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REGULATIONS ON GRADUATION EXAMINATIONS

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OBJECTIVE OF REGULATIONS

To Introduce common principles for organisation and conduct of the final examination at RISEBA University (hereinafter referred to as the University).

SCOPE

The present Regulations are binding to all RISEBA administrative and academic staff and external experts (final paper supervisors or state examination commission members, students, etc.).

DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Graduation examination – Final examination, state examination and/or qualification examination.

Final examination – examination at the end of **academic** Bachelor's or Master's program, consisting of the development of final paper and its public defending.

State examination – examination at the end of **professional** Bachelor's or Master's program, consisting of the development of final paper and its public defending.

Final paper – Bachelor's or Master's paper, the development and defence of which is a prerequisite for award of bachelor's or master's degree and/or qualification.

Qualification examination – State examination, covering the theoretical and practical knowledge necessary for qualification.

Final Examination Commission (State Examination Commission, Final examination or State qualification examination committee) – a group of persons with duly granted rights by RISEBA to assess academic degree, professional degree and/or professional qualification of candidate knowledge in the whole extent of the study program, as well as the quality of the final paper and compatibility to requirements of the program, as well as to decide on evaluation of the final paper and on granting the degree and/or qualification. Hereinafter referred to as the State Examination Commission (SEC).

Preliminary presentation of the Final paper – public defending of the Final paper in its development process presenting the paper's scope, aim, and tasks, utilised research methods, and the foreseeable, or already existing, research results. The preliminary presentation aims to help

the student develop the Final paper, provide comments or suggestions for its improvement, and prepare the student for public defence of the Final paper. A study program can have its own defined goals for the Preliminary presentation of the Final paper.

Public defence of the Final paper – public outline of the Final paper (presentation) for the State Examination Commission and the people in the auditorium, reflecting the work objectives, tasks, conclusions and proposals, as well as responding to questions asked by the reviewer and the commission.

1. General provisions

1.1. Graduation examination is mandatory in all RISEBA study programs. Their purpose is to generally examine the student's preparedness and compliance with granting an academic degree and/or qualification by study program and requirements of national standards.

1.2. Graduation examination is allowed to be taken by students who have fully acquired the study program, have successfully passed all study courses and have complied with financial and other obligations to RISEBA.

1.3. Final paper is being developed by RISEBA *Study paper development regulations NL 0006*. During the on-set of the final paper development, the study program director organises a meeting with the students, in which he explains, in minute detail, the requirements of *Study paper development regulations* and *Regulations for final examinations*.

1.4. Only persons who have at least a Master's degree or a comparable higher education diploma can be denominated as the Scientific advisor of a Final paper. Only persons who are specialists in the respective field can be denominated as the Creative advisor of a Final paper¹.

1.5. If a qualifying exam is foreseen in the study program, only students who have successfully passed the qualifying exam, are allowed to develop the Final paper.

1.6. Qualification exam is organized according to the approved study plan.

1.7. A student arrives at the Graduation examination with an identity document (a passport or eID).

2. Themes of the Final paper and choice of the scientific advisor

2.1. The program director at beginning of the academic year actualises the offered Final paper direction list for the students and approves it in the respective department meeting until October 1.

2.2. The program director submits the approved Final paper direction list and application form (ref. to appendices 1a. to 1d) and works development form electronically in the University study platform e.riseba.lv in a matter of 5 days after its approval in the department meeting.

2.3. A student chooses a preferred Final paper direction from the approved direction list or offers his own theme for the final paper, as well as indicated the potential Final paper advisor².

¹ It applies only to Bachelor's and Master's programs of "Audiovisual Media Art" and "Public Relations and Advertising Management".

² Supervisor for the creative part is in addition indicated in programs comprising the creative (B) part. In Audiovisual Media Arts programs, also format and timing of Part B, are indicated.

- 2.4. If necessary, the student consults with the program director or teaching staff in the respective field and the potential scientific advisor regarding the topicality of the Final paper or its compliance with program requirements. The program director may propose one or more potential advisors depending on the student's chosen Final paper direction.
- 2.5. Department leader approves the appropriate teacher as an advisor for the Final paper, considering the research subject, planned load of the teacher and the number of papers to be supervised in the given year. The head of the Department carries out a listing of the Final papers to be supervised by Final paper advisors.
- 2.6. The student meets with the advisor, specifies/agrees on the theme of the Final paper, tasks to be performed, draws up the development plan of the Final paper, fills in the application and within the period prescribed by the University, submits it to the Study Department. In case the number of Final papers to be supervised by a given advisor exceeds the maximum amount set by the University, the teacher has no right to accept supervising any additional work. Exceptions shall be coordinated with the Head of Department according to regulations of the University.
- 2.7. Final paper elaboration plan, signed by both the student and the paper's scientific advisor is binding for both the student and the advisor.
- 2.8. If the student is for any reason unable to perform the plan, it should be duly informed to the scientific advisor. If the scientific advisor for any reason can not provide work management of high quality, it should be duly informed to the student and the program director. The program director, together with the Head of the Department, deals with the issue of the final work supervision.
- 2.9. If the cooperation of students and scientific advisors is not satisfactory, the program director should be informed promptly. The student has the right to consult with other teachers or professionals, by previously coordinating it with the scientific advisor, but in this case, the study paper title page (under the advisor) must contain the scientific consultant.
- 2.10. Study department employee, based on received student applications, prepares an ordinance on approval of Final paper scientific and creative part ¹ advisor and themes (ref. to Appendix 2a) until the beginning of the final paper elaboration. The ordinance shall be endorsed by the program director and the head of the respective department, and signed by the vice-rector in study work.
- 2.11. The student, during harmonisation with the program director, is entitled to change the work advisor and/or to particularise the paper theme by applying (ref. to Appendices 1e. to 1f.) to the program director, but no later than 3 weeks before submitting date of the final paper. Study Department employee prepares approval of the Final paper advisor or theme change (ref. to Appendix 2b.).

3. Preliminary presentation of the Final paper

- 3.1. Preliminary presentation of the Final paper is mandatory for all students of RISEBA.
- 3.2. The program director plans the preliminary presentation dates and times, and informs the students, no later than one month before the date of paper submission.
- 3.3. The preliminary presentation committee is composed of its president and one commission member. Persons who are eligible to be commission members are program directors, teaching staff, academic advisors, reviewers, external specialists or doctoral students.
- 3.4. Composition of the preliminary presentation commission is determined and approved by the program director.

3.5. The Study division prepares the Draft of the Final Paper Preliminary presentation protocol with the student list (ref. to Appendix 3) for the specific preliminary presentation commission.

3.6. Members of the Commission mark down the students who presented the Final paper, sign the student list sheet, and submit it to the program director. The program director submits a copy of the list to the Study division, and informs the scientific advisor regarding the students who have not attended their preliminary presentation, and have not passed their preliminary presentation.

3.7. Participation in the Preliminary presentation of the Final papers is a mandatory requirement. In case the student does not participate in the preliminary presentation, or takes part but does not acquire a positive commission evaluation, then based on the student's application (ref. to Appendix 3a), the Head of Department, considering the opinion of the program director and scientific advisor, takes a conclusion regarding the continuation of the Final paper development, and the possibility to defend it in the overall defence of the current academic year. The head of the Department informs of his decision the student, the program director, the Study division and the paper advisor.

4. Submission of the Final paper

4.1. The student submits, within the deadline set by the University, to the program director a set of two identical, bound (at least one paper must be hardback) copies of the final paper, which also contain the summary (only for papers not written in the official language, ref. to Study paper development regulations, Paragraph 4.11.) with signatures of the scientific advisor and program director on the title page, as well as in electronic format (recorded in CD/DVD/USB in PDF file format). In case the scientific advisor or the program director suppose that the work is so seriously deficient that the work can not be promoted for defending, they do not sign the paper and informs the Head of the Department thereof. The head of the Department, in deciding whether to admit the paper for defending, can transfer the paper to the reviewer. If the reviewer's assessment is positive, the paper can be directed for defending, but the SEC is informed of the absence of the signature. If the reviewer's assessment is negative, the paper is not admitted for defending and the student is expelled with the right to recover and defend a revised Final paper at the earliest after one year.

4.2. The student, while submitting the paper to the Study division, signs up for defence date and time. The SEC composition for the given date is not available to the student.

4.3. Along with the Final paper, the student submits to the employee of the Study division the evaluation questionnaire of the Final paper development process (ref. to Appendices 4a-4c).

4.4. The scientific advisor submits an electronically signed reference of the scientific/creative advisor (ref. to Appendices 5a-5e) to the Study division on the same day of signing the Final paper of the student.

4.5. The Study division, after the final date of the student's Final work submission, based on indications of the program directors, no later than 1 working day prepares an ordinance regarding the reviewer of the Final paper (ref. to Appendix 6). The ordinance is approved by the vice-rector in the study process.

4.6. Employee of the Study division, no later than 1 working day after the final date of the student's Final work submission, delivers the student's Final paper to the reviewer by the

ordinance on Final paper reviewers. The reviewer shall remain confidential from the student until the student receives an already prepared and signed review.

4.7. Reviewer submits the review (ref. to Appendices 7a-7e) to an employee of the Study division in electronic and paper format, along with a signature, no later than 3 working days before defending the Final paper.

4.8. The employee of the Study division sends the review electronically (without the recommended evaluation score) in a matter of 1 day to the student and the paper advisor.

4.9. In case the reviewer provides a negative review, the employee of the Study division on the same day transfers the paper for review to another teacher, appointed by the program director. The reviewer submits the second review to an employee of the Study division in electronic and paper format, along with a signature, no later than 3 working days before defending the Final paper. In case the second review is positive, the student is allowed to defend his Final paper. In case the second review is negative, the student is not allowed to defend his Final paper and is expelled (ref. to Appendix 17) with the right to recover and defend a revised Final paper at the earliest after one year by University-approved additionally charged services and at no extra cost for defending the Final paper.

5. Composition of the State Examination Commission

5.1. The program director prepares, and sends to the assistant of the vice-rector in the study process, a project of the ordinance of the rector regarding the composition of the relevant study program's SEC (ref. to Appendix 8) until October 15 of each year. The composition of the SEC includes potential SEC members in the given study year – University representatives/Academics, representatives of the employers and industry professionals. SEC is comprised of a commission president, four commission members, and a commission secretary. Rector's ordinance is prepared within 5 working days.

5.2. SEC secretary shall have no voting rights.

5.3. Commission President or the Commission Vice President (in case there are several commissions operational within the study program) must have a doctoral degree.

5.4. Composition of the commission:

5.4.1. Commission president, and at least half of the members, are professionals or employer representatives, with at least a master's degree;

5.4.2. In Master's programs at least half of the SEC members, incl. commission president has a doctoral degree.

5.5. The timetable of SEC is drawn up by the program director in agreement with the Study division, the President and members of the commission.

5.6. Assistant vice-rector in the study process, based on a draft ordinance submitted by the study program administrator, prepares an ordinance regarding approval of the specific SEC (ref. to Appendix 9) no later than two weeks before the expected examination. The ordinance is approved by the vice-rector in the study process.

6. State Examination Commission Work organisation

6.1. Employee of the Study division prepares the necessary documents for the SEC (ref. to Appendices 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14a to 14c).

6.2. The work of the SEC is organised by the commission president, who is responsible for the timely and proper accomplishment of SEC tasks.

- 6.3. SEC is capable of decision-making when the meeting is attended by the President or his deputy, secretary and at least two members of the commission. Each member of the SEC evaluates each student after certain criteria. If the scientific advisor participates in the commission, his rating is not taken into account in evaluating a particular student's final mark. If the reviewer of the student's final paper participates in the commission, his rating is taken into account in evaluating a particular student's final mark. The reviewer's rating during defending (taking into account the presentation), may differ from his assessment during the review.
- 6.4. The decision on the final assessment of the Graduation examination, as well as the decision on assigning a degree and/or qualification, is taken by the SEC in a closed session after all the Graduation examination students have been heard.
- 6.5. The president of SEC gathers the evaluations of members of the commission and delivers the average rating in points, considering the evaluation of the reviewer and, if necessary, feedback from the scientific advisor. If the student's total score, considering the estimates of the members of the commission, ranges between two points, the decision on the final evaluation is taken by the commission president (or commission deputy president, if another commission is operating simultaneously).
- 6.6. The president of the commission reads the decision of the SEC regarding granting a degree and/or qualification, to all the students, after evaluation.
- 6.7. Final work defence arrangements are open to the public, if not agreed upon specifications, and final paper advisors, reviewers, students, teachers, as well as professionals and other interested persons may take part in them.
- 6.8. Final paper defences can be recorded in audio/video.
- 6.9. Decision of the SEC on the final examination assessment does not require approval by other University institutions.
- 6.10. The secretary of the SEC fills a protocol for each student (ref. to Appendix 10), and the protocols are signed by all members of the SEC.
- 6.11. At the end of the SEC meeting, a summary is drawn up (ref. to Appendix 11) in the general level of the Final papers, in which the SEC provides proposals to further improve the quality of the students' Final papers. This summary is then signed by the State Examination Commission president.

7. Organization of the Graduation examination

- 7.1. State examinations are organised by the approved study schedule of the respective program.
- 7.2. The employee of the study division, no later than two weeks before the first meeting of the State examination commission, prepares an ordinance *on defending the Final paper* (ref. to Appendix 15) (list of students entitled to defend their Final papers). The ordinance is approved by the vice-rector in the study process.
- 7.3. The student prepares the Final paper presentation and presents it to the state examination commission. For presentation requirements, refer to *Study paper development regulations NL0006*.
- 7.4. Secretary of SEC, after the presentation of the student, reads the Final work's positive qualities and weaknesses indicated by the reviewer in the review, as well as reads the questions asked by the reviewer (if any).

- 7.5. President of the SEC asks the student whether he has any comments on the evaluation of the reviewer.
- 7.6. When the student responds to the reviewer's questions, questions are asked by members of the SEC.
- 7.7. Language of the SEC session, presentation and defence of the Final paper, is the official language. Usage of other languages will be allowed in the following cases:
- 7.7.1. For non-residents, the defence presentation and defence language may be the language in which the student is studying (English or Russian);
 - 7.7.2. In study programs, which are fully realized in English, students' presentation and defence language is the English language;
 - 7.7.3. For double-degree program students of foreign universities, presentation and defence language is English or Russian;
 - 7.7.4. For Latvian residents whose study programs are fully provided in Russian, presentation language is the official language. In exceptional cases, by agreement between the student and the respective State examination commission, the defence language can be Russian.

8. Evaluation of the Final paper

- 8.1. The Final paper is evaluated with a mark on a 10-point scale. SEC thoroughly evaluates the student's work content and management, presentation skills, and responses to the reviewer's and commission members' questions, by using the evaluation criteria (ref. to Appendices 14a-14c). The reviewer thoroughly evaluates the contents of the work, depth of literature analysis, theory application, design and formatting of the work and its compliance to requirements of *Study paper development regulations NL0006*, etc. The reviewer assesses the work by the RISEBA assessment system (ref. to Appendices 16a through 16b), completing a review form (ref. to Appendices 7a through 7e).
- 8.2. If the final score of the Graduation examination is lower than 4 points (poor, very poor, extremely poor), or in case the student has not arrived at the defending of the Final paper, the Graduation examination is not passed, the student is being expelled, and re-arranging the Graduation examination is allowed no earlier than after one year.
- 8.3. After receiving an application for re-settlement of the Graduation examination, candidates can be re-matriculated for Graduation examinations at the earliest after one year, and no more than twice within five years, concerning the rates of the University's additional services charges.

9. Procedure of the Qualification Examination³

- 9.1. Qualification examination requirements for theoretical and practical examination of all study programs or parts of the programs are developed by the program director, they are examined by the Program Board and approved in the meeting of the Department.
- 9.2. The qualification examination uses drawable examination tickets.
- 9.3. The students are granted 45 minutes to prepare their responses.
- 9.4. The student is entitled to one exchange of the drawable ticket for another, as a result, the Qualification examination score is lowered by one point.

³ Applies only to the professional Bachelor's study programs "Public Relations and Advertising Management", and "Public Relations Management".

9.5. Oral examinations are recorded by the State qualification examination commission secretary (ref. to Appendix 18).

9.6. In case the Qualification examination score is lower than 4 points, the student is expelled with the right to re-take the Qualification examination according to provisions of p. 8.2. and 8.3.

10. Appeal

10.1. In case of a justified claim, the student has the right to, within 24 hours after the Graduation examination, bring an appeal application to the Study division regarding non-compliance with the State Examination Commission working procedures. Appeals must be submitted in writing, and addressed to the vice-rector in the study process;

10.2. For a review of the Appeal, the rector establishes an appeal review commission, which within 3 working days examines the appeal and provides an answer in writing to the student in reply to the appeal application.

10.3. Grounds for an appeal can only be violations of State Examination Commission work procedure or ethical violations. Appeals regarding the evaluation of the final work are not considered.

11. Appendices of the regulation

Appendix 1a. Application for Final paper theme and appointing the scientific advisor.

Appendix 1b Application for approval of the Final paper format, theme, and advisor in Audiovisual Media Arts programs.

Appendix 1c Application for approval of the Final paper theme in Public Relations and Advertising Management and Public Relations Management programs.

Appendix 1d On approval of the Final paper theme in Architecture programs.

Appendix 1e Application for change of the Final paper theme and/or change of the scientific advisor.

Appendix 1f Application for change of the Final paper theme and/or change of the scientific (and/or creative) advisor in humanities programs.

Appendix 2a Sample of the ordinance on approval of the Final paper theme and scientific advisor.

Appendix 2b Sample of the ordinance on approval of changes in Final paper theme or replacement of scientific (and/or creative) advisor.

Appendix 3 Draft of the Final Paper Preliminary presentation protocol

Appendix 3a Application on the possibility to defend the Final paper in the current academic year.

Appendix 4a Evaluation questionnaire sample for the Final paper development process

Appendix 4b Evaluation questionnaire sample for the Final paper development process in humanities programs

Appendix 4c Evaluation questionnaire sample for the Final paper development process in engineering programs

Appendix 5a Sample of the Scientific advisor reference

Appendix 5b Sample of the creative advisor for the Bachelor's/Master's paper and its "B" part for the program "Audiovisual Media Arts".

Appendix 5c Sample of the creative advisor for the Bachelor's/Master's paper and its "B" part for programs "Public Relations and Advertising Management" and "Public Relations Management".

Appendix 5d Sample of the bachelor's "A" part scientific advisor's reference for the "Architecture" program.

Appendix 5e Sample of the bachelor's "B" part creative advisor's reference for the "Architecture" program.

Appendix 6 Sample of approval of Final paper reviewer

Appendix 7a Sample of Bachelor's/Master's paper review

Appendix 7b Sample of Bachelor's/Master's review (practical "B" part)

Appendix 7c Sample of Bachelor's/Master's review for Public Relations and Advertising Management and Public Relation Management programs

Appendix 7d Sample of Bachelor's paper theoretical A part review for Architecture program.

Appendix 7e Sample of Bachelor's paper practical B part review for Architecture program.

Appendix 8 Draft ordinance on State examination commission composition in the study program „Program name”.

Appendix 9 Sample ordinance on approval of a specific State examination commission composition.

Appendix 10 State examination commission protocol sample

Appendix 11 Sample State examination commission summarisation.

Appendix 12 Sample State examination commission overall evaluation.

Appendix 13 Sample State Examination Commission decision

Appendix 14a Sample State examination commission Final paper evaluation.

Appendix 14b Sample State examination commission Final paper evaluation (in Audiovisual Media Arts programs).

Appendix 14c Sample State examination commission Final paper evaluation (in Public Relations and Advertising Management and Public Relation Management programs).

Appendix 15 Sample of the ordinance on Final paper defence

Appendix 16a Evaluation criteria of Bachelor's paper

Appendix 16b Evaluation criteria of Master's paper

Appendix 17 Ordinance on expelling (violation of the study plan)

Appendix 18 Protocol of the Qualification Examination

HARMONISED

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