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INTERNAL REGULATORY ENACTMENT

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Rīga Stradiņš University

Academic Regulations III

Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies

(Version 11)

Issued in accordance with
Section 15¹, Clause 3, Sub-Clause C and Clause 6 of the
Law on Higher Education Institutions

1. General provisions

- 1.1. Rīga Stradiņš University Academic Regulations III – Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies (hereinafter – the Regulations) prescribe the procedures for the conduct of studies in doctoral study programmes.
- 1.2. Doctoral studies at Rīga Stradiņš University (hereinafter – the University, abbreviated as RSU) constitute the doctoral student's independent work towards obtaining a scientific doctoral degree, carried out under the guidance of the doctoral thesis supervisor and academic staff.

2. Terms used

- 2.1. **Academic leave** – an interruption of active studies, usually for one semester or one academic year, due to medical indications, social reasons, employment, family circumstances or the birth of a child, while retaining student status. Academic leave shall be granted only to students who are in good academic standing and have paid their tuition fees.
- 2.2. **Academic year** – a period of study at a higher education institution corresponding to a calendar year and divided into two semesters – autumn and spring (with August as a study-free month).

- 2.3. **Academic integrity** – a set of fundamental values inherent in every member of the University staff, including students, encompassing honesty, ethics, trust and fairness, and serving as the basis for decision-making and action in studies, research and the academic environment.
- 2.4. **Outstanding academic obligation** – failure by a doctoral student to fulfil the academic obligations specified in the study course description and/or to pass assessments.
- 2.5. **Remote studies** – a part of the on-site education process in which a student learns using information and communication technologies without being physically present in the same room or training site as the lecturer. In the remote study process, the lecturer conducts lectures and classes, including seminars, online; prepares and uploads study materials to the *e-studies environment* for the student to study remotely; prepares descriptions of tasks for the student's independent remote work; organises study work remotely using online communication; and assesses the results of the student's independent work.
- 2.6. **Employer** – the University or cooperation partner.
- 2.7. **Employment contract** – an employment contract for the performance of academic and research work to achieve the learning outcomes of the study programme, concluded between the University or a cooperation partner and a doctoral student admitted to a state-funded study place in the cases and in accordance with the procedures laid down in these Regulations, the Regulations of the Department of Doctoral Studies, other internal regulatory enactments of the University and external laws and regulations.
- 2.8. **Exmatriculation** – removal of a doctoral student from the University's register of students in accordance with the procedure laid down in the University's Internal Rules and Regulations for Studies and these Regulations.
- 2.9. **E-grades** – the electronic register of a student's grades in the e-studies environment.
- 2.10. **E-studies environment** – an electronic online learning environment in which the University makes the materials required for studies available, students submit the work prescribed in a study course, and teaching staff enter grades for students' work.
- 2.11. **Hybrid learning** – a form of full-time studies in which some students study on site and others remotely at the same time. For example, in a class where a lecturer works with students in an auditorium, some students engage in discussions and other activities by videoconference.
- 2.12. **Individual study plan** – a student's study plan that differs from the approved study programme plan while observing the overall timetable of lectures and classes.
- 2.13. **Enrolment** – inclusion of a person in the University's student register after the admission requirements have been fulfilled.

- 2.14. **Credit point** – an accounting unit used for measuring studies that expresses the volume of study work on the basis of the learning outcomes defined for a study programme or part thereof and the workload associated with achieving those outcomes. One credit point corresponds to the student's 25-30 hours of work. Given that the academic year lasts eleven months, 66 credit points must be obtained during one year of full-time studies. During one year of part-time studies, less than 66 credit points must be obtained in accordance with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (hereinafter – ECTS).
- 2.15. **Lecture** – a form of acquiring a study course in which a teaching staff member presents the theoretical material included in the study course description. A lecture is a source of study information and a means of promoting a doctoral student's cognitive activity. A lecture may also be delivered as a video lecture.
- 2.16. **Class** – a form of acquiring a study course in which doctoral students, under the guidance of academic staff, consolidate theoretical knowledge acquired in lectures and independently, and acquire the relevant practical skills. In remote studies, classes may be conducted via video conferencing.
- 2.17. **Plagiarism** - presenting ideas borrowed from other sources without due reference to those sources, further conveying ideas expressed or written by another person as their own, without giving a precise and correctly worded reference to the author and source concerned, or repeating their own ideas that were previously made public without acknowledging the original source (self-plagiarism).
- 2.18. **Student portal MyRSU** – a portal in which every University student, using a personalised username and password, may obtain information about their grades, view an individualised timetable of lectures and classes, access library databases, monitor their financial obligations, read personalised news, draft and submit applications and requests, and access the e-studies environment, the student email account provided by the University and e-services.
- 2.19. **Year of study** – a period of study for the implementation part of the study programme (for example, the first year of study).
- 2.20. **Study course description** – a document available in the e-studies environment, which defines the prerequisites for the commencement of the course, defines the aim of the study course and the learning outcomes to be achieved, outlines the course content required to achieve the learning outcomes, describes the independent work of the student and defines the criteria for the assessment of the learning outcomes, the type and form of the examination.

- 2.21. **Study course** – a structured body of knowledge, skills and competence corresponding to a study programme, organised at a defined level and to a defined extent, with specified learning outcomes for the achievement of which credit points are awarded.
- 2.22. **Study programme** – a form of organising doctoral studies subject to defined requirements, upon the successful fulfilment of which a doctoral student is issued confirmation of successful completion of the doctoral study programme, enabling the student to become a candidate for a scientific doctoral degree.
- 2.23. **Director of the study programme** – a person approved by a decision of the Senate who is responsible for the development and implementation of the doctoral study programme. A study programme may have a head of the sub-programme.
- 2.24. **Study programme plan** – an annual study programme plan approved at the meeting of the Council of Deans.
- 2.25. **Research integrity** – a set of principles, professional, legal and ethical obligations that ensure good and responsible research practice. <https://www.rsu.lv/petniecibas-integritate>
- 2.26. **Doctoral thesis supervisor** – a researcher (holding a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification) who is engaged in research, as evidenced by participation in or management of research projects, publications in peer-reviewed journals or expert status in the database of the Latvian Council of Science.¹ The doctoral thesis supervisor shall be approved by a decree.
- 2.27. **Doctoral thesis** – an independently developed scientific work prepared in cooperation with the doctoral thesis supervisor, containing the results of original scientific research and providing new insights in one or more fields or sub-fields of science. The research may be carried out at a cooperation partner. A doctoral thesis may take the form of a dissertation, a collection of scientific publications or a monograph.
- 2.28. **Assessment sheet** – an electronic document in the e-studies environment in which a teaching staff member enters the grade and date of an assessment. Assessment sheets shall be submitted electronically.
- 2.29. **Cooperation partner** – a legal person or another institution (with which the University has concluded an agreement), which is capable of providing the material and technical equipment or information resources required for developing a doctoral thesis, meets the requirements for employing doctoral students laid down in the Regulations of the University's Department of Doctoral Studies, and is entitled to conclude an employment contract with a doctoral student.

¹The expert status conferred by the Latvian Council of Science must remain active throughout the period in which the doctoral thesis is supervised (an interval of up to twelve months between the expiry of the expert status and its renewal is permitted).

- 2.30. **Study contract** – a contract between a doctoral student and the University concerning their mutual obligations in order to ensure the doctoral student's completion of the study programme in accordance with the procedures laid down in these Regulations and external laws and regulations.
- 2.31. **Agreement on the development of a doctoral thesis** – an agreement between a doctoral student, the doctoral thesis supervisor(s) and the Department of Doctoral Studies (on behalf of the University) concerning their mutual obligations in order to ensure good practice in the implementation of doctoral studies during the development of the doctoral thesis and to facilitate the successful defence of the doctoral thesis for the award of a scientific doctoral degree.
- 2.32. **Research Activity Information System** – a system intended for compiling, storing and analysing research outputs relating to the University as a whole and individually to each member of the University's academic and research staff, doctoral student and candidate for a scientific doctoral degree. The system ensures the timely and high-quality retrieval of information and data for reports, the preparation of overviews, and the assessment and motivation of academic staff, and also promotes the University's international visibility (hereinafter – the Research Portal). Link to Research Portal: <https://science.rsu.lv/>.

3. Types and methods of knowledge assessment

- 3.1. Assessment of knowledge, skills and competence of doctoral students depending on the specific character of the study course may be organised by using various assessment methods.
- 3.2. **Test** – a written or computer-based assessment of knowledge conducted as part of lectures, classes or seminars.
- 3.3. **Report** – written material prepared by a doctoral student in accordance with the requirements set out in the study course description and relating to the topic of the doctoral thesis.
- 3.4. **Pass/fail test** – taken upon completion of a study course or an important stage of a study course. A pass/fail test shall be organised in a manner similar to an examination and shall be graded as “pass” or “fail”.
- 3.5. **Examination** – a form of assessing knowledge and skills relating to a study course (or part thereof), in which performance is graded on a 10-point scale.
- 3.6. Different forms of assessment may be used in examinations and pass/fail tests:
- 3.6.1. written;
 - 3.6.2. oral;

3.6.3. computer-based;

3.6.4. combined forms (for example, written and oral).

- 3.7. **Doctoral examination in a field/subfield** – a form of assessing knowledge and skills in the relevant field/subfield in which the doctoral student is developing their doctoral thesis (if the doctoral student is developing an interdisciplinary doctoral thesis, the doctoral student shall select the relevant field/subfield in which their knowledge and skills are to be assessed). Knowledge shall be assessed by a doctoral examination board for the relevant field/subfield (if the doctoral student is developing an interdisciplinary doctoral thesis, knowledge shall be assessed by a doctoral examination board comprising representatives of both relevant fields/subfields at the University). The Examination Board shall organise the doctoral examination and develop the doctoral examination questions in accordance with the topic of the doctoral student's doctoral thesis (no more than three questions). The examination shall be conducted in the form of a discussion in order to assess the doctoral student's ability to defend the results of their research with reasoned arguments and to demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the relevant field of science.
- 3.8. **Doctoral examination in a foreign language** – a form of assessing knowledge and skills in a foreign language in relation to the topic of the doctoral thesis.
- 3.9. The doctoral student may view the grade in the Student Portal (My RSU).
- 3.10. After the grade has been announced/published in the e-studies environment, the doctoral student is entitled to request and receive an explanation of the errors made.

4. Knowledge assessment system

- 4.1. A 10-point grading scale is used to assess the knowledge and skills of doctoral students:
- 4.1.1. with distinction (10) – knowledge, skills and competence exceed the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course and they testify to the ability to carry out independent research and deep understanding of problems;
 - 4.1.2. excellent (9) – knowledge, skills and competence fully comply with the requirements set for the study programme, study module or the study course; the ability to use the acquired knowledge independently;
 - 4.1.3. very good (8) – the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course are fully met, but in some areas there is insufficient depth of understanding to use the knowledge independently for addressing more complex problems;

- 4.1.4. good (7) – in general the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course are met but sometimes the inability to use the acquired knowledge independently is detected;
- 4.1.5. almost good (6) – the requirements of the study programme, study module or the study course are met, but there is insufficient depth of understanding of the problem and inability to use the acquired knowledge;
- 4.1.6. satisfactory (5) – in total, the study programme, the study module or the study course is acquired but there is insufficient knowledge of certain issues and inability to use the acquired knowledge;
- 4.1.7. almost satisfactory (4) – in total, the study programme, the study module or the study course is acquired, however, there is insufficient understanding of some basic concepts and there are considerable difficulties in practical application of the acquired knowledge;
- 4.1.8. weak (3) – the knowledge is superficial and incomplete; the student is unable to use it in specific situations;
- 4.1.9. poor (2) – there is superficial knowledge of only some issues; most of the study programme, study module and the study course is not acquired;
- 4.1.10. very poor (1) – there is no understanding of the fundamentals of the course and there is almost no knowledge of the study programme, study module or the study course.
- 4.2. If a doctoral student fails to attend an assessment, the doctoral student shall not receive a grade and the teaching staff member shall record the absence by entering “did not attend” in the section of the e-grades system intended for this purpose.
- 4.3. A doctoral student shall be deemed to be in good academic standing if they have received a grade of “almost satisfactory” (4 points) or higher. A grade of “almost satisfactory” (4 points) shall be awarded where at least 55% of the learning outcomes have been achieved.
- 4.4. A 10-point grading system shall not be used for assessment of the pass/fail test.
- 4.5. The lecturer may assess the achievement of learning outcomes in examinations and tests (for example, computer-based tests and similar) as a percentage aligning it with a 10-point grading scale:
 - 4.5.1. from 96 % to 100 % - with distinction (10);
 - 4.5.2. from 85 % to 95 % - excellent (9);
 - 4.5.3. from 75 % to 84 % - very good (8);
 - 4.5.4. from 70 % to 74 % - good (7);
 - 4.5.5. from 65% to 69% - almost good (6);
 - 4.5.6. from 60% to 64% - satisfactory (5);

- 4.5.7. from 55 % to 59 % - almost satisfactory (4);
 - 4.5.8. from 40 % to 54 % - weak (3);
 - 4.5.9. from 20 % to 39 % - poor (2);
 - 4.5.10. from 0 % to 19 % - very poor (1).
- 4.6. A pass/fail test is passed and a grade of “pass” is awarded if the doctoral student’s knowledge, skills and competence correspond to the level of “almost satisfactory” (4 points) or higher. If the doctoral student’s knowledge, skills and competence in a pass/fail test do not correspond to this level, a grade of “fail” shall be awarded.
- 4.7. The principles of academic integrity and research integrity, as well as the types and consequences of breaches of academic integrity, are prescribed by the University’s Academic Integrity Policy, the guidelines established by the University for observing academic integrity and the guidelines for electronic assessments.
- 4.8. The University is entitled to examine any work submitted by a doctoral student using various methods for detecting breaches of academic integrity, in particular methods for checking the originality of content and identifying copyright material (for example, using automated systems available to the University). If information is received concerning facts that indicate a possible breach of academic integrity, a doctoral student’s work may be re-examined after it has already been assessed and also after the doctoral student has been exmatriculated from the doctoral study programme.
- 4.9. If a lecturer or doctoral thesis supervisor identifies possible plagiarism or another possible breach of academic integrity or research integrity in a doctoral student’s work or conduct, the doctoral student shall be required to provide an explanation within no more than 3 (three) working days (failure to provide an explanation shall not prevent further action). Within 5 (five) working days, the teaching staff member or doctoral thesis supervisor shall assess the doctoral student’s explanation (if provided) and proceed in one of the following ways:
- 4.9.1. if no breach of academic integrity has been established – permit the student to continue taking the assessment and award a grade corresponding to the content of the work;
 - 4.9.2. if a breach of academic integrity is established in an interim examination – the student loses one attempt to take the examination and shall receive a grade of "very poor" (1 point);
 - 4.9.3. if a breach of academic integrity is detected in the final examination, the doctoral student shall be denied the opportunity to take the final examination and the assessment “very poor” (1 point) shall be given, and the head of the academic

department and the Dean of the Department of Doctoral Studies shall be notified of initiating disciplinary proceedings;

- 4.9.4. if a breach of academic integrity is found in the doctoral student's work that has already been assessed, the initial assessment of the work shall be amended and the assessment "very poor" (1 point) shall be given, and the head of the academic department and the Dean of the Department of Doctoral Studies shall be notified of initiating disciplinary proceedings. If a grade for an interim examination that constituted a prerequisite for taking the final examination or contributed cumulatively to the final examination grade has been amended, the student's entitlement to take the final examination or to obtain a cumulative final grade shall be reviewed accordingly, and the grade for that examination shall also be amended.
- 4.10. In the event of a breach of academic integrity in the final examination or in the re-take of the interim examination, the Dean shall, within five working days of receipt of the information specified in Sub-paragraphs 4.9.2 to 4.9.4 of the Regulations from the lecturer or the doctoral thesis supervisor, decide whether to initiate disciplinary proceedings (Sub-paragraphs 4.9.2 to 4.9.4 of the Regulations) or refuse to initiate disciplinary proceedings (Sub-paragraph 4.9.2 of the Regulations). The doctoral student shall be informed of the decision taken within one working day.
- 4.11. In the event of a breach of academic integrity, the lecturer shall have the right to set special rules for the repeated examination, if such is provided, by informing the doctoral student thereof.
- 4.12. The final assessment of the doctoral student's work (including, the assessment for the final examination, if the breach of academic integrity is established after the assessment for the final examination has been given) shall be determined within the framework of the disciplinary proceedings.
- 4.13. If the breach concerns two or more doctoral students (students), the assessment of all the involved doctoral students' work shall be reviewed accordingly, and the conduct of the doctoral students shall be evaluated.
- 4.14. If information is received indicating a possible serious breach of academic integrity or research integrity during doctoral studies and the person is no longer a doctoral student of the University but has not yet become a candidate for a scientific doctoral degree, the matter shall be considered by a committee (collegial body) established in accordance with the procedures laid down in the University's internal regulatory enactments. The Rector shall make a decision in the case on the basis of the committee's opinion (recommendation) in

accordance with the Administrative Procedure Law and the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

**5. Duties of the director of the study programme (head of the sub-programme),
doctoral thesis supervisor and doctoral student**

- 5.1. Upon commencing studies in a doctoral study programme, the doctoral student, the doctoral thesis supervisor and the Department of Doctoral Studies shall conclude an agreement on the development of the doctoral thesis.
- 5.2. The director of the study programme (head of the sub-programme):
 - 5.2.1. Coordinates the planning and organisation of the study process;
 - 5.2.2. Supports and advises the doctoral student on matters relating to study planning, the selection of a doctoral thesis supervisor, and the development and defence of the doctoral thesis;
 - 5.2.3. During the final year of studies, assesses the draft doctoral thesis developed by the doctoral student and recommends that it be submitted for a preliminary discussion of the doctoral thesis before the thesis is submitted for consideration by a Doctoral Committee of the University.
- 5.3. The doctoral thesis supervisor:
 - 5.3.1. Advises the doctoral student on matters relating to the development of the doctoral thesis, including the scope of the thesis; the selection of the research topic, design and methods; the planning and implementation of the research; data collection methods; ethical considerations; the publication strategy; the doctoral degree award process; and other matters relating to the doctoral research, the development of the thesis and the award of the doctoral degree;
 - 5.3.2. Ensures that the doctoral student obtains the necessary approvals from the relevant Research Ethics Committee in a timely manner where the research involves the processing of personal data, the participation of human subjects or other ethical considerations specified in laws and regulations;
 - 5.3.3. Supports the doctoral student in matters relating to personal data management, including the development of a protocol for storing personal data, in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of laws and regulations;
 - 5.3.4. Advises the doctoral student on the development of the study plan and doctoral thesis plan and monitors progress in implementing the research plan;

- 5.3.5. Provides the necessary support to the doctoral student in the implementation of the plan, continuously monitors the implementation of the doctoral student's plan and the progress in the development of the doctoral thesis;
 - 5.3.6. Advises the doctoral student on the preparation of scientific publications and their publication in journals indexed in Scopus or Web of Science;
 - 5.3.7. Where the doctoral student has two doctoral thesis supervisors, the supervisors and the doctoral student shall agree on the division of duties and responsibilities;
 - 5.3.8. Participates in the meeting at which the doctoral student's research is discussed;
 - 5.3.9. Advises the doctoral student on career opportunities relevant to the specific nature of their research;
 - 5.3.10. At the beginning of each semester, submits a doctoral thesis supervisor's report on the doctoral student's implementation of the research plan and the progress made in developing the doctoral thesis during the previous semester;
 - 5.3.11. Once per academic year, or as necessary, approves the list of grant expenditure submitted by the doctoral student and confirms that the use of the grant funding is justified.
- 5.4. The doctoral student shall:
- 5.4.1. Pursue their studies conscientiously and successfully complete the relevant doctoral study programme within the prescribed period in accordance with the Study Contract, the Agreement on the Development of the Doctoral Thesis, the Employment Contract and the University's internal regulatory enactments;
 - 5.4.2. Develop the doctoral thesis no later than within 4 (four) years after matriculation (excluding periods of academic leave), defend it and obtain the degree of Doctor of Science. Inform the Department of Doctoral Studies in a timely manner about problem situations and other circumstances that hinder the development of the doctoral thesis;
 - 5.4.3. In cooperation with the doctoral thesis supervisor(s), prepare a research plan (abstract), taking into account the opportunities and cooperation networks available within the doctoral study programme;
 - 5.4.4. Where amendments are made to the research plan (abstract), inform the Department of Doctoral Studies by submitting the updated abstract through the MyRSU portal. The abstract must be signed by the doctoral student and the doctoral thesis supervisor(s);

- 5.4.5. Actively engage in disseminating research results, publish scientific articles indexed in the Scopus or Web of Science databases, deliver presentations at scientific conferences and participate in international research networks;
- 5.4.6. Obtain the necessary approval from the relevant Research Ethics Committee in a timely manner where the research conducted as part of the doctoral thesis involves the processing of personal data, the participation of human subjects or other ethical considerations specified in laws and regulations;
- 5.4.7. Develop and maintain a data management plan specifying the procedures for collecting, processing, storing and accessing data, as well as the conditions for deleting or archiving the data following completion of the research. The University is entitled to require the doctoral student to submit copies of the aforementioned Research Ethics Committee approvals and the data management plan before the defence of the doctoral thesis;
- 5.4.8. Keep the information on the research results of their doctoral thesis up to date in their Research Portal profile.

6. Organisation of studies

- 6.1. Studies in doctoral study programmes shall be conducted in the official language or in a foreign language in accordance with a licensed or accredited study programme. Studies shall be organised in accordance with the study programme plan for the relevant year of study in the respective academic year within which the scientific research part is completed according to the individual study plan of each doctoral student.
- 6.2. Attendance of classes and lectures, and taking examinations in all the study courses shall be compulsory.
- 6.3. Upon starting each study course, the teaching staff of the academic department shall acquaint doctoral students with the content of the study course and the list of literature required for its completion, the assignments to be completed and the requirements, as well as the type and methods of knowledge and skill assessment. The mode of delivery of the study course (face-to-face, remote learning, hybrid learning) shall be specified in the e-studies environment.
- 6.4. The doctoral student must complete all the examinations prescribed in the study course description within the time schedule and time limit laid down in the timetable of lectures, seminars and classes, as well as in accordance with their individual study plan.

- 6.5. If a doctoral student has not participated in one of the classes, the lecturer shall have the right to include additional questions regarding the topics of the missed classes in the examination as prescribed in the study course description.
- 6.6. The written work of doctoral students shall be checked and evaluated by the academic staff not later than within 5 (five) working days after submission of the work. The doctoral student's answer in oral examinations shall be assessed within 5 (five) working days. Grades shall be entered in the e-grades system by completing the electronic assessment sheet and published in the student portal within 5 (five) working days of the assessment being graded.
- 6.7. Absence from classes and lectures where knowledge, skills and competence are tested, shall be equivalent to the first time of taking the examination, except in the cases referred to in Paragraphs 6.8 and 6.9 when a doctoral student retains the opportunity to take the examination twice.
- 6.8. If a doctoral student plans in advance to miss a class for a justified reason, for example, to participate in events representing the university or the country, such as scientific conferences, seminars or exchange visits, the doctoral student shall submit documents confirming the absence through MyRSU in a timely manner before the planned absence.
- 6.9. The doctoral student shall inform the lecturer of the respective class, the director of the study programme about the reasons for the previously unplanned absence within 5 (five) working days after returning to studies. In the event of illness, the doctoral student shall submit a document certifying incapacity for work through MyRSU; for another justified reason, the doctoral student shall submit a written explanation.
- 6.10. The director of the study programme shall evaluate the documents on non-attendance of classes within 5 (five) working days after receiving them and shall ensure that the doctoral student and the academic department are informed of the evaluation results. The director of the study programme shall be entitled to request the doctoral student to provide additional oral and written information; and the doctoral student shall be obliged to provide such information.
- 6.11. If the doctoral student has been absent from classes due to illness or another justified reason, the doctoral student may, subject to an assessment by the director of the study programme, continue their studies in accordance with an individual study plan.
- 6.12. If the number or content of the classes missed by the doctoral student is so substantial that the study course cannot be continued in accordance with the doctoral student's approved plan for the relevant year of studies, or if the doctoral student has failed a semester examination on two occasions, the academic structural unit shall inform the director of the

study programme thereof. The director of the study programme shall evaluate the situation (the reasons for and extent of the absence and the failed examinations) and the possibilities for continuing studies.

- 6.13. A doctoral student may temporarily interrupt their studies due to illness or another justified reason and subsequently resume them. An interruption of doctoral studies (academic leave) shall be formalised by a decree of the Vice-Rector for Science concerning matters related to the study process. The total duration of academic leave granted to a doctoral student must not exceed two years. During academic leave, the person shall retain doctoral student status and their study place in the programme. However, the doctoral scholarship and study and student loans, for example, shall not be disbursed, and the doctoral student shall not be entitled to request or receive doctoral study grant funding.
- 6.14. At the instruction of the director of the study programme, the doctoral student and the doctoral thesis supervisor(s) shall attend a meeting of the Doctoral Research Discussion Committee and present the progress made in developing the doctoral thesis.
- 6.15. For the doctoral study programme to be considered successfully completed, the doctoral student must have successfully completed all courses included in the doctoral study programme and, during their doctoral studies, must have conducted research and research activities (relating to the topic of the doctoral thesis) that have resulted in at least one of the following:
 - 6.15.1. **Two scientific publications that have undergone anonymous peer review** in journals indexed in Scopus or Web of Science, at least one of which has been published in a Q1- or Q2-ranked journal with the candidate as the first author;
 - 6.15.2. **One scientific article that has undergone anonymous peer review**, published in a Q1- or Q2-ranked journal indexed in Scopus or Web of Science, with the candidate as the first author, and **a peer-reviewed scientific monograph** devoted to a single scientific topic or problem and containing a bibliography. If the peer-reviewed scientific monograph is published in Latvian, it shall contain a summary in at least one other official language of the European Union.
- 6.16. The doctoral student shall record all research activities undertaken during their doctoral studies in the "PhD Projects" section of their Research Portal profile.
- 6.17. In the final year of study, a doctoral student who has fulfilled the requirements of the study programme by successfully completing all study courses and undertaking the required research activities may submit the draft doctoral thesis for a preliminary discussion to be organised in accordance with the University's internal regulatory enactments governing the doctoral degree

award procedure. Following the preliminary discussion of the doctoral thesis, at which the Committee decides whether the thesis may be submitted to the Doctoral Committee, the doctoral student shall be awarded the ECTS credits corresponding to the learning outcomes prescribed for the final year of study.

- 6.18. If the Preliminary Discussion Committee has issued a favourable opinion on the draft doctoral thesis and the reviewer has confirmed that the recommendations (if any) contained in the opinion have been implemented, the doctoral student shall be awarded the credit points prescribed for the fourth year of study and issued confirmation of the successful completion of the University's doctoral study programme. Once these prerequisites have been fulfilled, the doctoral student may submit an application to initiate the doctoral degree award procedure in accordance with the University's internal regulatory enactments governing that procedure.
- 6.19. Following exmatriculation, the doctoral student's personal file containing their study documents shall be transferred to the University Archives.

7. Doctoral research discussion

- 7.1. At the instruction of the director of the doctoral study programme, a discussion of the results of doctoral students' thesis research (hereinafter – the Doctoral Research Discussion) shall be organised at the end of the year of study in accordance with the procedures and deadlines established by the Department of Doctoral Studies.
- 7.2. The composition of the Doctoral Research Discussion Committee shall be approved by a decree of the Vice-Rector for Science on the joint proposal of the director of the relevant study programme and doctoral thesis supervisor, taking into account the sub-field of the doctoral student's thesis. The Committee shall consist of 3 to 7 members. The Committee shall be composed of the director of the doctoral study programme or an expert in the relevant field nominated by the director of the study programme, together with members who are specialists in the relevant field or sub-field and hold a scientific doctoral degree. The Dean of the Department of Doctoral Studies may, at their discretion, attend meetings of the Committee in a non-voting capacity.
- 7.3. The doctoral student shall present the progress made in developing the doctoral thesis and the results of their research activities and discuss the progress of the thesis with the members of the Committee. The members of the Committee shall provide recommendations and identify possible tools or methodological approaches for improving the doctoral thesis.

8. Organisation and conduct of examinations and pass/fail tests

- 8.1. The assessment of a doctoral student's knowledge shall be organised by the teaching staff member responsible for the relevant study course.
- 8.2. Information on the scheduled times of assessments shall be posted in the e-studies environment no later than 10 (ten) working days before the assessment.
- 8.3. No later than 3 (three) working days before an examination or theoretical pass/fail test, the doctoral student is entitled to agree with the teaching staff member responsible for the study course to reschedule the start time or date of the assessment on one occasion during the academic year.
- 8.4. If, irrespective of the reason, the doctoral student fails to attend an examination or pass/fail test at the scheduled time, "did not attend" shall be entered on the assessment sheet.
- 8.5. At the beginning of the study course, doctoral students shall receive instructions in the e-studies environment concerning the form and type of assessment. Doctoral students shall be informed of any additional learning resources that they are permitted to use.
- 8.6. The following persons may be present during an assessment: the doctoral students being assessed, the examiners, the Rector, the Vice-Rectors, the Dean of the Department of Doctoral Studies, the director of the study programme, the doctoral thesis supervisor(s), specialists invited by the teaching staff member responsible for the study course, and University employees.
- 8.7. The duration of a written and computer-based assessment shall be determined by the teaching staff member responsible for the relevant study course.
- 8.8. The doctoral student shall have not less than 30 minutes for preparing their answer in the oral part of the examination.
- 8.9. Duration of oral examining of each doctoral student shall not exceed 30 minutes in any examination.
- 8.10. If there are several separate questions in the examination, the doctoral student shall have the right to answer them in the order he/she wishes.
- 8.11. Any examination and pass/fail test or defence may be taken no more than twice.
- 8.12. A doctoral student who has not obtained a passing grade in an examination or pass/fail test may retake the assessment within the same year of study.
- 8.13. The doctoral student shall agree the time of the repeated assessment in advance with the teaching staff member responsible for the relevant study course.
- 8.14. If at the end of the year of study the doctoral student has not passed the examinations prescribed in the study programme plan, the director of the study programme shall consider

the individual circumstances of the case (including the reasons for any absence) and propose that the doctoral student be granted academic leave or exmatriculated.

9. Lodging and considering appeals

- 9.1. A doctoral student is entitled to lodge an appeal requesting a review of the correspondence between the question set in a study course assessment and the doctoral student's answer to that question.
- 9.2. An appeal against a grade awarded in a doctoral examination in the relevant field or sub-field or in a foreign language may be lodged by the end of the working day following publication of the grade in the student portal. An appeal concerning the conduct of an examination or the assessment procedure in any other assessment may be lodged within 3 (three) working days of the publication of the grade in the student portal.
- 9.3. An appeal against the assessment of the doctoral examination must be addressed to the Chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Board.
- 9.4. If the appeal concerns the last possible time of taking the examination, it must be addressed to the Dean of the Department of Doctoral Studies. If in this case the Dean as a representative of the academic staff, has made the assessment, the appeal must be addressed to the Vice-Rector for Science.
- 9.5. An appeal against a grade awarded in the final examination of a study course shall be addressed to the Dean of the Department of Doctoral Studies.
- 9.6. The appeal **shall be lodged** with the Student Services which shall do the following:
 - 9.6.1. Forward the appeal to the addressee for consideration;
 - 9.6.2. If the appeal is addressed to the Dean or Vice-Rector for Science, they shall inform the academic department about the appeal received, which shall:
 - 9.6.2.1. Provide the addressee of the appeal with the necessary information (explanations, the student's work, etc.);
 - 9.6.2.2. Inform the lecturer, who evaluated the examination, about the appeal received and about the possibility to submit the explanation about the assessment.
- 9.7. The appeal shall be considered by an Appeals Committee established and convened by the addressee of the appeal. The Appeals Committee shall comprise the addressee of the appeal and specialists invited by that person in accordance with the subject matter of the appeal (excluding any persons who assessed the doctoral student's performance). The Chairperson of the Appeals Committee shall be the addressee of the appeal. The Appeals Committee shall be composed of at least three persons. The supervisor of the doctoral student's doctoral thesis (at

least one – if two supervisors have been approved for the doctoral student) shall also be invited to the meeting of the Committee. The supervisor of the doctoral thesis shall have no voting rights and his/her absence from the meeting shall not constitute an obstacle to the consideration of the case.

- 9.8. The Chairperson of the Appeals Committee shall inform the appellant and the lecturer who has assessed the examination about the time and place of the meeting of the Appeals Committee, as well as about the rights to participate in the meeting and provide explanations. The appellant and the lecturer who assessed the examination should preferably be present at the meeting of the Appeals Committee.
- 9.9. Having considered the appeal, the Appeals Committee shall satisfy or reject the request included in the appeal.
- 9.10. If the content of the appeal received shows obvious breach of the examination procedure, the addressee of the appeal may cancel the assessment and ask to retake the examination without establishing the Appeals Committee.
- 9.11. The appeal shall be considered as soon as possible (but within no more than 10 working days from the receipt). The Chairperson of the Appeals Committee shall notify the appellant of the outcome in writing.

10. Employment and career support for doctoral students

- 10.1. The University shall ensure that, within 5 (five) months of the matriculation of a doctoral student admitted to a state-funded study place, the University or a cooperation partner concludes an employment contract with the doctoral student for the performance of academic work aimed at achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme, in the cases and in accordance with the procedures prescribed by external laws and regulations and in compliance with the Employer's remuneration and personnel policies.
- 10.2. The Employment Contract shall be concluded for the term of the Study Contract or for another period prescribed in these Regulations and external laws and regulations.
- 10.3. A doctoral student admitted to a state-funded study place shall receive remuneration from the funding earmarked by the University for the remuneration of doctoral students, comprising state budget funding and other funding provided by the University and Cooperation Partners.
- 10.4. The Employment Contract shall be concluded for part-time employment.
- 10.5. In the exceptional cases specified in the Law on Higher Education Institutions, an Employment Contract need not be concluded with a doctoral student admitted to a state-

financed study place. If, during the doctoral student's studies, none of the aforementioned exceptional cases continues to apply, the University shall provide the doctoral student with employment in accordance with these Regulations and external laws and regulations.

- 10.6. During the term of the Study Contract, the doctoral student is entitled to change Employer, provided that a new Employment Contract is concluded no later than one month after the date on which the previous Employment Contract ended, in accordance with these Regulations and the Regulations of the Department of Doctoral Studies. The doctoral student shall notify the University of a change of Employer within 5 (five) working days of the termination of the employment relationship with the previous Employer. If a new Employment Contract has not been concluded within one month of the date on which the previous Employment Contract ended, the University shall, within 6 (six) months of receiving the aforementioned notification from the doctoral student, ensure that a new Employment Contract is concluded with the doctoral student in accordance with these Regulations and the Regulations of the Department of Doctoral Studies.
- 10.7. An employer that is a cooperation partner is entitled to terminate the employment relationship with the doctoral student during the term of the Study Contract in the cases prescribed by the Labour Law, subject to the applicable periods of notice, and shall notify the University thereof. In such a case, the University shall, within 6 (six) months of receiving the aforementioned notification, ensure that a new Employment Contract is concluded with the doctoral student in accordance with these Regulations and the Regulations of the Department of Doctoral Studies.
- 10.8. If the doctoral student exercises their right to academic leave in accordance with external laws and regulations and these Regulations, the employer and the doctoral student shall agree on the arrangements for employment under the Employment Contract.
- 10.9. The Employment Contract shall terminate:
 - 10.9.1. Upon the award of the doctoral degree and the termination of the Study Contract;
 - 10.9.2. In the cases prescribed by the Labour Law, subject to the applicable periods of notice;
 - 10.9.3. if the University terminates the Contract on the Development of the Doctoral Thesis and excludes a doctoral student from the list of students without being awarded a doctoral diploma, in the cases prescribed by these Regulations and external laws and regulations.

11. Final provisions

- 11.1. These Regulations shall apply insofar as external laws and regulations do not provide otherwise.
- 11.2. Clauses 2.6, 2.7, 2.29 and 5.4.1 and Chapter 10 of these Regulations, which concern the employment of doctoral students under an Employment Contract with the University or a cooperation partner, shall apply to doctoral students who commenced their studies in a state-financed study place in a doctoral study programme at the University in the 2024/2025 academic year or thereafter.
- 11.3. Matters not provided for in these Regulations and any disputes shall be resolved by decision of the head of the relevant structural unit, the director of the study programme or the Dean of the Department of the Doctoral Studies, in accordance with the RSU Internal Rules and Regulations for Studies or other internal regulatory enactments of the University.
- 11.4. These Regulations shall enter into force on the day following their approval by the RSU Senate.

Chair of the Senate

J. Gardovskis

D. Bandere
T. 67409120

AGREED
at Rīga Stradiņš University
the meeting of the Council of Deans
of 15 June 2026
Minutes No 4-SP-3/8/2026

AGREED
at Rīga Stradiņš University
Rectorate meeting
of 31 August 2026
Minutes No 1-PB-1/56/2026

THIS DOCUMENT IS ELECTRONICALLY SIGNED WITH A SECURE ELECTRONIC
SIGNATURE AND CONTAINS A TIME STAMP