

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

Issued in compliance with
Section 15¹, Clause 3 (c) of the Law on 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) at Rīga Stradiņš University (hereinafter - the University).
2. The aim of the qualification paper, student's research paper, Bachelor's thesis and Master's thesis (hereinafter - the Final Theses) 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 the student's readiness to use the acquired knowledge, skills and competences independently in addressing academic and professional issues.
3. The objectives of the Final Thesis are the following:
 - 3.1. extend and increase the student's theoretical knowledge of the chosen topic;
 - 3.2. facilitate the development of the student's practical skills through research activities;
 - 3.3. promote the student's involvement in the work of the University's research laboratories and research institutes;
 - 3.4. develop the ability to read literature in foreign languages and analyse the literature in the field independently, to conduct research, to process research data statistically, to analyse the results obtained and to draw evidence-based conclusions;

- 3.5. draw up the Final Thesis according to technical, bibliographic and literary requirements.
4. Students who have successfully fulfilled all the academic and financial commitments shall be permitted to write their Final Thesis.
5. The faculties shall develop and the Faculty Council shall approve methodological guidelines on the specific provisions for writing, executing and defending the Final Thesis 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. The faculties shall be obliged to regularly review and update the methodological guidelines.
6. Writing and defence of the Final Thesis 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 THESIS SUPERVISOR, TOPIC SELECTION AND APPROVAL

7. The Final Thesis 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 Thesis supervisor (hereinafter - the Supervisor) may be a representative of the academic and research staff of the University or a visiting lecturer. The level of education of the Final Thesis Supervisor shall be at least a Master's degree or education equivalent to a Master's degree. The recommended level of education of the Master's thesis Supervisor shall be a candidate for a doctoral degree or a doctoral degree.
9. The Final Thesis 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. formulating 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 Thesis advisor (hereinafter - the Advisor) shall be a recognised professional in their field, shall have the required education and at least three years of professional experience in the subject area of the Final Thesis or in a related field.
11. Selection of the topic and the Final Thesis Supervisor shall be made in cooperation between the student, potential Supervisor, the Director of the Study Programme and/or the Head of the academic department. The Director of the programme (or any other staff member appointed

- by the Dean) shall advise the student, as necessary, on the choice of the topic and obtaining of the necessary permissions.
12. The Faculty Council shall approve the list of recommended topics (subject areas) for Final Thesis in Latvian and English and the potential Supervisors not less than 9 months prior to the scheduled defence of the Final Thesis, and the faculty shall inform the students about it by publishing it on the University e-environment within two weeks after the Faculty Council meeting. The student shall have the right to propose a topic of his/her choice.
 13. The faculty shall organise an information meeting for students, send explanatory e-mails and other information events as necessary.
 14. Not less than 7 months prior to the scheduled defence of the thesis, students shall submit a written application for the Final Thesis topic, signed by the Supervisor (if two Supervisors are required - signatures of both Supervisors or a signature of the Advisor) to the Director of the Study Programme (or to the Head of the academic department in individual faculties), justifying the topicality and scientific significance of the topic, defining the research aims and objectives, hypothesis or research question and specifying the methods and sources to be used in the thesis, as well as indicating the necessary permissions or attaching them (if already obtained).
 15. Final Theses topics, Supervisors, the involved Advisors, if necessary, and the deadlines for submitting permissions, as well as the deadlines for submitting the Final Theses shall be approved by the relevant Faculty Council (or at the meeting of the academic department in particular faculties) no later than 6 months prior to the scheduled defence of the theses. A change of the topic of the thesis or a change of the Supervisor shall, in exceptional cases, be approved by the Faculty Council, but not later than one month before the deadline for submission of the Final Thesis.
 16. The receipt of written permissions (consent) for conducting research for the Final Thesis, 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 permission of the University Research Ethics Committee, the permission of the competent state institution, if necessary (e.g. the Central Medical Ethics Committee, the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control); the permission of the relevant medical institution, the social care institution where the research will take place;
 - 16.2. for research related to commercial secrets, know-how, use of trade marks, use of patented or patentable inventions, the authorisation of the holder of these rights shall be obtained;

- 16.3. for research related to the state secret - the author shall have the appropriate category of authorisation for access to the objects of the state secret;
- 16.4. for research related to other restricted information - the authorisation of the persons or institutions concerned shall be obtained.
17. If research requires special permissions, the student shall start the procedure for obtaining permissions or consultations on obtaining them as early as possible, before submitting the application, but no later than immediately after the approval of the topic for the Final Thesis. The obtaining of permissions shall be in accordance with Paragraph 16 of the Regulations and the procedures laid down by the natural or legal person concerned.
18. No later than 2 weeks prior to the scheduled defence of Final Theses, the list of the Final Theses reviewers shall be approved by the corresponding Faculty Council (or at the meeting of the academic department in individual faculties).
19. The Director of the Study Programme (or the meeting of the academic department in individual faculties) shall be responsible for ensuring that for at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled defence of the Final Theses, the information on the time and place of the defence is publicly available at the departments, faculties and on the e-environment.

III WRITING AND SUBMISSION OF FINAL THESIS

20. The content and quality of the Final Thesis must confirm that the student has achieved the outcomes set out in the Study Programme, which comply with the Table 2 of Annex 1 to the Cabinet Regulations No 322 of 13 June 2017 "Regulations on the Education Classification in Latvia", which defines the knowledge, skills and competence corresponding the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) level at the following levels:
- 20.1. for a qualification paper: Level 5 (able to formulate, 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 field of science 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 formulate 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 potential impact of the research results or professional activity on the environment and society).

21. The student shall write the Final Thesis in accordance with the current Academic Integrity Policy of the University, i.e. independently, in good faith and respecting the rights and interests of third parties: all references to the sources used in the thesis shall be properly indicated, avoiding plagiarism; the information shall be used only to the extent necessary for research; personal data and names of legal persons, places of residence or locations shall be normally used in an anonymous or coded way (pseudonymised). The student shall follow the instructions of the Supervisor.
22. The Supervisor or the student shall immediately inform the Director of the Study Programme or the Head of the academic department if cooperation is unsuccessful or if any other difficulties arise. Depending on the circumstances, the Director of the Study Programme or the Head of the academic department shall immediately consider the possibility of proposing to the Faculty Council the replacement of the Supervisor or other appropriate action. The student shall have the right to withdraw the Final Thesis at any time before its defence by notifying the Dean of the faculty in writing (electronically).
23. The scope of the Final Thesis (minimum and maximum limits) shall depend on the field of study (health care or social sciences) and shall be defined in the methodological guidelines for the Final Thesis of each faculty. The length of the Final Thesis does not include the appendices, title page, table of contents, abstracts and a list of terms and abbreviations used in the thesis. If a drawing, photo, table or diagram occupies more than one third of a page, it should be normally attached as an appendix, not more than one per page. The Final Thesis must be written in the language, in which the student is studying the study programme or, in agreement with the Director of the Study Programme, in another language of the Programme; the Final Thesis must be in computer format (A4, *Times New Roman*, font size 12, with 1.5 line spacing) and must meet the requirements for a literary edited written text, using the terminology of the relevant field. Theses that do not meet the formal requirements shall not be proposed for defence.
24. If a student conducts quantitative research in the Final Thesis, the student must use at least the following statistical data processing methods (the use of methods depends on the field of study - health care or social sciences, where the use of these methods may differ/is not considered mandatory):

- 24.1. descriptive statistics in the Qualification Paper;
 - 24.2. in the 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. If the student uses generative artificial intelligence tools to create text, image or other content in the Final Thesis, the student shall list the technologies used and describe their application in the thesis (preferably in the introduction). The use of these technologies does not absolve the student from responsibility for plagiarism.
26. The Final Thesis shall include the following parts:
- 26.1. a title-page;
 - 26.2. an abstract and keywords in Latvian and English, if the student is studying the Study Programme in Latvian or only in English, if the Study Programme is studied in English. The student may also prepare an additional abstract in another language of the European Union Member State, in agreement with the Director of the Study Programme.
 - 26.3. a table of contents;
 - 26.4. a list of terms and abbreviations;
 - 26.5. an introduction;
 - 26.6. a literature review;
 - 26.7. research methods used;
 - 26.8. research results;
 - 26.9. an analysis of research results (discussion);
 - 26.10. conclusions, which may be accompanied by recommendations or proposals;
 - 26.11. bibliography;
 - 26.12. appendices containing:
 - 26.12.1. a statement about the Final Thesis;
 - 26.12.2. copies of permissions for carrying out the research, if applicable;
 - 26.12.3. other documents, if necessary.
27. The Final Thesis shall be submitted only in electronic format, except in the cases specified in Paragraph 28 of the Regulations. It shall be uploaded using an e-service in accordance with the University's internal normative act "Procedure for Submission and Storage of Electronic Versions of Student Qualification Papers, Bachelor's, Master's or other Final Theses" to the University's institutional open access e-resource repository. Upon uploading the Final Thesis within the specified period and approval of the statement, the Final Thesis shall be considered to have been submitted by the student.

28. If the mastering of the Study Programme envisages the secret status for the development and defence of students' Final Theses, the students of this programme shall submit the Final Thesis to the academic department, which conforms to the rules for the protection of a state secret, only in a printed version - in one hardback copy.
29. The Final Thesis in electronic format shall be submitted in accordance with the deadlines approved at the meeting of the Faculty Council.
30. In the cases specified in Paragraph 28 of the Regulations, the student shall submit the printed version of the Final Thesis with the signatures of the author and Supervisor (signatures of both Supervisors and the Advisor, if appointed) on the title page to the department, which complies with the rules for the protection of a state secret within the time limit set by the faculty before the defence. The aforementioned department shall inform the Director of the Study Programme thereof, organise the handing over of the thesis to the Reviewer and the receipt of the review.
31. If the Final Thesis contains restricted information, the student shall submit a request to the Dean to defend the thesis in a closed meeting and not to publicise it. The student's application shall be endorsed by the Supervisor of the Final Thesis. The Final Thesis shall be stored with restricted access to the content of the thesis.
32. The Supervisor (both Supervisors and the Advisor, if appointed) shall confirm their consent to the thesis being defended electronically, using the electronic means of communication available at the University. A review of the student's work, cooperation with the Supervisor and compliance with the deadlines may be attached to the statement. In the case referred to in Paragraph 28 of the Regulations, the review shall be attached to the thesis submitted and stored in the relevant academic department complying with the rules for the protection of a state secret.
33. If the Supervisor does not agree, i.e. does not approve the conformity of the form, content and scope of the Final Thesis with the requirements of these Regulations and the methodological guidelines approved by the Faculty Council, the Supervisor shall provide an explanation to the Head of the academic department, the Dean of the Faculty and the Director of the Study Programme about the reasons for not approving the thesis. The Faculty Council shall approve an additional Reviewer recommended by the Director of the Study Programme or the Head of the academic department.
34. If the student plans to validate the Final Thesis (Paragraphs 35, 36 of the Regulations), he/she shall agree on the chosen topic in accordance with Paragraph 11 of the Regulations within the deadlines set by the Faculty.

35. If a poster presentation or an oral presentation corresponding to the agreed topic has been awarded a prize at an international scientific conference during the period of learning the study programme, it may be considered as a developed and defended Research Paper of the student in accordance with the procedure and requirements approved by the Faculty Council. The student shall submit the evidence of the award at a scientific conference (for example a copy of a certificate or diploma) to the Dean of the relevant faculty.
36. If a scientific publication that corresponds to the topic agreed, is published in one of the peer-reviewed international journals in the field during the period of learning the Study Programme and is found in a scientific database, the following shall apply:
 - 36.1. In the case of a student's Research Paper, it may be considered as a student's developed and defended Research Paper in accordance with the procedures and requirements approved by the Faculty Council. The student must submit a copy of the published work to the Dean of the relevant faculty.
 - 36.2. In the case of the Master's thesis, if the quality of the publication meets the requirements for a Master's thesis, it may be considered as a student's developed and defended Final Thesis in accordance with the procedures and requirements approved by the Faculty Council. The publication shall be evaluated by the Faculty Council. The student must submit a copy of the publication to the Dean of the relevant faculty.
37. If a student has participated in a study course of Vertically Integrated Projects (hereinafter - VIP) for two academic years (four semesters), has carried out research work and has presented its results at an international conference, it may be considered as the student's developed and defended Research Paper in accordance with the procedures and requirements approved by the Faculty Council. The student shall submit to the Dean the evidence of his/her involvement in the VIP study course approved by the Vice-Rector for Science of the University.
38. In order to validate the Final Thesis, the student shall write an application addressed to the Dean of the faculty, accompanied by information and/or documents about the thesis, as well as a copy of the thesis to be validated. The Dean of the faculty, the Vice-Dean or the Faculty Council shall assess the compliance of the application and the attached documents with the previously agreed topic and the requirements set out in Paragraphs 35, 36 and 37 of these Regulations. In the case of approval of the validation (Paragraphs 35, 36 and 37 of the Regulations), the student's contact person shall draw up a Final Thesis Validation Report in the Academic Portal with the assessment "with distinction" (10 points). The Validation Report shall be signed in the Document Management System (hereinafter - DMS) by the Dean or Vice-Dean of the Faculty and the drafter of the Report, using a DMS signature. After signing the Report, the assessment shall enter the Student Information System.

39. The validated award-winning poster presentation, oral presentation or publication (DOI) in electronic format does not need to be submitted for storage in the University's institutional open access e-resource repository. In the case of a conference, the abstract or presentation, and in the case of a publication, the DOI, shall be attached or indicated as appropriate in the application for validation.
40. If the student's participation in the VIP is validated as a Research Paper, nothing shall be submitted to the University's institutional open access e-resource repository.
41. A Final Thesis developed in another study programme cannot be validated.

IV CHECKING AND REVIEWING OF FINAL PAPER

42. The Final Thesis shall be checked by methods of verifying the originality of the content, including the use of automated systems existing at the University. If plagiarism is detected, the procedure for verifying the originality of Final Theses and Doctoral Theses of University students shall be followed.
43. The Reviewer may be a member of the academic and research staff of the University, a recognised professional in his/her field, and his/her level of education shall be equal to or higher than the level of education of the Supervisor of the respective Final Thesis. The Reviewer shall be approved by a decision of the Faculty Council or at a meeting of the academic department.
44. The Reviewer shall evaluate the compliance of the Final Thesis with the requirements of these Regulations, as well as with the methodological guidelines for content and form prescribed by the Faculty, and shall recommend the Final Thesis Defence Committee an assessment for the for the Final Thesis on a 10-point grading scale. The Reviewer shall submit a written review electronically no later than 3 (three) working days before the defence of the Final Thesis, using electronic means of communication, or in the case specified in Paragraph 28 of the Regulations to the academic department where the Final Thesis is stored. The aforementioned academic department shall inform the Director of the Study Programme thereof.
45. If the Supervisor has not approved the thesis and two Reviewers' have assessed the thesis as not meeting the requirements for the Final Thesis, the student shall not be allowed to defend the Final Thesis.
46. The student shall have the right to get acquainted with the review or, in the case of Paragraph 33 of the Regulations, reviews no later than 2 (two) working days before the defence.

47. If the Supervisor has approved the thesis but according to the assessment of the Reviewer, the thesis does not meet the requirements for the Final Thesis, the student shall have the right to:
- 47.1. defend the Final Thesis at the scheduled defence;
 - 47.2. withdraw from the defence of the Final Thesis by notifying the Dean of the faculty in writing (electronically) before the scheduled defence. The Final Thesis may be defended in a revised or redrafted form no earlier than at the next Final Thesis defence session.
48. If the National Examination consists of two parts - the Final Thesis defence and the examination - and the student receives a mark lower than 4 points (almost satisfactory) in either part, the student may take the other part of the National Examination. This does not apply to the following study programmes:
- 48.1. students of study programmes “Medicine”, “Dentistry” and “Pharmacy” are allowed to take the National Examination if they have successfully defended a Research Paper;
 - 48.2. students of the professional Master’s study programme “Law” are allowed to take the State Uniform Professional Qualification Examination for Lawyers if they have successfully defended the Master’s thesis.

V DEFENCE AND ASSESSMENT OF FINAL THESIS

49. The composition of the Final Thesis Defence Committee (including the dates of the examinations) for the relevant academic year following the proposal of the Director of the Study Programme shall be agreed on by the Faculty Council or the meeting of the academic department within the first month of each semester, and it shall be approved by the Rector’s Decree. The Committee may include the Supervisor and Reviewers of the Final Thesis, but they shall not participate in the assessment of the theses of those students they have supervised or reviewed.
50. The defence of the Final Thesis may be organised in person or remotely. The defence of the Final Thesis shall be open, except in cases where the thesis is related to the interests of third parties 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 Thesis must not exceed 30 minutes.
51. The Final Thesis Defence Committee shall evaluate the Final Thesis according to the following criteria on a 10-point grading scale:

- 51.1. the correspondence of the content of the submitted Final Thesis to the chosen topic;
 - 51.2. the correspondence of the content of the Final Thesis to the qualification level of education;
 - 51.3. conformity of the conclusions to the aims and objectives of the thesis;
 - 51.4. compliance of the submitted thesis with the main formal requirements specified in the Regulations (visual design, volume, style, grammar, etc.);
 - 51.5. clarity, structure and time limit of the presentation;
 - 51.6. ability to answer the questions and participate in the discussion;
 - 51.7. 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 the publication, if that activity conforms to the agreed topic, shall increase the resultant assessment by 1 point.
52. After hearing the student's report, getting acquainted with the Supervisor's feedback, the written evaluation of the Reviewer/-s, having listened to the answers to the questions asked and after the discussion, the Final Thesis Defence Committee shall take its decision on the assessment of the thesis in a closed meeting by open vote. The thesis shall be assessed on a 10-point grading scale.
 53. The assessment of the Final Thesis shall be notified to the student after the end of the meeting on the same day, ensuring the confidentiality of the communication of the assessment.
 54. The Secretary of the Final Thesis Defence Committee shall complete an individual Final Thesis Defence Report for each student in the Academic Portal. All individual reports shall be sent electronically to the DMS for signing with a secure electronic signature.
 55. In the case of Final Thesis validation, the contact person for the students of the respective programme shall complete the individual report for Final Thesis validation in the Academic Portal, which shall be sent to the DMS for signing with a secure electronic signature.
 56. If the Final Thesis Defence Committee receives information about plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), violation of other principles of academic integrity or possible infringement of the interests of third parties, the Committee shall act in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Academic Regulations I and the Procedure for Checking the Originality of Final Theses, Resident Research Theses and Doctoral Theses of Students.
 57. The appeal procedure is determined in the University's "Academic Regulations I". The Final Thesis Defence Committee shall act in accordance with the Regulations of the National Examination Board, insofar as it is not specified otherwise in these Regulations.
 58. Electronic versions of successfully defended Final Theses shall be sent to the University's institutional open access e-resource repository no earlier than 14 days and no later than 30

days after the entry into force of the decree on the exclusion of the student having obtained the diploma. In the cases specified in Paragraph 28 of the Regulations, the bound copy of the successfully defended Final Thesis shall be returned to the student.

VI FINAL PROVISIONS

59. Where necessary, the detailed arrangements for implementing the actions provided for in these Regulations shall be determined by the Rector's Decree. The proposal form for the Final Thesis, the statement form and other forms necessary for the completion and defence of the Final Thesis shall be approved by the Rector's Decree.
60. These Regulations shall apply from the spring semester of the academic year 2023/2024.

Chairperson of the Senate

J.Gardovskis

I.Treija, 29428837

AGREED:
at Rīga Stradiņš University
meeting of the Council of Deans of 4 September 2023,
Minutes No 4-SD.1-2/22/2023

at Rīga Stradiņš University
Rectorate meeting of 25 September 2023,
Minutes No 1-PB-1/32/2023