

APPROVED  
at the Senate meeting of Rīga Stradiņš  
University  
of 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020,  
Minutes No. 2-1/9/2020

## **REGULATIONS ON WRITING AND DEFENCE OF QUALIFICATION PAPER, STUDENT'S RESEARCH PAPER, BACHELOR'S THESIS AND MASTER'S THESIS**

Issued in accordance with  
Section 4, Paragraph three, Clause 3 (a), Clause 4 and Section 15, Paragraph one  
of the Law on the Higher Education Institutions

### **I GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. Regulations on Writing and Defence of Qualification Paper, Student's Research Paper (Research Project), Bachelor's Thesis and Master's Thesis (hereinafter - the Regulations) establish general rules for writing and defence of a qualification paper, a student's research paper, a Bachelor's thesis and a Master's thesis in the respective first level professional higher education programmes, second level professional higher education programmes (except the residency in medicine), academic and professional Bachelor's study programmes, and academic and professional Master's study programmes (hereinafter - the Study Programme).
2. The aim of the qualification paper, student's research paper, Bachelor's thesis and Master's thesis (hereinafter - the Final Papers) is to enhance the students' ability to draft a research plan, to write the research aims, hypothesis and objectives, to select and apply the methods of data capture, processing and analysis relevant to the research, to independently formulate and justify their conclusions and to demonstrate their readiness to use the acquired knowledge, skills and competences independently in addressing academic and professional issues.
3. The objectives of the Final Paper are the following:
  - 3.1. extend and increase the student's theoretical knowledge of the chosen topic;
  - 3.2. promote the development of the student's practical skills while carrying out research;
  - 3.3. promote the student's involvement in the work of RSU scientific laboratories and scientific institutes;
  - 3.4. develop the skills of reading the literature of the sector in foreign languages and of analysing it independently, of conducting research, carrying out statistical data processing and analysing the results obtained;

- 3.5. draw up the Final Paper according to technical, bibliographic and literary requirements.
4. Students who have fulfilled all the academic and financial commitments shall be permitted to write their Final Paper. Students of the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Dentistry who have successfully defended their research work shall be allowed to take the National Examination.
5. The Faculties shall develop and the Faculty Council shall approve methodological guidelines on the specific provisions for writing and defending the Final Papers in the study programmes implemented at the Faculty; shall set the deadlines and organisational measures insofar as they are not in conflict with these Regulations.
6. Writing and defence of the Final Papers in the joint study programmes shall be carried out in accordance with these Regulations, unless otherwise specified in the Agreement on the implementation of the joint study programme.

## **II FINAL PAPER SUPERVISOR, TOPIC SELECTION AND APPROVAL**

7. The Final Paper shall be supervised by one supervisor, but in certain cases (for example, in interdisciplinary research) a second supervisor or advisor may be brought in.
8. The Final Paper supervisor (hereinafter - the Supervisor) may be a representative of RSU academic and scientific staff or an invited lecturer. The Supervisor shall have the following minimum level of education:
  - 8.1. a qualification paper Supervisor shall have a Master's degree or education equivalent to the Master's degree;
  - 8.2. a student's research paper Supervisor shall have a Master's degree or education equivalent to the Master's degree;
  - 8.3. a Bachelor's thesis Supervisor shall have a Master's degree or education equivalent to the Master's degree;
  - 8.4. a Master's thesis Supervisor shall have a doctoral degree or a Master's degree or completed doctoral studies.
9. The Final Paper Supervisor shall be responsible for providing competent and regular advisory support on the following issues:
  - 9.1. drafting the research plan and methodology;
  - 9.2. defining the research aim and objectives;
  - 9.3. planning research and setting deadlines;
  - 9.4. selecting and analysing methods, literature and sources;
  - 9.5. obtaining, processing and analysing empirical data;

- 9.6. interpreting the results, drawing conclusions and bringing forward proposals.
10. The Final Paper advisor (hereinafter - the Advisor) shall be a recognised professional in their sphere, shall have the required education and at least three years of professional experience in the topic area or related areas of the Final Paper.
  11. Selection of the topic and the Supervisor for the Final Paper shall be carried out in cooperation between the student, potential Supervisor, the Head of the Study Programme and the Head of the Academic Department. The Head of the Programme (or any other employee appointed by the Dean) shall, if necessary, advise the student on the choice of the topic and obtaining of the necessary permits.
  12. The Faculty Council shall, not less than 9 months prior to the scheduled defence of the Final Paper, approve the list of topics (topic areas) for Final Papers in Latvian and English and the potential Supervisors; and the Faculty shall inform the students thereof. The student shall have the right to offer their own research topic for the development.
  13. If a study course related to conducting research is not included in the study programme, the Faculty shall organise an informative meeting for students, send explanatory e-mails, etc.
  14. Not less than 7 months prior to the scheduled defence of the papers, students shall submit a written research proposal, signed by the research Supervisor (if two Supervisors are required - signatures of both Supervisors or a signature of the Advisor) to the Head of the Study Programme (or to the Head of the Academic Department in particular faculties). In the proposal, students shall justify the topicality and scientific significance of the topic, define the aims and objectives of the research, the hypothesis or the research question and shall specify the methods and sources to be used in the Paper, and shall indicate the necessary permits or add them (if already received).
  15. Final Paper topics, Supervisors, if necessary, the involved Advisors and the deadlines for submission of permits, as well as the deadlines for submitting the Final Papers shall be approved by the corresponding Faculty Council (or at the meeting of the Academic Department in particular faculties) not later than 6 months prior to the scheduled defence of the Papers.
  16. The receipt of a written authorisation (consent) for conducting research for the Final Paper, specified in laws and regulations or in these Regulations shall be required in the following cases:
    - 16.1. for biomedical research, research with the use of identified or identifiable personal data - the authorisation of RSU Research Ethics Committee, if necessary, the authorisation of the competent national authority (e.g. the Central Medical Ethics

- Committee, the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control); the authorisation of the relevant medical institution, the social care institution where the research will take place;
- 16.2. for studies related to commercial secrets, know-how, the use of trade marks, the use of patented or patentable inventions, an authorisation of the holder of that right shall be obtained;
  - 16.3. for research related to the state secret - the permit of the relevant category to the author regarding the access to subject matter of the state secret shall be obtained;
  - 16.4. for research related to other restricted access information - the authorisation of the persons or institutions concerned shall be obtained.
17. If research requires special permits, the student shall initiate an authorisation procedure or consultations on receipt thereof as early as possible, before submitting a proposal, but not later than immediately after approval of the topic for the Final Paper. The authorisation shall take place in accordance with the procedure laid down by the natural or legal person concerned.
  18. Not later than 2 weeks prior to the scheduled defence of Final Papers, the list of the reviewers of Final Papers shall be approved by the corresponding Faculty Council (or at the meeting of the Academic Department in particular faculties).
  19. The Head of the Study Programme (or the meeting of the Academic Department in particular faculties) shall be responsible for ensuring that for at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled defence of the Final Papers, the information on the time and place of the defence is publicly available at the departments, faculties and on e-studies.

### **III WRITING AND SUBMISSION OF FINAL PAPER**

20. The content and quality of the Final Paper must certify that the student has achieved the outcomes specified in the Study Programme, which corresponds to Table 2 of the Education Classification in Latvia prescribed by the Cabinet Regulations No. 322 of 13 June 2017 "Regulations on the Education Classification in Latvia", which determines the knowledge, skills and competence relevant to the level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) at the following levels:
  - 20.1. for a qualification paper: Level 5 (able to define, describe and analyse practical problems in their profession, select the necessary information and use it to address clearly defined problems; participate in the development of the relevant professional area, demonstrate that they understand the place of the relevant profession in a wider social context);

- 20.2. for a Bachelor's thesis: Level 6 (able to obtain, select and analyse information independently and use it, make decisions and address problems in the relevant science sector or profession; demonstrate that they understand professional ethics, evaluate the impact of their professional activity on the environment and society and participate in the development of the relevant professional area);
- 20.3. for a Master's thesis and for a student's Research Paper: Level 7 (able to independently define and critically analyse complex scientific and professional issues, justify their decisions and, if necessary, carry out additional analysis; able to integrate knowledge of various areas, contribute to the creation of new knowledge and to the development of methods used in research or professional activity, demonstrate understanding and ethical responsibility for the possible impact of the research results or professional activity on the environment and society).
21. The student shall write the Final Paper independently, sincerely and honestly, respecting the rights and interests of third parties: all references to the sources used in the Paper shall be indicated; the information shall be used only to the extent required for the research; personal data and the names of legal persons, places of residence or location are usually used in an anonymous or coded way (pseudonymous way). The student shall follow the instructions of the Supervisor.
22. The Supervisor or the student shall immediately inform the Head of the Study Programme or the Head of the Academic Department if the cooperation is unsuccessful or any other difficulties arise.
23. The length of the student's Research Paper shall be up to 25 pages, the length of the Qualification Paper up to 30 pages, the length of the professional Bachelor's thesis up to 40 pages, the length of the academic Bachelor's thesis up to 60 pages and the length of the Master's thesis up to 80 pages, excluding appendices, a title page of the Paper, a table of contents, abstracts and a list of terms and abbreviations used in the Paper. The length of the Final Paper depends on the field of study (a faculty of health care or a faculty of social sciences) and is specified in the methodological guidelines for the development of Final Papers of each faculty. If a drawing, photo, table or chart exceeds a third of the page, it must be appended in the appendix, not more than one on a page. The Final Paper must be typewritten in the language in which the study programme is implemented (A4 format, *Times New Roman* font, font size: 12; line spacing: 1.5), and it must comply with the requirements of a literally edited written text, using the terminology of the relevant sector. Papers that do not meet the formal requirements may not be directed for defence.

24. If a student conducts a quantitative research in his/her Final Paper, he/she must use at least the following statistical methods of data processing:
  - 24.1. in a Qualification Paper: descriptive statistics;
  - 24.2. in a Bachelor's thesis: descriptive statistics and methods of inferential statistics for estimating differences;
  - 24.3. in the student's Research Paper and the Master's thesis: descriptive statistics, methods of inferential statistics for estimating differences and statistical methods of analysis.
25. The Final Paper shall include the following parts:
  - 25.1. a title-page;
  - 25.2. an abstract and keywords in Latvian and English. A student may also prepare an additional abstract in another language of the European Union Member State, in agreement with the Head of the Study Programme.
  - 25.3. a table of contents;
  - 25.4. a list of terms and abbreviations;
  - 25.5. an introduction;
  - 25.6. a literature review;
  - 25.7. research methods used;
  - 25.8. research results;
  - 25.9. an analysis of research results (a discussion);
  - 25.10. conclusions, which may be supplemented by recommendations of proposals;
  - 25.11. bibliography;
  - 25.12. appendices, including the following:
    - 25.12.1. a statement about the Final Paper;
    - 25.12.2. if necessary, copies of permits for carrying out the research;
    - 25.12.3. if necessary, other documents.
26. The Final Paper shall be submitted only in electronic format, except in the cases specified in Paragraph 27 of the Regulations. It shall be uploaded in electronic format in accordance with RSU internal rules and regulations regarding the procedures for the submission and storage of electronic versions of the student Qualification Papers, Bachelor's theses, Master's theses or other Final Papers in RSU institutional open access e-resource repository.
27. If the mastering of the study programme envisages the secret status for the development and defence of students' Final Papers, the students of this programme shall submit the Final

- Paper to the Academic Department, which conforms to the rules for the protection of a state secret, only in a printed version - in one hardcover copy.
28. Electronic versions of successfully defended Final Papers shall be sent to RSU institutional open access e-resource repository. In the cases specified in Paragraph 27 of the Regulations, the bound copy of the successfully defended Final Paper shall be returned to the student.
  29. The Final Paper in electronic format shall be submitted in accordance with the deadlines approved at the meeting of the Faculty Council or specified in the methodological guidelines, but not later than 14 calendar days before the defence.
  30. In the cases specified in Paragraph 27 of the Regulations, the student shall submit the printed version of the Final Paper with the signatures of the author and Supervisor (both Supervisors and the Advisor, if appointed) on the title page no later than 14 calendar days before the defence at the Academic Department, which complies with the rules for the protection of a state secret. The aforementioned Academic Department shall inform the Head of the Study Programme thereof, organise the handing over of the Paper to the Reviewer and the receipt of the review. If this deadline is overdue, the Head of the Study Programme or the Head of the Academic Department may, respectively, refuse to direct the Final Paper for review and defence.
  31. If the Final Paper contains restricted access information, the student shall submit a request to the Dean for a possibility to defend the Paper in a closed meeting and not to disclose it. The student's application shall be endorsed by the Supervisor of the Final Paper. The Final Paper shall be stored having limited rights of access to the content of the Paper.
  32. The Supervisor (both Supervisors and the Advisor, if appointed) shall submit his/her statement regarding directing the Final Paper for defence electronically on the lecturer's portal.
  33. The Supervisor shall submit a written review regarding the student's Final Paper, cooperation with the Supervisor and compliance with the deadlines. In the case referred to in paragraph 27 of the Regulations, the review shall be attached to the Paper submitted and stored in the relevant Academic Department in compliance with the rules for the protection of a state secret.
  34. If the Supervisor does not approve the compliance of the form, content and length of the Final Paper with the requirements of these Regulations and the methodological guidelines approved by the Faculty Council, the Supervisor shall provide an explanation regarding the reasons for non-approval of the Paper, and the Faculty Council shall approve an

additional Reviewer recommended by the Head of the Study Programme or Academic Department.

35. If a poster presentation or an oral report corresponds to the agreed topic and it has won an award in an international scientific conference, it shall be considered as a developed and defended Research Paper for the first author. A statement of an award-winning place in the scientific conference (a copy of the certificate) shall be submitted to the Head of the corresponding Academic Department who gives the assessment “with distinction” (10 points).
36. If a scientific publication that corresponds to the topic agreed, is published in one of the peer-reviewed international journals of the sector and is found in a scientific database, the following shall apply:
  - 36.1. In case of a student’s Research Paper, it shall be considered as a developed and defended Research Paper for the authors of the article. The student must submit a copy of the published paper to the Head of the Academic Department who gives the assessment “with distinction” (10 points).
  - 36.2. In case of the Master’s thesis, if the quality and the scope of the publication correspond to the requirements specified for the Master’s thesis, it shall be considered as a developed and defended student’s Final Paper for the first author of the publication. The evaluation of the publication shall be carried out by the Faculty Council following the submission of the student’s application and provision of additional information. If the publication is validated, the student shall get the assessment “with distinction” (10 points).
37. The validated award-winning poster presentation, oral report or publication must be submitted for storage in electronic format to RSU institutional open access e-resource repository using the Final Paper upload e-service.

#### **IV CHECKING AND REVIEWING OF FINAL PAPER**

38. The Final Paper shall be checked by methods of verifying the originality of the content, including the use of automated systems existing at RSU. If plagiarism is detected, the procedure for checking the originality of RSU students' Final Papers and Doctoral theses shall be followed.
39. The Reviewer may be an employee of RSU academic and scientific staff, a recognised professional in their field, and their level of education shall be equal to or higher than the level of education of the Supervisor of the respective Final Paper. The Reviewer shall be



approved by a resolution of the Faculty Council or at a meeting of the Academic Department.

40. The Reviewer shall evaluate the compliance of the Final Paper with the requirements of these Regulations, as well as with the methodological guidelines prescribed by the Faculty regarding the form and content of the Paper, and shall give the assessment for the Paper to be defended on a 10-point grading scale. Not later than 3 (three) working days prior to the defence of the Final Paper, the Reviewer shall submit a written review electronically to the lecturer portal or in the case specified in Paragraph 27 of the Regulations to the Academic Department where the Final Paper shall be stored. The aforementioned Academic Department shall inform the Head of the Study Programme thereof.
41. If the Supervisor has not approved the Paper and the evaluations of two Reviewers regarding the non-compliance of the Paper with the requirements for the Final Paper have been received, the student shall not be allowed to defend the Final Paper and shall be excluded.
42. The student shall be entitled to acquaint himself/herself with the review and the additional review (if the Supervisor has not approved the Paper) not later than 2 (two) working days prior to the defence.
43. If the Supervisor has approved the Paper but according to the assessment of the Reviewer, the Paper does not meet the requirements for the Final Paper, the student shall have the right to:
  - 43.1. defend the Final Paper during the scheduled defence. ;
  - 43.2. refuse to defend the Final Paper by notifying thereof in writing prior to the scheduled defence. The defence of the revised Final Paper may not be earlier than during the following period for the defence of Final Papers.

## **V DEFENCE AND ASSESSMENT OF FINAL PAPER**

44. The composition of the Final Paper Defence Committee (including the dates of the examinations) for the relevant academic year following the proposal of the Head of the Study Programme shall be agreed on by the Faculty Council or the meeting of the Academic Department during the first month of each semester, and it shall be approved by the Rector's Decree. The Supervisor may be on the Committee, but he/she shall not participate in the assessment of the Final Papers he/she has supervised.
45. The defence of the Final Paper shall be open, except in cases where the Paper is related to the interests of third persons or a State secret. During the defence, a student shall outline the topicality of the research conducted, its aims and objectives, research results,

conclusions and proposals in about 10 to 15 minutes. The total time devoted to the defence of one Final Paper must not exceed 30 minutes.

46. The Final Paper Defence Committee shall evaluate the Final Paper according to the following criteria:
  - 46.1. the correspondence of the content of the submitted Final Paper to the chosen topic (on a 10-point grading scale);
  - 46.2. the correspondence of the content of the Final Paper to the qualification level of education (on a 10-point grading scale);
  - 46.3. conformity of the conclusions to the aims and objectives of the Paper (on a 10-point grading scale);
  - 46.4. compliance of the submitted Paper with the main formal requirements specified in the Regulations (visual design, volume, style, grammar, etc.) (on a 10-point grading scale);
  - 46.5. comprehensibility of the presentation, its structure and compliance with the time limit set (on a 10-point grading scale);
  - 46.6. ability to answer the questions and participate in a discussion (on a 10-point grading scale);
  - 46.7. the participation of a student in an international scientific conference without obtaining an award-winning place or co-authorship (for the second and subsequent authors) for publication, if that activity conforms to the agreed topic, shall increase the resultant assessment by 1 point.
47. The resultant assessment for the Final Paper shall be made by the Final Paper Defence Committee, taking into account the assessment of the Reviewer and the Supervisor's review.
48. After having listened to the student's report, getting acquainted with the Supervisor's review and a written evaluation of the Reviewer/-s, having listened to the answers to the questions asked and after the discussion, the Final Paper Defence Committee shall take its decision in a closed meeting, by open voting after having listened to the students. The Paper shall be assessed according to a 10-point grading scale.
49. The assessment of the Final Paper shall be notified to the student after the end of the meeting on the same day, ensuring the confidentiality of the assessment.
50. If the student's research work is validated, the defence of the Final Paper shall not take place and the Final Paper Defence Committee shall put the assessment given by the Head of the Academic Department.

51. The appeal procedure is determined by RSU “Academic Regulations I”. The Final Paper Defence Committee shall act in accordance with the Regulations of the National Examination Board, insofar as it is not specified otherwise in these Regulations.

#### **VI FINAL PROVISIONS**

52. The proposal form for the Final Paper, the statement form and other forms necessary for the completion and defence of the Final Paper shall be approved by the Rector’s Decree.

53. These Regulations shall enter into force on \_\_\_\_\_ 2020.

Chairperson of the Senate

J.Gardovskis

*T. Koķe, 67409065*

*AGREED*

at the meeting of the Dean’s Council on \_\_\_\_\_ 2020,

Minutes No. \_\_\_\_\_

at the Rectorate meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ 2020,

Minutes No. \_\_\_\_\_