



## **Rules governing masters studies at the Reykjavík University School of Law**

### **Article 1**

#### ***Masters Degree in Law***

The Reykjavík University School of Law confers the academic title of Master of Legal Studies (“ML”) following graduate studies of 120 ECTS credits at the School with satisfactory results

### **Article 2**

#### ***Qualification for entry to the legal profession***

A student who has completed an ML degree at the Reykjavík University School of Law and received a minimum of 240 ECTS credits for the completion of legal subjects in the course of undergraduate and graduate studies shall be regarded as qualifying for entry to the legal profession in the meaning of point 4 of the first paragraph of Article 6 of Act No. 77/1998 on professional lawyers. This qualification is equivalent to a professional law degree where such degree is required by law.

### **Article 3**

#### ***Content of the studies***

In the course of masters studies a student shall complete a minimum of 60 ECTS credits in legal subjects; however, up to 60 ECTS credits may be completed in other subjects at graduate level, as further provided in Article 14. Notwithstanding the above, students who are enrolled in masters studies on the basis of Article 5(c) of these Rules without having completed a BA degree in law, or a comparable degree, shall complete a minimum of 105 ECTS credits in legal subjects. Masters level courses in the Reykjavík University School of Law course catalogue are legal subjects within the meaning of the above provision, except as otherwise decided by a faculty meeting. Courses or assignments completed at other Reykjavík University schools or other Icelandic or foreign academic institutions are not considered legal subjects in the above understanding except as otherwise decided by the Academic Affairs Council.

All students enrolled in master’s studies are required to submit a master thesis of 30 or 60 ECTS credits, as further provided in the rules on masters theses in Article 13 below.

In any other respects, students shall themselves decide on the composition of their masters studies within the limits provided for in these Rules and depending on the course offering of the School at any time.

### **Article 4**

#### ***Functions of the Academic Affairs Council***

With regard to masters studies in law at the Reykjavík University School of Law, the Academic Affairs Council is responsible for the following tasks:

- a. To submit recommendations to the faculty dean on the offering of electives and seminars in each semester and, as applicable, on the appointment of part-time instructors;



- b. To take the initiative in contracting with organisations and business enterprises on internships;
- c. To discuss applications for enrolment in masters studies and submit recommendations to the faculty dean concerning admissions;
- d. To discuss and decide on evaluations of studies conducted at other universities;
- e. To provide opinions and recommendations in response to queries from the faculty dean;
- f. To resolve disputes in circumstances provided for in these Rules;
- g. To submit other recommendations and decisions as necessary within the context of these Rules.

The Academic Affairs Council may establish its own rules of procedure concerning the implementation of items (a) – (g).

## **Article 5**

### ***Admission requirements***

An applicant for masters studies at the University of Reykjavík School of Law shall have completed a B.A. or B.Sc. degree, or passed a corresponding examination at an accredited university. The Academic Affairs Council shall evaluate applications and submit recommendations to the faculty dean on the admission of applicants to master studies. The Council may establish rules of procedure concerning such evaluation.

(a) Applicants who have passed a B.A. examination at the Reykjavík University School of Law with an average grade of 6.0 or higher qualify for admission to masters studies (M.L.). The Academic Affairs Council may admit an applicant to masters studies who has earned a minimum of 165 ECTS credits in undergraduate studies and fulfils the above requirements in other respects. Students who begin master studies without having fully completed their undergraduate studies shall not be awarded any registered credits for courses or assignments in their masters studies until they have completed their B.A. degree with the minimum grades provided for above, or have applied for and been admitted to masters studies on the basis of paragraph (b) of the present Article. Students commencing studies at the masters level before completing their B.A. degrees must complete their undergraduate studies in the first two semesters of the masters programme. Students who fail to earn credits in accordance with the above within the requisite time limit forfeit their right to pursue masters studies until all undergraduate courses have been finished.

(b) Applicants who have completed a B.A. degree at the Reykjavík University School of Law, but do not meet the performance requirements provided for in paragraph (a), and applicants with a B.A. degree in law or a comparable degree from other universities, may apply for admission to studies for an M.L. degree at the Reykjavík University School of Law. In assessing such applications, the Academic Affairs Council shall have particular regard to the composition of the applicants' studies and their performance in individual components. If the M.L. degree is intended to qualify for entrance into the legal profession pursuant to point 4 of the first paragraph of Article 6 of Act, No. 77/1998 on professional lawyers, equivalent to a professional law degree in the meaning of statutory law, the Academic Affairs Council may issue general and specific rules and establish requirements relating to the content of, and performance in, masters studies, exceeding the requirements of the present Rules. Such rules may require a student to complete certain courses or assignments in undergraduate studies offered at the School, without the credits so earned being counted towards the completion of master studies. Extra requirements may include performance in masters studies, either in certain parts of the studies or in the masters programme as a whole, in excess of the performance that is generally required. The faculty dean shall decide on tuition fees for any additional courses that students may be required to complete at the undergraduate level.



(c) Applicants possessing a B.A. or B.Sc. degree in fields other than law may be admitted to masters studies. In assessing such applications, the Academic Affairs Council shall have particular regard to the composition of the applicants' studies and their performance in individual components. Such applicants shall also, as a part of their masters studies, be required to complete a course in jurisprudence with an average grade of 6.0 or higher. Completion of this course shall not count towards the credit requirements in masters studies. For these applicants, an M.L. degree does not qualify for entrance into the legal profession within the meaning of point 4 of the first paragraph of Article 6 of Act No. 77/1998 on professional lawyers and is not equivalent to a professional law degree in the meaning of statutory law.

The faculty dean shall, in consultation with the Academic Affairs Council, decide on the number of students to be admitted to masters studies.

Masters studies will normally begin in the autumn. The deadline for applying for admission to M.A. studies is 30 April in the spring preceding the start of studies, and responses to applications, conditional or unreserved, shall be available no later than 20 May.

## **Article 6**

### ***Study components***

The following study components are eligible for credits in masters studies at the Reykjavík University School of Law: *electives*, as provided for in Article 10; *seminars*, as provided for in Article 11; *studies abroad*, e.g. under student exchange programmes in which the School participates, as provided for in Article 12; *internships*, as provided for in Article 13; *studies in fields other than law*, as provided for in Article 14, and *masters theses*, as provided for in Article 15.

Undergraduate electives at the Reykjavík University School of Law may earn students enrolled for masters studies on the basis of Article 5(a) or (b) up to 15 ECTS credits in the course of their masters studies. However, such electives or comparable study components shall not have formed a part of students' undergraduate studies. The Academic Affairs Council shall decide whether a study component which a student plans to use towards a masters degree is comparable in substance to a study component of the student's undergraduate studies

Students admitted to masters studies under the provisions of Article 5(c) may, subject to approval by the Academic Affairs Council, select to a total of two elective subjects from the undergraduate curriculum of the Reykjavík University School of Law. The Academic Affairs Council may decide to limit this choice to only some elective subjects from the undergraduate curriculum. A minimum grade of 6.0 is required to pass examinations in elective subjects from the undergraduate curriculum.

## **Article 7**

### ***Offering of electives and seminars***

The Academic Affairs Council shall, prior to 20 October each year, recommend electives and seminars to be offered over the following two academic years. The Council shall prepare its proposals in consultation with the members of the faculty. Prior to 10 January of each year the dean of faculty, having obtained the opinion of a faculty meeting, shall decide which electives and seminars should be offered during the period in question.



In preparing its proposals the Academic Affairs Council shall endeavour to ensure the offer of a minimum combination of 10 electives and seminars. Descriptions of electives and seminars, with information on supervision, teaching, performance evaluation and other arrangements, shall be made available at the same time to the extent possible. Electives and seminars shall be offered with a view to making available to students, during the course of their studies, a reasonable choice of varied courses in as many fields of law as feasible, both in traditional fields and more recent fields. Special emphasis shall be focused on offering students a good selection of courses in the fields of law provided for in Article 16.

## **Article 8**

### ***Study plan, progress and evaluation***

A student who has been admitted to masters studies in the autumn shall, prior to 1 June of the year that studies begin, submit a comprehensive study plan, a choice of electives and seminars, and requests for internships. Students' selections of courses and seminars for the first year of study are binding. A student who is starting masters studies in the spring shall submit a plan for that semester before 15 November. The Academic Affairs Council may permit students to alter their registrations for courses or seminars after the prescribed date if there are urgent reasons for doing so. Until 1 June of the year in which the second year of study begins, students may alter their selection of courses and seminars for that year without seeking the Council's approval.

Masters' students study plans shall state any intended credit evaluation requests relating to studies conducted in institutions other than the Reykjavík University School of Law.

Students should notify the Academic Council of the subject of their masters theses and the approval by their advisor of the subject before 10 June of the year when the second year of studies is begun. The corresponding deadline for students beginning their masters studies at the turn of the year is 15 November.

Students should endeavour to choose their elective courses, seminars and other study components so that the work on the 30 ECTS credit master's thesis is spread over the entire second year of studies. In other respects, students are responsible for their choices and decisions on the progress of studies. In the case of a 60 ECTS credit essay, the work should extend over the last three semesters of study.

Masters studies should at a minimum extend over four semesters. Students should complete their masters studies no later than three years after their commencement, unless the faculty dean has granted a leave of absence from the studies. In such an event the deadline shall be extended by the duration of the leave of absence. A student may appeal a denial of a leave of absence to a faculty meeting. A faculty meeting may grant a student up to one year of additional time to complete his or her studies in special circumstances, and a longer period in exceptional cases.

In order to graduate with a masters degree in law a student must receive a minimum grade of 6.0 in all study components pursuant to Article 6, subject to the provisions of Articles 11(b), 12, 13 and 14. This requirement applies also to any previous studies evaluated for a credit transfer as a part of ML studies, as appropriate.

In order to pass a course, a student must receive a minimum grade of 6.0 for the final examination. If the final examination accounts for less than 20% of the final grade, a teacher is permitted to deviate from this provision.



The final grade for qualification for entry into legal profession within the meaning of Article 2 of these Rules shall be calculated as a weighted average of all grades awarded for the study components of B.A. and masters studies

### **Article 9** **Electives and seminars**

The School is not required to offer an elective course or seminar if 10 or fewer students have registered for the course at the end of the registration period. Notwithstanding the above provisions, the School is permitted to offer elective courses and seminars for which a lower number of students has been registered. The Academic Affairs Council may provide for a maximum number of students in elective courses. Decisions on a maximum number of students in elective courses and seminars pursuant to Article 11 may result in students being denied admission to the elective or seminar in question.

A decision on the elective courses and seminars to be offered shall be available prior to 20 June in the year when studies begin.

In the event of difficulties in offering an elective course or a seminar due to unforeseen circumstances the dean of faculty may decide that the course or seminar will not be taught.

Elective courses or seminars shall normally be offered every other year; however, individual courses and seminars may be offered every year or at intervals longer than two years.

Elective courses and seminars in master studies shall be offered with a view to awarding one credit for four to five classes or seminar sessions. Thus, each elective course or seminar of 7,5 ECTS credits should involve 30-38 classes or seminar sessions.

Elective courses and seminars shall be supervised by members of the permanent teaching staff, as decided by the dean of faculty. However, supervision may be entrusted to part-time instructors if permanent faculty members are unavailable.

The School may offer summer studies, independently or in partnership with other parties, which qualify for credits toward a masters degree as further decided by the dean of faculty. Also, the School may offer shorter electives or seminars qualifying for credits toward a masters degree, which are not in other respects subject to the provisions of this Article. The Academic Affairs Council shall decide whether credits should be awarded for such shorter courses, and how many. Additional tuition fees may be charged for studies pursuant to this paragraph.

### **Article 10** **Electives**

Electives may comprise normal classes, discussion periods and assignments, at the discretion of their supervisor at any time. The supervisor shall decide on the arrangements of performance evaluation, including whether written or oral examinations should be held, and whether a course should be completed, in part or in full, by submitting a term paper or completing an assignment, by evaluation of a student's performance in discussions, etc. Examinations and other assignment work are subject to general rules.



Electives should normally be worth 7.5 credits, and both new courses and existing courses should be based on that number of credits. The Dean, following consultation with a faculty meeting, may permit another number of credits to be awarded for an elective.

Electives in the third year of undergraduate studies should normally be worth 7.5 ECTS credits as of the spring semester of 2012.

### **Article 11 Seminars**

Seminars can be of two kinds:

A. General seminars addressing defined fields of law and requiring greater participation and initiative on the part of students than traditional courses. The number of students in such seminars shall normally be restricted to 15 students, with the supervisor selecting students for participation if the number of applicants exceeds 15. The number of classes shall be the same as in normal courses; in other respects the arrangements of the seminar shall be subject to the discretion of the supervisor. Performance evaluation in seminars of this kind shall be based on assignment work rather than traditional examinations. However, a supervisor may examine students' knowledge of the subject matter of assignments that they have completed in the course of the seminar.

B. Seminars relating to research by individual faculty members, which serve as a forum for teachers to present their research, disseminate their conclusions and demonstrate to students their research methods, with students assisting the teachers in individual components of their research, as applicable. Such seminars should represent an attempt to link studies engaged in by students with teachers' research, including research carried out under the auspices of the Reykjavík University research institutes.

Supervisors of these seminars are permitted to establish conditions on the maximum number of students admitted to the seminars, and in addition supervisors are permitted, as appropriate, to select students for participation in a seminar if the number of students exceeds the desired maximum, in the opinion of the supervisor.

The supervisor shall decide on the number of classes in seminars of this kind, following approval by the Academic Affairs Council. The supervisor may decide that actual classes should be fewer than required by normal rules and supplemented instead by students' work and independent studies, in addition to discussion periods or individual interview sessions. A seminar description shall include the supervisor's plans concerning work methods, number of classes and discussion periods and a schedule for the classes and discussion periods when possible. The arrangements of performance evaluation are at the discretion of the supervisor. Among other things, the supervisor may decide that no grades should be awarded for participation in the seminar and that confirmation should instead be granted that the required credits were completed with satisfactory results.

Seminars should normally be worth 6 ECTS credits. The Dean, following consultation with a faculty meeting, may permit another number of credits for a seminar.



## **Article 12 Internships**

The School of Law shall organise internships in partnership with outside organisations or business undertakings.

A student may complete up to 7,5 ECTS credits toward a masters degree by means of an approved internship. Normally, 7,5 ECTS credits should be equivalent to 150 hours of attendance at a place of employment where the student is engaged in a legal project which will demonstrably expand the student's knowledge of the law and ability to carry out legal assignments.

The School of Law shall endeavour to secure internships with a suitable organisation or business undertaking for students wishing to earn credits through an internship. The School is not required to meet students' wishes in this regard, as the availability of internships will be determined by the needs and wishes of the School's partners. If internships are not available for all the students wishing to earn credits through an internship, the Academic Affairs Council shall decide which students should be offered internships, and at which locations. The Academic Affairs Council may establish more specific rules on the implementation of this provision.

The Academic Affairs Council shall take the initiative in seeking partnership agreements with appropriate business undertakings or organisations. In the course of concluding such agreements, the Academic Affairs Council shall appoint a supervising teacher for interns in respect of each agreement, and the partner shall appoint a supervisor of the student's work within the organisation or business enterprise in question

Normally, a student will be expected to complete an internship by submitting a work report or paper on the internship.

Following the internship the supervisor shall confirm the work report and submit a testimony on the student's performance. The supervising teacher shall then decide, on the basis of the confirmed work report and the testimony of the supervisor, whether the student completed the intended number of credits with satisfactory results.

The performance of the student in the internship shall be entered in the student's records as "pass" or "fail" with no numeric grade awarded for inclusion in the student's average final grade.

The Academic Affairs Council may accept a student's work on a specific research project under the guidance of a supervisor as the equivalent of an internship pursuant to the above. The Academic Affairs Council may permit research projects of this kind even if the student in question has completed an internship.

Internships and research projects pursuant to the above shall be unremunerated work.

## **Article 13 Master's thesis**

At the end of the last semester of master studies, students shall submit a master thesis worth 30 or 60 ECTS credits.



### *30 ECTS credit thesis*

All students in graduate studies (M.L.) at the RU School of Law shall submit a master thesis qualifying for a minimum of 30 ECTS credits. The thesis shall meet the following requirements:

- Discuss a jurisprudential subject or a subject relating to legal issues in combination with issues in other scholarly fields.
- Involve the use of primary sources and secondary sources for a scholarly purpose to the extent that the subject of the thesis warrants.
- Achieve the goals established by the student and accepted by the advisor before the start of work. The goals should be clearly laid down in the introduction to the thesis.
- It should be clear from the approach taken in dealing with the subject that the thesis is a result of no less than 600 hours of work.

The length of a 30 ECTS credit thesis shall be in the range of 25.000 to 30.000 words, as counted in a word processing programme. The Dean shall appoint an examiner, and the advisor and examiner shall jointly evaluate the student's thesis. If there are more than one advisor, they should jointly assess the thesis, in which case no examiner is needed.

A grade should be awarded for the thesis in the same manner as for courses taken in the School of Law. The School of Law shall co-ordinate advisors' requirements regarding masters theses.

### *60 ECTS credit thesis*

Students in masters studies may, with the approval of the advisor, apply to the Academic Affairs Council for permission to write a 60 ECTS credit master thesis instead of a 30 ECTS credit thesis.

A 60-credit thesis shall meet the following requirements:

- Discuss a jurisprudential subject or a subject relating to legal issues in combination with issues in other scholarly fields.
- Constitute an intellectual property of the writer and an important and independent contribution to the field or fields it addresses.
- Involve the testing of a theory that the student has proposed as a response to a research question which forms the focal point of the thesis.
- Primary sources and secondary sources should be used to support or refute any theory proposed by the student as a possible response to his or her research question.
- It should be clear from the approach taken in dealing with the subject that the thesis is a result of no less than 600 hours of work.

A 60 ECTS credit thesis shall be 50,000 to 75.000 words, as counted in a word processing programme.

If an application by a student to write a 60-credit master's thesis has been approved, the Dean of the School of Law will appoint a committee comprising the student's advisor and two specialists in the scholarly field covered by the thesis. The majority of the committee shall have completed a masters degree, comparable studies or a higher university degree. The committee shall assess the student's thesis and subject the student to an oral examination on the subject of the thesis in a public seminar. A grade should be awarded for the thesis in the same manner as for courses taken in the School of Law.

Students' theses will not be graded and awarded credits until students have completed at least 60 other ECTS credits of masters' studies.



#### **Article 14**

##### **Studies outside the RU School of Law during ML studies**

A student in masters studies may apply for permission to engage in the following studies at the masters level in the course of ML studies at the Reykjavík School of law and have such studies evaluated as part of the masters studies.

- a. up to 60 ECTS credits of university studies in law or other subjects at a foreign university, e.g. within the framework of student exchange programmes in which the School or Reykjavík University are participants;
- b. up to 60 ECTS credits of studies in subjects other than law in another faculty of Reykjavík University;
- c. up to 60 ECTS credits of studies in law or other subjects at another Icelandic university.

However, in no case will students be permitted to complete more than a total of 60 ECTS credits under items (a) to (c) above.

A student seeking to qualify for entrance into the legal profession must complete a total of 240 ECTS credits in law at the undergraduate and master's level.

A student who is not seeking to qualify for entrance into the legal profession must complete a total of 105 ECTS credits in legal fields at the master's level.

Students should seek the approval of the Academic Affairs Council for studies under this Article prior to starting studies.

Assessment of whether a student's performance under items (a) to (c) in the first paragraph was satisfactory shall be based on the requirements of the university where the studies took place. The performance of a student in such studies shall be entered in the student's records as satisfactory or unsatisfactory, with no numeric grade awarded for inclusion in the student's average final grade.

#### **Article 15**

##### **Evaluation of earlier studies (transfer of credits)**

Prior to commencement of masters studies a student may apply for evaluation, as part of the masters studies, of any courses completed at the masters level at other domestic universities or foreign universities before starting studies in law at Reykjavík University.

A maximum of 15 ECTS credits may be transferred on the basis of such courses. In special circumstances, a student seeking to qualify for entry into the legal profession may have courses in law assessed at the master level up to a maximum of 20 ECTS credits.

Previous courses taken at the masters level cannot be evaluated as part of masters studies in law if the courses formed a part of a degree already completed by the student, or if a course was completed more than nine years before the student registered for masters studies in law.



The Academic Affairs Council shall decide whether and how earlier studies should be evaluated. In addition to the factors above, the Council may also take into account the nature of the studies in question and the results achieved.

The performance of a student in the studies provided for in this Article shall be entered in the student's records as "transferred", with no numeric grade awarded for inclusion in the student's average final grade.

#### **Article 16** **Points of focus**

Masters level studies at the Reykjavík University School of Law shall focus in particular on offering courses in the fields of international law and international business, advocacy and judiciary, contract law, law of claims, tort and property law.

Furthermore, the School of Law may designate a master's degree as concentrated on private and public international law. For this purpose, electives and seminars offered by the School of Law shall be identified as pertaining to that field, as appropriate. On the recommendation of the supervising teacher, the Academic Affairs Council will decide whether an elective or seminar should be designated as international in above meaning.

Students intending to complete a degree in private and public international law shall complete a minimum of 45 ECTS credits in electives or seminars designated as international. Furthermore, such students should complete their master thesis in international private or public international law. Internships in international law may replace courses or seminars in that field subject to the decision of the School of Law at any time.

The Academic Affairs Council will decide whether studies abroad fall within the field of international studies. At the request of a student, such evaluation may take place before the start of studies, provided that the student supplies adequate information on the subject matter of the studies.

#### **Article 17** **Tuition**

The University Council will decide on tuition fees for masters studies.

#### **Article 18** **Decisions and recourses for appeal**

Where these Rules do not provide otherwise, the Dean of the School of Law has the final decision in matter pertaining to the conduct of masters studies in law pursuant to Section 2.4 of the Reykjavík University Regulations. However, the Dean may entrust other members of the staff of the School with tasks provided for in these Rules.

Where these rules assign powers of decision to the Academic Affairs Council, it shall be assumed that the Dean of the School of Law has assigned his or her powers to the Academic Affairs Council. Such decisions may be appealed by students to a faculty meeting, which shall then have the final decision on the matter within the School.

#### **Article 19** **Reference to the Reykjavík University Rules**

Where these Rules do not provide otherwise, the general rules of Reykjavík University on masters studies in the School of Law shall apply and, as appropriate, other rules of the School of Law.



So approved at faculty meetings of the School of Law held on 16 September 2004, 24 January 2005, 2 December 2005, 6 March 2006, 25 April 2006, 15 December 2006, 30 January 2007, 4 December 2007, 19 April 2010 and 9th November 2010 (Amendments to the second paragraph of Article 10 are effective as of the autumn semester of 2011, while amendments to the third paragraph of Article 10 are effective as of the spring semester of 2012)