

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION EQUITY POLICY

# Latvia



## Policy Frameworks

**Does equity with regard to supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education feature in any government produced policy documents? If so, which government policy document(s) are these and can you provide website link(s) to them?**

- Regulations regarding stipends: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/93004-regulations-regarding-stipends>
- Education Law: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/50759-education-law>
- The Law on Social Services and Social Assistance, Section 15.<sup>1</sup> Social Integration State Agency: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/68488-law-on-social-services-and-social-assistance>
- Social Integration State Agency: <https://www.siva.gov.lv/functions.html>
- Procedures for Granting and Financing an Assistant Service in an Educational Institution: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=252140>

**What policies and actions are described in these government policy documents in terms of supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education?**

- There are state funded study places for the students if they have demonstrated good results at the secondary school. If a student receives state funded place, they can apply for the stipend (scholarship). Regulations foresee that in the case results are equal, preference is given to the students from low-income populations, students from large families (at least three children), orphans, students with disabilities and students with a child.
- In Education Law, there is a clause stipulating that different groups of people have equal rights to obtain education and there is Prohibition of Differential Treatment.
- Social Integration State Agency is an institution where students with disabilities can get support in college level studies.
- There is a procedure envisioned for the students with disabilities that lays down the process how they can get state funded assistant at Higher Education Institutions.

**Is there a standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education? If so, which document(s) is/are these? Can you provide a link(s)?**

No.

**Which equity target groups are identified in the policy documents? (Please choose as many groups as apply in your own country)**

- Low-income or lower socio-economic background students
- Students with disability
- Refugees of all kinds (internally and externally displaced; deported)
- Students with care experience, orphans, youth without parental care.

### Does the country have concrete targets for the participation of specific equity groups in higher education?

- In the National Development Plan for 2021-2027, Inclusive Education is mentioned as one of the priorities. The plans and measures how to work with different target groups are laid down in the following document: [https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027_ENG.pdf)
- The country has set the targets for participation of specific equity groups in higher education: Low-income or lower socio-economic background students, Students with disability, Students with care experience, orphans, youth without parental care. Based on the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance Section 15.1 Social Integration State Agency: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/68488-law-on-social-services-and-social-assistance>, it is necessary to implement vocational initial education, vocational secondary education, first level higher vocational education (college education), vocational further education and vocational in-service training programmes, educating and training specialists in the professions which are necessary for the performance of social security measures for disabled persons.

### Which agency has responsibility for policies related to equity in student participation/success in higher education?

- Ministry of Education and Science.
- State Education Quality Service <https://ikvd.gov.lv/en/>

### Which stakeholder groups are consulted during the equity policy formulation? (Please choose all the stakeholders that are invited to the consultation process in your own country)

- Higher Education Institutions' Associations
- Civil society organisations
- Private sector organisations
- International organisations
- Student Organisations/Association
- Others:
  - Department of Higher Education and Research (Ministry of Education and Science)
  - Latvian Rectors' Council
  - Council of Higher Education
  - Latvian Council of Science
  - Latvian Student Association's (LSA)
  - The Employers' Confederation of Latvia

## Achieving Policy Targets

### Are there any non-monetary instruments such as outreach work between schools and universities, reforms to university admission etc. used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?

- Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Welfare "Creation of an inclusive study environment": [http://sf.lm.gov.lv/f/files/Vadlinijas\\_augstskolam\\_16092020.pdf](http://sf.lm.gov.lv/f/files/Vadlinijas_augstskolam_16092020.pdf).
- There are non-governmental organisations which educate people, mostly company representatives about diversity: <http://www.thinkdiversity.eu/> and <https://www.dazadiba.lv/>. They offer possibility to get evaluation for organizations and invite them to sign memorandum of understanding.
- Riga Technical University publishes the Guidelines for Communication and Provision of Learning Environment for Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs: <https://ebooks.rtu.lv/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2020/10/789934225055-Personas-ar-invaliditati-specialajam->

vajadzibam-RTU-PDF.pdf

### Are there any financial instruments such as bursaries, scholarships and loans used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?

- There are some funds in Latvia, which provide scholarships to the students, they support students from low income or marginalized population, for example: <https://www.vitolufonds.lv/en/bout-us>; Riga Technical University Development Fund: <https://www.rtu.lv/lv/attistibasfonds/aktualie-konkursi/atvert/atbalsta-stipendija-toposais-profesionalis-rtu-1-kursa-studentiem-1> and other.
- Some higher education institutions have their own regulations, which support students from these groups, for example, Riga Technical University has the procedure for granting a tuition fee discount: <https://www.rtu.lv/lv/rtusp/sp-studijas/studiju-atlaides> and Riga Stradins University: <https://www.rsu.lv/studiju-iespejas/praktiska-informacija/finansialais-atbalsts/studiju-maksas-atlaides>
- There are Regulations on study and student lending for studies in Latvia from the resources of credit institutions, which are guaranteed from the state budget. There are preferential conditions for the students with disabilities: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/314184-noteikumi-par-studiju-un-studejoso-kreditesanu-studijam-latvija-no-krediestazu-lidzekliem-kas-ir-garanteti-no-valsts-budzeta-lidzekliem>

### Who is responsible for monitoring the impact of measures used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education?

- Quality Agency for Higher Education: <https://www.aika.lv/en/>
- Ministry of Education and Science: <https://izm.gov.lv/en/>

Quality Agency for Higher Education ensures accreditation process for higher education institutions and study fields. Analysing self-evaluation reports and during expert visits they evaluate different support measures for different student groups.

### What instruments, methods and data are in place to carry out the monitoring and evaluation?

- Self-evaluation, expert visits: <https://www.aika.lv/en/for-higher-education-institutions/accreditation-of-study-direction/>
- Different rankings and ratings using specific methodology are used to evaluate higher education institutions.

### What kind of autonomy do higher education institutions enjoy in reaching the policy targets set by government?

No information was available.

### How do you see the role of inter-governmental/international organisations in supporting higher education equity policies? In which areas would be their contribution the most valuable? (1= most valuable contribution 4=least valuable contribution)

1. Policy setting
2. Financial assistance (grants, loan financing, scholarships)
3. Technical assistance and capacity building
4. Facilitating peer learning, exchange of experience among countries

## COVID-19 and Equitable Access and Success in Higher Education

**How, if at all, has Covid-19 affected the existence and implementation of policies designed to encourage greater access and success on higher education of those from low-income/marginalized groups?**

Larger scholarships and bursaries are granted to the students due to COVID: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/93004-regulations-regarding-stipends> and digitalization in different fields helps make education more accessible.

### Sources

This country brief was prepared as part of the *“ASEM National Equity Policies in Higher Education”* report, a collaboration between the [Asia-Europe Foundation \(AEF\)](#) and the [National Education Opportunities Network \(NEON\)](#). The report was launched at the [8<sup>th</sup> AEF Regional Conference on Higher Education \(ARC8\)](#) on *“Inclusive and Diverse Higher Education in Asia and Europe”* on 10 September 2021.

All information in this country brief was provided by the Office of the Vice-Rector of Strategic Development at Riga Technical University, Latvia, as of 28 October 2020.