



**RIGA
GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF
LAW**

Riga Graduate School of Law

Research Strategy

2025 – 2030

APPROVED

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
1. SWOT Analysis	5
2. Key Research Areas	8
3. Assessment of Scientific Competitors	10
4. Key Performance Indicators	12
5. Strategic Goals, Objectives and Activities	13
6. Implementation and Monitoring of the Strategy	16

Introduction

The Riga Graduate School of Law (RGSL) is dedicated to fostering an environment where academic excellence, integrity, and professionalism are at the heart of all research activities.

Values

RGSL's values are: 1) professionalism; 2) loyalty; 3) fellowship; 4) impartiality; 5) respect; 6) dignity; 7) solidarity; 8) confidentiality; 9) academic honesty.¹

These values not only shape our research ethics but also ensure that RGSL remains a trustworthy, reliable, and ethical institution, both in the classroom and in the broader research landscape.

Vision

The vision is to establish RGSL as a leading research-intensive centre of legal studies in the Baltic area through:

- 1) 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);
- 2) 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;
- 3) establishing networks with other universities aimed at strengthening academic and research cooperation, setting up joint study programmes;
- 4) establishing continuous professional development course offer, responding to the needs of legal industry professionals;
- 5) continuing and strengthening RGSL involvement in development assistance projects;
- 6) maintaining RGSL's financial sustainability.²

Through these efforts, RGSL seeks to contribute significantly to the global discourse on law, justice, and human rights, fostering academic research that is not only innovative but also has a profound social, economic, and cultural impact. By engaging in interdisciplinary collaboration and developing forward-thinking legal scholarship, RGSL aspires to produce research that shapes public policy, informs legal reforms, and enhances the understanding of justice in a rapidly changing world.

¹ Art. 2.1. of the Code of Ethics for Students, Faculty and General Personnel of Riga Graduate School of Law, available online at: <https://www.rgsl.edu.lv/data/pdf-files/code-of-ethics-for-students-faculty-and-general-personnel-of-rgsl-eng.pdf>. Last accessed on 29 December 2024.

² RGSL Development Strategy 2020 – 2026, p. 1, available online at: <https://www.rgsl.edu.lv/data/pdf-files/development-strategy-short-version-2020-public.pdf>. Last accessed on 29 December 2024.

Mission

The mission of the Riga Graduate School of Law is to provide high-profile, internationally oriented education in the realm of legal studies to prepare students for a rapidly changing world.³

In alignment with its mission, RGSL is committed to advancing research that addresses the complexities of an ever-changing world.

RGSL's research will serve as a foundation for societal progress, advocating for the protection of fundamental rights and supporting the development of legal frameworks that respond to contemporary challenges. Through these endeavours, RGSL will position itself as a key player in shaping the future of law and justice, fostering a lasting legacy that benefits both the legal community and society.

³ Art. 1.1. of the Code of Ethics for Students, Faculty and General Personnel of Riga Graduate School of Law, available online at: <https://www.rgsl.edu.lv/data/pdf-files/code-of-ethics-for-students-faculty-and-general-personnel-of-rgsl-eng.pdf>. Last accessed on 29 December 2024.

1. SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The working language of RGSL is English. Academic staff members are thus used to using English in their work, and everyone has the necessary level of proficiency. It makes it easier to disseminate the research results to an international audience. 2. RGSL is the centre of international law and international human rights law in Latvia. RGSL's academic staff members are experts in these areas. 3. Several academic staff members are recognized internationally. 4. RGSL has an outstanding research infrastructure. The law library provides access to all the major research databases. This gives the necessary support for doing research. 5. RGSL supports and facilitates research among the students (e.g. by organizing the annual Student Research Paper Conference). 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current number of academic staff is limited, which poses challenges for RGSL in fully leveraging opportunities to participate in research projects and expanding its research output. 2. The primary task of the current academic staff members is teaching. It takes most of the workload, and not so much time is left for research. The strong focus on the study process at RGSL could pose a challenge to the development of research, as it may limit the time and resources available for fostering research activities. 3. RGSL operates as a private research institution without access to public funding; however, it does have access to competition-based funding opportunities. Consequently, opportunities to support research activities are more limited. 4. Like other Latvian research institutions, RGSL faces challenges in attracting high-profile foreign researchers due to the limited ability to offer internationally competitive salaries. 5. RGSL is still in the process of developing a well-established research culture, which presents challenges in fully realizing its research potential and further enhancing its academic profile.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Due to the international and European geopolitical situation, the need for researchers with international and multidisciplinary knowledge and experience increases, and the expertise of RGSL academic 	<p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall, research in Latvia faces several challenges that could pose a threat to RGSL's growth. The consistently insufficient public funding, the relatively low prestige of an academic career and broader issues within the education system

<p>staff members will be even more in demand in Latvia and abroad.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. RGSL's research output can make a significant contribution to the legal scholarship, industry and the broader society in Latvia. 3. RGSL has a large network of partners, which provides many opportunities for collaboration and research projects. 	<p>may hinder the development and sustainability of research at the institution.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Global political and security situation might leave a negative impact on Latvia as a potential destination for international and European researchers. As a result, it can become even harder to hire new academic staff members who would be willing to relocate to Latvia. 3. The strict requirement to have publications in journals, which are indexed in Scopus and Web of Science databases, limits the freedom of researchers. Many prestigious legal journals are not necessarily indexed in either Scopus or Web of Science databases. Also, chapters which are published in foreign academic books are not always indexed. As a result, researchers are forced to search for journals which are indexed in Scopus or Web of Science databases, even if it means that their research will not reach the intended audience.
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The SWOT analysis shows that RGSL is positioned as a strong academic institution with notable expertise in international law and human rights law, offering a valuable research perspective within Latvia and abroad. English as the working language provides RGSL with a unique advantage, enabling greater visibility and engagement in international research communities. The presence of internationally recognized academic staff, coupled with outstanding research infrastructure such as access to key research databases, strengthens its capacity to produce high-quality research. Additionally, RGSL's proactive approach to involving students in research through initiatives fosters a vibrant academic environment.

However, RGSL faces challenges that hinder its ability to fully leverage its research potential. The limited number of academic staff poses a significant barrier to engaging in a wide array of research projects and expanding research output. This issue is compounded by the primary workload being focused on teaching, which reduces the time and energy available for research. RGSL's status as a private institution without access to public funding further restricts its ability to support research activities, though competition-based funding opportunities remain a potential avenue for growth. Furthermore, RGSL's research culture, though developing, is still in its formative stages, making

it more difficult to build a strong and sustainable research foundation. Finally, the institution's strong focus on the study process could limit the time and resources dedicated to research, making it harder to achieve a balance between teaching and research priorities.

Despite these internal challenges, there are significant external opportunities for RGSL. The increasing demand for researchers with international and multidisciplinary knowledge, driven by global geopolitical shifts, presents an opportunity for RGSL to position itself as a key player in this field. RGSL's academic staff, with their deep expertise in international law, is well-placed to meet the needs of both national and international research communities. Additionally, RGSL's expansive network of partners opens up opportunities for collaborative research projects, which could further elevate the institution's academic profile and enhance its contribution to legal scholarship and the broader society.

Nevertheless, RGSL must navigate several threats that could impede its research growth. Latvia's general challenges with insufficient public funding for research, combined with systemic issues in the education sector, create an environment that is not always conducive to fostering research excellence. This, in turn, can limit RGSL's ability to attract and retain top-tier researchers. Furthermore, the global political and security climate may affect Latvia's appeal as a destination for international researchers, potentially making it even more difficult for RGSL to hire new academic staff from abroad. Finally, the strict requirement to have publications in journals, which are indexed in Scopus or Web of Science databases limits the freedom of researchers and may negatively impact the accessibility and impact of their research output.

2. Key research areas

According to the national framework for groups, branches, and sub-sectors of science⁴, RGSL's research is categorized within the social sciences group, under the branch of law science, with subfields including international law and civil law.

As regards the key research areas of RGSL, they are defined based on the following criteria:

- 1) strategic specialization of RGSL;
- 2) research interests of the academic staff members;
- 3) possible collaboration with the industry.

RGSL's research in key areas is distinguished by notable expertise and a strong international presence, which aligns with the institution's strengths and opportunities outlined in the SWOT analysis.

Branches of science	Subfields of science	Key Research Areas
5.5. Law science	International law	Public international law, Private international law, International human rights law
5.5. Law science	Civil law	Contract law, Property law

Public International Law – RGSL has established a prominent research focus in public international law, underpinned by a long-standing tradition of publishing the *Baltic Yearbook of International Law*, which is indexed in the Scopus database. This initiative significantly strengthens RGSL's position as a key player in international law research and underscores the institution's commitment to producing high-quality research with a substantial international impact.

Private International Law – RGSL's research in private international law contributes to leading European and international law journals, while the active participation of its academic staff in prestigious international scientific conferences further elevates RGSL's presence in this field. The continued development of research in private international law aligns with the growing demand for expertise in international and multidisciplinary legal frameworks, providing RGSL with a valuable opportunity to capitalize on current global trends.

International Human Rights Law – International human rights law is another vital research area at RGSL. The institution organizes an annual conference on human rights in Latvia, providing an important platform for global discussions on human rights issues. RGSL's commitment to human rights research strengthens its academic profile and ensures that the institution makes a meaningful

⁴ Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 595 “Regulations on Latvian science industry groups, science sectors and sub-sectors” of 27 September 2022, available online at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/335928-noteikumi-par-latvijas-zinatnes-nozaru-grupam-zinatnesnozarem-un-apaksnozarem> Last accessed on 29 December 2024.

contribution to addressing global challenges in human rights law, while also having a broader societal impact.

Contract Law and Property Law – In the fields of contract law and property law, RGSL’s academic staff lead research exploring various facets of Latvia’s Civil Law. Through regular presentations and publications in national conferences and journals, RGSL enhances its contribution to legal scholarship both within Latvia and beyond. This research area provides RGSL with the opportunity to bridge local legal issues with broader international trends, further expanding its research reach and societal influence.

Additionally, RGSL has a strong teaching and research tradition not only in law but also in business, international relations, and technology, particularly where these fields intersect with law. This **interdisciplinary focus** allows RGSL to explore complex legal issues within global trends such as international trade, diplomacy, and the regulation of emerging technologies like intellectual property, data protection, and cybersecurity. By integrating these disciplines, RGSL enhances its research competencies and offers innovative solutions to contemporary legal challenges. This approach enables RGSL to contribute both to academic scholarship and practical legal applications, positioning it as a key player in addressing the evolving needs of the global legal landscape.

Through these key research areas, RGSL demonstrates its potential to expand its academic influence, deepen its research contributions, and leverage the growing demand for internationally oriented legal scholarship. By strengthening its academic networks and fostering collaborations, RGSL is well-positioned to enhance its research impact both regionally and globally.

3. Assessment of Scientific Competitors⁵

RGSL faces competition in its key research areas from both national and international institutions, which also specialize in legal studies.

Key research area	Sub-topics	Closest competitors at the national level	Closest competitors at the international level (Baltic states)
International Law	Private International Law	University of Latvia, Faculty of Law	University of Tartu, School of Law
	Public International Law	Rīga Stradiņš University, Faculty of Social Sciences	Mykolas Romeris University, Law School
	International Human Rights Law		Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Law
Civil Law (of Latvia)	Contract Law	University of Latvia, Faculty of Law	Not applicable
	Property Law	Rīga Stradiņš University, Faculty of Social Sciences “Turība” University, Faculty of Law	

At the **national level**, RGSL's closest competitors in **international law** research include the University of Latvia which is known for its strong focus on international law and its long-established reputation in legal studies. In addition, Rīga Stradiņš University also contributes to international law research, with a focus on interdisciplinary approaches that incorporate social sciences.

As regards **civil law**, in addition to the University of Latvia and Rīga Stradiņš University, “Turība” University also specializes in practical legal education and research, including civil law aspects relevant to the Latvian legal system.

At the **international level**, closest competitors in the area of **international law** RGSL faces competition from several respected institutions in the Baltic region, including the University of Tartu, with a strong reputation in both public and private international law, Mykolas Romeris University known for its focus on international law, human rights, and legal reforms, and Vytautas Magnus University that competes with RGSL in international law research, particularly in

⁵ All data are up to date till 31 December 2024.

international human rights law and European law. At the same time, RGSL is a part of Nordplus Law Network which includes these closest competitors and other law schools and faculties in the Baltic Sea Region forming close collaborative research links.

It should be noted that RGSL in comparison with other universities stands out for its strong commitment to **interdisciplinary research**, leveraging its expertise in law while actively engaging with other fields to address complex global challenges. By combining legal research with insights from business, technologies, and international relations, RGSL fosters a dynamic environment for interdisciplinary collaboration. This approach enables RGSL to offer nuanced perspectives on contemporary issues, such as international conflicts, human rights violations, and the intersection of law with technology and business. The institution's international and interdisciplinary focus strengthens its research output, allowing RGSL to contribute meaningfully to both academic and practical discussions on pressing global issues. Additionally, the integration of interdisciplinary research enhances RGSL's ability to create innovative solutions that resonate with a diverse range of stakeholders, from policymakers to legal practitioners, positioning the institution as a key player in advancing legal scholarship and its applications across various sectors.

4. Key Performance indicators

KPIs	Base value (2024)	Target value (2027)	Target value (2030)
Number of academic personnel	11	16	20
Number of Scopus and Web of Science publications	5	12	18
Number of publications developed jointly with international partners	0	1	5

RGSL has identified key performance indicators (KPIs) to track and drive its progress in academic and research excellence over the next several years. The **number of academic personnel** is a crucial KPI, reflecting RGSL's commitment to expanding its research capacity. Currently, RGSL has 11 academic staff members, with a target of increasing this number to 16 by 2027 and 20 by 2030. This growth in personnel will enable the institution to broaden its research focus, increase its research output, and improve the quality of education offered to students.

Another important KPI is the **number of Scopus and Web of Science publications**, which measures the visibility and impact of RGSL's research on the global academic stage. The institution currently has five publications indexed in these databases, with a goal of reaching 12 by 2027 and 18 by 2030. This steady increase reflects RGSL's ambition to enhance its scholarly contribution and strengthen its international research reputation.

Furthermore, RGSL aims to significantly increase its level of **joint publications with international partners**. With no current publications in collaboration with international partners, the target is to publish one by 2027, and five by 2030. This focus on international collaboration is central to RGSL's strategy to expand its global research network and elevate the impact of its academic output.

By setting these ambitious KPIs, RGSL is positioning itself for sustained growth and enhanced global recognition in the academic and research communities.

5. Strategic Goals, Objectives and Activities

Strategic goal	Objectives	Activities
<p>SG1. To achieve scientific excellence in the key research areas.</p>	<p>O1.1. To increase the number of academic staff members.</p>	<p>A1.1.1. To strengthen and develop the study programmes, which the RGSL offers, and to increase the number of students, as this would generate more financial resources which could be invested in research.</p> <p>A1.1.2. To open new academic positions.</p>
	<p>O1.2. To increase the number of Scopus and Web of Science publications.</p>	<p>A1.2.1. To apply a strict approach regarding whether the academic staff members fulfil their contractual obligations regarding publications.</p> <p>A1.2.2. To establish a support system for academic staff members, which would facilitate the process of publishing the research output.</p>
	<p>O1.3. To increase the number of publications developed jointly with international partners.</p>	<p>A1.3.1. To explore opportunities of collaboration among the RGSL's international partners by facilitating international mobility of academic staff members.</p> <p>A.1.3.2. To explore opportunities of organizing joint scientific conferences.</p>

	O1.4. To increase the number of research projects.	A1.4.1. To explore opportunities of collaboration among the RGSL's national and international partners by organizing seminars and workshops. A1.4.2. To promote participation of academic personnel in seminars and workshops organized by partner institutions.
	O1.5. To establish an interdisciplinary research center within the RGSL.	A1.5.1. To develop and implement a collaboration programme for RGSL academic staff members with the aim to facilitate interdisciplinary research. A1.5.2. To introduce an internal peer-review system among colleagues from different disciplines. A1.5.3. To participate regularly in interdisciplinary seminars and conferences with the aim to gain new knowledge and expand the professional network.
SG2. To create a sustainable and meaningful partnership with the industry to ensure that the research output contributes also to the needs of the industry.	O2.1. To determine the areas in which RGSL's research output could contribute to the industry.	A2.1.1. To organize regular (yearly) meetings with the industry in order to have an up-to-date information on the needs of the industry. A2.1.2. To explore possibilities for performing research tasks for the industry. A2.1.3. To organize research activities in which industry representatives could be involved.

To achieve **scientific excellence** in its key research areas, RGSL has outlined several strategic activities aimed at enhancing its academic and research capacity. Key objectives include increasing the **number of academic staff**, boosting **Scopus and Web of Science publications**, and expanding **collaborative research**. To achieve these, RGSL plans to strengthen and expand study programmes, open new academic positions, and implement a strict approach to publication

requirements. Additionally, RGSL aims to establish a support system for academic staff to facilitate research publishing, while exploring opportunities for international collaboration and joint scientific conferences.

To increase the number of **research projects**, RGSL intends to foster national and international partnerships by organising seminars and workshops and encouraging academic personnel participation in external events.

Furthermore, RGSL aims to establish an **interdisciplinary research centre** by developing a collaboration programme for academic staff, introducing an internal peer-review system, and participating regularly in interdisciplinary seminars and conferences to expand its professional network.

To create a **sustainable partnership with the industry**, RGSL aims to align its research with industry needs. This includes organising annual meetings with industry representatives to stay informed about their challenges, exploring opportunities for industry-commissioned research, and involving industry partners in research activities. These initiatives will help ensure RGSL's research remains relevant and impactful, fostering long-term collaboration with the industry.

6. Implementation and Monitoring of the Strategy

The RGSL rector is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the RGSL Research Strategy. Every year, the rector provides the RGSL Senate, which performs the functions of a Scientific Council, with a report on the implementation of the strategic goals and objectives.

In addition, the rector informs the RGSL Board on the implementation of the Strategy and its KPIs in 2027 and 2030.