EUA-Institutional Evaluation Programme

RIGA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

EVALUATION REPORT

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1. Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of Riga Technical University. The evaluation visits took place from 3 to 5 February and from 21 to 24 April, 2013.

1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture. The IEP is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

The distinctive features of the Institutional Evaluation Programme are:

- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European and international perspective
- A peer-review approach
- A support to improvement

The focus of the IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses upon:

- Decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision-making and strategic management as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

The evaluation is guided by four key questions, which are based on a "fitness for (and of) purpose" approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does it know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

1.2 Riga Technical University and the national context

Riga Technical University is the oldest higher education institution in Latvia and the only technical university. Its history dates back to 1862 when Riga Polytechnic Higher School was established. Over the years the university has grown and changed its name and language of instruction. In 1958 the Riga Polytechnic Institute was re-established as it was part of the University of Latvia during the inter-war period. After the Soviet Union collapse the institute was renamed Riga Technical University in 1990. This last change meant significant restructuring of administration and academic work. The Constitution of RTU was approved in 1996 and it was accredited as a university in 2001

by the Council of Higher Education of the Republic of Latvia. In 2007, RTU was granted the status of publicly owned institution operating as a private entity, which means it is an autonomous public institution with the right to self-government, the right to decide its goals and strategy, hire academic staff, determine the content and forms of its study programmes, determine its budget and to own its property (SER, p. 5).

RTU has eight faculties, half of which are located in one campus on Kipsala island (in Riga) while the other four are dispersed throughout the city. Today Kipsala campus includes the main library, dormitories and the university sports centre. In addition, RTU has four branch campuses outside Riga in Daugavpils, Liepaja, Ventspils and Cesis. Smaller units outside the faculty structure include the Institute of Humanities, Institute of Applied Linguistics, Riga Business School.

In 2011/2012 RTU had 14,747 Latvian and 500 international students (in programmes at all cycles), and has 827 academic staff. RTU administration consists of 840 non-academic staff.

It considers itself central in contributing to the Latvian national economy through teaching, research and innovative activities as can be seen from its strategy. RTU has high ambitions – it aims to become one of the leading universities of science and technology in Europe.

Since Latvia's accession to the EU, RTU has pursued opportunities to apply for research funding from the European Structural Funds. RTU received funding for infrastructure development from the EU Structural Funds. The European Regional Development Fund has co-financed the further development of the RTU campus on Kipsala island, a project called "RTU-town in town".

1.3 The self-evaluation process

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by the self-evaluation group chaired by Deputy Rector for Academic Policy and Quality Affairs Assoc. Prof. Gita Revalde. The group consisted of:

- Assoc. Prof. Gita Revalde, Deputy Rector for Academic Policy and Quality Affairs
- Prof. Elmars Bekeris, Head of the Department of Fundamentals of Electronics
- Dr Ingars Erins, Chancellor
- Prof. Elina Gaile-Sarkane, Chair of the Senate
- Prof. Eriks Gerins, Dean of the Faculty of Transport and Mechanical Engineering
- Mr Juris Iljins, Head of the Students Parliament

- Prof. Talis Juhna, Vice-Rector for Research
- Prof. Valdis Kokars, Dean of the Faculty of Materials Science and Applied Chemistry
- Prof. Uldis Sukovskis, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs
- Mr Mareks Zeltins, Deputy Rector for Strategic Development
- Mr Zigmunds Zitmanis, Administrative Director

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) is comprehensive and informative and was submitted to the self-evaluation team on time. Additional data and materials were provided to the evaluation team upon request before the main visit. The self-evaluation report was prepared based on data provided to the self-evaluation team from different faculties and university administrative departments. The SWOT analysis was taken from the RTU Development Plan 2009-2015 and yearly faculty SWOT analyses (SER, p. 3). Not all interviewed members of RTU were aware of the self-evaluation process that was taking place at their university.

1.4 The evaluation team

The self-evaluation report of the Riga Technical University (RTU), together with the appendices, was sent to the evaluation team (hereafter the team) in January, 2013. The visits of the team to RTU took place from 3 to 5 February, 2013 and from 21 to 24 April, 2013 respectively. In between the visits RTU provided the evaluation team with requested additional documentation.

The team consisted of:

- Prof. Júlio Pedrosa, Chair of the Team, former Rector, University of Aveiro, Portugal
- Prof. Spyros Amourgis, President of the Council, The Athens School of Fine Arts, Greece
- Prof. Nejat Erk, Vice-Rector, Cukurova University, Turkey (joined the team for the second visit)
- Prof. Ivan Leban, former Vice-Rector, University of Ljubliana (joined for the first visit)
- Ms Delia Gologan, student, “Iuliu Hatieganu” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
- Dr Liudvika Leisyte, Team Coordinator, Senior Researcher, CHEPS, University of Twente, the Netherlands.

The team is most grateful for the hospitality shown by RTU, the excellent organisation of the two visits, timely and extensive reporting as well as the open and frank atmosphere, which the rector and the chair of the self-evaluation team created. The team appreciates the great interest and collaboration of the rector, vice-rectors, the

deans, the self-evaluation team, university academic and administrative staff and students. The team wishes to extend special thanks to Rector Prof. Leonids Ribickis and Deputy Rector Assoc. Prof. Gita Revalde.

2. Context, mission and goals

Since its creation, RTU has witnessed changes in its political, economic, and cultural environment, including those associated with Latvia joining the EU in recent years, a turning point in the national context of the institution. Since Latvia's membership of the EU, European Structural Funds became available to the university, providing opportunities to purchase new research equipment, to develop technology transfer capacities as well as attract young scientists to work at RTU. The recent amendments to the Law on Higher Education (2011) emphasized the relevance of quality assurance to higher education and, in particular, the involvement of stakeholders in university governance and quality-related structures and processes. The Law provides university autonomy in hiring staff, allocating its financial resources, changing study programmes, having their own regulations, taking loans and entering into partnerships with industry. However, universities cannot sell their real estate. At the same time the economic recession and demographic shift with decreasing high school graduate numbers posed serious challenges to the university.

RTU's history changes in context as well as in its status and mission. It was an engineering school in the Russian Empire, but later changed to a polytechnic institution, joining the University of Latvia during Latvia's independence years. Later in the context of the Soviet system it separated from the University of Latvia into an independent polytechnic institute. After independence was regained, RTU renamed itself as a university and had the challenge of changing all its programmes to adapt to the new environment. The present designation of Riga Technical University was approved by the University Senate on 29 January 1990 and by the government on 19 March of the same year, being accredited as a university by the Council of Higher Education of the Republic of Latvia on 12 July 2001. Today, RTU being the largest Technical University in Latvia is an autonomous, self-governed institution with a distinct identity and history that faces a new phase of development. In 2004 Latvia became a full member of the EU, creating new opportunities for RTU by opening access to EU structural and framework programmes. Today RTU is indeed an institution with a distinct identity and a long history facing a new and challenging phase of development.

The university has a strong history of international relations where one can find, for example, cooperation with academics from Germany, Switzerland and Austria. The history of relations with German-speaking countries can be related to the time when German was the main language of the territory, until over a century ago. In terms of students, RTU has always had an international student body, which has recently diversified after becoming a member of the EU. In fact, in 2012 the university was involved in an extensive range of exchange programmes involving academic and administrative staff as well as students on Erasmus initiatives.

RTU's vision is the "development of a modern, internationally recognized university as a centre for studies, scientific research, and innovation – a cornerstone of the development of the economy of the state" (SER, p. 7). Its mission is "to conduct advanced scientific research vital for the growth of the Latvian national economy as well as to educate and train highly qualified specialists, who are in demand by the national economy in order to become competitive internationally" (SER, p. 7).

The university aims to become a leading technical university in the Baltic States, with a good balance in teaching, research and innovation. It aims at reaching excellence in research, well integrated, internationalised and used as a basis for promoting technology transfer through collaborations. The team recognised the efforts that are being made to pursue these goals but sees room for improvement in interfaculty cooperation. The team witnessed development of a new strategy that allows the institution to reach the envisaged ambitious goals and mission.

3. Teaching and learning

RTU offers academic and professional study programmes at three cycles in line with Bologna action lines. In total it offers 134 programmes out of which 21 are doctoral programmes. The programmes cover a variety of fields such as: architecture, civil engineering, electronics and telecommunications, energy and electronics, materials, mechanical engineering and transport, medical engineering, mechanics and engineering, heat engineering, textile technology and design, management and administration, language studies, environmental engineering and management and chemistry. Out of these there are 29 professional Bachelor programmes, 18 academic Bachelor programmes, 23 academic Masters programmes and 30 professional Masters programmes. The team has observed that some courses in different programmes seem to be overlapping.

The team appreciated that RTU graduates' employability is high, as confirmed during the interviews with various stakeholders and in the documentation provided. At the same time, the team observed a shortage of teaching resources and laboratory space, which results in having to place more emphasis on theoretical knowledge. To compensate for the lack of laboratory training, the university is putting great effort into providing opportunities for training in companies. This activity is appreciated by students.

RTU has ambitions to be an internationalised university, maintaining good collaborative relations with technical universities from the other Baltic countries — Estonia and Lithuania and in developing cooperation within the EU setting. In the 2010-2011 academic year, 166 RTU students participated in the Erasmus programme, destinations including Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Germany (SER, p. 17). In total, RTU has 319 international agreements with foreign universities. It is registered that RTU also attracts students beyond the countries participating in Erasmus and welcomes students from Uzbekistan, Nigeria, Egypt, Tajikistan to name a few. The same goes for international staff — RTU is inviting international staff, mostly coming from Germany, Lithuania and the Netherlands.

To summarise, the interviews and document analysis revealed that RTU is strongly committed to internationalisation. Since the 1990s it has been active in attracting foreign staff and students, and creating joint-degree programmes. The programmes offered by the Business School can serve as a good example. Internationalisation is noted as extremely valuable by the students. The interviews revealed that students value very much the experience of the Erasmus exchange programme. Finally, the team was impressed with the foreign language proficiency of the academic staff and students. Although teaching in a foreign language is still perceived as difficult, the university currently offers 13 BSc programmes and 15 MSc programmes in a foreign language.

4. Research

The university places a strong focus on developing research as an important component of its mission and strategic plan. The goal of the university is to carry out high quality scientific research that contributes to the economy at national and international levels, to be widely involved in international, national and sectorial research programmes and integrate research in the learning process. The tasks and aspirations of the university in research are well specified: increasing the internationally recognised number of publications of the academic staff, increasing the number of doctoral degrees and the amount of external research funding per academic staff. The university has four priorities, in this area — internationalisation, interdisciplinarity, financial independence, and infrastructure excellence. Together with this, research objectives are presented as international cooperation in research, interdisciplinary research projects, increasing research income from external sources and research infrastructure development.

RTU has a range of research institutes and research centres. It coordinates one national research centre funded by European Union resources, which focuses on energy and environment for sustainable resource extraction and use of technology and participates in three national centres as a cooperation partner which focuses on:

1. Nanostructured and multifunction materials, design and technology;
2. Pharmaceutical and biomedical research;
3. Information, communication and signal processing technology.

These collaborative initiatives in partnership with the University of Latvia and various institutes provided a substantial upgrade of laboratory equipment, new researcher positions and renovation of buildings as well as the opportunity to be part of a highly regarded researchers' network, which can be used as a starting point for other project ideas.

A recent change in the internal research funding distribution model took place. As noted in the SER, a quality-oriented funding model was introduced to distribute base funding among RTU research institutes (SER, p 20). Further, the university encourages academics to publish in peer-reviewed journals cited in the Web of Science or Scopus, by giving them bonuses of LVL 2000. Further, internal research funds are made available to academics (SER, p. 19).

Given the history of teaching-oriented universities in Latvia, research infrastructure at RTU is still developing. Despite the establishment of some state of the art laboratories in some faculties, the infrastructure in other laboratories as the team observed is scarce and outdated. However, the university is active in finding ways to acquire new equipment to reach its ambitious goal of research excellence.

The university has attracted external funding to develop the university campus buildings and the team observed that the expansion of the central library is on the agenda. Recognising the value and costs of maintaining a good research library, the team observed the quality of the present structure and sees the enormous potential of using the opportunity created by the expansion to rationalise and improve this crucial infrastructure for the research and education missions of the institution. In fact, it is a unique library in Latvia focusing on engineering. The team noted that RTU operates its own publishing house with 25 scientific peer-reviewed journals.

Research project funding applications are supported by the university management. A project management system is in place for this purpose. RTU has already shown success in attracting national and international research funding, having, since 2000, actively applied and been successful in applications for projects supported by the European Framework programme. In addition, in more recent years European structural funds were made available, with RTU participating in more than 37 projects funded by the European Regional Development Fund. These funds enabled very important research equipment to be purchased.

RTU has also attracted European Social Fund financing for master and doctoral fellowships for a couple of years. However, researchers at RTU are concerned about discontinuity of funding for fellowships from the EU structural funds as priorities of such funding are nationally determined and may be changing.

In terms of international research cooperation, academic staff benefits from participation in international conferences and attracting guest academics to the university. RTU is currently working to create an information system that keeps track of visiting professors. Outgoing mobility is also observed as RTU academics go abroad on short visits. For example, in 2012 around 100 academics and administrators participated in exchange programmes in various European countries.

In terms of research output, the university has been active in publishing and increasing technology transfer. 12,864 publications in the past three years were published in journals and books with the Faculty of Power and Electrical Engineering in the lead with 1 267 publications. The team commends the active approach to publishing and especially the initiatives to publish internationally and aim for higher quality in research.

5. Knowledge exchange and transfer

Innovation is another aspiration for RTU. The university aims at effective technology transfer and nurturing an innovation environment, which encourages the creation of new technological start-ups and product development processes. The university foresees the implementation of a common IP policy and providing innovative products and increase the number of licensing agreements. The university aims to increase the number of patents, contracts with business, income from licensing and double the revenue from contracts with industry. The team recognises that RTU's academics have produced a number of patents. In the past three years 305 patent applications were issued with the Faculty of Power and Electrical Engineering with a total of 81. At present, academics, students and alumni have created 14 start-ups. Up to now the university has established six spin-off companies (Additional materials). However, no revenue has been generated.

The implementation of research commercialisation is the responsibility of the deputy rector for business liaison and development who is also the director of the Centre for Business Support and Development. First steps have been taken to structure the commercialisation process within RTU. The establishment of the Innovation and Technology Transfer Centre and the Business Liaison and Development Centre is expected to improve this situation.

In the view of the team RTU has laid the basis for collaboration with industry. In this regard the Riga Science and Technology Park initiative is important (SER, p. 11). A strong link with industry has been observed by involving employers in student internships. The team understood from industry representatives interviewed that students are appreciated. The team strongly supports the university in consolidating and expanding the efforts of collaboration with the industry.

6. Governance

The decision-making process at RTU is largely collegial as observed by the team. The organisational structure of the university seems unnecessarily complex with too many levels of decision-making. In the view of the team there is no need to have such a variety of units below the level of faculties.

Due to the momentum gained with the renovation of the university campus it is a good time to rethink the university governance structures due to the concentration of buildings on campus. Given the size of the university, flexibility is needed in decision-making. Having the university community on one campus is an opportune moment to streamline decision-making processes.

The team appreciates that students are actively involved in university governance and are well represented in line with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the Rector's Council and Dean's Councils as well as in the Senate. Student representation in the Senate reaches 20% of the total number of Senate members. The interviews with the students revealed that their opinion is taken into consideration and that they are able to make substantial contributions to the decisions made. Student motivation and attachment to the institution seems to be high. Indeed, the team meetings with students showed that they have high regard for their university.

The university established an Advisory Board at the central level consisting of 29 external stakeholders. Its main function is to give RTU advice on its strategic directions. The board members represent main university partners and are chaired by the Chairman of the "Latvenergo" management board. The President of Latvia is the Honorary Member of this Advisory Board. The team noted the active involvement of representatives from key industries on the Advisory Board.

The team further noted that the university is operating in a complex national environment, with the recent recession having serious implications for resources at RTU. The goal to concentrate all faculties in one campus is also a good opportunity to optimise the use of infrastructures and other resources, namely rationalising the allocation of administrative and technical staff and reducing costs.

The team did not find an indication of the use of clear and functional criteria in the allocation of the number of academic positions per faculty. In addition, there is a problem of age gap among the current academic staff as the average age is above 50. Gender balance among academic staff also seems to be an issue.

RTU has autonomy granted to the university by Law. The university should use the autonomy to distribute funding internally as it sees fit, while at the same time, doing so

in a transparent way and meeting functional needs effectively. By doing this, RTU is in a better position to discuss how to improve the financial situation with the government.

The university adopted a complex model of internal distribution of funds which shows RTU is using its autonomy. In the team's view the system of academic staff remuneration is too complex and difficult to understand, while also encouraging competition between academic staff for teaching hours and students.

At the moment diversification of funding resources is limited due to the specific types of programmes (there are nearly no fee-paying engineering and science students) and limited income from contract research. The efforts to attract national and international research grants are commendable, especially in the area of infrastructure development.

In terms of other resources, ORTUS is a good example of using ICT at RTU. The team commends RTU for developing its own intranet portal which eases information flows and communication.

Further, the team found the renovation of the student dormitories commendable. The process has been well planned and is economically viable. Impressive renovations have taken place. However, it is not evident yet how the needs of the socially vulnerable students are met and whether the renovated facilities will be accessible to all students.

Finally, the team commends the pioneering initiatives of the Distance Learning Centre. It could be the catalyst for enhancement of the activities of the RTU branches outside Riga. Perhaps rethinking the strategy of regional presence could take place with the view of using more distance learning for the offer of courses at RTU branches.

7. Quality assessment and improvement

Academic excellence is one of RTU's strategic objectives. The task foreseen for the vice-rector for academic affairs is to "improve study programs by developing a comprehensive block of energy and discipline-specific fundamental science courses and a wide range of elective specialization module course, which facilitate the development of engineering design and practical skills" (Annex 1, p. 10). One of the key performance indicators here is the improvement of the quality of each component of the study programme and the learning outcomes of all study programmes in the period of 2009-2015. This shows that RTU is seriously adopting the improvement approach to excel in its education offer.

RTU is taking several measures to improve the quality of study programmes, which includes a new structure of quality assurance, student course evaluations, alumni surveys and employer surveys. RTU has a functioning internal quality assurance system, which started back in 2001. With the new strategy, a university quality policy was adopted on 31 October 2011. Following the recent amendments in the Higher Education Law (2011) universities are expected to have an internal quality assurance system in place. As a consequence of this, a new position of vice-rector for academic policy and quality was created in May 2012 to coordinate the process. The team commends RTU for establishing a quality assessment committee and appointing a vice-rector for this domain. This shows that RTU prioritises quality assurance.

The team recognises that teaching and learning quality assessment is set as a process. As noted from various sources study programmes are being regularly evaluated. Student surveys are used to evaluate each study course every semester. The team found the course evaluation questionnaires distributed to students comprehensive. Based on the results of the course evaluations, curriculum changes are discussed. In the case of reported low student satisfaction, heads of departments discuss with teachers the possible improvements or, if necessary, even change the teachers.

Programme reviews take place on a regular basis. According to the university regulations, reviews also include feedback from employers and alumni. The normal accreditation cycle is every six years. However, RTU's practice is to carry out an annual review.

Following the new Higher Education Law (2011), internal regulation on learning outcomes has been approved by the Senate. The team thinks that monitoring internal quality is the first step towards creating an internal quality assurance system and by involving the entire academic community it will lead to the building and consolidation of a quality culture.

The team invites the university to monitor its quality assessment procedures to ensure that the feedback is given to students and staff and that the results of student evaluations feed back into the programme improvement cycle.

8. Strategic management and capacity for change

The team observed that RTU started with the development of the strategic plan. Action plans and allocation of staff responsible for their implementation are essential elements to be included for successful strategy implementation. The team notes that it is important to involve the whole university community in the process of strategic plan development so that the proper ownership of the final results of this exercise can be ensured.

The team hopes that the IEP report can be an instrument in this development. We have observed that the level of awareness of SER by the academic community was limited. Capacity for change depends highly on the understanding and ownership of the need for change.

More flexibility and streamlined decision making is needed where cooperation and communication between all bodies of a university is paramount. The team observed that the university is monitoring the quality of study programmes, however, monitoring of organisational processes to identify the bottlenecks and be able to rectify them is also needed.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

Riga Technical University is ready to embark on a new phase of its development despite the difficult national economic environment. It is ready to consolidate its activities and build on its strengths.

RTU's goals of excellence in teaching, research and innovation are comprehensive and ambitious. The team witnessed the development of the university strategy at the time of the visits. The university is strongly committed to creating the right conditions to accomplish these goals.

Following the new Higher Education Law (2011), internal regulation on internal quality assurance and learning outcomes have been revisited by the Senate and a new position of vice-rector for academic policy and quality assurance was created. The team recommends that teaching and learning quality assessment is set as a process and that the European Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance are considered a framework for these developments. The team considers that monitoring quality is the first step in creating an internal quality assurance system. The team commends RTU for establishing a quality assessment committee and appointing a vice-rector for this domain. This shows that RTU prioritises quality assurance.

Research at RTU is seen as a major goal. Research performance at university is shown in the number of publications, national and international research projects and infrastructure development projects. However, despite establishment of some state of the art laboratories in some faculties, the infrastructure in some teaching laboratories as the team observed is scarce and outdated. The current reconstruction of campus and projects to build infrastructure are timely and needed.

The third main ambition of RTU is innovation. In this regard significant steps have been taken to encourage knowledge transfer such as the creation of the Innovation and Technology Transfer Centre and the Business Liaison and Development Centre. However, stronger links with industry could help diversify RTU's funding base.

The team thinks that the university should take advantage of the momentum for change created by a move into new campus buildings for rethinking governance structures. This momentum would be an excellent opportunity to look at a better model for consolidating participative decision-making processes at top and medium level. Given the size of the university, flexibility decision making should be considered, as well as building up a sense of ownership for the institutional project. The participation of various stakeholders, including students, in the governance of the university is seen as a space for consolidation and continuous improvement. RTU started with a process of strategic plan development. This is an excellent opportunity

to involve the whole university community in the exercise so that proper ownership of the final results can be ensured.

In addition, the team would like to put forward the following recommendations:

1. The university should promote a wide discussion for optimising the use of the structures.
2. The organisational structure ought to be revised and streamlined so that a lean structure is reached, enabling a better communication atmosphere at all levels.
3. RTU should find a way to reinforce the budget in a way that young researchers, doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows are attracted and motivated to stay.
4. The team strongly recommends reviewing the model for internal distribution of the state budget. A more transparent model of internal distribution of the state budget should be discussed and adopted. For example, a budget allocation model should be devised that takes into consideration the number of academic staff positions needed (estimated on the basis of teaching hours, number of students and the appropriate method of teaching in different disciplines i.e., lecturing, laboratory work, seminars). The budget should also take into account the systems and standards used by other countries in estimating the numbers of academic staff and the costs of teaching staff, which is the costlier element of the operating budget of universities.
5. Reducing budget allocation towards administration by detailed human resource planning, redefining job definitions and job specifications is needed.
6. Defining priorities in the action plan should be a standard practice.
7. Streamlining the programmes and enhancing cooperation between departments in teaching should be considered a priority.
8. Study programmes curricula should be reviewed regularly.
9. Students should be given adequate opportunities to carry out laboratory work as part of the courses together with practical training time outside the university.
10. ORTUS success should be used as an excellent example of rationalising and taking full advantage of the use of ICT at RTU.
11. The team appreciated the way the central library is organised and run, and strongly supports the planned transfer of the dispersed branches in an expanded central library.
12. RTU should continue to enhance quality culture in the institution and adopt a strategy for Quality Assurance in Teaching and Learning that takes the

European Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher education as a framework to be considered.

13. The team recommends the university to evaluate the costs and benefits of the branch campuses offering courses outside Riga. The potential of RTU's distance learning programmes should be considered an alternative and complement for that kind of activities.
14. RTU should facilitate access to educational programmes for socially vulnerable students as well as assure a gender-balanced study environment.

10. References

Riga Technical University (2013) Self-Evaluation Report, Riga: RTU.
Riga Technical University (2013) Institutional documents.