



VYTAUTAS
MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY
M C M X X I I



DOCTORAL STUDENT'S HANDBOOK

Doctoral School
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GENERAL INFORMATION

- Vytautas Magnus University has been granted the right to conduct doctoral studies in 24 fields of science together with other Lithuanian higher education and research institutions.
- Responsibility for the content, quality, organisation, and conduct of doctoral studies shall fall under the responsibility of the Committee of Doctoral Studies.
- Doctoral studies and research shall be governed by the regulations of doctoral studies in the field of science the doctoral student is enrolled in. Each doctoral student must familiarise himself/herself with the regulations of his/her field of science. The regulations are available at: <https://www.vdu.lt/en/research/phd-studies/important-documents/>

NOTE: for some fields of science, several regulations of doctoral studies in the same field are presented. The regulation to be followed shall depend on the year of entry. For example, those who entered in 2019 should follow the regulation with the note “for those who entered in 2017”.

Guidance on doctoral studies at the University shall be provided by the Doctoral School of the Research and Innovation Department:

- Head of the Doctoral School Dr. Karolina Gugytė – karolina.gugyte@vdu.lt.
- Chief specialist Rasa Andrišiūnaitė – rasa.andrisiunaite@vdu.lt
- Chief specialist Monika Brimaitė-Kemėšė (advises doctoral students at the Agriculture Academy) – monika.brimaite-kemese@vdu.lt
- Chief specialist dr. Rasa Kimbirauskienė – rasa.kimbirauskiene@vdu.lt
- All doctoral students, except for doctoral students of the Agriculture Academy, shall be consulted on matters related to competitions funded from the Research Fund and incentive funds for doctoral students by the chief specialist of the Research Unit Laura Stankevičienė – laura.stankeviciene@vdu.lt
- Consultations on competitions funded from the Research Fund and incentive funds for doctoral students shall be provided to doctoral students of the Agriculture Academy by the chief specialist of the Research Unit Assoc. Prof. Judita Černiauskienė – judita.cerniauskiene@vdu.lt

- Information on international research and scientific cooperation opportunities shall be provided by the chief specialist of the Project Implementation Unit Eilina Dailidienė – eilina.dailidienne@vdu.lt

Additional information on issues related to doctoral studies shall be provided by the administrators of the committees of doctoral studies (see page 17).



CONNECTION TO VMU IT SYSTEMS

Your **login details for VMU IT systems**:

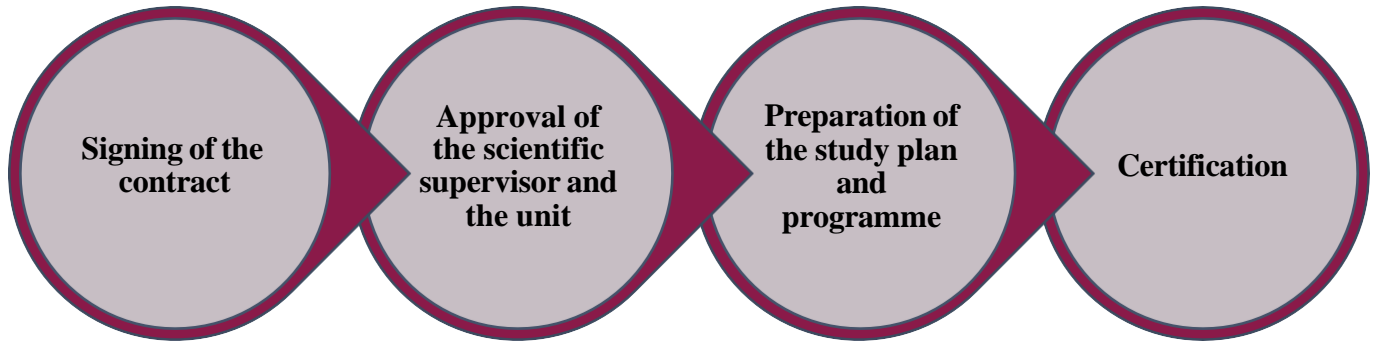
- If you have previously studied at VMU, the username and password you used during your studies shall still be valid. You can change your password or create a new one at pagalba.vdu.lt.
- If you have not previously studied at VMU, you should create a new password at <https://support.vdu.lt/> When creating a password, you should enter the username (**name.surname**) and the email address you are currently using.

For more information on changing or creating a password, visit : https://support.vdu.lt/pagalba/Migration_eng.pdf. If you encounter any problems, please contact the Student Centre by email at studentas@vdu.lt or by phone +370 37 751175, stating your name, surname, email address, and telephone number.

All information related to doctoral studies and/or messages from the University, the Faculty, and the Doctoral School shall only be sent to the University's Outlook email account: <http://webmail.vdu.lt>. Information shall not be sent to personal email addresses.

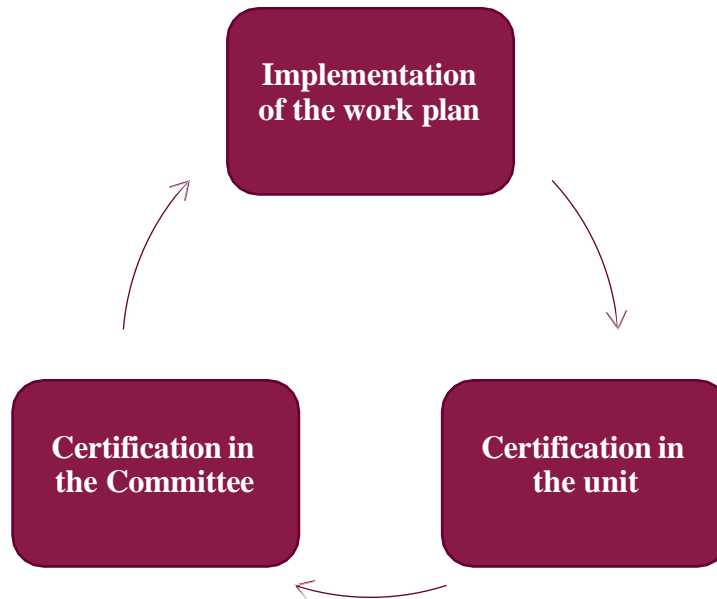
- Office365: <http://portal.office.com>.
- Student self-service portal: <https://studentas.vdu.lt/login.php?lang=EN>
The Student Portal provides information about dormitories and fees payable for your studies or other services provided by the University. Certificates can also be ordered here (student status certificates can be ordered through the Student Portal, while academic transcripts must be ordered at the Doctoral School).
- Virtual learning environment Moodle: moodle.vdu.lt.
- Eduroam WiFi network (login instructions: <https://eduroam.vdu.lt/en/>).
- Printing system (login instructions: https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/print_vdu_en.pdf).
- VMU library: biblioteka.vdu.lt.
- **Lithuanian Student Identity Card** can be ordered at <https://lsp.lt/en>

BEGINNING OF STUDIES



1. Before the beginning of the doctoral studies, the admitted student shall sign the study contract electronically.
2. Following the admission, the Committee shall assign a supervisor and a unit to the newly admitted doctoral students no later than one month after the beginning of the doctoral studies.
3. No later than within one month after the approval of the supervisor, the supervisor together with the doctoral student shall prepare the study programme of the doctoral studies and the plan of scientific research. The plan must include deadlines for all activities to be undertaken and the study courses to be studied. During doctoral studies, the work plan may be revised with the approval of the supervisor and the Committee of Doctoral Studies. **NOTE: Doctoral studies must consist of at least 30 ECTS credits.** It is recommended that the courses studied cover not only the topic of the dissertation being prepared, but also the development of key competences (i.e., the preparation of project applications, issues of ethics and procedures as well as copyright, communication skills, etc.). The scope of the study course should be at least 5 credits. The credits shall be acquired by studying at least 3 courses/modules. The credits can also be accumulated by participating in international schools for doctoral students and while the doctoral student is in partial studies abroad. The decision regarding the recognition of the credits shall be made by the Committee. Full-time doctoral students shall pass all examinations within two years of their doctoral studies; part-time doctoral students, within three years of their doctoral studies.
4. For the exact requirements and guidelines for the work plan, doctoral students should refer to the regulations of doctoral studies in the science field they are studying.

CERTIFICATION



The doctoral student shall carry out his/her study programme and research in accordance with the approved work plan. The content, quality, scope, and deadlines of the conducted research shall be evaluated during certification of the doctoral student.

In accordance with the terms set by the Committee, the doctoral student shall report to the department/the research unit and the Committee of Doctoral Studies twice a year. Before the certification, the doctoral student shall fill in the forms of the certification documents.

The certification may be postponed for valid reasons upon submission of a reasoned application by the doctoral student to the Committee/the administrator of the Committee. The scholarship shall not be paid during the period of the postponement of certification.

A negatively certified doctoral student shall be dismissed from the doctoral studies by order of the head of the doctoral institution and shall have to [return a part of the basket fee](#) to the STATE STUDY FUND.

EXAMINATIONS AND ACADEMIC PRACTICE

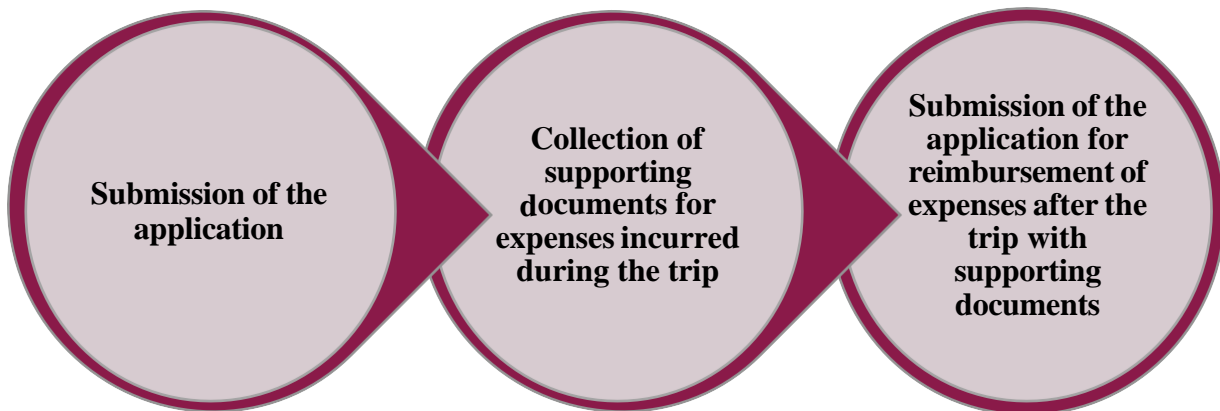
- **After the examination has been passed**, an examination sheet shall be filled in and signed by all examiners. The examination sheets shall be handed over to the administrator of the science field. The examination sheets shall be stored in the doctoral student's file together with the reports.
- **Doctoral students' academic practice** shall be a part of the study process during which doctoral students gain experience in academic activities and enhance their professional knowledge and skills.
- Full-time students funded by the state, EU structural funds, and the University must undertake an academic practice of 120 hours; part-time students, an academic practice of 60 hours. Teaching practice may be carried out if the doctoral student agrees to undertake it.
- The following activities shall be recognised as academic practice for doctoral students:
 - ✓ Delivering lectures/seminars/supervising laboratory works.
 - ✓ Additional consultations provided on the supervisor's instructions for students who are working on Bachelor's theses, course papers, and other independent work assignments.
 - ✓ Organisation of student research clubs and other research and educational activities (e.g., trips to museums, plays).
 - ✓ Science/study popularisation lectures, participation in information events (VMU study fairs, meetings with students at schools, etc.).
 - ✓ Organisation of scientific conferences/research and art events (biennials, festivals, symposiums).
 - ✓ Contribution to the organisation of summer schools.
 - ✓ Participation in the preparation of draft national, international, and other research and study programmes.
 - ✓ Participation in R&D activities (outsourced research, provision of research services, etc.).
 - ✓ Adaptation (including attestation) of the study course to level 2 of online studies (i.e., blended-online studies, when teachers restructure the contact hours and adapt the study

material accordingly, combining face-to-face work in the University classroom and in the Moodle environment) – 20 hours.

- ✓ Adaptation (including attestation) of the study course to level 3 of online studies (i.e., when the whole study course or at least 90% of the study course is delivered online) – 30 hours.
 - ✓ Provision of assistance to university guests and visiting teachers during their lectures and events.
 - ✓ Work in self-evaluation groups of study programmes.
 - ✓ Other activities (subject to individual agreement).
- The academic practice shall be carried out during the first three years of full-time doctoral studies and the first four years of part-time doctoral studies.
 - The hours of the academic practice shall be assessed by the unit (department or institute) to which the doctoral student has been assigned.
 - The academic practice shall be registered in a form of records, in which the number of hours shall be confirmed by the signature of the head of the unit to which the doctoral student has been assigned by the Rector's order, the doctoral student's scientific supervisor, and the doctoral student.



TRIPS



- Doctoral students may conduct research or spend a period of time studying at other institutions in the country or abroad. This time period shall be included in the overall duration of the doctoral studies.

If the doctoral student goes on trips (takes part in partial studies, conferences, seminars, congresses, courses, etc.):

1. He/she should submit an application for the trip to the Doctoral School **at least 5 working days before your departure**. The application must specify the country and city of destination. The application must be signed by the doctoral student's supervisor. On the basis of the submitted application, an order of the Vice-Rector for Research shall be issued.

NOTE: The application must specify the departure and return dates, not the dates of the event.

One day before and one day after the event shall be allocated for travelling.

2. During the trip, the doctoral student should collect and keep all original financial documents related to the trip (e.g., invoices, hotel and flight bookings, boarding cards, public transport tickets, bank statements for withdrawals, till receipts, etc.). If payment is made in cash, a copy of the certificate of participation must be provided. Within 3 working **days** after returning from the trip, the doctoral student must submit to the Research Unit, together with the application for reimbursement, the invoices (necessary for the participant registration fee), hotel and flight bookings, boarding cards, public transport tickets, bank statements for withdrawals, till receipts if paid in cash, and a copy of the certificate of participation.

Original financial documents supporting the actual expenses incurred during the trip shall include:

- ✓ Airline tickets (booking, boarding cards, the bank statement for withdrawals, the invoice, if applicable).
 - ✓ Train and bus tickets (till receipts if paid in cash, bank statements for withdrawals if paid by bank card, invoices if issued).
 - ✓ Local transport tickets (till receipts if paid in cash, bank statements for withdrawals if paid by bank card, invoices if issued).
 - ✓ Documents proving the expenses of renting accommodation (invoices, till receipts if paid in cash, bank statements if paid by bank card).
 - ✓ Documents proving the participation fee/conference registration fee (invoices, till receipts if paid in cash, bank statements for withdrawals if paid by bank card).
 - ✓ If the doctoral student uses his/her own car for travelling, he/she should present a copy of the registration certificate of the vehicle (technical passport), receipts for the purchase of fuel (the date of the fuel purchase documents must be no earlier than one calendar day before the start of the trip and no later than the last day of the trip), and bank account statements regarding withdrawal of funds if payment is made by bank card. If the car is not owned by the doctoral student, the car rental contract must also be submitted.
 - ✓ All invoices related to trips must be issued in the name of the doctoral student, with his/her address of residence stated on the invoice.
-
- Doctoral students shall not be paid/reimbursed daily allowance during their trip.
 - If the conference, doctoral school, etc. is organised by VMU (i.e., VMU is the service provider), then there shall be **no need to pay** a fee to VMU account, and only the application for reimbursement without an invoice specifying the details of the event fee shall be submitted. For more information, please contact chief specialists at the Research and Arts Unit Laura Stankevičienė and Judita Černiauskiene (for the doctoral students of the Agriculture Academy).

SCHOLARSHIPS

Doctoral students admitted to full-time positions of doctoral studies funded by the state budget or the EU shall be paid a scholarship for the duration of their studies in the amount set by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

From 1 January 2025, the amount of the support (scholarship) for doctoral students set by the Government is as follows:

- €1330 per month in the first year of studies.
- €1540 per month in the second to fourth year of studies.

If, on the recommendation of the Committee, the certification of the doctoral student is postponed, the scholarship shall not be paid during the period of the postponement of certification. The scholarship shall also not be paid during the academic leave.

FUNDS FOR PROMOTING DOCTORAL STUDENTS' RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The funds to support doctoral students' research activities are available for full-time and part-time doctoral students studying in state- and EU-funded doctoral study programmes, depending on the field of science and the form of studies:

- Full-time doctoral students in **the Humanities and Social Sciences** receive €500 per year in the first and second year of their studies.
- Part-time doctoral students in the first and second year of their studies receive €350 per year; part-time doctoral students in the third year of their studies receive €300 per year.
- Full-time doctoral students in the **Natural Sciences, Agricultural Sciences, and Technological Sciences** receive €700 per year in the first, second, and third year of their studies.
- Part-time doctoral students receive €525 per year in the first, second, third, and fourth year of their studies.

- The funds for promoting doctoral students' research activities can be utilised during the whole period of the doctoral studies.
- In the case of the academic leave, the period of the utilisation of funds shall be extended.
- The allocated funds can be accumulated, i.e., if they are not used in a given year, they can be transferred to the following year of studies.
- The allocated funds can be used (reimbursed) by submitting an application to the Research and Innovation Department in the prescribed form (see Annex 1).

The funds for promoting doctoral students' research activities can be used **to reimburse for the following:**

- ✓ Costs of research trips/internships (airline tickets, participation fees, local transport tickets, fuel). All invoices must be issued in the name of the doctoral student, with his/her address of residence stated on the invoice. Before the trip, an application for permission to leave must be submitted to the Doctoral School.
- ✓ Scientific literature. It shall be ordered through VMU library. The books ordered shall be checked out through VMU library for long-term use.
- ✓ Materials (e.g., reagents, etc.) needed for the doctoral student's scientific work/research. Documents (invoices) shall be processed through the faculty (the buyer shall be VMU).
- ✓ Publishing of articles. All invoices must be issued in the name of the doctoral student, with his/her address of residence stated on the invoice.

The funds for promoting doctoral students' research activities **cannot be used to reimburse for the following:**

- ✓ Daily allowance.
- ✓ Purchase of personal items (passport, glasses, computer, etc.).
- ✓ Personal expenses (excursion fees, airport luggage storage, meals, etc.).

COMPETITIONS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS' TRIPS AND FUNDING

Twice a year, a competition for doctoral students' trips (internships) and online events is launched, which is funded by **VMU Research Fund**. Possible periods of trips:

- The first call – from 1 December of the current year to 30 April of the following year.
- The second call – from 1 May to 30 November of the current year.

Information about the competition can be found in the “News” section of VMU website and in the “Research Competitions” under the “Research” section.

Funding for various research activities can also be obtained **from VMU research clusters** or institutes by joining VMU research cluster or institute. There are the following clusters at the University: <https://www.vdu.lt/en/research/research-priorities/>

Doctoral students may also receive incentives for their most significant research results (highest level of research output, research projects) **according to the following fund allocation procedure, which is approved each year:** https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Reiksmingiausiu-tvarka_2021-1.pdf. There shall be no need to apply for funding as the results shall be taken centrally from VMU databases. The allocated funds can be used to finance trips, scholarships, the publication of research articles, and other activities related to research.

After joining a research cluster, applications for participation in the competition for projects of VMU research clusters and institutes, funded by VMU Research Fund, can be submitted. The aim of this competition is the development of research. The competition period shall normally run from 1 July of the current year to 31 May of the following year.

Funds may also be allocated from the unit to which the doctoral student has been assigned.

The Research Council of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the “RCL”) runs two competitions for funding of doctoral students: funding of academic trips and funding for study results.

The aim of the funding of doctoral students' academic trips is to provide doctoral students with opportunities to improve their research competences by participating in events abroad, to increase doctoral students' international mobility, and to contribute to the international dissemination of the Lithuanian research results. The maximum amount of funding shall be 30 basic social benefits; the doctoral student shall receive a maximum of one funding per year for one research trip. The call is launched twice

a year: from 15 October to 15 November for trips in the first half of the following year, and from 15 April to 15 May for trips in the second half of the same year. Applications must be submitted during the call in Lithuanian in the RCL electronic system – <https://www.lmt.lt/en>

The aim of funding for study results is to support doctoral students who are productive in their studies. The maximum amount of funding shall be 96 basic social benefits per year. The call is open annually from 15 October to 15 December. Applications must be submitted during the call in Lithuanian in the RCL electronic system.

For more information about the competitions, please visit the “Research” section of VMU website and click on “Research Competitions”.

The International Cooperation Department regularly launches calls for Erasmus+ visits; for more information, see: <https://www.vdu.lt/en/international-cooperation/for-students/erasmus-exchange-studies/>



ACADEMIC LEAVE

The doctoral student may take the academic leave (a study break) without losing his/her student status. The academic leave shall last for one year. Early return from the academic leave shall not be possible.

- The doctoral student may take one academic leave **for personal reasons**. In such a case, it shall be sufficient to submit an application for the academic leave to the Doctoral School, which must be signed by the head of the unit, by the doctoral student's scientific supervisor, and by the chairperson of the Committee of Doctoral Studies.
- **At the end of the academic leave**, the doctoral student must submit an application to the Doctoral School for the return from or extension of the academic leave. The doctoral student must submit the application at least 5 working days before the end of the academic leave.
- If the doctoral student wants to **take the academic leave for the second time or to extend the academic leave**, the extension or re-granting of the academic leave shall **only be possible if there is a valid reason** (e.g., health problems, parental leave) and documents proving this (e.g., the child's birth certificate, medical board certificate).
- The **application** for the academic leave must be submitted **at least 5 working days** before the date on which the academic leave is granted.
- During the academic leave, **the scholarship shall not be paid**.
- If the doctoral student's academic leave has expired and no application for return from or extension of the academic leave has been submitted to the Doctoral School **within 30 calendar days**, the **doctoral student shall be removed from the student lists**.



TERMINATION OF STUDIES

The doctoral student shall be removed from doctoral studies if:

- he/she has been certified negatively;
- he/she has not returned from the academic leave within the specified deadlines;
- has not paid the tuition fee on time in accordance with the Description of Procedure for Conclusion of Contracts and Payment and Return of Tuition Fees and Instalments approved by the Rector;
- the contract has expired;
- he/she fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the contract;
- he/she has violated the Statute and/or internal procedures of the University.

If the studies are terminated of his/her own volition, the doctoral student must submit an application for termination of studies to the Doctoral School. This application must be signed by the Dean, the doctoral student's supervisor, and the head of the unit.

In the event of termination of doctoral studies later than after the second semester of studies without certification, the funds used shall be returned to the University's account within 3 months of the date of termination of studies.

What part of the funds should be returned?

- Persons who terminate their studies of their own volition or are expelled from the higher education institution must reimburse 50 per cent of the annual tuition fee for the current year of studies, up to a maximum of 70 basic social benefits, not exceeding the standard tuition fee approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport.

There shall be no need to return the study basket:

- if the doctoral student was admitted to the research and study institution after 1 January 2017, has completed the study year within the timeframe set by the research and study institution, has competed and reported on the activities outlined in the doctoral student's work plan, and has notified the research and study institution in writing of the termination of his/her studies at the latest before the beginning of the new year of studies, or has completed his/her doctoral student's work plan,

including submission of his/her dissertation to the research and study institution, but has not defended the dissertation (has failed to defend it);

- if the person has been granted the academic leave due to illness, on the recommendation of a doctor or a medical board, or due to maternity leave or parental leave, and has notified the research and study institution in writing of the termination of the studies prior to the expiry of the period of the academic leave;
- if the person has been recognised as having a disability in accordance with the procedure laid down by legal acts;
- if the person dies, the obligation to return the funds shall not be transferred to the deceased's heirs.
- All information about the amount to be returned to the State can be found by clicking on this link <https://parama.vsf.lt/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f> and logging in through the government's electronic portal.
- For more information on returning the student's basket, please visit: <https://vsf.lrv.lt/en/>

We hope that you have found this information useful and that it has facilitated the process of your doctoral studies.

However, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the specialists at the Doctoral School.

Doctoral School and Research and Arts Unit



Universiteto g. 8A-203 kab., Akademija, Kauno r.



I–V 8:00 am – 5:00 pm



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Administrators of the committees of doctoral studies

Field of science	Administrator of the committee of doctoral studies
H 001 Philosophy H 005 History and Archaeology,	Vitalija Kasperavičiūtė
H 002 Theology	Vilma Budrytė
H 003 History and Theory of Arts	Miglė Munderzbakaitė
H 004 Philology	Diana Česnauskaitė
H 006 Ethnology	Diana Jovaišienė
S 001 Law	Deimantė Chomičiūtė - Obolevičienė
S 002 Political Sciences	Aistė Žemaitytė
S 003 Management, S 004 Economics	Edita Eičiuvienė
S 005 Sociology S 006 Psychology	Daiva Vilčinskienė
S 008 Communication and Information	Rūta Vainauskaitė
S 007 Education	Lina Šedbarė
N 009 Informatics	Irena Juodienė
N 012 Ecology and Environmental Studies, N 011 Biophysics, N 004 Biochemistry	Karolina Gugytė
N 010 Biology	Dalytė Mardosaitė-Busaitienė
A 001 Agronomy	Brigita Medveckienė
A 004 Forest Sciences	Kristina Lingytė
T 003 Transport Engineering, T 004 Environmental Engineering, T009 Mechanical Engineering	Simona Paulikienė