

ISMA
ANNO 1994

ISMA UNIVERSITY
OF APPLIED SCIENCES

**ISMA UNIVERSITY
OF APPLIED SCIENCES
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
FOR 2018-2023**

Strategic planning document

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CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Abbreviations	
1. Compliance with the strategic documents and legal enactments of the EU and the Republic of Latvia	5
2. ISMA in the education area of the EU and Latvia	6
3. SWOT analysis	8
4. ISMA vision and mission	10
5. ISMA values	12
6. ISMA strategic aims and objectives	
13	
7. Implementation and management of the strategy	18

INTRODUCTION

ISMA University of Applied Sciences Development Strategy for 2018-2023 (ISMA Strategy) is worked out based on the evaluation of the results of ISMA work and development, as well as on the topical challenges of the educational environment of the EU and the Republic of Latvia. ISMA Strategy is founded on the recognition that in the 21st century higher education is one of the significant resources, which at the same time is subjected to radical change focused on the finding of relevant national and local solutions in the context of global challenges, ensuring the competitiveness of Latvia and human capital value factor.

The strategy provides the directions for development, a broadly defined set of aims and values, the objectives to be carried out, the necessary tools for achieving the aims and the expected outcomes, which are crucially significant for the further development of ISMA. At the same time, it is not a prescriptive one, but rather a dynamic strategy which outlines our further development and progress considering rapid change of the world economy and technology in the nearest 20 years. Strategy ideas are meant to lead our performance, to concentrate our priorities and to inspire our further motion and development.

The Strategy convincingly shows the place of ISMA, being an institution of higher education and science, in the higher education system and the society of Latvia, as well as it outlines the main directions of cooperation in the European higher education area (EHEA). The implementation of the Strategy will create preconditions for the development of human capital, competences, creativity, social and emotional intelligence, which are defined as the priorities of the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 in the “Change of paradigm in education” chapter.

The Strategy is developed by ISMA working group in cooperation with ISMA Convention of Advisors, academic staff, students, social partners – industry associations and entrepreneurs. In the framework of the Strategy development the indicators of ISMA performance have been analysed and evaluated, the statistical data of The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Ministry of Education and Science and Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) have been processed, the strategic documents of the EU and the Republic of Latvia, which are focused on higher education and science, have been considered.

ABBREVIATIONS

CSB	Central Statistical Bureau
EHEA	European higher education area
ES/EU	European Union
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISMA	ISMA University of Applied Sciences
Latvia 2030	Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030
Latvia NRP	National Reform Programme of Latvia for the Implementation of Europe 2020 Strategy
MOODLE	Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment
NDP2020	National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014-2020
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis

1. COMPLIANCE WITH THE STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS AND LEGAL ENACTMENTS OF THE EU AND THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

Strategy is developed based on the priorities in the field of higher education and science, which are defined in the strategic documents and regulatory enactments of the EU and the Republic of Latvia, such as:

- ✓ National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014-2020 (NDP2020);
- ✓ Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 (Latvija2030);
- ✓ National Reform Programme of Latvia for the Implementation of Europe 2020 Strategy (Latvia's NRP);
- ✓ National Concept for the Development of Higher Education and Institutions of Higher Education of Latvia for 2013-2020 (the NCDHEIHEL or the Concept);
- ✓ Guidelines for the Development of Science, Technology and Innovation for 2014-2020;
- ✓ Guidelines for the Development of Education for 2014-2020;
- ✓ [*International assessment of the scientific activity and capacity of the scientific institutions of Latvia (informative report „On the international assessment of science” adopted with the protocol decision of the Cabinet of Ministers dated January 21, 2014 (prot. No.3, 42.§));]*]
- ✓ Bologna Declaration;
- ✓ Bologna Process Ministerial Communiqué: Paris Communiqué (2018);
- ✓ Law on Education;
- ✓ Law on Institutions of Higher Education;
- ✓ Law on Scientific Activity;
- ✓ ISMA Satversme etc.

2. ISMA IN THE EDUCATION AREA OF THE EU AND LATVIA

ISMA University of Applied Sciences is a higher education institution founded by the legal person AS "Izglītības nams". ISMA receives the Ministry of Education and Science Licence on the right to implement higher education on July 17, 1997. But the origins of ISMA date back to 1994, when several private higher educational institutions were established on the basis of the legendary Riga Aviation University (RAU). On February 25, 2002 ISMA was accredited for an unlimited period of time as a higher education institution.

In the very beginning the administration of the newly established higher education institution has made the decision to work in the direction of innovative development, therefore, great attention was paid to the technical provision of the study process, the application of modern technologies for organization of the higher education institution and the use of the appropriate methodology within the study process.

Starting the implementation of the study process, the results of the ISMA activities have already fully met the Latvian higher education quality criteria, for which the university has been accredited in the three study directions: business administration, information technology and tourism.

Entering the 21st century, ISMA ranked among the top of Latvia's private higher education institutions, becoming one of the most popular and most demanded private universities in Latvia.

As one of our priorities, we have put forward the development of an international cooperation program, in the framework of which is continuous, purposeful and active work aimed at the establishing and strengthening of international contacts. Thanks to this activity, ISMA has been able to establish a wide network of foreign cooperation partners, which includes partner universities, multinational companies, enterprises and industry associations both within the EU and beyond (see Annex 1).

ISMA is active in the framework of the ERASMUS Charter, which ensures the mobility of our students and academic staff, as well as facilitates cooperation between higher education institutions in the context of promoting innovation and exchange of good practice.

2011 marks the new start of ISMA's work and development - ISMA launches its study and research process in new fully renovated premises. It allows providing even more technologically advanced modern study and research environment, available also for students with special needs.

In 2011 ISMA received the Ministry of Education and Science License on the right to implement doctoral study programme "Business Administration", which proves our ability and capacity to implement study and research work on the highest level of education.

Today, ISMA is an internationally recognized, modern educational and research centre with rich traditions and clear vision of the future in the European higher education area.

Our students are given the opportunity to make their dreams come true, which is ensured by the vast variety of the study programmes on all levels of education, from the 1st level professional higher education (ISCED 5) to postgraduate doctoral studies (ISCED 8).

ISMA provides high quality study programmes in the following study directions, which are accredited by the Ministry of Education and Science:

- ✓ Information technology, computer engineering, electronics, telecommunication, computer management and computer science;
- ✓ Economics;
- ✓ Management and administration, real estate management;
- ✓ Hotel and restaurant service, tourism and recreation organisation.

Through hard work and visionary approach, we have been able to provide continuous development, which today makes it possible to offer both Latvian and foreign students the competitive, combining theory with practice, education based on science and practical experience of Latvia, Europe and the global labour market. We offer the acquisition of all study programmes at three languages – Latvian, English and Russian. We provide students the opportunity to receive education which is relevant to their aspirations, market oriented and promotes personal development, creativity and leadership skills.

ISMA offers its students modern lecture rooms, library, modern technical support of studies, free parking and meals in the university café, as well as an opportunity to spend their free time in the park on campus. The implementation of new methodology and technology (distance learning) ensures the acquisition of knowledge for those willing to study who cannot attend lectures due to various reasons. After the first year of studies our students can join student mobility programmes and continue studies at prestigious foreign universities or start a traineeship. In summer months students can obtain professional skills while working for international foreign companies. This is an opportunity to apply the knowledge, which has been acquired during studies, to learn the world and, which is also important, to pay tuition fee out of the money earned in summer (se Annex 2).

Being a trusted partner for anyone who wants to build future career, gain new knowledge and build their professional qualifications, ISMA offers various programmes and courses of professional development. We can be proud with the quality of our work, scientific and creative potential, and the academic staff who prepare students for their future career. The provision of qualitative knowledge and skills is one of our core values.

ISMA is available to anyone willing to receive modern higher education which meets the today's requirements.

3. SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis is performed by ISMA Strategy development working group in order to assess the advantages and problems caused by the internal and external factors which affect ISMA development.

STRENGTHS

- ✓ Internationally recognised modern centre of education and research;
- ✓ Experienced, highly qualified and professional academic staff;
- ✓ Qualitative study programmes which meet the requirements of modern labour market;
- ✓ Research based quality of studies;
- ✓ Annual international scientific conferences on the progress and innovation in the scientific research domains which are topical for ISMA;
- ✓ Study methodology is focused on practice and knowledge application;
- ✓ Fast growing number of international students;
- ✓ Wide international cooperation and partnership networking with partner universities, foreign companies, enterprises and industry associations;
- ✓ Continuous renewal of study and research infrastructure;
- ✓ Regular monitoring and analysis of study processes. Internal Quality System is developed and is constantly being improved.
- ✓ Study courses teaching by the means of electronic learning management system MOODLE;
- ✓ Active mobility of students and personnel;
- ✓ Active participation of ISMA Convention of Advisors in the development of ISMA Strategy;
- ✓ The growing number of scientific degree graduates;
- ✓ The developing opportunities of distance and life-long learning;
- ✓ Active work of Students' self-government body;
- ✓ Active involvement of students in creativity development, interests and sports clubs.

WEAKNESSES

- ✓ Insufficient number of foreign lecturers;
- ✓ Insufficient number of publications in internationally recognised data bases;
- ✓ ISMA periodicals are not represented in internationally recognised data bases;
- ✓ Incomplete students' foreign language skills;
- ✓ Students' insufficient participation in scientific and practical activities.

OPPORTUNITIES

- ✓ Development of study programmes, modules and courses, which are innovative, interdisciplinary, exporting oriented, based on new technologies and are available for distance learning;
- ✓ Broadening and improvement of cooperation with Latvian and international partners in the field of education and research;
- ✓ Development of joint study and research programmes with Latvian and foreign partner universities;
- ✓ Compliance of the study directions being implemented by ISMA with the state defined priority industries of the economy:
 - information and communication technologies, computer science;
 - entrepreneurship, including hospitality and tourism;
- ✓ Availability of the EU structural funds and other international projects;
- ✓ Internationalisation of studies;
- ✓ Growing number of foreign students;
- ✓ Improvement of distance and life-long learning systems.

THREATS

- ✓ The heterogeneous level of knowledge of secondary education graduates;
- ✓ The willingness of secondary education graduates to study in foreign universities;
- ✓ Unequal competition between state and private higher education institutions;
- ✓ Under evaluated role of higher education in the society;
- ✓ Unpredictable changes in the state policy and in regulatory enactments in the field of higher education;
- ✓ Unfavourable demographic situation in the country, migration and the brain drain of intellectual potential abroad;
- ✓ Increasing competition for resources for the development of higher education and science in Latvia and internationally;
- ✓ Low student solvency due to low income level of the population.

4. ISMA VISION AND MISSION

Vision

ISMA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES IS INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED, MULTICULTURAL AND DYNAMIC PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN THE LATVIAN AND EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA, WHICH IS CHARACTERISED BY EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION, EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AND EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION.

We understand **EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION** as –

- ✓ study programmes are based on scientific research, which ensures our competitive advantage on the Latvian and international higher education market;
- ✓ quality to comply with the aim and learning outcomes to be achieved;
- ✓ quality to meet the responsibility to our students, cooperation partners and the society;
- ✓ quality as continuous improvement.

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH includes:

- ✓ synergy of research and educational processes;
- ✓ integration of doctoral students and young scientists in the international science environment;
- ✓ development of new products and technologies with high added value to meet the society needs and ensure the development of the national economy;
- ✓ transfer of knowledge and technologies to implement research results in manufacturing or services provision;
- ✓ integration in the international scientific excellence network and European science area through mobility projects;
- ✓ publication of scientific activity results in high quality international scientific periodicals.

EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION means changes in our behaviour, life and perception:

- ✓ new culture of students, personnel and administration relationships, especially in the context of our multicultural environment;
- ✓ flexibility of study programmes in relation to curriculum, form, time, sequence and environment;
- ✓ new organisation of study process, which includes teaching and learning, development of flexible study models, working out of study materials and manuals, application of information and communication technologies, the use of alternative methodology of knowledge acquisition;
- ✓ new relationships with our cooperation partners.

MISSION

ISMA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES MISSION IS:

- ✓ THE FORMATION OF LEADERS AND PROFESSIONALS OF HIGH QUALIFICATION, WHO ARE ABLE TO ENSURE THE TRANSFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY THROUGH THEIR KNOWLEDGE, CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE ACTIVITY AND STRONG SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY;
- ✓ THE PROVISION FOR OUR STUDENTS' GLOBAL, INTEGRATED AND TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE TO PROMOTE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THEIR HIGHEST PERSONAL AND CAREER GOALS.

5. ISMA VALUES

Our values

EXCELLENCE reflects our commitment to ensure qualitative academic environment which promotes our students' intelligence and development of modern, internationally recognised high quality study programmes being in demand. Excellence comprises the ISMA development, physical wellbeing and environment protection. Striving for excellence in learning and teaching, we create the environment our growth and entrepreneurial spirit development through the recognition and evaluation of our achievements.

DIVERSITY, reflects our commitment to create and sustain the inclusive environment which provides for our diverse needs through increasing everyone's opportunities to participate in various processes, which are important for ISMA and its culture, thus reducing the options of exclusion. The awareness of our diversity creates the favourable and friendly environment, where cultural differences, perspective and beliefs enrich academic discussion and our social life.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM, reflects our intellectual freedom, freedom of thought and expression regardless of ideological beliefs. We are looking for various approaches to the acquisition of new knowledge, which broadens our horizons and improves understanding of the society and ourselves.

COOPERATION, reflects our interdisciplinary approach and is focused on internal and external partner relationships.

CREATIVITY, reflects our openness to new ideas and forms of expression, our readiness to take risks as well as our entrepreneurial spirit.

RESPECT (fellowship) reflects our mutual respect and our ability to recognise that each member of our community creates added value and deserves respect.

SUSTAINABILITY, reflects our commitment to preserve and protect the knowledge generated by our work, to create and protect our ecosystem, as well as to treat responsibly the resources, which are available to us.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Excellence in education

Excellence in research

Excellence in innovation

HORIZONTAL ACTIONS

Human resource – personal development enabling environment for the existing and future human resource (students, academic staff, general staff), which promotes qualitative study process and excellent research work.

Internationalisation – the openness of ISMA to the world with the aim to improve its competitiveness on the international and national levels (attracting foreign students and academic staff, students and academic staff mobility, development of study programmes in foreign languages, international cooperation in the sphere of research, development of joint study programmes and degrees).

Interdisciplinarity – the synthesis of two or more disciplines, which forms a new level of discourse and knowledge to serve as the foundation for the development of new, innovative and contemporary curriculum.

Infrastructure – modern study and research environment with modern buildings and technical equipment.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

G.1. To ensure excellent quality of studies which promotes our students' continuous striving for new knowledge as well as develops their professional competence in a specific area of the economy, leadership, critical thinking, creativity, communication skills, transformative learning experience, life-long self-education ability, and other skills which are necessary in today's situation.

Objectives

O.1.1. To ensure the compliance of study programmes with the requirements of the planning documents and regulatory enactments of the higher education policy of the Republic of Latvia.

O.1.2. To promote the improvement of study programmes in accordance with the requirements of the society and the labour market, in cooperation with industry experts, employers, graduates and students.

U.1.3. To develop academic capacity through the involvement of young researchers and doctoral students in the study process.

O.1.4. To develop and implement joint study programmes with local and/or foreign cooperation partners in order to strengthen the reputation of study programmes and to provide students with the opportunity to master various skills .

O.1.5. To provide students with the opportunity to master three foreign languages. For foreign students one of the languages should be the Latvian language.

U.1.6. To promote academic staff motivation for continuous professional growth, research work and study courses improvement based on the innovation in the specific industry or the latest scientific knowledge.

O.1.7. To improve the opportunities for students' extracurricular studies through the availability of the necessary literature and information sources, data bases and electronic learning management system MOODLE.

O.1.8. To increase the efficiency of student traineeship, as well as traineeship supervision in cooperation with local and foreign companies and entrepreneurs.

O.1.9. To promote interdisciplinary approach in the organisation of study process, to promote cooperation of different study programmes' students within the implementation of joint projects.

O.1.10. To promote the participation of students and academic staff in Erasmus+ mobility and in other international projects.

O.1.11. To increase the number of foreign academic staff and guest lecturers.

O.1.12. To promote the international recognition of ISMA and the attraction of foreign students. To expand cooperation with foreign student recruiting organisations.

O.1.13. To work out a plan for study programmes development and consolidation.

O.1.14. To establish and develop ISMA branches and representative offices abroad.

O.1.15. To continuously improve infrastructure in order to promote high quality study process. Together with cooperation partners to provide students with infrastructure for extra curriculum activities according to their interests and needs (sports, creative activities, etc.).

O.1.16. To increase the number of opportunities which ISMA offers for life-long learning through the improvement of special study programme, distance learning and professional development programmes.

O.1.17. To promote the profitability of study programmes through the ensuring of the high quality level of study programmes in full.

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

G.2. To form and develop a dynamic and interactive structural division which creates ideas and discoveries, creates new areas of knowledge, which promotes the transfer of research results to the economy and changes our society, culture, environment and wellbeing.

Objectives

O.2.1. To form the stimulating scientific research environment which promotes the involvement of the academic staff and students in the research work.

O.2.2. To ensure modern and technologically sound research base which meets the today's needs and will promote the active involvement of our researchers, academic staff and students in the national and international research projects.

O.2.3. To expand cooperation with the national, European and the world leading scientific and research centres through the implementation of joint research projects.

O.2.4. To promote students' cooperation in the implementation of joint, interdisciplinary and research projects.

O.2.5. To promote the involvement of doctoral students in the scientific research work, to develop ISMA internal system of projects and grants.

O.2.6. To promote the publication of academic staff and students' works in internationally recognised scientifically quoted journals and articles editions, as well as to promote their presentations at scientific conferences.

O.2.7. To analyse the opportunities to include ISMA scientific publications in the internationally significant data bases, as well as to develop the action plan.

O.2.8. To develop and introduce the support system for the preparation and publication of scientific articles (editing, translation and publishing).

O.2.9. To promote Open Access to the scientific publications and data.

O.2.10. To promote the development of ISMA scientific institution support strategy.

O.2.11. To increase the quality of students' research work through broader application of research methods.

EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

- ✓ **G.3.** The promote the formation and development of new relationship culture in the university community to form the organisation of the new type study process, which includes teaching and learning, the development of study models, working out of study materials and manuals, application of information and communication technologies, the use of alternative methodology of knowledge acquisition;

Objectives

O.3.1. To promote the joint action of students, academic staff and ISMA in order to achieve common aims and objectives, which is based on internal consistency and orderliness, beliefs, values and norms, perceptions and feelings, as well as on interpersonal behaviour, especially considering the multicultural environment of our higher education institution.

O.3.2. To promote the development of the core values of our students within the study process - self-confidence, self-reflection, linguistic and creativity development, tolerance, empathy, etc., general human features which ensure students' orientation, motivation and preparation for a successful professional career.

O.3.3. To develop our students' understanding of values and value orientation which is related to the ability to delineate the fundamental matters from insignificant ones, the important from something of minor importance, freedom of choice and understanding of how to live, how to deal with the environment and people, how to act.

O.3.4. To promote students' involvement in the improvement of the study process and curriculum - feedback on the quality of the study process; improvement of study courses' content; consultations on learning and assessment methods; evaluation of the quality of study programs, etc.

O.3.5. To provide examples of good practices of teaching and learning which students and academic staff face during mobility, their discussion and implementation/dissemination in the university.

O.3.6. To promote the use of methods that allow students' mutual evaluation and learning within the study process.

O.3.7. To use simulation, project and group work more often within the study process. To promote extracurricular activities, as well as to develop their evaluation and recognition system. To provide students with an opportunity to receive individual consultations with the academic staff.

O.3.8. To evaluate the support mechanisms and services which are necessary for students with special needs and students from different social groups. To develop an action plan for their implementation.

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE STRATEGY

ISMA Strategy is the medium-term (5 years) planning document which defines the strategic priorities, horizontal directions of action, the main development aims and the objectives to be solved in order to achieve each set aim in compliance with ISMA long-term defined vision, mission and values.

In addition, a detailed action plan is developed for the effective implementation of SMA Strategy, which defines the actions planned to solve the objectives (activities and actions), the expected time period for the implementation of the actions, the sources of the resources necessary for their implementation, as well as ISMA structural divisions responsible for the implementation of the actions.

With the purpose of its effective management ISMA Strategy is regularly updated - yearly in autumn - with the following evaluation of the achieved progress.