

Rīga Stradiņš University
Academic Regulations III
Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies

(Version 10)

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) shall determine the procedure of studies for doctoral study programmes.
- 1.2. Doctoral studies at Rīga Stradiņš University (hereinafter - RSU) involve independent work of a doctoral student supervised by a supervisor of the doctoral thesis and academic staff for obtaining a doctoral degree.

2. Terms used

- 2.1. **Academic leave** – a study break from active studies, usually for a semester or academic year due to medical indications, social reasons, employment, family reasons or the birth of a child, while maintaining the status of a student. Academic leave shall be granted only to the students who make good academic progress and who have paid their tuition fees.
- 2.2. **Academic year** - the period of study at a higher education institution referring to the calendar year, which is divided into two semesters: autumn semester (October to February) and spring semester (March to September, with August being a free month).
- 2.3. **Academic integrity** - a set of core values inherent in each representative of RSU staff, including students, which includes honesty, ethics, trust and fairness and is the basis for decision-making and undertaking of activities in studies, research and academic environment.

- 2.4. **Academic failure** – failure to fulfil the academic commitments of the doctoral student provided for in the study course and/or failure to pass examinations, including failure to defend scientific research work.
- 2.5. **Remote study** - a part of the full-time education process in which students learn using information and communication technologies without being physically present in the same room or training site as the lecturer. In the process of remote studies, the lecturer conducts online lectures and classes, including seminars; prepares and posts study material in the *e-learning environment*, which the student learns remotely; prepares descriptions for the assignments of the student's remote independent work, organises remote studies using online communication, and evaluates the outcome of the student's independent work.
- 2.6. **Study programme** - a form of doctoral study organisation with specific requirements, the successful completion of which allows a doctoral student to obtain a certificate of successful completion of the doctoral study programme and to become a candidate for a doctoral degree.
- 2.7. **Employer** - RSU or Cooperation Partner.
- 2.8. **Employment contract** - an employment contract for academic and scientific work in order to achieve the study results of the Study Programme, which is concluded between RSU or the Cooperation Partner and a doctoral student who has been admitted to a state-funded study place, in the cases and according to the procedure established in these Regulations, the Regulation of the Department of Doctoral Studies, other internal and external laws and regulations of RSU.
- 2.9. **Doctoral student's plan/report on the accomplishments during the year of studies** - an individual study record document completed by a doctoral student on the scientific, research and pedagogical activities planned for the year of studies, which specifies the assignments to be carried out during the doctoral study year, as well as provides an overview of the accomplished scientific, study and pedagogical work in the respective year of studies.
- 2.10. **E-grades** - an electronic register of a student's progress in the e-learning environment.
- 2.11. **E-learning environment** - an electronic online learning environment where registration for study courses takes place, materials necessary for studies are available and where RSU provides access to the materials necessary for studies, students submit coursework intended for the study course and the teaching staff post assessment of students' coursework.

- 2.12. **Exclusion/withdrawal** - removal of a student from the list of RSU students in accordance with the procedures provided for in RSU Internal Rules and Regulations for Studies.
- 2.13. **Hybrid learning** - a form of full-time studies in which part of students learn face-to-face, but another part remotely. For example, in a class where a lecturer works with students in an auditorium, some students engage in discussions and other activities via video conferencing.
- 2.14. **Matriculation** – enrolment of a person who has fulfilled admission requirements in the list of RSU students.
- 2.15. **Credit point** – an accounting unit that expresses the volume of learning based on the learning outcomes defined in the study programme or part thereof and the study load related to their achievement. Taking into account that the length of the academic year is eleven months, full-time doctoral studies in one academic year are equivalent to 66 credit points of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in accordance with an accredited doctoral study programme. Part-time doctoral studies in one academic year are equivalent to less than 66 credit points in accordance with an accredited doctoral programme. Credit points are expressed as whole numbers. One credit point corresponds to 25-30 hours of study work.
- 2.16. **Lecture** – a form of organisation of studies, in which a lecturer expounds the theoretical material of the study course. The lecture is a source of information for studies, the means of promoting the doctoral student’s cognitive activity. The lecture can be delivered also as a video lecture.
- 2.17. **Class** – a form of organisation of studies, in which doctoral students under the guidance of academic staff broaden their theoretical knowledge acquired during lectures and independently, as well as acquire relevant practical skills. In remote studies, classes may be conducted via video conferencing.
- 2.18. **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).
- 2.19. **Student portal “MyRSU”** - a portal where each RSU student using a personalised username and password can obtain information about their assessment, view their individualised timetables, access library databases, keep track of their financial

liabilities, read personalised news, write and submit applications and submissions, as well as access the e-learning environment, e-mail assigned by RSU and e-services.

- 2.20. **Year of studies** – a period of study at a higher education institution for implementation of specific part of the study programme (for example, the first year of studies).
- 2.21. **Study course description** - a document available in the e-learning 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.
- 2.22. **Study course** - an outline of a system of knowledge, skills and competence, organised at a certain level and scope, which is relevant to the study programme and for the achievement of which learning outcomes are defined and credit points are awarded.
- 2.23. **Director of the study programme** - a person approved by the Senate decision who is responsible for the development and implementation of the doctoral study programme. A study programme may have the head of the subprogramme.
- 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. **Supervisor of doctoral thesis** - a researcher (PhD or equivalent) who participates in scientific research, as evidenced by participation in research projects, their supervision or publications in peer-reviewed journals, or who has the status of an expert of the Latvian Council of Science.¹ The supervisor of the doctoral thesis shall be approved by a decree of the Vice-Rector for Science.
- 2.27. **Doctoral thesis** - a scientific work independently developed in collaboration with the supervisor of the doctoral thesis, which contains the results of original scientific research and provides new insights in one or more fields or subfields of science. The research may be developed at the Cooperation Partner. The thesis may be a dissertation, a collection of scientific publications or a monograph.

¹ The status of expert of the Latvian Council of Science must be active for the entire duration of the doctoral thesis supervision (an interval of up to twelve months is allowed between the expiry of the right of expert and the re-approval).

- 2.28. **Assessment sheet** - an electronic document in the e-learning environment, in which the lecturer enters the assessment mark and the date of the examination. Assessment sheets shall be submitted electronically.
- 2.29. **Cooperation Partner** - a legal entity or other institution (with which RSU has concluded an agreement), which is able to provide material and technical equipment or information base for the development of the doctoral thesis, which meets the requirements for employment of doctoral students set out in the Regulation of the RSU Department of Doctoral Studies and which is entitled to conclude an employment contract with the doctoral student.
- 2.30. **Study contract** - a contract between a doctoral student and RSU on mutual obligations to ensure the doctoral student's completion of the Study Programme in accordance with these Regulations and external laws and regulations.
- 2.31. **Contract on the development of doctoral thesis** – a contract between a doctoral student, the supervisor(-s) of the doctoral thesis and the Department of Doctoral Studies (on behalf of RSU) on mutual obligations to ensure good practice of implementing doctoral studies for the development of doctoral thesis and to facilitate the successful defence of the doctoral thesis for obtaining the degree of Doctor of Science.

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 work** - a written or computer-based testing of knowledge during lectures, classes and seminars.
- 3.3. **Report** - a written account prepared by a doctoral student in accordance with the requirements set out in the description of the study course and in relation to the topic of the doctoral thesis.
- 3.4. **Test** – is taken upon completion of the study course or a significant section of the study course. A test is organised in a similar way to the examination; assessment in it is “pass” or “fail”.
- 3.5. **Examination** - a type of assessment of knowledge and skills for the study course (or part thereof), in which the knowledge assessment is given in marks using a 10-point grading scale.
- 3.6. Various assessment techniques may be used during examinations and 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 the field/subfield** - a form of assessment of knowledge and skills in the field/subfield in which the doctoral candidate is working on his/her doctoral thesis (if the doctoral candidate is working on an interdisciplinary thesis, the doctoral candidate chooses the field/subfield in which his/her knowledge and skills are to be assessed). The knowledge will be assessed by the Dissertation Examination Committee of the relevant field/subfield (if the doctoral candidate is working on an interdisciplinary dissertation, the knowledge will be assessed by the Dissertation Examination Committee composed of representatives of both fields/subfields of the RSU).
- 3.8. **Doctoral examination in a foreign language** - a type of assessment of knowledge and skills in a foreign language about the topic of the doctoral thesis, that is assessed by the members of the relevant field/subfield and foreign language committee.
- 3.9. The doctoral student can acquaint himself/herself with the assessment on the student portal (My RSU).
- 3.10. After the announcement / publication of the assessment in the e-learning environment, the doctoral student shall have the right to request and to receive an explanation for the mistakes 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 are 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 the examination, the doctoral student shall not get the assessment, and the lecturer shall record the fact of absence by entering “no-show” in the section of the e-assessment provided for this purpose.
 - 4.3. A doctoral student is successful if he/she has received the assessment “almost satisfactory” (4 points) or higher. The assessment “almost satisfactory” (4 points) shall be given when at least 55 % of the amount of learning outcomes is acquired.
 - 4.4. A 10-point grading system shall not be used for assessment of the 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. The test is passed and the doctoral student shall get the assessment “pass” if his/her knowledge, skills and competence correspond to the assessment “almost satisfactory” (4 points) and above. If in the test the doctoral student’s knowledge, skills and competence do not correspond to such a level, they get the assessment “fail”.
- 4.7. The principles of academic integrity and research integrity, as well as the types and consequences of breaches of academic integrity are determined by RSU Academic Integrity Policy, RSU guidelines for observing academic integrity and the guidelines for electronic examinations.
- 4.8. RSU shall be entitled to check any work submitted by a doctoral student by various methods for detecting breaches of academic integrity, in particular, by methods of verifying the originality of the content and by detecting copyright (for example, applying the automated systems in use at RSU). If information about the facts indicating a possible breach of academic integrity is received, the check may be repeated for the already assessed doctoral student's work and also for the work after exclusion of the doctoral student from the doctoral study programme.
- 4.9. If the lecturer or the doctoral thesis supervisor finds possible plagiarism or other breach of academic integrity or research integrity in the doctoral student's work or action, the doctoral student shall be required to provide explanations no later than within three working days (failure to provide explanations shall not constitute an obstacle to further action). The lecturer or the supervisor of the doctoral thesis shall evaluate the student’s explanations (if provided) in five working days and shall act in one of the following ways:
- 4.9.1. if no breach of academic integrity has been found, the student shall be allowed to continue the examination and shall be given an assessment corresponding to the content of the work;
- 4.9.2. if a breach of academic integrity is detected in the mid-semester examination, the student shall lose one attempt at taking the examination and the assessment “very poor” (1 point) shall be given;
- 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. Where such an amendment has been made to the assessment of a mid-semester examination, which has been a prerequisite for taking the final examination or has cumulatively produced an assessment for the final examination, the right of the student to take the final examination or to obtain a cumulative assessment for the final examination shall be reviewed accordingly and the assessment of that examination shall also be changed.
- 4.10. In the event of a breach of academic integrity detected in the final examination or in a repeated mid-semester examination, the Dean shall, within five working days of receipt of the information specified in Subparagraphs 4.92 to 4.94 of the Regulations from the lecturer or the supervisor of the doctoral thesis, decide whether to initiate disciplinary proceedings (Subparagraphs 4.9.2 to 4.9.4 of the Regulations) or refuse to initiate disciplinary proceedings (Subparagraph 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 at RSU but is not yet a candidate for a doctoral degree, the matter shall be examined by a committee (collegial body) established in accordance with the

procedure laid down in RSU internal laws and regulations. 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 subprogramme), supervisor of the doctoral thesis and doctoral student

- 5.1. Upon commencing studies in the doctoral study programme, the doctoral student, the supervisor of the doctoral thesis and the Department of Doctoral Studies shall conclude a contract on the development of the doctoral thesis.
- 5.2. Director of the study programme (head of subprogramme) shall:
 - 5.2.1. Coordinate the planning and organisation of the study process;
 - 5.2.2. Support and advise the doctoral student in matters related to the planning of studies, the selection of the supervisor of doctoral thesis and matters related to the development and defence of the thesis;
 - 5.2.3. For the first-year doctoral students, examine and approve or reject the doctoral student plan once the doctoral plan has been received for examination. If necessary, instruct the doctoral student to clarify it within one month in cooperation with the supervisor(-s) of doctoral thesis. The doctoral student's plan for the first year of studies shall enter into force after it has been approved by the director of the study programme (and the supervisor);
 - 5.2.4. At the end of each year of studies, review and, if necessary, instruct the student to clarify the study plan for the following academic year and evaluate the doctoral student's plan/report on the work done during the year of studies. If necessary, refer the doctoral student for evaluation of the results of the doctoral student's scientific activity to the scientific activity evaluation committee of the relevant study programme;
 - 5.2.5. During the last year of studies, evaluate the draft doctoral thesis developed by the doctoral student and recommend it for discussion before submitting the doctoral thesis to RSU Promotion Council for consideration.
- 5.3. Supervisor of the doctoral thesis shall:
 - 5.3.1. Advise the doctoral student on the development of the doctoral thesis, including the scope of the thesis, the choice of research topic, design and methods, research planning and implementation, publication strategy, the

thesis process and other matters related to the doctoral research, thesis development and doctoral dissertation;

- 5.3.2. Advise the doctoral student in the development of the study and dissertation plan, coordinate the study and research plan submitted by the doctoral student for each year of studies with the director of the doctoral study programme, and monitor the progress of the research plan;
- 5.3.3. Provide the necessary support to the doctoral student in the implementation of the plan, continuously monitor the implementation of the doctoral student's plan and the progress in the development of the doctoral thesis;
- 5.3.4. Advise the doctoral student on preparing and publishing of scientific publications in journals indexed in *Scopus* or *Web of Science*;
- 5.3.5. Participate in the meeting for evaluation of the doctoral student's scientific activity;
- 5.3.6. Advise the doctoral student on career opportunities relevant to the specifics of the doctoral student's research;
- 5.3.7. Submit a report of the doctoral thesis supervisor on the implementation of the doctoral student's research plan and the progress with the doctoral thesis, expressing an opinion on the progress of the doctoral student's scientific research work at the end of each semester;
- 5.3.8. Once per academic year, approve the list of grant expenses submitted by the doctoral student and the justification for the use of grant funding.

5.4. Doctoral student shall:

- 5.4.1. Study in good faith and successfully complete the relevant doctoral study programme within the prescribed time limit, in accordance with the study contract, the contract on the development of doctoral thesis, and the internal laws and regulations of RSU;
- 5.4.2. Complete and defend the doctoral thesis no later than within 4 (four) years after matriculation (not including academic leaves), 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 supervisor(-s) of the doctoral thesis and the Department of Doctoral Studies draw up a study and research plan taking into account the possibilities and networks of the doctoral study programme;
- 5.4.4. Actively participate in the dissemination of research results, publish scientific articles indexed in *Scopus* or *Web of Science* databases, participate in scientific conferences with reports and participate in international research networks.

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 studies 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-learning 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. The assessments shall be entered in the e-grades by filling in the electronic assessment sheet, and published on the student portal within 10 (ten) working days of the assessment.
- 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 previously plans not to attend a class for valid reasons, for example, to participate in events defending the honour of the University or the country (scientific conferences, seminars, exchange visits, etc.), the doctoral student shall submit supporting documents for the absence via MyRSU in a timely manner before the planned absence.
- 6.9. The doctoral student shall inform the lecturer of the respective class and the director of the study programme about the reasons for the previously unplanned absence within 5 (five) working days after returning to studies by submitting a document confirming incapacity for work in case of illness or a written explanation in case of any other valid reason.
- 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 a doctoral student has not attended classes due to illness or any other valid reason, and in the opinion of the director of the study programme, the studies can be continued according to the approved doctoral student's plan / report on the work done during the year of studies, the director of the study programme shall inform the Dean thereof.
- 6.12. If a doctoral student has not attended classes and the number or content of the classes is so significant that it is not possible to continue studies in this study course according to the approved doctoral student's plan for the respective year of studies or if a semester examination is failed twice, the academic department shall inform the director of the study programme about it. The director of the study programme shall evaluate the situation (reasons for non-attendance, the amount and failure in examinations) and the possibilities for continuing studies.
- 6.13. A doctoral student may temporarily suspend studies due to illness or any other valid reason, and then continue them. Suspension of doctoral studies (the academic leave) shall be issued by a decree on matters of the study process by the Vice-Rector for Science. The total period of academic leaves for a doctoral student must not exceed two years. During the academic leave, the status of a doctoral student and the place in the study programme shall be maintained, however, neither scholarship nor study

and student loans are paid, and the doctoral student shall not have the right to request and receive doctoral study grant funds.

- 6.14. As part of the doctoral thesis development, the doctoral student shall submit a plan and reports on the research activities carried out during the year of studies. The doctoral student shall draw up and electronically submit to the student portal documents supporting the scientific activity, together with the report on the research activity in the prescribed format and the doctoral student's plan/report on the work done during the year of studies:
 - 6.14.1. Within two months from the start of studies, the doctoral student, in cooperation with the supervisor(s) of the doctoral thesis shall draw up and electronically submit the doctoral plan for the first year of studies;
 - 6.14.2. At the end of each year of studies, the doctoral student shall complete and electronically submit to the student portal the doctoral student's report on the work done during the year of studies and the report on scientific activities.
- 6.15. At the end of each year of studies, the doctoral student, together with the supervisor(s) of the doctoral thesis, shall participate in the meeting of the Scientific Activity Evaluation Committee and present the progress in the scientific activity undertaken during the year of studies and the development of the doctoral thesis.
- 6.16. The relevant programme part for the year of studies shall be considered completed if the requirements of the doctoral student's programme plan for the year of studies have been fulfilled, including the completion of all study courses intended for completion in the amount of the prescribed credit points, and a positive assessment of the doctoral student's plan/report on the work done during the year of studies has been received, as well as a positive assessment by the scientific activity evaluation committee.
- 6.17. A doctoral student who has partially implemented the study programme plan for the relevant year of studies and has an academic failure may, on a case-by-case basis, be transferred to the following year of studies by a decree on matters of the study process by the Vice-Rector for Science, on the condition that he/she fulfils certain academic tasks by a specified deadline, including the settlement of the academic failure. The recommendation for transfer to the next year of studies shall be made by the director of the doctoral study programme. If the doctoral student fails to fulfil this condition, the doctoral student shall be excluded from the list of students due to academic failure.

- 6.18. In order to recognise the doctoral study programme as successfully completed, the doctoral student must have completed all the courses required for the doctoral study programme and must have carried out research and scientific activity (related to the topic of the doctoral thesis) during the doctoral studies, corresponding to at least one of the following research outcomes:
- 6.18.1. **Two double-blind peer-reviewed scientific publications** in scholarly journals or conference proceedings indexed in *SCOPUS* or *Web of Science*, where at least one is published in a Q1 or Q2 quartile journal and the applicant is the first author.
- 6.18.2. **One double-blind peer-reviewed scientific publication** in a scholarly journal or conference proceedings indexed in *SCOPUS* or *Web of Science*, published in a Q1 or Q2 quartile journal and the applicant is the first author, and **a peer-reviewed scientific monograph** on one research topic or problem, and containing a bibliography. If a peer-reviewed scientific monograph is published in Latvian, it shall contain an abstract in at least one of the other official languages of the European Union.
- 6.19. In the last year of studies, the doctoral student who has fulfilled the requirements of the study programme may submit a draft doctoral thesis to the Director of the doctoral study programme with a request to forward it for discussion before submitting the doctoral thesis to RSU Promotion Council for consideration in accordance with RSU internal laws and regulations regarding the promotion procedure.
- 6.20. If the consultation committee has given a favourable opinion on the draft doctoral thesis and the reviewer has confirmed the fulfilment of the instructions contained in the opinion (if any), the doctoral student shall be awarded the credit points provided for the fourth year of studies, and a certificate of successful completion of RSU doctoral study programme shall be issued. After fulfilment of these prerequisites, the doctoral student may submit an application to start the promotion process in accordance with RSU internal laws and regulations on the promotion procedure.
- 6.21. The personal file of a RSU doctoral student with study documents shall be handed over to RSU Archives after the exclusion.

7. Evaluating the results of scientific research work

- 7.1. At the end of the year of studies, the evaluation of the results of the doctoral students' scientific research shall be organised according to the doctoral student's plan / report on the work done during the year of studies, as instructed by the Director of the

doctoral study programme. The doctoral student shall present the progress and results of his/her scientific research activity in accordance with the procedure and deadlines set by the Department of Doctoral Studies. Presentation of the results of the research work shall be equivalent to an oral test.

- 7.2. The Scientific Activity Evaluation Committee of the respective study programme or subprogramme shall evaluate the doctoral students' research progress and the results of their scientific research work and shall award the credit points. The composition of each Committee shall be approved by the decree of the Vice-Rector for Science on the basis of a proposal from the Director of the relevant study programme. The number of members of the Committee shall be determined from 5 to 7, including the Chairperson of the Committee and the Deputy Chairperson of the Committee. The Committee shall be composed of the director of the doctoral study programme and the members of the Committee, who are specialists in the relevant field with a doctoral degree, as well as the Secretary of the Committee (without voting rights). The Committee shall have a quorum if more than a half of the Committee members, including the Chairperson of the Committee or the Deputy Chairperson, participate in the meeting. The Committee shall take its decisions by a simple majority. In the event of a tied vote, the Chairperson of the Committee (or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Chairperson) shall have the casting vote. The Dean of the Department of Doctoral Studies may, at his/her discretion, participate in the meetings of the Committee without voting rights.
- 7.3. The doctoral student shall present the research progress and results of his/her scientific research activity by an oral speech (up to 10 minutes) and shall answer the questions posed by the Committee (up to 10 minutes) without preparation time.
- 7.4. The meetings of the Scientific Activity Evaluation Committee may be recorded by audio or video recording. The doctoral student shall be notified before the recording that the meeting is being recorded. The audio or video recording shall be stored on RSU server for 1 (one) month, and access to the recording shall be granted to a member of staff designated by the RSU Department of Doctoral Studies for the preparation of the minutes of the meeting. If an appeal is received following the evaluation of scientific activity, the audio or video recording may be used in the appeal process and the recording shall be retained until a final decision on the case is made. After the specified deadline, the recording shall be permanently deleted and no further processing of this data shall take place.
- 7.5. The Committee shall decide on the compliance of the research progress and the results of the doctoral student's scientific research work with the doctoral student's plan,

including the adequacy of scientific publications, the existence of a permit issued by an Ethics Committee, a competent public administration institution or a patent holder (if the doctoral thesis is related to personal data, medical treatment, state secret, patent of another person, etc.) and shall give an assessment “pass” or “fail”.

- 7.6. In case of a ‘pass’ assessment, the Committee shall award the doctoral student all the credit points for the scientific research work provided for in the study programme plan in the relevant year of studies, and shall give binding guidelines for the further scientific research work of the doctoral student in the individual study plan for the following year of studies.
- 7.7. In the event of a ‘fail’ assessment, the Committee shall not award the doctoral student the credit points for the scientific research work provided for in the study programme plan in the relevant year of studies.
- 7.8. A member of the Committee shall refrain from giving assessment if the member of the Committee is the supervisor of the doctoral thesis or advisor of the doctoral student.
- 7.9. A doctoral student, who was excluded at the end of the last year of studies due to the academic failure in relation to the scientific research work outstanding in the respective year of studies, but who has fully completed the remaining doctoral study programme in accordance with the study programme plan, shall have the right to resume their studies within two years of the date of exclusion and do only the defence of the results of the scientific activity by covering the expense for the work of the Scientific Activity Evaluation Committee. If there have been changes to the content of the study programme during that period, the Director of the relevant doctoral study programme shall determine the part of the study programme to be studied in addition.

8. Organising and taking examinations and tests

- 8.1. The relevant academic department shall organise the examination of doctoral students’ knowledge.
- 8.2. No later than 30 (thirty) working days before the examination, information on the examination timetable shall be posted in the e-learning environment.
- 8.3. A doctoral student shall have the right to negotiate with the lecturer of the study course the postponement of the time or date of an examination once during the academic year in each academic department, at the latest 3 (three) working days before the examination or theoretical test.
- 8.4. If a doctoral student, regardless of the reason, fails to arrive at the examination or the test at the specified time, “no show” shall be written on the assessment form.

- 8.5. At the beginning of the course, doctoral students shall receive instructions on the form and nature of the examination in the academic department and in the e-learning environment. Doctoral students shall receive information about the additional learning resources that may be used.
- 8.6. Doctoral students being examined, examiners, the Rector, Vice-Rectors, the Dean of the Department of Doctoral Studies, the director of the study programme, the supervisor/-s of the doctoral thesis, professionals and RSU employees invited by the head of the academic department shall be allowed to participate in the examination.
- 8.7. The duration of a written and computer-based examination shall be determined by the academic department.
- 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 test or defence may be taken no more than twice.
- 8.12. A doctoral student, who has not obtained a pass mark in an examination or a test, may re-sit the examination within the year of studies.
- 8.13. The doctoral student shall agree with the lecturer of the relevant study course on the time for resitting the examination.
- 8.14. If at the end of the year of studies the doctoral student has not passed the examinations prescribed in the study programme plan, the director of the study programme shall, on a case-by-case basis (reasons for non-attendance), propose that the doctoral student is granted an academic leave or is excluded.

9. Lodging and considering appeals

- 9.1. The doctoral student shall have the right to request, by lodging an appeal, that the correlation between the answer to the examination question in the study course examination and the doctoral student's answers to the question is considered, but in case of the evaluation of the results of the scientific research work, the correlation between the results of the scientific research work intended in the individual study plan, the results presented and the assessment is considered.
- 9.2. An appeal against the assessment of the doctoral examination in the field / subfield and a foreign language may be lodged until the end of the following working day from the

moment when the assessment is published on the student portal. An appeal against the conduct of the examination and the assessment procedure in any other examination or against the evaluation procedure of the results of the scientific research work may be lodged within 3 (three) working days from the date of publication of the assessment on 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 the evaluation of the results of the scientific research work and the assessment of the final examination of the study course must 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. Send the necessary information to the addressee of the appeal (audio recording, 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 the Appeals Commission which is set up and convened by the recipient of the appeal (except in the case of the evaluation of the results of the scientific research work). The Appeals Commission shall be composed of the person to whom the appeal is addressed and of experts (other than the persons who assessed the examination) invited by him/her according to the content of the appeal. The Chairperson of the Appeals Commission shall be the recipient of the appeal. The Appeals Commission shall be composed of at least three persons. In case of the evaluation of the results of the scientific research work, the Dean of the Department of Doctoral Studies shall establish and chair the Appeals Commission. 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 Commission. 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 Commission shall inform the appellant and the lecturer who has assessed the examination about the time and place of the meeting of the Appeals Commission, 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 Commission.
- 9.9. Having considered the appeal, the Appeals Commission 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 recipient of the appeal may cancel the assessment and ask to retake the examination without establishing the Appeals Commission.
- 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 Commission shall notify the applicant in writing of the results of the consideration.

10. Employment and career support for doctoral students

- 10.1. The RSU shall ensure that, during the first semester of the academic year, the RSU or the Cooperation Partner concludes an employment contract with a doctoral student who has been admitted to a state-funded study place, in the cases and according to the procedure established by external laws and regulations, for the performance of academic work in order to achieve the study results of the study programme, subject to the remuneration and personnel policies of the Employer.
- 10.2. The employment contract shall be concluded for the duration of the study contract concluded or for such other period as may be specified in these Regulations and in external laws and regulations.
- 10.3. A doctoral student enrolled in a state-funded study place shall receive remuneration from the RSU doctoral student remuneration fund, which consists of the state budget and other financial resources provided by RSU and its Cooperation Partners.
- 10.4. The employment contract is concluded for part-time work.
- 10.5. If a doctoral student is admitted to a state-funded study place, the employment contract may not be concluded with him/her except in the cases provided for in the Law on Higher Education Institutions. If one of these cases no longer applies to the doctoral student

during his/her studies, the RSU shall provide the doctoral student with employment in accordance with these Regulations and external laws and regulations.

10.6. A doctoral student shall have the right to change Employer during the term of the study contract, provided that a new employment contract is concluded within a maximum period of one month from the date of termination of the last employment contract, in accordance with these Regulations and the Regulation of the Department of Doctoral Studies. The Doctoral Student is obliged to notify RSU of the change of Employer within five working days of the termination of the employment relationship with the previous Employer. If a new employment contract is not concluded within one month of the date of termination of the last employment contract, the RSU shall, within six months from the date of receipt of the said notification by the doctoral student, ensure that the doctoral student concludes a new employment contract in accordance with these Regulations and the Regulation of the Department of Doctoral Studies.

10.7. The Employer, who is the Cooperation Partner, shall have the right to terminate the employment relationship with the doctoral student within the term of the study contract in the cases stipulated by the Labour Law, observing the stipulated notice periods, by notifying RSU thereof. In such a case, RSU shall, within six months from the date of receipt of the said notification, ensure that the doctoral student concludes a new employment contract in accordance with these Regulations and the Regulation of Department of Doctoral Studies.

10.8. The Employer and the doctoral student shall agree on employment under the employment contract if the doctoral student exercises his/her right to academic leave in accordance with external laws and regulations and these Regulations.

10.9. The employment contract shall terminate:

10.9.1. on the award of the doctoral degree and the termination of the study contract;

10.9.2. in the cases provided for in the Labour Law, subject to the notice periods laid down;

10.9.3. if RSU terminates the contract for the development of the doctoral thesis and the doctoral student is removed from the list of students in the cases stipulated in these Regulations and external laws and regulations without the doctoral diploma.

11. Final provisions

- 11.1. These Regulations shall be applicable in so far as external laws and regulations do not prescribe otherwise.
- 11.2. Sections 2.7, 2.8, 2.29, 5.4.1 and 10 of these Regulations, which apply to the employment of a doctoral student upon conclusion of an employment contract with RSU or the Cooperation Partner, shall apply to those doctoral students who have commenced their studies at a state-funded study place in the doctoral programme of RSU starting from the academic year 2024/2025.
- 11.3. Matters that are not covered by the Regulations, or disputes shall be dealt with by decisions of the head of the department, director of the study programme or the Dean of the Department of Doctoral Studies in compliance with RSU Internal Rules and Regulations for Studies or other RSU internal laws and regulations.
- 11.4. These Regulations shall enter into force on the following day after the approval at the RSU Senate.

Chair of the Senate

J.Gardovskis

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AGREED:
at the meeting of Rīga Stradiņš University
Council of Deans
of 30 September 2024,
Minutes No. 4-SD.1-2/21/2024

AGREED:
at the meeting of Rīga Stradiņš University
Rector's Office
of 7 October 2024,
Minutes No. 1-PB-1/34/2024

THE DOCUMENT IS ELECTRONICALLY SIGNED WITH A SECURE ELECTRONIC
SIGNATURE AND INCLUDES A TIMESTAMP