

Studying in Latvia

A guide for international students & families — how Latvian higher education works, the student visa and residence permit, affordable English-taught medicine, and post-study work.

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AFFORDABLE EU DEGREES, INCL. ENGLISH MEDICINE

Latvia offers **affordable, EU-recognized degrees** — with **Riga Stradiņš University** a major destination for **English-taught medicine, dentistry, and health sciences** — plus low living costs and full EU/Schengen mobility. Non-EU students get a **long-term (D) visa and a residence permit**. This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. Latvian rules, tuition, and the funds requirement change (and funds figures vary widely by source). The details here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with Study in Latvia, the OCMA (migration office), and your university.**

Understand Why Students Choose Latvia

WHAT TO KNOW

Latvia offers **affordable EU-recognized degrees**, **standout English-taught medicine (Riga Stradiņš University)**, **low living costs**, and **full EU/Schengen/EU-Blue-Card mobility** — with a growing job market in IT, fintech, and pharma.

BY THE NUMBERS

English medicine

Riga Stradiņš

Affordable

EU degree

EU mobility

+ Blue Card path

HOW TO HELP

Weigh Latvia's **affordable EU degrees** and **strong English-medicine option** against its small scale — for medicine and health sciences especially, it's excellent value.

GOOD TO KNOW

Riga Stradiņš University is a leading destination for **English-taught medicine and health sciences** — a major draw for international students.

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

Latvia's leading institutions are the **University of Latvia (LU)**, **Riga Technical University (RTU)**, **Riga Stradiņš University (RSU — medicine and health)**, and the **Stockholm School of Economics in Riga**. Degrees follow the European (Bologna) structure and are EU-recognized.

BY THE NUMBERS

Univ of Latvia / RTU

broad & technical

RSU

medicine & health

SSE Riga

business

HOW TO HELP

Choose by field — RSU for medicine/health, RTU for engineering, the University of Latvia for breadth, SSE Riga for business — all offering EU-recognized degrees.

GOOD TO KNOW

Latvian degrees are **EU-recognized and Bologna-compliant** — portable across Europe.

Get the Visa & Residence Permit

WHAT TO KNOW

Non-EU/EEA students staying over 90 days need a **long-term (D) visa or a residence permit**. Apply at a Latvian embassy/consulate, then complete the **residence permit at the OCMA** (Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs). Your diploma is checked by the **AIC** (Academic Information Centre).

BY THE NUMBERS

Long-term (D) visa

or residence permit

OCMA

migration office

AIC

diploma recognition

HOW TO HELP

Apply for the **D visa/residence permit** with your acceptance, funds proof, and insurance — and note that the **AIC** must confirm your diploma is sufficient (allow 4–6 weeks).

WATCH OUT

AIC diploma recognition takes about 4–6 weeks — start it early, as your admission and permit depend on it.

Apply to Universities

WHAT TO KNOW

Apply **directly to universities** (each has its own process; RSU and others recruit internationally). Programs are widely available in English. There's a non-refundable application/registration fee, and documents must be in English or translated.

BY THE NUMBERS

Apply directly

to universities

English programs

widely available

Application fee

non-refundable

HOW TO HELP

Apply **directly to your chosen universities**, prepare English-language (or translated) documents, and factor in the application fee and AIC recognition time.

GOOD TO KNOW

Programs are widely available **in English** — no Latvian is needed to begin, though it helps daily life.

Plan for Tuition & Funding

WHAT TO KNOW

Tuition for non-EU students is **affordable by EU standards**: roughly **€1,500–8,000/year** for most programs, with **English-taught medicine higher**. Scholarships include state-funded awards, Erasmus+, and university grants.

BY THE NUMBERS

Most programs

~€1,500–8,000/yr

Medicine

higher

Scholarships

state & university

HOW TO HELP

Budget the **non-EU tuition** (medicine is the outlier) plus low living costs, and pursue state, Erasmus+, and university scholarships — the overall cost is well below Western Europe.

GOOD TO KNOW

Latvia's **total cost (tuition + living)** is **often below** even some home-country private universities — strong value for an EU degree.

Meet the Financial Requirement

WHAT TO KNOW

For the visa/permit you must prove **sufficient means** — commonly cited around **€6,000–8,400/year for living** (plus tuition), though figures vary by source and are tied to the minimum wage. You also need **health insurance** and accommodation proof.

BY THE NUMBERS

Funds

~€6,000–8,400/yr (varies)

+ tuition

paid/proven

+ insurance

& accommodation

HOW TO HELP

Prepare **proof of funds** at the current amount (confirm it, as figures vary), plus **health insurance** and accommodation — insufficient funds is the top refusal reason.

WATCH OUT

The **funds figure varies by source** and is the most common refusal reason — confirm the exact current amount and show it clearly.



Meet Language Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

For **English-taught** programs you prove English (typically **IELTS 6.0–6.5**). **No Latvian is needed to begin**, though basic Latvian helps daily life and (limited) part-time work.

BY THE NUMBERS

English

IELTS 6.0–6.5

No Latvian

needed to start

Some Latvian

helps daily life

HOW TO HELP

Take an **accepted English test** for your program — you can study and live largely in English, though some Latvian helps with daily life and work.

GOOD TO KNOW

Riga is international and English-friendly — you can manage in English, but some Latvian opens more doors.

Prepare for the Move

WHAT TO KNOW

After arriving, complete your **residence permit at the OCMA**, **arrange health insurance**, and **(if required) a medical check**, then set up banking. Riga living costs are ~€600–900/month (cheaper in smaller cities), and dormitories are affordable.

BY THE NUMBERS

OCMA permit

+ health check

Insurance

required

Riga costs

~€600–900/mo

HOW TO HELP

Handle arrival admin — **OCMA residence permit, insurance, banking** — and take advantage of Latvia—s low living costs; smaller cities are cheaper than Riga.

GOOD TO KNOW

Riga is affordable by EU-capital standards — and smaller Latvian cities are cheaper still.

Understand Work Rules

WHAT TO KNOW

Bachelor's and master's students with a valid residence permit may work **up to 20 hours per week during term** and **full-time during holidays** — useful for experience and income, with studies coming first.

BY THE NUMBERS

Work

20 hrs/week in term

Full-time

in holidays

Studies first

the rule

HOW TO HELP

You may work **up to 20 hours/week** during term (full-time in holidays) — useful for experience, though budget primarily from other sources.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep **studies as your priority** and enrollment in good standing — it's required to keep your permit.

Thrive & Work After Study

WHAT TO KNOW

After graduating, you can apply for a **one-year residence permit to seek work or start a business**. Latvia's EU/Schengen membership and **EU Blue Card** pathways let graduates build careers across Europe, with demand growing in IT, fintech, and pharma.

BY THE NUMBERS

1-year permit

post-study

EU Blue Card

pathway

Growing sectors

IT, fintech, pharma

HOW TO HELP

Plan for the **1-year post-study permit**, use Latvia's EU/Schengen mobility and Blue Card routes, and target its growing sectors if you want to stay in Europe.

GOOD TO KNOW

Latvia's **1-year post-study permit plus EU Blue Card pathways** support building a career across Europe — confirm current conditions.

Studying in Latvia: The Essentials

A snapshot — figures vary by source, so confirm everything with Study in Latvia, the OCMA, and your university.

The system

University of Latvia, Riga Technical University, Riga Stradiņš University (medicine/health), and SSE Riga; EU-recognized, Bologna-compliant degrees; wide English offering.

Visa & permit

Non-EU students need a long-term (D) visa or residence permit (apply at an embassy, complete at the OCMA); the AIC must confirm your diploma (allow 4–6 weeks).

Tuition

Non-EU tuition ~€1,500–8,000/year for most programs, with English-taught medicine higher; state, Erasmus+, and university scholarships help; total cost well below Western Europe.

Money & language

Prove sufficient means (commonly ~€6,000–8,400/year, tied to minimum wage — figures vary, confirm) plus insurance and accommodation; English programs need IELTS ~6.0–6.5; no Latvian to start.

Work & after

Work up to 20 hrs/week in term (full-time in holidays); a 1-year post-study permit and EU Blue Card pathways support staying to work in Europe.

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