The history of Riga Technical University dates back to 14 October 1862, when the Riga Polytechnicum (RP) was founded. It was the first multi-discipline technical tertiary education establishment in the Russian Empire. The RP was established following the model of the most progressive technical universities of that time. As a private educational establishment it was financed by the Baltic nobility. The RP originally incorporated six departments: Engineering, Chemistry, Agriculture, Mechanics, Commerce, and Architecture. Admission was open only to male students for a tuition fee, irrespective of nationality, religion or social status. There were no entrance examinations. The language of tuition was German.

The records have kept the name of the first student of the RP – it was Leons Kulbahs, a representative of local landlords from Vidzeme. Until 1896, Riga Polytechnicum had been the alma mater for 4941 student.

DIRECTORS:
Ernst Nauck (1862 – 1875)
Gustav von Kiezeritzky (1875 – 1885)
August Lieventhal (1885 – 1891)
Theodor Groenberg (1891 – 1896)

Riga Polytechnical Institute

1896 – 1919

In 1896, the Riga Polytechnicum was reformed into an official higher school of the Russian Empire – the Riga Polytechnical Institute (RPI), with Russian as the official language of tuition. Following the example of European higher schools, the institute retained its autonomy. The academic staff included many scientists of world renown, especially in such areas as chemistry and engineering.
During World War I, the Institute was evacuated to Moscow where it operated until 1918.

DIRECTORS:
Theodor Groenberg (1896 – 1902)
Pauls Valdens (1902 – 1905)
Voldemar von Knieriem (1905 – 1916)
Pauls Valdens (1917 – 1918)

Technical faculties within the Higher School of Latvia
(later – the University of Latvia and the Latvian State University)
1919 – 1958

In the beginning of 1919, the five faculties of the Riga Polytechnical Institute formed the core for the foundation of the Higher School of Latvia. On 28 September 1919 the consolidation of the independent Latvia State led to the establishment of the University of Latvia, which incorporated nine faculties. For the first time in the history of Latvia, tuition was conducted in Latvian.

In 1923, the Higher School was officially awarded the name of the University of Latvia. The University offered studies in engineering and natural sciences as well as humanities, and included all the former RPI faculties, except that of Commerce. For the following 40 years higher technical education in Latvia was generally associated with the University of Latvia and its successor - the Latvian State University.

Riga Polytechnical Institute
In 1958, technical faculties of the Latvian State University were separated to form the renewed Riga Polytechnical Institute, providing tuition both in Latvian and Russian, depending on the course system. The RPI was an independent tertiary education establishment with 3000 students. In the first 5 years the number of students increased more than threefold. At the end of the 1980s, the RPI had already 10 faculties: Architecture and Civil Engineering, Chemistry, Mechanics and Mechanical Engineering, Technical Appliances and Automation, Textile and Clothing Technology, Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Engineering, Radio Engineering and Communications, Engineering Economics and Social Sciences. Students were also offered extramural studies and training at educational consultation centres.

RECTORs:
Kristaps Neilands (1958 – 1960)
Aleksandrs Malmeistars (1961 – 1963)
Aleksandrs Veiss (1963 – 1985)

Riga Technical University

On 19 March 1990 the Riga Technical University was renamed to its present name. Since then the
university has been successfully reorganizing its study processes to ensure compliance of academic and professional tertiary education, focused on the spheres typical for the national economy of Latvia, along with the requirements of the European Union.

The academic performance of RTU has received positive evaluation by international experts and the university is accredited by the Tertiary Education Council of the Republic of Latvia. The study programmes offered by the RTU have undergone international expertise and are officially accredited.

To date RTU comprises 8 faculties: Architecture and Urban Planning, Civil Engineering, Computer Science and Information Technology, Electronics and Telecommunications, Power and Electrical Engineering, Engineering Economics and Management, Materials Science and Applied Chemistry, Transport and Mechanical Engineering. There are also part-time and extramural departments. RTU has affiliations in the largest cities of Latvia – Daugavpils, Liepāja, and Ventspils.

RECTORS:
Egons Lavendelis (1990 – 1999)
Ivars Knēts (1999-2011)
Leonīds Ribickis (since 2011)