



## **Thesis Regulation English-taught programmes 2020-2021, Faculty of Law**

### **Article 1      Applicability**

This Regulation is applicable to:

- a. theses written as part of the LLB programme International and European Law, more particularly the bachelor-concluding course unit Research Colloquium as mentioned in Article 7.4 Teaching and Examination Regulations bachelor's degree programme International and European Law;
- b. theses written as part of the LLM programmes Energy and Climate Law, European Economic Law, Global Criminal Law, International Commercial Law, Public International Law and its track International Human Rights Law;
- c. small theses/papers written as part of one of the English-taught programmes of the Faculty of Law.

### **Article 2      Aim Master's thesis**

The master's thesis of the programmes listed under Article 1 sub b constitutes the final test in order to show the possession of legal and academic research skills. In the Master's thesis, the student should demonstrate that s/he commands the legal and academic skills in such a manner so as to be able, using the knowledge gained during his/her studies, to independently:

- formulate a scientific question in the legal field of his/her chosen programme;
- set up legal research according to a method that is accounted for;
- assemble, describe, classify, analyse, critically evaluate, assess and synthesise data relevant to this research;
- draw relevant conclusions, with force of argument, on the basis of the research conducted and to formulate, insofar as relevant, defensible solutions;
- present the research, as well as the conclusions and solutions in a clear and orderly manner, in writing and at an academic level.

### **Article 3      Study load**

- 3.1 The study load for the thesis determined in the Teaching and Examination Regulation of the programme concerned.
- 3.2 If a student writes a Master's thesis in more than one programmes, the student needs to fulfil the requirements of each programme separately. A Master's thesis approved for one programme cannot lead to granting an exemption for a Master's thesis in a different programme.
- 3.3 The study load of a small thesis/paper is determined based on the size of the paper. The minimum study load for a small thesis/paper is 3 ECTS, the maximum study load is 7 ECTS.





#### **Article 4    Enrolment Master's thesis and Master's thesis preparation process**

- 4.1 Students are required to enrol in the enrolment period of block 1 if they wish to start their thesis-writing process in February. Students who wish to start their thesis-writing process in September are required to enrol in the enrolment period of block 3 that same calendar year.
- 4.2 Students are required, before the start of the writing process of their Master's thesis, to have participated in the thesis preparation process. This process consists of a Thesis Class, a library instruction, an introduction and methodology session, and a library thesis workshop.
- 4.3 Students may only offer their thesis topic for approval to a thesis coordinator after having participated in the thesis class, the library instruction, the introduction and methodology session and the library thesis workshop.
- 4.4 The student must offer his/her thesis topic for approval of the thesis coordinator of the programme concerned before the deadlines set in the thesis-writing session students enrolled for (early January for the February session, early June for the September session).
- 4.5 After approval of the topic and after a supervisor has been assigned, the student enrolls in Progress for the Nestor page of the supervisor concerned.

#### **Article 5    Supervision structure**

- 5.1 The Faculty Board appoints a general thesis coordinator. S/he is in charge of informing students and the coordination of the Faculty's thesis policy.
- 5.2 Every programme has its own thesis coordinator. This is the Academic Director of that programme or another member of the academic staff so appointed. The thesis coordinator assesses, after a preliminary discussion of the topics with the student person or via e-mail, the suitability of the topic.
- 5.3 After approval of the topic, the thesis coordinator appoints a thesis supervisor under whose supervision the student will write the thesis. If the topic of the thesis is a crossover of two fields of law and/or interdisciplinary in character, a second supervisor who is an expert in the other field of law or other discipline will be appointed.
- 5.4 In situations as mentioned in Article 1.1a and 1.1b, the thesis coordinator appoints an examiner as second assessor.
- 5.5 In case of a small thesis/paper, the student will be supervised and assessed by an examiner who is qualified in the specific field of law of the topic of the small thesis/paper.





## **Article 6 Approval topics**

- 6.1 The topic of a small thesis/paper and the Research Colloquium is determined by the student in consultation with the supervisor.
- 6.2 The topic of the Master's thesis should be connected to the programme in which the student will graduate.

## **Article 7 Substantive supervision**

- 7.1 The student submits a proposal (including time path) for a small thesis/paper and send this for approval to the supervisor.
- 7.2 The student submits a research plan (including time path) for his/her Research Colloquium and Master's thesis and send this for approval to the supervisor. This research plan needs to fulfil the requirements as set out in A Guide to Preparing a Paper or Master's Thesis (Thesis Guide). The deadlines for both the Research Colloquium and Master's thesis are fixed and will be announced at the start of the thesis-writing process. Students will have to adhere to these deadlines.
- 7.3 In consultation with the supervisor(s) and based on the research plan, arrangements will be made about:
- the frequency of the supervision (meetings);
  - the possibility of handing in one or more drafts;
  - the manner and timing of handing in the drafts;
  - expected periods of absence of the supervisor(s);
  - date of handing in the final version;
  - the number of copies of the final version to be handed in;
  - the way in which at least the final version of the thesis will be offered to the supervisor digitally, so that it can be checked for plagiarism.
- 7.4 If a student wishes to deviate from the approved research plan, s/he should inform the supervisor about this as soon as possible and further arrangements will be made in this respect.
- 7.5 Students have the right to hand in a draft at least once and to discuss this with the thesis supervisor. Students have to hand in these drafts before the deadlines stated at the start of the thesis-writing process (1 May for the February session, 1 December for the September session).
- a. If (interim) drafts are handed in according to the time path agreed upon, the thesis supervisor assesses the (interim) draft as soon as possible, but no later than fifteen days after submission, unless the supervisor and the student have made other arrangements about this.
- b. If (interim) drafts are not handed in according to the time path agreed upon, the thesis supervisor assesses the (interim) drafts as soon as possible, but no later than twenty working days after submission, unless the supervisor and the student have made other arrangements about this.
- 7.6 The student processes the criticism and comments of the supervisor concerning the draft(s) within the final version.





- 7.7 The deadline for handing in the final draft of the full thesis is the 15<sup>th</sup> of June each year for the February session and 15 January for the September session.
- 7.8 After submitting the final version of the thesis no adjustments can be made by the student any more. If a final version of the thesis is assessed with a fail grade, a repair period of 5 weeks is offered. If the new final version is again assessed with a fail grade, a new thesis dealing with a new topic, possibly supervised by a different supervisor, should be written to successfully complete the module.
- 7.9 In consultation with the thesis coordinator the supervisor may, in exceptional circumstances of a pressing nature, allow for an extension beyond the repair period.

### **Article 8 Volume**

The thesis volume is linked to the study load as arranged for in the respective Teaching and Examination Regulation. A small thesis/paper has a minimum size of 3 ECTS.

Indicatively: a page generally holds about 450-500 words:

- 3 ECTS (84 hours): 2,500-3,000 words;
- 4 ECTS (112 hours): 3,000-3,500 words;
- 5 ECTS (140 hours): 4,000-4,500 words;
- 6 ECTS (168 hours): 5,000-5,500 words;
- 10 ECTS (280 hours): 8,000-9,000 words;
- 12 ECTS (336 hours): 10,000-11,000 words;
- 18 ECTS (504 hours): 15,000-17,000 words;
- 20 ECTS (560 hours): 20,000-22,000 words.

The maximum number of words can only be exceeded in consultation with the thesis supervisor.

### **Article 9 Plagiarism check**

- 9.1 The final version of the thesis will be checked for plagiarism through a digital check. The supervisor is responsible for this digital check.
- 9.2 In case of doubt, the supervisor is free to digitally check draft versions for plagiarism at an earlier moment.
- 9.3 If plagiarism is detected, the supervisor sends both the result of the digital check and an official report to the Board of Examiners for assessment in accordance with Article 15 Examination Regulation.

### **Article 10 Assessment**

- 10.1 After receiving the final version of the thesis, the thesis supervisor assesses on a provisional basis whether or not the thesis meets the minimum requirements as mentioned in article 10.2 and 10.5.  
When no plagiarism is determined, the thesis will be handed over to a second supervisor for assessment.
- 10.2 When assessing the final version, the following factors will be explicitly considered:  
- contents (absence of plagiarism, balance between own ideas and materials used);





- reasoning (critical-reflection with an own opinion);
  - volume (article 8);
  - referencing of sources (according to the Thesis Guide);
  - clear and correct use of language;
  - form and lay-out (according to the Thesis Guide).
- 10.3 The supervisor(s) shall, as soon as possible, but no later than ten working days after the final version of the small thesis/paper has been handed in at the agreed time, award a grade to the small thesis/paper by mutual consent.
- 10.4 The thesis supervisor and second assessor shall, as soon as possible, but no later than 20 working days after the final version of the Research Colloquium or Master's thesis has been handed in at the agreed time, award a grade to the thesis by mutual consent.
- 10.5 The thesis grade is determined with reference to the following criteria:
- Definition of the problem and research methodology;
  - Structure and composition;
  - Correct use of language;
  - Contents;
  - Reasoning;
  - Command of (specific) research skills;
  - Originality of the research;
  - Independence in conducting research.
- 10.6 The thesis supervisor(s) or if applicable the second assessor have to make clear how they reached the grade awarded, considering the criteria mentioned in Article 10.5, as expressed on the digital thesis assessment form.
- 10.7 The thesis supervisor makes sure that a digital copy of the final version of the Research Colloquium or Master's thesis is uploaded in the digital thesis assessment form before the grade is communicated to the student.
- 10.8 The Faculty Board can determine that an oral defence of the thesis is part of the thesis process.
- 10.9 The supervisor will send the grade of the thesis, at the latest within five working days after the date mentioned in Article 10.3 and 10.4, to the Teaching and Examination Administration. The result slip needs to be signed by both the supervisor and the second assessor. If the thesis was supervised by two thesis supervisors, both supervisors need to sign the result slip on which the result is indicated.  
A thesis supervisor cannot co-sign on behalf of a possible second supervisor or on behalf of a second assessor.

## **Article 11 Objection and appeal procedure**

- 11.1 If a student does not agree with the awarded grade, s/he can make a request to reconsider the grade. The supervisor(s) and the second assessor, insofar they have been appointed based on Article 5.3, can decide to request another lecturer for his or her assessment.





- 11.2 If the informal objection procedure as mentioned in Article 11.1 does not lead to the result as desired by the student nor to an adequate explanation, it is possible to lodge an appeal through the Central Portal for the Legal Protection of Student Rights.

#### **Article 12 Number of copies to be handed in**

The student will submit a minimum of one paper copy and one electronic copy of the approved thesis to his/her supervisor, unless different arrangements have been made with the supervisor.

#### **Article 13 Storage period**

The digital version of the Master's thesis will be stored according to a procedure approved by the Faculty Board for a period of at least 7 years.

#### **Article 14 Board of Examiners**

Only the Board of Examiners can derogate, at the written request of the student, from the arrangements set out in provisions set out above.

This regulation shall take effect on 1 September 2020.

