



Accepted by the Management Board of

Riga Graduate School of Law

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## **RGSL Development Strategy 2020-2026**

### **Vision**

To establish RGSL as a leading research-intensive centre of legal studies in the Baltic area through:

- strengthening the permanent faculty in each key area of RGSL teaching and research activities (public international law, EU law, international human rights law, legal theory and methodology);
- a constant review and improvement of the study programmes offered and the creation of new innovative programmes responding to the needs of the students and of the labour market;
- establishing networks with other universities aimed at strengthening academic and research cooperation, setting up joint study programmes;
- establishing continuous professional development course offer, responding to the needs of legal industry professionals;
- continuing and strengthening RGSL involvement in development assistance projects;
- maintaining RGSL financial sustainability.

## **Introduction**

Currently RGSL has three main areas of activities and sources of income – academic programmes, extensive involvement in development assistance projects and efficient management of its owned real estate.

RGSL offers two interdisciplinary Bachelor level programmes – Law and Business and Law and Diplomacy. The two LLB programmes have been recently revised and the new structure included in accreditation document package in 2019. The revision has improved the consistency of the law courses to allow students in the first year to acquire solid theoretical basis in all main areas of law. Starting from the second year the programmes acquire their specific features either specialising in public law or in private law. Moreover, a stronger emphasis has been put on interdisciplinarity of the courses.

The current Master programmes offer consists of 6 one year programmes in 1) International and European Law, 2) Public International Law and Human Rights, 3) European Union Law and Policy, 4) Transborder Commercial Law, 5) Law and Finance, 6) Technology Law and a two-year programme in Law and Finance.

The strong networks that RGSL has built over the years with employers, practitioners, policy makers, academics and alumni is to be used not only to review and improve the existing didactic offer but also to verify the possibility to create new academic programmes to satisfy the needs of students and market. Areas where a market analysis should be undertaken include, but are not limited to, environmental/climate change law and health law. A preliminary investigation to verify this hypothesis will be carried out in the first semester of 2020.

## RGSL strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats

RGSL work has to be contextualized in its local, regional and international frame. Universities face common global challenges and their work is conditioned by emerging ‘megatrends’ that need to be taken into account (The Future of Universities Thoughtbook, 2018). The latter include 1) the emerging of new markets and an increasing process of urbanization; 2) augmented interconnectivity and fall of geographical barriers with further opportunity for cooperation; 3) fast technological change, 4) an aging world.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Interdisciplinary programmes in English; Quality of programmes in line with EU best standards; Highly qualified faculty, including high-profile practitioners; Strong placement service; Student-centered approach; Extensive network of partners; Regular study process analysis; Wide mobility opportunities for students, academic and administrative staff; Scientific activities of the faculty in line with objectives of study programmes; Qualified administrative staff; Stable financial resources; Excellent library; Effective governance model; Academic programmes shaped, reviewed and improved on the basis of inputs from academia, practitioners, students, graduates in line with the requirements of</p>	<p>Lack of public funding; Limited permanent faculty; Reliance on external lecturers; Limited premises which might, in the long run, prevent the growth of the students' numbers; Research outputs and international cooperation can be improved; Lack of a PhD programme; Limited possibilities for BA graduates to continue studies in a RGSL Master's programme; Lecturers' turnover, as a threat to consistency of the teaching; Lack of attractiveness for Latvian students who want to have a career in legal professions in Latvia.</p>	<p>Strengthening RGSL position as a centre for legal studies by improving the offer of programmes; Strengthening of permanent faculty; Possibility for establishing a doctoral programme in cooperation with other EU universities or autonomously; Allow RGSL graduates more opportunities to enter in RGSL Master's programmes; Develop more extensive student recruitment activities (especially for the Master's programmes); Implement a policy for engaging the whole faculty in scientific and research activity; Consider offer of courses on Latvian law in the future; Consider a more efficient use of Alberta 13 building also for academic purposes.</p>	<p>Decreasing population in Latvia; Competition from other universities and actors active in third level education; Reform of the professional exam for lawyers in Latvia; Emigration of Latvian students to other countries; Changing entry requirements policy of other universities in Latvia; Necessity to monitor Latvian recent secondary and higher education reforms and education policies.</p>

## **RGSL Strategic Directions 2020 - 2026**

### **1. Increasing the number of students**

- ✓ Educational activities and events aimed for high school pupils
- ✓ Promotion of export of education
- ✓ Opening of RGSL branch abroad
- ✓ Review of current RGSL Master programmes
- ✓ Opening of new study programmes, incl. in Master level
- ✓ Development of joint study programmes with other universities
- ✓ Development of study courses offer on Latvian legal system
- ✓ Recruitment of high quality foreign students
- ✓ Assessment and improvement of study process` quality

### **2. Strengthening of the research activities. Increasing the research revenues and number of publications**

- ✓ Publishing of Baltic Year Book of International Law, its inclusion in Scopus/Wos
- ✓ Obtaining the status of research institution
- ✓ Organising research seminars for RGSL academic personnel
- ✓ Assessment of research outputs
- ✓ Promotion of mobility by academic personnel
- ✓ Administrative support for research project applications
- ✓ Support for RGSL staff publishing in English
- ✓ Relaunch of the PhD programme
- ✓ Development of a strategy to involve external lecturers in research activities
- ✓ Set up a career development strategy for RGSL academic staff

### **3. Expansion of knowledge transfer**

- ✓ Expansion of development assistance projects through increase of number of project donors
- ✓ Development of continuous professional development courses offer for local and foreign legal industry participants. Organisation of Summer schools.
- ✓ Organisation of various regular public lectures in cooperation with legal industry

### **4. Institutional capacity**

- ✓ Strengthening of permanent academic personnel in compliance with RGSL financial capabilities

### **Increasing the permanent faculty**

RGSL faculty, although small, has a tremendous expertise in areas such as international law, human rights and diplomacy. Considering the context where RGSL operates ideally the resident faculty should have at least one senior academic expert working full time for every key area of RGSL teaching and research activities (public international law, EU law, international human rights law, legal theory and methodology).

### **Improving research outputs**

It is necessary at this stage to find further resources to improve research activities and outputs of RGSL. In order to benefit from research opportunities offered by the Latvian Council of Sciences RGSL will apply to become a 'Registered Research Institution'. RGSL is exploring at the moment the possibility to set up joint research projects with other EU universities.

### **Student recruitment**

Students' tuition fees represent a crucial source of income for RGSL. Currently RGSL uses various channels for student attraction locally and internationally, adjusting its marketing and recruitment activities to the specific requirements of prospective students. RGSL sees a potential to increase current bachelor student number up to 30% and almost double the number of master students. Taking into account both its specialisation in international Law and the adoption of English as core study language RGSL plans to increase the proportion of foreign students through expanding its international recruitment activities over the next 6 years.

**Financial sustainability.** To ensure that the objectives outlined in this strategy are met, it is necessary to have a good degree of financial sustainability. The main RGSL revenue streams beside students' tuition fees are incomes from the rent of real estate property and the international projects.

As new resources are needed the possibility to use the RGSL Foundation to raise funding will be considered. Other possibilities such crowd funding, search for endowment from law firms interested in cooperating with RGSL will be explored too.

**Development of Continuous professional development education product offer** - activities can be developed in a form of short intensive courses aimed at professional development, also in the form of summer or winter schools. These activities can be a source of income for RGSL and simultaneously have positive effects on the image and the internationalization of the school.

**International Projects** - RGSL considers the currently run Advanced and Intensive programmes in EU Law and Economics as a significant part of its activities and will continue maintaining the close relationships with the established network of stakeholders in order to constantly evaluate the needs and requirements of potential programme beneficiaries, investigate other forms of cooperation where RGSL can use its expertise in EU Law, economics, policies and international affairs and obtain financing for programme continuation.