;
- 2) activity in attracting projects of various levels, scope, and importance, which contribute to the development of LASE.

The transparency of financial activities of LASE is ensured by the opportunity of anyone interested to participate in LASE Senate meetings, where once a year the Accounting Department of LASE reports on the financial situation of the Academy for a given year, informing both about revenue and providing comprehensive information about the use of funds. The Senate also approves the budget of LASE for the next fiscal year, which is adjusted during the year according to the situation and need.

Infrastructure development plan

An infrastructure assessment has been carried out at LASE, which allows to conclude that the study directions of our specialized higher education institution, as well as the fields of sport and health, are closely related, and they develop in relation to each other. Therefore, the infrastructure is also used in both fields, connecting, and interacting with each other.

Current load on existing infrastructure

In the last five years, the number of students at LASE has remained approximately constant, even an increasing trend can be observed, in contrast to the overall decreasing trend in the number of students in the country.

At the moment, the current issue in the optimization of the existing infrastructure of LASE – further development and equipment purchase for the specialized auditoriums, the Health Care in Sport Research Centre, and the Sport Science Laboratory. The use intensity of LASE premises – 9.8 m² per student, but the intensity of equipment use should be promoted, promoting the concentration of investments, reducing fragmentation in modernized objects.

Based on the conclusions, evaluations, recommendations, and proposals of the Accreditation Commission during the programme accreditation process, an analysis of the return on investments made in the field of HEI and STEM was carried out. The evaluation was carried out in conjunction, analysing the importance of investments in both the direction of sport science studies and the direction of health care studies, and the provision of investment processes. Every year, LASE invests in the investments of this area both the funding obtained from its own revenue, and using funding within the implemented projects.

Characteristics of the investments made in the last five years in the modernization of buildings (houses), parts (groups of rooms) of buildings (houses), and premises, including the financing sources of the investments made:

- ERDF project “Increasing Energy Efficiency in Building Located at Brīvības gatve 333, Riga” – increasing energy efficiency and renovation of the main study and sports building of LASE.

- ERDF project “Modernized LASE STEM Study Programmes in Health Care” – creation of the LASE Health Care in Sport Research Centre, building appropriate premises for the operation of the Centre at the Academy, and purchasing the necessary hardware, equipment, computer equipment.
- The project “Complex Solutions for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions at the Latvian Academy of Sport Education” in Riga, Brīvības gatve 333 – implementation of a complex of energy efficiency measures in the study and sports building (“A” building) – attic insulation, replacement of windows and doors, renovation of lighting with LED lighting fixtures.

As a result of the implementation of the mentioned projects, in the last two years we achieved significant savings in payments for utilities (electricity, heating), which we use in the modernization of auditoriums and sports facilities.

Real estate development plan

Development **plan** for the real estate owned by the Latvian Academy of Sport Education for the coming years:

- 2021-2026 - to perform insulation and energy efficiency improvement works in the athletics arena (Brīvības gatve 345);
- 2021-2026 - to renovate the stands by the stadium (Brīvības gatve 333).
- 2021-2027 - to plan and develop the creation of a new LASE study and sports complex to strengthen the unity of science and practice (Brīvības gatve 351).
- 2022-2027 - to perform insulation and energy efficiency improvement works in the dormitory building (Brīvības gatve 351);

Possible risks: Insufficient amount of co-financing, which depends on the financial amount of own revenue, for the implementation of insulation and energy efficiency improvement projects, which may threaten and affect the implementation of the mentioned projects and plans.

Real estate of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education

(all properties are used for the implementation of the goals and tasks of the Academy, all properties are free of encumbrances):

- Study-sports building (building A) (Brīvības gatve 333) - 7056 m²
- Study-sports building (building B) (Brīvības gatve 333) – 4659 m²
- Garage (Brīvības gatve 333) – 237.9 m²
- Athletics arena (Brīvības gatve 345) – 2316 m²
- Stands with a shooting range (Brīvības gatve 333) – 1435 m².
- Dormitory (Brīvības gatve 351) – 2168.77 m²
- Stadium (Brīvības gatve 333) – 13056 m²
- Land (Brīvības gatve 333) – 45742 m²
- Land (Brīvības gatve 351) – 5916 m²

The real estate of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education is planned to be used for the implementation of the goals and tasks of the Academy.

Tasks to be performed within the framework of the strategic direction of LASE development *Optimization of the Structure and Infrastructure of the Academy:*

No.	Formulation of the Task	Responsible Structural Units	Deadline and Result	Funding Sources or Resources
Strategic Tasks for the Structure Optimization				
1.	To optimize the consolidations of structural units, incl. departments, their management and employee utilization processes for further development of LASE operation;	<i>Rector's office</i>	<i>2027</i>	<i>Own revenue</i>
2.	To develop the operation of the LASE Health Care in Sport Research Centre and the Sport Science Research Laboratory;		<i>2027</i>	<i>Own revenue, ESF, third-party funding</i>
3.	To strengthen the operation of the LASE International Communication Centre;	<i>Rector's office</i>	<i>2027</i>	<i>Own revenue, ESF, third-party funding</i>
4.	To promote the operation of the LASE Information Technology and Technical Support Centre;	<i>Rector's office</i>	<i>2027</i>	<i>Own revenue, ESF, third-party funding</i>
Strategic Tasks for the Infrastructure Optimization				
6.	To continue to improve the study, research, and work environment in cooperation with the LASE Council, providing optimal conditions for the students, academic and support staff of the Academy.	<i>Rector's office, Procurement Department</i>	<i>2027.g. Renovation of the student dormitory</i>	<i>Own revenue, ERDF, ESF</i>
7.	To develop the modernization and renovation of sports bases, incl. athletics arena, stadium, shooting range.	<i>Rector's office, Procurement Department</i>	<i>2027</i>	<i>Own revenue, ERDF, ESF</i>
8.	To plan and develop the creation of a new LASE study and sports complex to strengthen the unity of science and practice.	<i>Rector's office, Procurement Department</i>	<i>2027</i>	<i>MoES, ERDF, ESF, PPP (private public partnership)</i>
9.	To improve the living conditions of students at the LASE student dormitory.	<i>Rector's office, Procurement Department</i>	<i>2027</i>	<i>Own revenue, ERDF, ESF, KPFI</i>
10.	To improve the material and technical supply (incl. technological solutions), using European Union structural funds and financial opportunities of projects, state, and private investment programmes, etc. funding sources, activating, and increasing the role of every LASE academic and other staff in these processes.	<i>Rector's office, Procurement Department</i>	<i>2027</i>	<i>Own revenue, ERDF, ESF, third-party funding</i>

11.	To strengthen the economic management of LASE and infrastructure management, evaluating its operational efficiency.	Rector's office, Procurement Department	2027	Own revenue, ESF, ERDF, third-party funding
-----	---	---	------	--

LASE staff remuneration policy

The purpose of the LASE staff remuneration policy is to determine the basic principles of LASE staff remuneration, promoting the implementation of staff policy consistent with the mission, goals, and development strategy of LASE, attracting competent, loyal, and motivated employees in accordance with the Staff Management Policy of LASE.

Basic principles of LASE staff remuneration:

- to promote the motivation of LASE staff to achieve the goals of LASE, as well as to promote the involvement of every employee in the implementation of the goals and values of LASE;
- to ensure the determination of wages in accordance with external regulatory enactments;
- to achieve balance and competitiveness of wages of LASE;
- to remunerate employees according to qualification, responsibility, and work results, as well as to ensure comparable remuneration for equal scope of work, quality, and position;
- to motivate staff for quality work;
- to promote the improvement of the professional qualifications of the staff.

Remuneration structure:

- The constant part of the remuneration system is the monthly salary or the hourly tariff rate, which is determined based on the qualification category assigned to the position, according to the complexity of the duties to be performed, the scope of work, the degree of responsibility, and qualification requirements.
- The variable part of the remuneration system is additional remuneration to the constant part according to the work results achieved in a certain period of time, where the variable part of the remuneration system consists of: additional payments, premiums, and money prizes.

LASE staff remuneration policy is implemented in accordance with the cost accounting of non-economic activity, economic activity, and combined activity, and related activities.

Investment attraction plan

In attracting the planned investments, the following were used:

- 1) EU infrastructure projects,
- 2) EU research projects,
- 3) Sports budget of MoES (including the state research programme),
- 4) Municipal investments,

5) Third-party funding.

Justification: the planned investments will contribute to the opportunity for students to obtain higher academic and higher professional education and the provision of training, as well as it will develop sport science and research in health care in sport, cultivate culture in order to preserve the intellectual and physical potential necessary for the Republic of Latvia (LR), promoting and ensuring the harmonious development of the nation. To promote the connection of LASE research with the industry of the field, the implementation of market-oriented research will be promoted, thus attracting third-party funding (sports federations, sports clubs, etc.) for research.

The planned investments will fully contribute to the achievement of the strategic goals of LASE.

Diversified sources of investment, synergy between them – state funding, own revenue, financing within the framework of implemented projects (KPMF, ESF, ERDF, etc.), and revenue from other natural and legal persons are aimed at achieving the main goal of LASE.

LASE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PLAN

The digitalization process of the study environment and study process of LASE is characterized by the use of the following information systems:

- E-study environment “Moodle” – the course management system of the Latvian Academy of Sport Education (CMS-<https://lspa.lv/kvs.lspa.lv/login/index.php>);
- Informative system for LASE students – LSPA IS (<http://is.lspa.lv>);
- Informative system “Alise” of the LASE Sports Branch Library (<https://alise.lspa.lv/Alise/lv/home.aspx>).

In order to ensure the successful organization of the study and scientific research process, as well as the work of the Academy, LASE has made the following improvements in the information technology infrastructure:

- The process of modernizing and ensuring the operation of remote and online studies and conferences has been completed, i.e., *MS Teams* and *Microsoft* cloud service have been introduced.
- Modernization of accounting systems and programmes has been completed. In 2021, the accounting programme *HORIZON* was introduced as a cloud service. Completed work on the implementation of the module “Business trips”, completed the implementation of the staff module “HoP Staff” to optimize the staff management of LASE. Within the module, employees have easy access to information about themselves – personal data, salary slip, vacations, and other applications, as well as information about the absence calendar of colleagues.
- Modernization of the informative system (IS) of LASE was completed to ensure automatic transfer of data on students of the Academy to LSIF, connection of IS to Erasmus systems.
- Design and functionality improvements of the new student admission website of LASE have been completed.
- The internet supplier of LASE was changed from the University of Latvia to “*Telia Company AB*”, as well as a survey of the internet network schemes and troubleshooting was performed.

- Work continues on the reintegration of the website of LASE and the Course Management System (CMS).
- To optimize the work of LASE staff, computer equipment (computers, monitors, printers, etc.) was purchased within the financial possibilities of the Academy.
- A new firewall.lspa.lv was assembled, installed, and set up.
- Partial modernization of the LASE internet network (installation of 1000mbps routers and Network switch) in the LASE student dormitory, the athletics arena of LASE, and Building B of LASE has been implemented.

In general, during the previous development period of LASE, basic tasks have been carried out to ensure a study process that meets modern requirements. In turn, the goal of the Smart Specialization Strategy of Latvia for Research and Innovation (RIS3) is to promote the structural transformation of the economy, moving towards knowledge-based activities, as the decrease in the number of the working-age population limits the potential for further growth. Therefore, innovation is the key to increasing productivity and living standards in Latvia. To increase research and development, and to support innovation in business, Latvia needs to:

- Focus attention to digitalization as a key transversal tool for innovation and growth.
- Promote digital service innovation.
- Promote digital innovation to solve the social and economic issues of Latvia.

Therefore, **the digital transformation of LASE aims at the process of implementing digital technologies in all areas of LASE operation to change the operating models of LASE, improve processes, increase their efficiency, and provide greater value to those involved.**

Specific tasks have been set to achieve the goal of digital transformation:

- assessment of the digital maturity of LASE,
- reassessment of digital transformation priorities in the areas of LASE operation,
- improvement of the study environment digitalization of LASE,
- improvement of the study content digitalization of LASE,
- improvement of the study process digitalization of LASE,
- digitalization of the scientific activity of LASE,
- improvement of the management process digitalization of LASE, improvement of data quality,
- improvement of the digital skills of LASE students, tutors, and employees.

Tasks Set for Achieving the Goal of Digital Transformation:

No.	Formulation of the Task	Responsible Structural Units	Deadline and Result	Funding Sources or Resources
1.	To assess the digital maturity in the operational areas of LASE	<i>Rector's office, IT and Technical Support Centre</i>	3 rd quarter of 2024	<i>EU financial instruments</i>
2.	To reassess the priorities of digital transformation in the areas of LASE activity	<i>Rector's office, IT and Technical Support Centre</i>	4 th quarter of 2024	<i>Own revenue</i>
3.	To improve and expand the study environment digitalization of LASE, expanding digital technology support for students and tutors	<i>Rector's office, IT and Technical Support Centre</i>	4 th quarter of 2026	<i>EU financial instruments</i>
4.	To improve and expand the study content digitalization of LASE	<i>Rector's office, IT and Technical Support Centre</i>	4 th quarter of 2026	<i>EU financial instruments</i>
5.	To improve and expand the study process digitalization of LASE	<i>Rector's office, IT and Technical Support Centre</i>	4 th quarter of 2026	<i>EU financial instruments</i>
6.	To carry out the scientific activity digitalization of LASE	<i>Rector's office, IT and Technical Support Centre</i>	4 th quarter of 2026	<i>EU financial instruments</i>
7.	To improve the management process digitalization of LASE	<i>Rector's office, IT and Technical Support Centre</i>	4 th quarter of 2026	<i>EU financial instruments</i>
8.	To improve the digital skills of LASE students, tutors and employees	<i>Rector's office, IT and Technical Support Centre</i>	4 th quarter of 2026	<i>EU financial instruments</i>

Latvian Academy of Sport Education



APPENDICES