

APPROVED
by the Riga Graduate School of Law
Senate meeting of 25 September 2025
Decision No. 2025/7, Point 1.5 of the Minutes

Regulations on elaboration and defence of theses at Riga Graduate School of Law

1. General provisions

- 1.1. Regulations on the elaboration and defence of theses (hereinafter – the Regulations) at the Riga Graduate School of Law (hereinafter – RGSL) establish uniform principles and requirements for the elaboration, design and defence of Bachelor and Master theses for RGSL study programmes.
- 1.2. The regulations are binding on RGSL students who develop and defend theses, lecturers who supervise and/or review theses, as well as on those who participate in thesis defence commissions.
- 1.3. The student – the author of the thesis is responsible for the quality of the thesis, the accuracy of the data used, the quality of the conclusions, as well as the observance of deadlines and timely defence of the thesis.

2. Choice of the thesis topic and its development stages

- 2.1. RGSL Study Department not later than 1 October of the current academic year sends out information to students about the deadlines for elaboration, submission and defence of the thesis.
- 2.2. The student is free to choose the topic of the thesis independently or in consultation with the RGSL academic staff. The topic of the thesis must be of a legal nature and imply a substantial degree of legal analysis. Students can address a legal issue from an interdisciplinary perspective. In addition, the topic of the thesis cannot completely overlap with the topic of any significant work (such as a research paper) already submitted by the student.
- 2.3. In the bachelor study programmes, the student submits the thesis outline up to 1,000 words on the RGSL Student Portal according to the prepared form (see Annex 1).
- 2.4. In the master study programmes, the student submits the thesis topic on the RGSL Student Portal within the set deadlines (see Annex 2).
- 2.5. The choice of topics and supervisors is coordinated by the director of the study programme or another designated person, while the RGSL Study Department informs the students about the approval of the topic and supervisor within four weeks of receiving the thesis outline.
- 2.6. If the topic of the thesis is not approved, the director of the study programme or another designated person provides the student with a reasoned answer, setting a deadline for the submission of a new topic. The student, in consultation with the Programme Director, another designated person or the potential supervisor, re-submits the improved application until the set deadline.
- 2.7. After the approval of the topic and the supervisor, the student initiates communication with the supervisor, agreeing on the deadlines for the development stages of the thesis, as

well as the frequency of communication. The student is recommended to maintain regular contact, ensuring multiple (at least three) encounters with the supervisor.

- 2.8. In Bachelor study programmes, the student must submit a draft thesis (10,000 words) via email to the supervisor and the designated person by the end of the specified date.
- 2.9. If the cooperation between the student and the supervisor is not possible, the student or supervisor informs the Programme Director or another designated responsible person.
- 2.10. If the student significantly changes the topic of the thesis or the supervisor, the new topic of the thesis and/or the new supervisor of the thesis are approved no later than:
 - 2.10.1. 10 weeks until the deadline for submission of the thesis in bachelor study programmes;
 - 2.10.2. 12 weeks until the deadline for submission of the thesis in master study programmes.
- 2.11. If the student does not observe the term specified in Article 2.8 and 2.10 or the length of the submitted draft is significantly lower than required (under 9,000 words), then the elaboration and defence of the thesis are organised in the next academic year, applying a late submission fee.
- 2.12. The supervisor of the thesis may be an RGSL lecturer or an employee of another organisation with a master's or doctoral degree who has scientific and/or practical experience in the relevant field.
- 2.13. Functions of the supervisor:
 - 2.13.1. to help formulate the research topic and choose research methods;
 - 2.13.2. to advise on the possible structure of the thesis to the extent that it is not imperatively determined in these regulations (see Article 3.1);
 - 2.13.3. to examine separate parts of the thesis and the thesis as a whole, to point out errors, deficiencies, necessary changes and additions;
 - 2.13.4. to participate in the evaluation of the thesis;
 - 2.13.5. to review the presentation of the student's defence, indicating the necessary changes and additions before the defence.
- 2.14. Functions of the student:
 - 2.14.1. to develop the thesis independently, in consultation with the supervisor;
 - 2.14.2. to observe the agreed deadlines for the development of the thesis;
 - 2.14.3. to comply with the requirements of the Regulations and other RGSL internal regulations including independently verifying that the work complies with the requirements set out in these regulations;
 - 2.14.4. to prepare and coordinate with the supervisor the presentation of the thesis;
 - 2.14.5. to present the thesis to the defence committee.
- 2.15. The thesis must meet the following requirements:
 - 2.15.1. it must represent scientifically accurate and methodologically sound legal research on the chosen topic, in which the findings of various authors are analysed and independent judgments are expressed, using the academic information sources that are necessary to carry out the research;
 - 2.15.2. the topic must be relevant, in line with the requirements of the modern society and science, and development perspectives;
 - 2.15.3. the structure of the research, the presentation of the results and conclusions must be logical, precise, clear and completed following the requirements of the scientific language and literary English norms;
 - 2.15.4. the principles of academic honesty and integrity must be observed;
 - 2.15.5. the prescribed structure of the thesis must be followed (see Article 3.1).

3. The structure of the thesis

- 3.1. In the order indicated in the thesis, the student includes the following parts:

- 3.1.1. Title page;
 - 3.1.2. Abstract;
 - 3.1.3. Summary;
 - 3.1.4. Table of Contents;
 - 3.1.5. List of Figures, Tables and Abbreviations (if necessary);
 - 3.1.6. Introduction;
 - 3.1.7. The main part, consisting of several sections and subsections;
 - 3.1.8. Conclusions;
 - 3.1.9. Bibliography;
 - 3.1.10. Annex (if applicable).
- 3.2. An extended structure of the thesis is available in the RGSL Bachelor and Master Thesis Manuals.

4. Technical design of the thesis

- 4.1. The student must format the thesis according to the RGSL Style Guide. The thesis layout is available on the RGSL Student Portal.

5. Submission of the thesis

- 5.1. Thesis length:
- 5.1.1. Bachelor study programmes – 14,000 words;
 - 5.1.2. Master study programmes – 20,000;
 - 5.1.3. Deviations up to 10% are allowed; if the deviations exceed 10% (but less than 25%), the grade is reduced (unless the supervisor's approval is received);
 - 5.1.4. If the deviation in the length of the thesis exceeds the 25% limit, the RGSL Study Department informs the student that the thesis is not accepted. In this case, the thesis is considered not to have been submitted. The thesis is re-written and defended in the following academic year, with a late fee being applied. The student may choose a new topic or continue to develop the previously selected topic.
 - 5.1.5. Thesis length does not include a title page, abstract, summary, table of contents, footnotes, bibliography and annexes.
- 5.2. The student submits the thesis to the RGSL Student Portal by the set deadline in .doc or .pdf format. If a student submits the thesis after the deadline, it will not be accepted, and the defence and evaluation of the submitted thesis is transferred to the next academic year.
- 5.3. At the same time, the student submits one hardcover copy of the thesis and submits it to the RGSL Library together with the Publication agreement (see Annex 3). The student also submits the Supervisor's Certificate (see Annex 4) and the Checklist (see Annex 5) to the RGSL Study Department.
- 5.4. The director of the study programme or another designated person coordinates the evaluation of the thesis, while the RGSL Study Department sends the thesis to the supervisor and the second reader for evaluation.
- 5.5. The second reader may be an RGSL lecturer or an employee of another organisation with a master's or doctoral degree who has scientific and/or practical experience in the relevant field.
- 5.6. The supervisor together with the second reader agrees on the preparation of a joint review (see Annex 6) within 5 days of receiving the thesis. Evaluations take place in a 10-point system according to the evaluation criteria:
- 5.6.1. Relevance of the research subject;
 - 5.6.2. Quality of research;
 - 5.6.3. Quality of analysis;
 - 5.6.4. Structure and organisation;

- 5.6.5. Language and formalities.
- 5.7. In the event that the supervisor and the second reader cannot agree on a common review text, but have agreed on the grade, the second reader may indicate their individual comments on the quality of the thesis in the review.
- 5.8. In the event that the supervisor and the second reader cannot agree on the grade of the work, then:
- 5.8.1. if both evaluators give the thesis a negative grade (1-3), then the student receives the higher of the two grades, but the thesis is not forwarded to the defense;
 - 5.8.2. if one evaluator gives a positive grade (4-10), and the other a negative one (1-3), or both evaluators give the thesis positive grades (4-10) – the thesis is forwarded to the defense with both offered grades and the final grade is determined by the thesis defense committee.
- 5.9. In the cases referred to in Article 5.8.2, both evaluators shall specifically explain in writing the reasons for which they were unable to agree on a common grade. This explanation may be included in the “Assessment” section of the review. This explanation is not sent to the student, but it is presented to the thesis defense committee.
- 5.10. If the thesis does not meet the basic requirements (see Article 2.15, including the principles of academic honesty), the student obtains a failing grade (1-3), and the thesis is not directed to the defence. In this case, the elaboration and defence of the thesis are organised in the next academic year, applying a late submission fee. The student can choose a new topic or further develop the previously selected topic.
- 5.11. If the assessment indicated in the review is positive (4-10), the thesis is directed to the defence. At the same time, if the students are graded 4-5, they are warned of their low grade giving them the option to withdraw the thesis and work on it further or to defend it. If they choose to defend and fail, they have to propose a new topic to submit the thesis again.
- 5.12. The RGSL Study Department forwards the review (without the grade) to the student within 5 days after receiving it (but not later than 48 hours before the defence) to allow them to prepare for their defence.

6. Defence and assessment of the thesis

- 6.1. Only those students who have fulfilled all the requirements specified in the study programme and study plans, as well as obtained a positive assessment in the review, can defend the thesis.
- 6.2. The composition of the thesis defence committee is determined by the Programme Director or another designated person.
- 6.3. The defence of the thesis takes place in open meetings of the thesis defence committee (in person or remotely), the time and form of which are made known to the students at least 3 working days until the date of the defence. Supervisors and second readers of the theses, students, RGSL academic staff and guest lecturers, as well as specialists of the respective field, are invited to participate in the open meetings of the thesis defence committee. However, only members of the committee can ask questions.
- 6.4. If the student has not come to defend their thesis without justification, the meeting of the thesis defence commission is organised in the next academic year.
- 6.5. When defending the thesis, the student must choose one of the following options:
- 6.5.1. presentation of the thesis with visual materials (.ppt or another format);
 - 6.5.2. presentation of the thesis without visual materials.
- 6.6. The presentation of the thesis for students of the bachelor study programmes lasts up to 10 minutes, while for the students of the master study programme – up to 15 minutes. Its recommended structure is as follows:

- 6.6.1. Introduction (problem description, topicality of the research, research question or hypothesis, aim and objectives of the research, methodology, limitations of the research and structure of the thesis);
- 6.6.2. Key results;
- 6.6.3. Key conclusions;
- 6.6.4. Answers to the questions indicated in the review (if any).
- 6.7. After the student's presentation, the members of the committee have the opportunity to ask questions about the content of the thesis, as well as questions concerning the specific field of law examined in the thesis. The members of the committee can also ask general questions about the theory of law, as well as comment on the content and form of the thesis, developing a discussion that lasts up to 15 minutes. However, if necessary, the members of the committee may extend the discussion to verify the student's knowledge and understanding of the chosen topic.
- 6.8. The evaluation of the thesis defence takes into account:
 - 6.8.1. the student's presentation;
 - 6.8.2. The answers to the committee's questions and the debating skills;
 - 6.8.3. the quality of the thesis and the written review.
- 6.9. When evaluating the thesis, the committee may decide:
 - 6.9.1. to leave the grade indicated in the review;
 - 6.9.2. to increase the grade indicated in the review by 2 point;
 - 6.9.3. to decrease the grade indicated in the review by 2 point;
 - 6.9.4. In the case of Article 5.8.2, choose one of the proposed grades or decide to assign another grade;
 - 6.9.5. If the student is unable to answer the questions and/or it is revealed during the defense that the student has not independently developed the thesis, this in itself may be grounds for giving the thesis a negative grade.
- 6.10. The evaluation of the theses takes place in a closed meeting of the thesis defence commission after the defence. After the agreement has been reached on the final grade, the secretary of the committee prepares a protocol with a joint list of thesis grades, which is agreed upon and approved by the chairman of the committee.
- 6.11. Students are informed about the final outcome of the thesis by notifying the student of the RGSL Study Department in person or by sending an e-mail on the day of the defence of the thesis.

7. Appeal procedure

- 7.1. If a student believes that the RGSL Study Departemnt has unreasonably deemed the thesis not submitted in accordance with Articles 5.1.1 or 5.1.4, the student may submit a written, reasoned request to the Programme Director to review the grade of the thesis. Such a request must be prepared in e-mail format, and a copy must also be sent to the RGSL Study Department.
- 7.2. If the student considers that significant procedural violations or errors in the thesis evaluation procedure have occurred during the defence and evaluation of the thesis, the student may submit a written reasoned request to the Programme Director to review the thesis evaluation (hereinafter – the application). The application must be prepared in e-mail format, and a copy must be addressed to the RGSL Study Department.
- 7.3. A significant procedural violation is a violation of the normative acts regulating the thesis or such circumstances during the defence of the thesis, which in themselves could affect the student's performance (for example, a serious violation of the rules of defence, constant and loud noise, etc.).
- 7.4. Errors, the existence of which can be easily and objectively verified (for example, a technical error in the recording of a grade) can be recognised as errors in the thesis evaluation process. Considerations based on the academic staff's reasoned academic

position, as well as considerations that fall within the academic freedom of assessment (for example, the significance of mistakes made in the student's thesis and the impact on the assessment of the thesis), cannot be recognised as errors in the thesis evaluation process.

- 7.5. The student has the right to submit an application indicated in Article 7.2 to the Programme Director within three working days from the notification of the thesis assessment. The student has the right to submit the application referred to in Article 7.1 to the Programme Director within three working days from the date of receipt of the notification from the RGSL Study Department that the thesis has not been accepted.
- 7.6. In the application indicated in the Articles 7.1 and 7.2, the student indicates the name, surname, student ID number, as well as substantiation of the application. Documents confirming the circumstances referred to in the complaint may be attached to the application.
- 7.7. The application indicated in the Articles 7.1 and 7.2 is reviewed within five working days from the date of receipt of the application.
- 7.8. If the student's application indicated in Article 7.2 is justified, the Programme Director decides on the re-defence and evaluation of the thesis. If the application referred to in Article 7.1 is justified, then the Programme Director shall recognise the work as submitted on the day it was submitted to the RGSL Study Department.
- 7.9. If the Programme Director considers that the student's application indicated in Articles 7.1 or 7.2 is not substantiated, the Programme Director rejects it, informing the student about the reasons for rejection. This decision may be challenged within three working days after receipt by the Rector, who reviews the application within five working days.

8. Storage and archiving of defended thesis

- 8.1. After the defence of the thesis, the hardcover copy is stored under the RGSL case nomenclature for at least 10 years and the electronic copy is archived in the RGSL database permanently.



**RIGA
GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF
LAW**

Title

Bachelor Thesis Outline

AUTHOR:

Name Surname

LL.B 202X/202X year student

student number XXXXXXXXXX

PREFERRED SUPERVISOR:

Name Surname

Academic title

Main legislative act that you will use for your research:

*Put the title of the law / Convention / Directive, etc. that you will build your research around.
If you will analyse one or several provisions, indicate, which ones.*

Example:

Constitution of Latvia, Article 100

European Convention of Human Rights, Article 3

Research question or hypothesis:

Indicate the legal research question or hypothesis around which you will build your research.

Planned approach to research (methodology):

*Indicate the methodology here: how exactly will you find the answer to the research question?
Examples: doctrinal, comparative, etc. (check the Legal Research Methods course materials).*

Initial structure

Think of the structure of your paper:

- how many chapters will it contain?*
- what is the preliminary title of each chapter?*
- are there sub-chapters? Note that division into sub-chapters is optional:
think if it fits your research*

Example:

Introduction

Chapter 1: (title)

1.1.

1.2.

Chapter 2: (title)

2.1.

2.2.

Chapter 3: (title)

Conclusion

Preliminary bibliography

Use databases provided by RGSL and draw a list of literature that is suitable for your research. The list should have at least 5 books, 10 articles, and approx. 2-3 cases. If there are no 2-3 cases for your topic, you need to add more books and articles to balance it.

Divide the bibliography into:

1. *Primary sources*

*Put **only** legislation (laws, conventions, directives, regulations) and case law here. All other sources are secondary.*

2. *Secondary sources*

These are books, academic articles, legal reviews, protocols, etc.

Note that the bibliography references need to follow the RGSL Style Guide.

Law: indicate its full title, year of adoption and a link to full text;

Case judgment, indicate the name of the case, the court (or tribunal), case number (if possible) and the date of the judgment;

Books: indicate the author's name, full title of the book, year of publishing and the publisher.

Articles: indicate the author's name, full title of the article, place of publishing (e.g. journal, law review) and the date.



Registration of Thesis Topic RGSL LL.M

Student name, surname:

Student number:

Programme:

Academic year:

Thesis Topic/Field :

Supervisor (1st choice):

Supervisor (2nd choice):

Preliminary topic:

Which is the main legal act / legal norm?

What is the central legal problem?

Have you checked if there are academic sources (publications by legal scholars) and cases related to the problem?

What do you want to research (what is the preliminary research question)?

Which research methods do you intend to apply?



Student name, surname:

Student number:

Title of thesis:

PUBLICATION AGREEMENT

The author agrees that once the thesis has passed defence, RGSL may publish the thesis on its website, portal and by any other means, with one of the following access options:

- ☐ Open access for all readers
- ☐ Access for all readers authorised by RGSL
- ☐ Access for readers authorised by RGSL, with the following exceptions:
embargo period years
- ☐ No access

By selecting one of the above access options, the author hereby concludes the publication agreement with RGSL.

(Date)

(Signature)

RGSL Supervision Certificate

It is hereby attested that the supervision process has proceeded in accordance with the thesis development calendar plan and has involved at least three substantive encounters (in person or by email) between student and supervisor.

Supervisor

Yes ☐

No ☐

Student

Yes ☐

No ☐

If not, please provide a short explanation of why the supervision process happened differently.

Supervisor:

Student:

Date

Date

Supervisor
(Name and Signature)

Student
(Name and Signature)

**Check List**

Academic Year 2021/2022

Student's Name, Surname _____

Student ID _____

Study Programme _____

Further Studies (University, Study Programme) or Place of Employment:

Your e-mail address for further communication after Graduation:

Filled out by administration:

	Not Approved	Approved
Law Library		
Financial obligations		
Locker's key		

Admitted for the defence: _____

EVALUATION OF BACHELOR/ MASTER THESIS

Academic Year

Author		Student ID_____
Thesis Title		
Programme		
Supervisor		
A second reader		
Date of evaluation		

1. Relevance of the research subject

This includes its relevance, topicality, appropriateness to a law degree, etc.

2. Quality of research

This includes thoroughness, accuracy, variety of sources, the use of academic reliable sources, etc.

3. Quality of analysis

This includes conceptual clarity, correct interpretation of empirical or theoretical facts, originality, quality of reasoning and arguments, use of relevant sources, illustrative examples, avoidance of circular arguments, ability to apply the law to the facts, etc.

4. Structure and organisation

This includes the ordering of the material, coherence, introduction and conclusion (whether they reflect the content of the thesis), absence of irrelevant and repeated issues, etc.

5. Language and formalities

This includes the evaluation of whether the thesis has been formatted according to the RGSL Style Guide, whether the language complies with academic writing standards, and whether the bibliography and footnotes are present and formatted accurately.

6. Final comments and questions

Suggested grade¹

(please check with “✓” corresponding check box)

- ☐ I **DO** recommend the thesis for defence
- ☐ I **DO NOT** recommend the thesis for defence

¹ The suggested grade will not be included in the document transmitted to the student