



Thesis Regulation English-taught programmes 2023/2024, 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. Master's theses written as part of the LLM programmes Energy and Climate Law, European Law in a Global Context and its track Technology Law and Innovation, 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. After successfully completing his or her thesis, a student will have demonstrated possession of legal and academic research skills and will have shown, using the knowledge gained during the studies and in an independent manner, the ability:

- to identify a societal problem – whether of a political, policy, legal, social, economic, cultural, military or any other nature – and, on this basis, to formulate (an) academic, legal question(s) in the field of studies of his or her programme;
- to set up research according to a legal method and to account for and justify the methodology adopted;
- to establish relevant facts in an objective manner, and to identify, search for and assemble the (most directly) relevant primary and secondary sources of importance to the legal research to be conducted, whether available in university or law libraries or through online databases or the internet;
- to describe and to classify, analyse, critically evaluate, assess and/or synthesise information derived from primary and secondary sources relevant to the legal research conducted;
- to reflect upon, insofar as relevant, legal theories and concepts pertinent to the topic under discussion, and to address issues of interpretation and application of the law relevant to this topic;
- to answer the academic, legal question raised and draw relevant conclusions, with force of argument, on the basis of the research conducted, and to formulate, insofar as relevant, defensible solutions to the societal problem identified;
- to make proper use of the (most directly) relevant primary and secondary sources within the thesis and to provide accurate and correct reference to such sources in accordance with good academic and legal practice;
- to present the research conducted, as well as the answer(s), conclusions and solutions, in a clear and orderly manner, in writing and at an academic level.





Article 3 Study load & language

- 3.1 The study load for the thesis is 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.
- 3.4 Theses have to be written in English.

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 Enrolment for a Master's thesis is binding for students and will by definition lead to a result (either a final grade or a fail grade). The Board of Examiners can, at the request of a student, decide otherwise than arranged for above based on special circumstances.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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, and after having been enrolled in the Master's thesis for that particular semester.
- 4.5 The student must offer the 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).
- 4.6 All students in the English-taught master programmes are automatically offered access to the Thesis Faculty of Law page on Brightspace.
- 4.7 Students who have enrolled for the Master's thesis, but find their planning to be unrealistic can ask the International Office to de-enrol them from the Master's





thesis respectively before 1 February (semester 2 thesis-writing) or 1 September (semester 1 thesis-writing).

Article 5 Supervision structure

- 5.1 The Faculty Board appoints a general thesis coordinator. The thesis coordinator is in charge of informing students and the coordination of the Faculty's thesis policy.
- 5.2 Every programme has its own programme thesis coordinator. This is the Academic Director of that programme or another member of the academic staff so appointed. The thesis coordinator assesses the suitability of the topic.
- 5.3 After approval of the topic, the programme 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 competent in the other field of law or other discipline will be appointed.
- 5.4 In situations as mentioned in Article 1.a, the departments appoint an examiner as second assessor. In situations as mentioned in Article 1.b, the programme 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. The topic of the thesis written within the Research Colloquium needs to fall within the scope of the LLB programme International and European Law programme, including its Technology Law track. The topic should be related to courses offered in the LLB programme International and European Law in Groningen, excluding courses taken in the semester abroad.
- 6.2 The topic of the Master's thesis is determined by the student in consultation with the programme thesis coordinator and should be sufficiently 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 the Research Colloquium and Master's thesis and sends this for approval to the supervisor. This research plan needs to fulfil the requirements as set out respectively in The Guide to the Research Colloquium or 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 be made with respect to:
- 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, the student should inform the supervisor about this as soon as possible and further arrangements will be made in this respect.
- 7.5 Students writing a Master's thesis 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, which are arranged for respectively in The Guide to the Research Colloquium or A Guide to Preparing a Paper or Master's Thesis (Thesis Guide).
- 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 Master's thesis is at the end of June each year for the February session and mid-January for the September session (specific dates to be determined in the Thesis Guide).
- 7.8 After submitting the final version of the Master's thesis no adjustments can be made by the student any more. If a final version of the thesis is assessed to be insufficient to receive a pass grade, a repair period of 4 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 Not handing in a final version before the deadline will lead to the award of the mark '1' (one). No repair period will be offered in such cases.
- 7.10 In consultation with the general thesis coordinator and the programme thesis coordinator the supervisor may, in exceptional circumstances of a pressing nature





and after consultation with the study advisers of the International Office, 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. 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. The word count indicated above concern the main text, and in particular do not include the footnotes, tables, annexes, and the bibliography.

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 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 of the 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 10.6.
When no plagiarism is determined, the thesis will be handed over to a second assessor for assessment.
- 10.2 When assessing the final version, the following minimum requirements 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) will assign a grade only after oral discussion(s) of (parts of) the thesis with the student. The purpose of the oral discussion(s) is to assess the student's knowledge and understanding of the topic.





- 10.4 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, determine a grade to the small thesis/paper by mutual consent.
- 10.5 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, determine a grade to the thesis by mutual consent.
- 10.6 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.
- 10.7 The thesis supervisor(s) and/or the second assessor have to make clear to the student how the grade was determined, considering the criteria mentioned in Article 10.6, as expressed on the digital thesis assessment form.
- 10.8 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.
- 10.9 The Faculty Board can determine that an oral defence of the thesis is part of the thesis process.
- 10.10 The supervisor will send the grade of the thesis, at the latest within five working days after the date mentioned in Article 10.4 and 10.5, to the Education and Examination Administration. The digital thesis assessment form is forwarded by the supervisor by email to the Examination Administration from their official UG email address, with the official UG email address of the second supervisor or second assessor in the cc line. The second supervisor or second assessor will confirm the grade as determined to the Examination Administration by using 'reply all'.

Article 11 Objection and appeal procedure

- 11.1 If a student does not agree with the grade as determined, the student can make a request to reconsider the grade. The supervisor(s) and the second assessor, insofar they have been appointed based on Articles 5.3 and 5.4, 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 (www.rug.nl/clrs).





Article 12 Number of copies to be handed in

The student will submit a digital version of the final thesis to the supervisor. The student can agree with the supervisor that at least one or more paper copies will also be handed in.

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 regulations set out in the provisions set out above.

This regulation shall take effect on 1 September 2023.

