



## Training of translators and interpreters in Latvia

*Ph.D. Jānis Sīlis\**

*Ventspils University College (Ventspils Augstskola), Latvia*

[janis.silis@venta.lv](mailto:janis.silis@venta.lv)

### **Abstract:**

The article provides a brief insight into the field of training translators and interpreters in Latvia, a European Union member state since 2004. The demand for an increasing number of professionals, being able to cope not only with translation of fiction, but capable to translate and interpret information vital for any independent country, became especially urgent toward the end of the 1980's due to the rapid political and economic changes accompanied by the growth of international contacts. The first training programme of translators and interpreters was started in 1995 and in the next few years was followed by several others. At present translators and interpreters in Latvia are trained in 16 academic programmes at 10 higher education institutions (3 universities and 3 university colleges funded by the government, as well as 4 private higher education institutions) - in 7 professional, 5 professional Bachelor and 4 professional master programmes. Doctoral dissertations in translatology at present are written and defended in two of the 3 doctoral programmes in Applied, Comparative and Contrastive Linguistics. After the general survey of the situation in training translators and interpreters in Latvia, the author provides a more detailed overview of the bachelor, master and Ph.D. programmes of the Ventspils University College.

**Key words:** translator and interpreting training, translation programme, doctoral dissertations.

### **Resumen:**

Este artículo presenta un panorama general de la formación de traductores e intérpretes en Letonia, país miembro de la Unión Europea desde el 2004. La demanda de profesionales capacitados para traducir, no solamente ficción, sino información vital para cualquier país independiente, es cada vez mayor y adquirió una urgencia particular a finales de los años 1980, debido a la rapidez en los cambios políticos y económicos, acompañada del aumento en los contactos internacionales. El primer programa de formación de traductores e intérpretes comenzó en 1995, otros programas le siguieron luego. Actualmente, los traductores e intérpretes en Letonia se forman en 16 programas de estudio en 10 establecimientos de educación superior (3 universidades, 3 Institutos Universitarios y 4 establecimientos privados), en 7 programas profesionales, 5 programas de pregrado y 4 programas de maestría. Las disertaciones doctorales en traductología, son defendidas hoy en dos de los tres programas de estudios doctorales en Lingüística Comparada y Aplicada. Luego de hacer una encuesta sobre la situación de los traductores e intérpretes en Letonia, el autor hace una presentación más detallada de los programas de pregrado, maestría y doctorado en el Instituto Universitario de Ventspils.

**Palabras clave:** formación de traductores e intérpretes, programas de traducción, tesis doctorales.

## 1. Introduction

At the end of the 1980's political changes in Latvia – a country situated opposite Sweden on the Baltic Sea coast, being twice as large as the Netherlands and having a population of around 2.3 million inhabitants-, promoted professional challenges for practicing translators and interpreters who could no longer cope with the explosive development of translation and interpreting market services. Having university degrees in philology, they suddenly had to master terminology and solve sophisticated problems in all spheres of life important for a newly independent state.

In the second half of the 1980's and the beginning of the 1990's, there were around 15-20 good self-taught interpreters in Latvia, as well as a somewhat larger number of good translators of non-literary texts. These individuals, who were philologists and linguists by education, were suddenly confronted in their translation and interpretation activities with completely new and unknown problems and with terminology in domains totally unfamiliar to them – like economics and finance, business administration and law, environmental problems and health care system details, politics and military terminology, etc.

Most of those who had taken the risk, were coping with those challenges more or less satisfactorily, but the demand for more professionals was exceeding all expectations. Growth of Latvia's foreign contacts in the 1990's demanded an explosive increase of translators and interpreters in government structures, in the big public monopolies like *Lattelekom* and *Latvenergo*, in local governments, in newly-created joint ventures and in companies now directly dealing with import and export. All these structures were in desperate need of an increasing scope of translation and interpretation services, but the majority of them were not sure where to look for professionals. Even if they knew, the number of professionals available would not have been sufficient. Therefore, many people without any professional training, with insufficient source language and target language proficiency became interpreters, created companies and public institutions.

In 1995, the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the University of Latvia was the first higher education structure in Latvia to respond to the changes in the market realities. This was not an easy task to accomplish, because in the previous decades stress was laid mainly on translation of fiction.

Still the supply did not match the demand. Finland, for example, with its population of around 5 million inhabitants at that time had at least five universities where professional interpreters and translators were trained. However, the EU institutions' translation and interpreting services (DGT: Directorate-General for Translation of the European Commission, JICS: Joint Interpreting and Conference Service, etc.) had pointed out in the beginning of the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that there still was a problem of recruiting a sufficient number of required level interpreters from both Finland and Sweden.

## **2. Institutions**

At present in Latvia there are 6 government-funded universities (3 of them in the capital city Riga, 3 in the comparatively large cities of Daugavpils, Jelgava and Liepāja which are three regional centres), 14 government-funded university colleges (11 of them are in the capital city of Riga, 3 in regional cities Rēzekne, Ventspils and Valmiera), 13 private higher education institutions of university-college type (all of them in the capital city of Riga), 18 government-funded (12 of them in Riga) and 8 private institutions (all in Riga) of higher education offering first level programmes (see also <http://www.aiknc.lv>).

Translators and interpreters in Latvia are trained in 16 academic programmes at 10 higher education institutions (3 universities and 3 university colleges funded by the government, as well as 4 private higher education institutions), in 7 professional, 5 professional bachelor and 4 professional master programmes.

Three of the seven professional programmes, all five professional bachelor programmes and one professional master programme provide both translation and interpretation qualification (complemented by the bachelor or master degree of the respective programmes). Three of the professional programmes offer only the translation qualification, and one programme – only interpretation qualification. Three professional master programmes provide translation qualification (for those who have not obtained it at the previously completed higher education academic programmes) parallel to the master degree, but one programme of this type claims to offer both translation and interpretation qualification.

Length of studies in 4 full time professional programmes ranges from one year or two terms (60 ECTS: European Credit Transfer System) to 4.5 years or 9 terms (270 ECTS). Three of the professional programmes are both full time and part time ranging from 2 and 2.5 years (120 ECTS) to 4 and 4.5 years (270 ECTS). The academic period in four of the 5 professional Bachelor programmes is 4 years or eight terms (240 ECTS), but studies in the fifth programmes are both full time and part time (4 and 4.5 years and 270 ECTS). The length of studies in 3 full time professional master programmes ranges from 1.5 years (90 ECTS) to 2 years (120 ECTS). The length of study in the only part-time professional Master programme is 2 years (75 ECTS).

The discipline of Translation Studies in Latvia is not yet recognized as an independent field of study. At present, doctoral dissertations in translatology are written and defended in two of the 3 doctoral programmes in Applied, Comparative and Contrastive Linguistics of the Department of Contrastive Linguistics at Ventspils University College, Faculty of Translation Studies at the University of Latvia. In principle, doctoral dissertations of this kind could also be written within the framework

of the Comparative and Contrastive Linguistics doctoral programme of the University of Daugavpils, but so far that has not been the case.

The table below presents a concise overview of the higher education institutions in Latvia offering programmes relevant to training of the would-be translators and interpreters:

<i>Government-funded higher education institutions offering professional Bachelor and master level translation and interpretation training programmes</i>		
UNIVERSITIES	UNIVERSITY COLLEGES	Institutions offering the First level higher education professional programmes
<p><b>University of Latvia:</b>  <b>3 programmes</b> – a professional Post-Bachelor of Translator Training Programme, a professional post-Bachelor of Interpretation Training Programme, a Ph.D. programme;  <b>Riga Technical University:</b>  <b>2 programmes</b> – a professional Bachelor of Translation and Interpretation Training Programme, a professional Master of Translation and Interpretation Training Programme;  <b>University of Daugavpils:</b>  <b>1 programme</b> – a professional Translator Training Programme.</p>	<p><b>Ventspils University College:</b>  <b>5 programmes</b> – 2 professional Bachelor of Translation and Interpretation Training Programmes, 2 professional Master translator training programmes, a PhD programme;  <b>Vidzeme University College:</b>  <b>1 programme</b> – a professional Post-Bachelor of Translator Training Programme;  <b>Rēzekne Higher education Institution:</b>  <b>1 programme</b> – a professional Bachelor of Translation and Interpretation programme.</p>	<p>None</p>
<i>Private higher education institutions offering professional Bachelor and Master Translator and Interpreter Training Programmes</i>		
<p><b>Baltic International Academy:</b>  <b>1 programme</b> - a professional Translation and Interpretation Training Programme;  <b>Higher School of Economics and Culture:</b>  <b>1 programme</b> - a professional Bachelor of Translation and Interpretation Training programme;  <b>Higher School of Social Technologies:</b>  <b>1 programme</b> - a professional Translation and Interpretation Training Programme;  <b>International Higher School of Practical Psychology:</b>  <b>2 programmes</b> - a professional Translation and Interpretation Programme, a professional Master Translator Training Programme.</p>		

At present only one higher education institution – Ventspils University College (*Ventspils Augstskola*) – offers Translator/Interpreter Training together with research in the domains of theoretical and applied Translation Studies at the bachelor, master and Ph.D. level.

### **3. Training of Translators and Interpreters at Universities**

The University of Latvia, the leading university of the country, offers a 1 year full-time 60 ECTS Interpretation Training Professional Programme and a 1.5 year long full-time 90 ECTS Translator Training Programme. Both programmes are offered as a continuation of academic bachelor programmes in English, German or French philology. In the translator training programme out of the total 90 ECTS, 26 ECTS are given for internship and 15 ECTS – for diploma paper and final examinations. Sixty per cent of all credit points are allotted for acquisition of theoretical knowledge. The Department of Contrastive Linguistics and Translatology at the University of Latvia is cooperating with the Faculty of Translation Studies of Ventspils University College, Riga Technical University, Germersheim School of Applied Linguistics and Cultural Studies (Germany), University of Rostock (Germany), Institute of Applied Linguistics of Kent University (USA), Savonlinna School of Translation Studies (Finland) etc. Students have their internship in the State Chancellery of the Republic of Latvia, Centre of Translation and Terminology, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DGT and DGI (Directorate General for Interpretation) of the European Commission etc. A number of graduates become translators and interpreters of EU institutions in Brussels, Luxemburg and Latvia.

Riga Technical University is offering a 240 ECTS professional Bachelor Translation and Interpretation Training Programme. The length of full-time studies is 4 years; part-time studies are 4.5 years long. There is also a possibility to academic in a 90 ECTS professional Translation and Interpretation Training Master Programme; here the length of full-time studies is 1.5 years, but part-time studies are a term longer. To teach technical translation in various fields of technology (at present, there are 18 recognized fields) specialists from different fields are involved. The possibility of cooperating with various leading specialists is the strong point of the present programs, since Riga Technical University is the largest and best of the institutions of technical learning in Latvia. There is a great need for technical translators in Latvia and elsewhere; each year this need will only increase.

The University of Daugavpils offers a 120 ECTS professional Translator Training Programme. The length of full-time studies here is 2 years (2.5 years – part-time). The prerequisite to become a student is a bachelor degree in philology. Working languages are either English and Latvian or German and Latvian, but translation is practiced less frequently from and into French, Swedish, Polish, Spanish and Russian. Translators are mainly prepared for work in the regional institutions of the Eastern part of Latvia.

### **4. Training of Translators and Interpreters at University Colleges**

These are government-funded university-type higher education institutions where patterns of studies are equal to universities; the difference is mainly in size (university

colleges are smaller) and in a lower number of areas of specialization. In fact, university colleges in Latvia are regional universities.

Academic programmes of Ventspils University College, as the author himself represents this institution, will be discussed in greater detail at the end of the article (see also Sīlis 2006: 12-20 and Sīlis 2009: 247).

Vidzeme University College offers a 90 ECTS 1.5 year full-time professional translator training programme after obtaining an academic or professional Bachelor degree. Applicants having a bachelor in English philology are enrolled without entrance examinations. Students are trained to translate from English or German into Latvian, which is their mother tongue.

Rēzekne higher education Institution, which corresponds to all standards of other university colleges in Latvia, offers a 240 ECTS 4 year full-time professional bachelor of Translation and Interpretation Programme. The number of students is small (6 students in the first and 6 students in the second year). The future translators and interpreters are trained to work from and into 3 languages, one of them being Latvian.

## **5. Training of Translators and Interpreters at Private Institutions of higher education**

Baltic International Academy is a fairly large private institution established in 2000. It offers a 270 ECTS 4.5 year long professional programme of Training Translators and Interpreters. There were 55 students in the programme in 2007. The programme contains two basic directions “English-Latvian-Russian translation” and “German-Latvian-Russian translation”. The module “English-Russian” and “German-Russian” translation has been incorporated into the programme. Translation and (consecutive) interpretation is taught in three main fields – business and economics, culture and tourism, social relations and politics. There are no courses on law and translation of legal texts in the programme.

High School of Social Technologies is offering a 270 ECTS 4.5 year programme training both translators and interpreters, where English, German and Spanish are among the working languages. Although English is emphasized, 43 ECTS are allotted for the acquisition of Spanish, which is perceived as an important business language of the near future.

High School of Economics and Culture continues with a 240 ECTS 4 year full-time and 4.5 year part-time professional Translation and Interpretation Training Programme, preparing translators, consecutive and simultaneous interpreters who could work in the social-economic field, in various branches of culture and art with both Western and Eastern partners of governmental and non-governmental structures, as cultural attaches.

International High School of Practical Psychology offers a 240 ECTS 4 year full-time and 4.5 year part-time professional Translation and Interpretation Training Programme, as well as a 120 ECTS 2 year professional master Translator Training Programme. The programme consists of several modules: translation technologies, functional scope of translation, intercultural communication and psychological aspects of interpreting.

## **6. Training Translators and Interpreters at Ventspils University College Professional Bachelor Programmes**

The philosophy of the two bachelor academic programmes can be formulated as providing training to both translators and interpreters who are competitive in the national and international market and who can work at European Union institutions, legislative and executive national government and municipal institutions, as well as in major joint ventures, private companies (including also translation services, publishing houses and the like).

As it was stated in the initial part of this survey, the University of Latvia was the only centre for training translators and interpreters. Therefore, in the process of establishing a new government-funded higher education institution in Ventspils (today, Ventspils Augstskola), it was decided to create a Translation Studies Department as one of the two departments (from 2000 Faculties) of the University College.

In 1997, the Translation Studies Department had to solve a number of curriculum development problems that had arisen due to the specific character of the demand of interpretation and translation services in Latvia. This called for a universal specialist who would be able both to interpret spoken utterances and to translate written texts, embracing a wide range of subjects predominantly in the domains of economics, management and law, as well as transportation and technological processes relevant to industries and businesses dealing with import, export and transit activities.

The first versions of academic programmes for the Ventspils College Translation Studies Department were created between December 1996 and March 1997, which was half a year before the beginning of the first academic year of the new college. To assure the full development of the programmes, an extended work group was set up in November 1996. The group continued its activities until April 1997 when the work was completed. A number of academics from the Faculty of Foreign Languages and from the Language Centre at the University of Latvia, including the author of the present article, formed the active core of this group.

Subsequent to this, the programme was translated into English and German, and sent for review to the Agder College Centre of Translation Studies (Norway), the University of Joensuu Savonlinna School of Translation Studies (Finland) and the Department of

Contrastive Linguistics at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the University of Latvia. All the three reviews were positive and contained a number of suggestions for potential improvement.

The implementation of the programme began on September 1, 1997, when Ventspils University College was founded. (The whole team was invited by the Ministry and the local government of the City of Ventspils, to leave the University of Latvia and go over to the newly founded University College.) The two professional programmes in Translation Studies with the Specialisation in English – Latvian – Russian and German – Latvian – Russian were ready by June 1997.

The programme was meant for the internal and regional market, hence the choice of the particular language combination.

One paramount problem was to cope with the prerequisite of having four languages (two more than the previous practice). Three languages out of these four had to be the so called *interpreter's working languages*, one being an A language (usually the native language or a language used with a native-like fluency), and the other two - B languages (the perfectly mastered interpreter's active non-native languages, one of them a major EU language), as well as a C language (interpreter's passive language - another extensively used EU language) in which the students were to achieve an upper intermediate (4 terms) up to advanced (6 terms) proficiency level combined with a certain level of ability to translate and interpret from this language, but not into it. Traditionally, an A language or the mother tongue is self-explanatory. Still, in a certain exceptional case, an interpreter-bilingual may have more than one language that fits in this category. An active language, or B language, is a language mastered by an interpreter, without it being a mother tongue. An interpreter will work from one or several other languages into his or her B language, though some interpreters only work towards their B language(s) in one of the two interpreting modes (simultaneous or consecutive). A passive language – or C language- is one which the interpreter fully understands and from which she or he works. (See also <http://www.isit-paris.fr/eng/interpreter.html>).

With the beginning of the European Union pre-accession process and Latvia becoming a EU member state in 2004, it became clear that the initial academic programmes were not in conformity with the new developments and demands of the EU translation and interpreting services market. One of the most topical demands was the ability of translators and interpreters to work from at least two major EU languages.

Therefore, already in 2003, the Faculty of Translation Studies decided to develop two new programmes – the Professional Higher education BA Academic Programme “Translation and Interpreting from and into English – Latvian – Russian/German Languages” to obtain a Professional Bachelor Degree in Translatology and the Professional Qualification of Translator and Interpreter and a similar programme with



German – Latvian – Russian/German working languages. Both programmes were positively evaluated by a committee of international experts and accredited for the maximum term of 6 years in June 2005.

Here is the structure of the English – Latvian – Russian/German language Specialisation Programme, which is very similar to the English – Latvian – Russian/German language Specialisation Programme.

**Duration:** 4 years (8 Terms) – full-time studies, **scope** - 248 ECTS.

The Programme contains the following groups of academic courses:

1. General Knowledge Courses (min. 30 ECTS required by the Regulations of the Ministry of Education and Science) - 30 ECTS.
2. Basic Theoretical Courses of the Discipline (min. 54 ECTS required) - 54 ECTS.
3. Basic Courses of Professional Specialisation (min. 90 ECTS required) - 90 ECTS.
4. Optional Courses (min. 9 ECTS required) - 9 ECTS.
5. Internship (min. 39 ECTS required) - 39 ECTS.
6. Academic Paper in Translation Theory (Term 6, included in the 3 ECTS course of Translation Theory and written within the planned 40 academic hours of the student's individual work).
7. Case Competition in Translation and Interpreting Internship II (16 weeks of Term 7, description and assessment of the student's translation and interpreting activities outside the University College. Internship Defence where translated material, number and quality of interpreting hours, employers' and internship tutor's evaluations are assessed, 6 ECTS)
8. Bachelor Graduation Paper (minimum. 18 ECTS) - 18 ECTS.

**General Knowledge Courses** offer the opportunity to master subjects of general knowledge indirectly relevant to the profession of translator and interpreter; the acquired knowledge is essential for students' competitiveness in the labour market of translation and interpreting. In the programme these courses are subdivided into 2 subgroups – theoretical courses of humanities and social sciences and courses enhancing social, communicative and organisational skills.

See below for courses determined by the student's choice of the 3rd working language – either Russian or German, are in given in italics:

<b>Academic Course</b> (language of instruction: [EN] - English, [LV] - Latvian, [RU] – Russian, [FR] – French, [GE] - German)	<b>Term</b>	<b>Hrs. a week</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
<b>GENERAL KNOWLEDGE COURSES – 30 ECTS</b>			
<b>Theoretical Courses of Humanities and Social Sciences:</b>			
Introduction into Intercultural Communication [LV]	1	2	3
Introduction into Linguistics [EN]	2	2	3
Development Tendencies of Modern Latvian I [LV]	2	2	3
Development Tendencies of Modern Latvian II [L]	3	2	3
Basics of Entrepreneurship [EN]	1	2	3
International Business and International Business and Financial Organisations [EN]	2	2	3
<b>Courses Enhancing Social, Communicative and Organisational Skills</b>			
English Phonetics [EN]	1	2	3
Written Communication in English [EN]	1	2	3
General Communication in English I: Situational Models [EN]	1	2	3
General Communication II: Presentation Skills in English [EN]	2	2	3

**Basic Theoretical Courses of the Discipline:** provide a theoretical support for the training of professional translators and interpreters:

<b>Academic Course</b> (language of instruction: [EN] - English, [LV] - Latvian, [RU] – Russian, [FR] – French, [GE] - German)	<b>Term</b>	<b>Hrs. a week</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
<b>BASIC THEORETICAL COURSES OF THE DISCIPLINE – 54 ECTS</b>			
Strategies of Written Translation: EN / LV	1	2	3
English Grammar I: Theory of Morphology and its Practical Application [EN]	1	4	6
Lexicostylistic English Text Analysis: Theory and Application [EN]	1	2	3
Introduction to Translation I [A]	1	2	3
Research Methods in Translation Studies Theses and Projects [EN]	2	2	3
British Studies: UK as an EU Member State [EN]	3	2	3
Contrastive Linguistics [EN]	3	2	3
English Stylistics [EN]	4	2	3
American Studies [EN]	4	2	3
Consecutive Interpreting: Theory and Application: EN-LV-RU-GE	5	4	6
EU Terms of Economics and Business Administration in English and Latvian [EN]	5	2	3
Simultaneous Interpreting: Theory and Application: EN-LV-RU-GE	6	4	6
Legal Terminology in the EU and its Member States' Legislation [EN]	6	2	3
Translation Theory and Academic Paper I [EN]	6	2	3
Russian Stylistics (RU) / Acquis Communautaire [GE] [LV]	6/(4)	2/2	3/3

**Basic Courses of Professional Specialisation** – acquisition of translator and interpreter's professional skills in the context of Latvia as an EU member state:

<b>Academic Course</b> (language of instruction: [EN] - English, [LV] - Latvian, [RU] – Russian, [FR] – French, [GE] - German)	<b>Term</b>	<b>Hrs. a week</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
<b>BASIC COURSES OF PROFESSIONAL SPECIALISATION – 90 ECTS</b>			
<b>Enhancement of English Language Proficiency:</b>			
Lexicostylistic Analysis of Texts II [EN]	2	2	3
English Grammar II: Theory of Syntax and its Practical Application [EN]	2	2	3
Business English I: Management and Labour Market in the EU [EN]	3	2	3
Business English II: Business and Finance Management in the EU [EN]	4	2	3
<b>Enhancement of Russian Language as L2 Proficiency:</b>			
<i>Modern Russian [RU]/ Syntax [GE]</i>	1/(1)	2/2	3/3
<i>Business Russian [RU]/ Text Typology [GE]</i>	2/(2)	2/2	3/3
<b>Enhancement of French, German and Russian Languages as L3 Proficiency:</b>			
<i>Basic French I [FR]/Basic German I [GE] / Modern Russian I [RU]</i>	1	2	3
<i>Basic French II [FR]/Basic German II [GE] / Modern Russian II: Situational Models [RU]</i>	2	2	3
<i>Basic Business French I [FR]/Basic Business German I [GE] / Business Russian I [RU]</i>	3	2	3
<i>Business French II [FR]/Business German II [GE] / Business Russian II [RU]</i>	4	2	3
<b>Enhancement of Translation and Interpreting Skills in all the three working languages:</b>			
Translation II EN-LV: Informative and Publicity Texts	2	4	6
<i>Translation I RU-LV / Document Translation, GE-LV-GE</i>	3/(3)	2/2	3/3
Translation III EN-LV: Macroeconomics and Entrepreneurship in EU Member States	3	4	6
<i>Translation I EN-RU: Informative and Business Texts/ Introduction into Entrepreneurship (GE) (LV)</i>	4/3	2/2	3/3
Translation IV EN-LV: Transport in the EU	4	4	6
<i>Translation II LV-RU / Translation of Agreements, LV-GE-LV</i>	4/(4)	2/2	3/3
Translation V EN-LV: Environment Problems in the EU	5	2	3
Translation VI LV-EN: Publicity Texts	5	2	3
<i>Translation II EN-RU: EU Texts in Economy and Law/ Business German II [GE]</i>	5/(3)	4/2	6/3
<i>Translation III EN-RU: Economic and Legal Texts Outside EU / Legal Terminology LV-GE-LV</i>	6/4	2	3
<i>Translation IV RU-EN: Economic and Legal Texts/ Translation: Marketing and Advertisements GE-LV-GE</i>	6	2/4	3/6
<i>Consecutive Interpreting II: Situational Models and Interpreting Types in the EU Context EN-RU/GE-LV</i>	6	2	3
Translation VII EN-LV: Legal Texts	6	4	6
Translation EN-LV-EN	8	2	3
Consecutive Interpreting III and Simultaneous Interpreting II: Training and Authentic Conference Interpreting EU Issues EN, LV	8	2	3

**Internship, Term Papers and Bachelor Graduation Work** are the forms of instruction consolidating theoretical knowledge and acquired professional skills by their practical application. **Internship** is a form of studies during which the student enhances his/her translation and interpreting skills while working (for 16 weeks in Term VII) in central and local government institutions, companies and joint ventures. Students themselves choose the place of internship. However, the obligation of the programme instructors is to advise students on the suitability of the chosen place for the achievement of the set goals. The instructors appointed by the Programme Director supervise the internship and help students to resolve issues of organisational and professional nature related to the translation internship. At the end of the internship the student submits the Internship Report to the Programme Director or to his/her authorised person. The Internship Report is to be publicly presented.

Implementation of the internship is regulated in the Internship Regulation approved by the Senate of VUC.

Goals of the internship are:

- testing students' professional and personal aptitude to work in the profession of translator and/or interpreter,
- providing students with an opportunity to continue perfection of the acquired professional skills in authentic working conditions.

Students' tasks during the internship period are:

- translation of special texts from and into their 3 chosen working languages (English-Latvian-Russian, English-Latvian-German, German-Latvian-Russian or German-Latvian-English),
- conference, community, liaison and telephone interpreting from and into the three working languages,
- gathering of glossary materials for a company-specific field,
- collection of material relevant to the internship field for the Bachelors Graduate Paper,
- acquisition of office works skills (optional),
- compilation an internship survey and presentation of a report at an annual conference where internship results are discussed and the performance of the students is evaluated both by the supervisor and the Internship Commission, usually chaired by the Programme Director.

Internship documents are presented in the form of a folder containing the student's internship report, consisting of:

- internship log book,
- description of the internship place (company, enterprise),
- description of the activities of the institution/company, main directions of

activities, management structure, internal and external economic relations, as well as the place and role of an interpreter and/or translator in the activities of the institution/company.

A similar document provide information on the eventual deadlines of the internship period, volume of the student's work in the fields of (a) written translation, (b) interpreting, (c) office work and (d) other jobs. As well, the following is included:

- characterisation of translations/interpreting sessions,
- a detailed report on the internship period,
- a review of the internship place representative

The supervisor prepares a written report evaluation which she/he reads out to the commission and the audience, assessing student's:

- translation skills,
- interpreting skills,
- knowledge in the specific field of internship, background knowledge of the textual material,
- personal qualities (wider professional role),
- general evaluation and recommendations to the student in order to enhance his/her professional skills and knowledge.

Term Papers are written within the framework of professional specialisation courses and internship and are mandatory to obtain the necessary number of ECTS points.

**Bachelor Graduation Paper** consists of an independent theoretical and practical project, defended before the Final Assessment Commission. It certifies the student's competence conforming to the requirements of the Bachelors degree and professional qualification criteria.

## **7. Professional Master Programmes**

The aim and philosophy of the two MA programmes is to maintain professional studies in order to train translators of advanced qualification for the Latvian and European translation services market, who are able to translate business and legal texts for municipal, national and EU institutions. The graduates must also acquire research work skills during their studies and obtain the necessary qualification for teaching at higher education institutions.

In 2004 the Faculty of Translation Studies decided to introduce a part-time professional master programme Translation and Terminology (English, German or French into Latvian), which is predominantly for the EU translation services market.

The programme was accredited in June 2005. However, it began to be implemented in February of the same year. Here is the study plan of the programme:

**Term I (Spring)**

<b>Academic Course</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
Translation Theory and Criticism [LV]	3
Text Components and Translation [LV]	3
Written Translation I (Economics, Business Administration, Entrepreneurship): EN-LV DE-LV FR-LV	3
Translation Technologies and Methods [LV]	3
<b>TOTAL ECTS</b>	<b>12</b>

**Term II (Fall)**

<b>Academic Course</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
LSP and Terminology Management [LV]	3
Modern Written Latvian [LV]	3
Intercultural and Pragmatic Aspects of Translation [LV]	3
Written Translation II (Legal Texts and Documents): EN-LV DE-LV FR-LV	3
<b>TOTAL ECTS</b>	<b>12</b>

**Term III (Spring)**

<b>Academic Course</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
Internship	9
Introduction into Comparative Law [LV]	3
Psychology of Communication [LV]	3
Written Translation III (EU Documents): EN-LV DE-LV FR-LV	3
Research Methods of Translation Studies [LV]	3
<b>TOTAL ECTS</b>	<b>21</b>

**Term IV (Fall)**

<b>Academic Course</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
MA Thesis [LV]	30
<b>TOTAL ECTS</b>	<b>30</b>

From September 2007:

Ventspils University College Faculty of Translation Studies Professional Master Academic Programme “Translation of Legal Texts”.

### **Structure of the Programme**

**Duration** 1/5 year (3 Terms) – full-time studies

**Scope** 90 ECTS

<i>Academic Courses</i>	<i>Hrs a week</i>	<i>Term I Hrs/w</i>	<i>Term II Hrs/w</i>	<i>Term III Hrs/w</i>	<b>ECTS</b>
<b>1. Academic Courses Introducing Theoretical and Practical Innovations – 39 ECTS</b>					
Pragmatic Aspects of Latvian in Legal Texts [LV]	2	2			3
Private Law [LV]	2	2			3
Public Law [LV]	2	2			3
EU Institutions and Their Functions [LV] *)	2	2			3
Legal System of the EU [LV]	4	4			6
<i>Translation of EU Legal Documents EN-LV, FR – LV, DE-LV</i>	4		4		6
<i>Law of International Organisations, LV*)</i>	2	2			3
Translation of Documents of International Organisations EN-LV, FR-LV	2		2		3
Systems of Legal Terminology: Aspects of Translation EN, FR, DE, LV	4		4		6
Translation of Commercial Law Documents LV-EN, FR-LV, DE- LV	2	2			3
<b>2. Courses in Research, Project Management and Business Administration - 9 ECTS</b>					
<i>Computer-aided Translation EN, FR, DE, LV</i>	2	2			3
<i>Translation Management, LV</i>	4		4		6
<b>3. Courses in Research – 3 ECTS</b>					
<i>Research Methodology in Translation Studies, LV</i>	2	2			3
<b>4. Internship – 9 ECTS</b>	6		6		9
<b>5. Master Thesis– 30 ECTS</b>				20	30
<b>TOTAL</b>		20	20	20	90

## **8. Translation Studies Component in the Ph.D. Linguistics Programme at Ventspils University College**

At present there are two higher education institutions in Latvia - University of Latvia and Ventspils University College, with Translation Studies as one of the components of Doctoral Programmes offering a PhD degree in Linguistics, but not in Translation Studies.

There are two other doctoral programmes in Linguistics:

- 1) One at the University of Daugavpils, offering a PhD degree in Comparative and Contrastive Linguistics (academic courses: Methodology of Contemporary Linguistics, Basic Paradigms of Linguistics, History of Latvian Language and Nation, Latvian Terminology of Linguistic Research, History of Russian Language in the Context of Ethnic History of Latvia, Semantics: Contemporary Theories of Meaning, Language Policy in EU Context, Lexicography in Europe and the US, Contemporary Ethno linguistics, Contrastive Analysis of Literary Texts, Contrastive Morphology);
- 2) The other at the University of Liepāja, offering a PhD degree in Latvian Synchronic and Diachronic Linguistics.

In order to begin doctoral research in Translation Studies one has to become a doctoral student in a Ph.D. Linguistics Programme and choose among 12 officially approved sub-disciplines of Linguistics; traditionally, these are the sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics and Comparative and Contrastive Linguistics. Applicants must have a Master's degree in humanities, social sciences or educational sciences, high philological education on either bachelor or master level. A doctoral student can come into Translation Studies from the field of humanities, social sciences or educational sciences.

The doctoral degree is not officially devoted to Translation Studies, since this discipline is non-existent in the official nomenclature of scientific disciplines approved by Latvia Council of Science (<http://www.lzp.lv>) The degree is one of subdisciplines of linguistics – in the case of Ventspils University College, either *Doctor of Philology in Applied Linguistics* or *Doctor of Philology in Comparative and Contrastive Linguistics*.

Time needed to complete a doctoral degree amounts to 3 years for full time and 4 years for part time doctoral students. Joint degrees are not possible so far. Number of years of prior study are at least 5 or 6 (3-4 years of bachelor studies + 1,5-2 years of master studies).

Applicants must submit a 10-15 pages length research paper or a set of publications of similar length on a topical problem of the chosen linguistic subdiscipline (e.g. Translation Studies). Applicants are then interviewed concerning the topic of the submitted paper. The Council of the Doctoral Academic Programme accepts proposals for a PhD. Students are free to choose their research topics.

The interview is assessed according to 10-point scale, both for the content of answers and the language of answers. There is a table of criteria explained in detail for each mark in the scale. In addition, factors like motivation, competence, type of previous studies, as well as academic and research experience are taken into consideration. The paper is evaluated according to 10-point scale; there is a table of criteria explained in detail for each mark in the scale.



Workload for the doctoral programme is 180 ECTS and its structure is as follows:

Theoretical studies – 34.5 ECTS, out of which:

16.5 ECTS are allotted to academic courses of obligatory choice (Part A): courses in Linguistic theories and methods (ECTS), research workshops (4.5 ECTS), examination in General Linguistics (3 ECTS).

18 ECTS are allotted for academic courses of limited choice (Part B): subdiscipline specialisation modules (e.g., Translation Studies) – 9 ECTS, second language for research purposes – 6 ECTS, examination in speciality matters and a second language examination – 3 ECTS.

Enhancement of research, organisational and academic competences – 10.5 ECTS.

Research work – 135 ECTS: presentations, papers read at international conferences, publications – 6 ECTS, doctoral dissertation – 129 ECTS.

Courses are organised in the form of lectures, seminars, workshops, colloquiums, conferences (including internal conferences of the students), research projects, consultations with the supervisors and other academics, as well as independent studies. Theoretical courses are required (34.5 ECTS, for more details see the previous point). Attendance is both before and during the research work.

Integration is promoted into a broader research environment: graduate school/national coordination, research network, participation in research seminars/conferences, etc.

Students have to participate in international, national and local research projects, as well as in a definite number of seminars and international conferences.

Length of the text (not counting bibliography and annexes) has to have a minimum 120 A4 pages, but not more than 200 A4 pages. Languages: Latvian or any other language of the EU.

Studies and research abroad is encouraged, but is not backed by definite centralised funding.

Supervisors of the PhD dissertations must be PhDs (Associate Professors and “full” Professors) in the specific subdiscipline. Supervisors can come from a different university or country, but usually there is also a “native” supervisor – therefore joint supervision is possible and is practiced from time to time. The role of a supervisor in our programme is defined in a special document (February, 2009).

Officially there may be one or two supervisors, but Ventspils University College plans to involve all academics of the programme to have a decisive say in the final evaluation.

As for assessment requirements, there must be one local and 2 external referees at the public defence, pre-publication evaluation by editorial boards of research articles' collections, public defence and 3 examinations (viva), grades (10 – outstanding, 9 – excellent, 8 – very good, 7 – good, 6 – almost good, 5 – average, 4 – almost average, 3 – poor, 2 – very poor etc.)

Articles before the final defence are mandatory, and a certain number of them must be in regular publications approved by the Latvia Council of Science. Dissertation so far has to be submitted in the form of a manuscript (A4 pages, hard cover).

## **9. Conclusion**

First written translations into Latvian that have been preserved up to the present moment, date back to year 1525. Since then fiction and non-fiction texts have been increasingly translated by self-made experts in the field. These have often been writers, poets, linguists and philosophers, as well as outstanding researchers in their own particular branch of science. Training of translators and interpreters started in professional academic programmes of two Latvian universities in the middle of the 1990's. Several doctoral students are conducting research in translation theory and their contribution will strengthen the theoretical foundation of bachelor and master level translation studies.

Another master programme in interpreter training will be opened in the University of Latvia in Fall 2009, which is a clear sign that the profession of translators and interpreters has a bright future in Latvia.

## References

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