

Masaryk University Faculty of Law Directive No. 3/2024

About the rigorous procedure

(as amended with effect from 1 September 2024)

Pursuant to Section 28(1) of Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education and on Amendments and Additions to Other Acts (the Higher Education Act), as amended (the Higher Education Act), the Dean of the Faculty of Law of Masaryk University (the Faculty) issues this Directive:

Article 1

Introductory provisions

This Directive implements certain provisions of the Rules of the Masaryk University Rigorous Proceedings (hereinafter referred to as "the Rules") and sets out more detailed conditions for the organisation of the rigorous proceedings at the Faculty. Unless otherwise provided for in this Directive, the Regulations shall apply.

Article 2

Focus of the rigorous procedure

1. The faculty holds rigorosum proceedings in connection with the Master's degree programme "Law and Legal Science" in one of the following thematic areas:
 - theories of law,
 - constitutional law and state science,
 - history of state and law,
 - Roman law,
 - civil law,
 - civil procedural law,
 - business law,
 - labour law,
 - intellectual property law,
 - private international law,
 - criminal law,
 - administrative law,
 - financial law,
 - environmental law,
 - European Union law,
 - public international law,
 - information and communication technology law.
2. After the successful completion of the state rigorosum examination by the candidate, the Faculty proposes to Masaryk University (hereinafter referred to as

"MU") to confer the academic degree of "Doctor of Law" (abbreviated as "JUDr." before the name) on those who have fulfilled all the requirements of the rigorosum procedure and to issue them with the relevant diploma.

3. The state rigorosum examination verifies whether the graduates of the master's studies have deepened their knowledge acquired during their university studies, their ability to work independently with new theoretical and practical knowledge and with foreign language texts.

Article 3

Submission of the application and commencement of the rigorous procedure

1. Graduates who have obtained the academic degree "Master" in a five-year Master's degree programme in Law and Legal Studies or Law or an equivalent Master's degree programme may apply for the State Rigorosum Examination (hereinafter referred to as the "Rigorosum Examination").
2. The application must be submitted by 31 December of the calendar year for the rigorosum examination held, as a rule, in the following spring semester, and by 30 June for the rigorosum examination held, as a rule, in the autumn semester of the calendar year. The compulsory elements of the application form are laid down in the Regulations.
3. If the application does not contain the specified requirements and attachments, the relevant vice-dean will invite the applicant to complete or correct the application or attachments within at least 30 days from the date of sending the invitation. If the candidate fails to remove the defects of the application or the annexes within the stipulated time limit, the rigorous procedure is terminated on the last day of the stipulated time limit. The candidate shall be entitled to a refund of part of the fee in accordance with Article 4(5) of this Directive.
4. A candidate who has an access password to the MU Information System (hereinafter referred to as "MU IS") from his/her previous studies at MU is obliged to enter his/her rigorous thesis into the MU IS without undue delay, no later than within 7 days of the faculty's confirmation of the application for the rigorous examination. If the rigorous thesis is not entered into the MU IS within the specified time limit, the rigorous examination will be terminated and the candidate is entitled to a refund of part of the fee pursuant to Article 4(5) of this Directive.
5. The electronic application will be confirmed in the MU IS by the Department for Doctoral Studies and Rigorosum Proceedings after the required attachments have been received and the rigorosum fee has been paid via the MU Business Centre.
6. A candidate who does not have an access password to the MU IS from a previous study will pick up the password to the MU IS at the Doctoral Studies and Rigorous Proceedings Department after confirming his/her application in the MU IS and enter the rigorous thesis into the system without undue delay, no later than within 7 days of picking up the password. If the rigorous thesis is not entered into the MU IS within the specified time limit, the rigorous procedure will be terminated and the candidate is entitled to a refund of part of the fee pursuant to Article 4(5) of this Directive.
7. The application, which fulfils all the requirements and contains all the required annexes, will be forwarded by the Doctoral Studies and Rigorous Proceedings Department to the chair of the rigorous examination committee in the chosen subject area.

Article 4

Fee for the rigorous procedure

1. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 46(5) of Act No.111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education Institutions, as amended, the rigorous proceedings are held for the rigorous proceedings fee. The amount of the fee shall be set by the faculty in a measure.
2. The fee is a payment for the actions related to the acceptance of the application for the rigorous examination and the holding of this examination.
3. The applicant is obliged to pay the fee for the rigorous procedure through the MU Business Centre at the same time as submitting the application for the rigorous procedure.
4. Consultations prior to the submission of the application for the rigorous examination can be arranged separately through the Department for Doctoral Studies and Rigorous Proceedings (hereinafter referred to as "DSP"). The amount of the fee is published on the official board of the faculty.
5. The candidate shall be entitled to a refund of 90 % of the fee paid if the rigorous procedure is terminated in accordance with Article 2(3)(d) of the Regulations.
6. The candidate shall be entitled to a refund of 50 % of the fee paid if the rigorous procedure is terminated by his/her declaration under Article 2(3)(c) of the Regulations, made before the opponents of the rigorous thesis have been appointed.
7. In all other cases of termination of the rigorous procedure, the rigorous procedure fee is not refundable.

Article 5

Rigorous thesis

1. In his/her thesis, the candidate must demonstrate, in accordance with the requirements set out in Article 2(3) of this Directive, that he/she has deepened his/her professional knowledge beyond the Master's degree and developed the ability to work independently with new theoretical and practical knowledge and with foreign language texts at an appropriate level. The thesis exceeds the professional standard required for theses in this subject area, including extensive use of foreign language sources. In accordance with Article 4(1) of the Regulations, the rigorous thesis must contain original creative work.
2. The minimum length of the thesis is 100 standard pages, but at least 180,000 characters (including spaces and footnotes) of the text from the introduction to the conclusion. Other parts of the thesis are not included in the minimum length.
3. The thesis is submitted electronically via the IS MU in a text format allowing easy editing in commonly used text editors such as .doc, .docx or .odt. Submission in hard copies is not required.
4. An amended bachelor's, master's, rigorous, dissertation, habilitation or other qualification thesis submitted in another procedure may be submitted as a rigorous thesis only if the content correspondence with this thesis does not exceed 30%. In this case, the candidate is obliged to submit the original thesis to the faculty.
5. In accordance with Article 4(2) of the Regulations, the Faculty stipulates that the rigorous thesis cannot take the form of a collection of the candidate's published works or works accepted for publication, which the candidate shall provide with a comprehensive introduction to the subject and a commentary.

Article 6

Content and technical requirements of the rigorous thesis

1. The thesis contains a title page, an affidavit, an annotation with a list of keywords, a table of contents, the text itself and a list of sources used. Optionally, it may also contain acknowledgements and other components.
2. The title page is placed on a separate sheet. At the top of the page it says "Masaryk University Faculty of Law" and the name of the relevant subject area. In the middle part it is written "Thesis", its title and the author's name. The academic year of submission is indicated in the lower part.
3. The affidavit is on a separate sheet. It consists of the following text (accompanied by the title of the work). The text of the affidavit is as follows: 'I declare that I have prepared my thesis on [title of the thesis] by myself. All the sources and sources of information that I have used to write this thesis have been cited in the footnotes and are listed in the list of sources and literature used.'
4. An annotation with a list of keywords is placed on a separate sheet. It consists of a Czech and English version of the annotation (the usual length of each is 500-600 characters including spaces) and a Czech and English version of the list of keywords (the usual length of the list is 5-10 words). The text of both language versions of the annotation and the keyword lists must be identical to those provided by the student in the thesis archive in IS MU.
5. A description of the use of AI tools is located after the annotation. It consists of a Czech and an English version. It indicates which AI tools were used in the writing of the thesis, how and to what extent, including the specification of the chapters.
6. The content of the work is placed on a separate sheet or sheets. It includes chapters and subchapters, and optionally other subdivisions. Individual items are numbered and marked with the page on which they begin.
7. The text of the thesis itself is usually divided into chapters, subchapters and sections. The numbering is done in Arabic numerals, with each level separated by a full stop (1 Chapter title, 1.1 Subchapter title, 1.1.1 Section title). The introduction and conclusion are not numbered. The chapter always starts on a new page.
8. The list of sources used is on a separate sheet or sheets. It must include an alphabetically ordered, ascending numbered list of bibliographical data of all literature used in the production of the thesis (the criteria for ordering are the surname of the author and, in the second sequence, the year of publication of the work). Optionally, a list of cited court decisions and other sources, as well as legal regulations, may also be included. However, this must be visibly separated from the list of references.
9. Paper size is A4, text colour is black. Starting with the affidavit, the pages are numbered in ascending Arabic numerals. The first line of a paragraph (excluding the line immediately following the heading) shall be indented by a paragraph stop of appropriate length.

Article 7

Opponents of the rigorous thesis

1. The dean of the faculty, on the proposal of the rigorosum examination committee, appoints two opponents of the rigorosum thesis who will assess its content and formal level. The opponent of the rigorous thesis may only be an academic staff member who has been awarded the degree of JUDr., Ph.D. or equivalent, and in justified cases also another expert from practice. At least one of the opponents is

not an MU employee. Requesting additional opposing opinions in case of disagreement in the opinions of the opponents is not allowed. The proposal of the rigorosum examination committee for the appointment of opponents is submitted by the chair of the committee, as a rule, within 14 days of the date on which the application for the rigorosum examination was submitted to him/her by the Department for Doctoral Studies and Rigorosum Proceedings.

2. The chair of the State Rigorous Examination Board or a member authorised by the chair is obliged to check the legibility and conformity of the submitted rigorous thesis via the IS MU before a proposal for the appointment of opponents is submitted.
3. Each of the referees prepares, as a rule, a written report within 8 weeks from the date of appointment, in which he/she evaluates the quality of the rigorous thesis, the candidate's own contribution and, in particular, his/her capacity for independent creative activity in the field of study. It shall also assess the linguistic and formal standard of the thesis. The assessment must conclude with an explicit statement as to whether the rigorous thesis: 'contains the original results of the candidate's creative activity, demonstrating that the candidate has deepened his or her expertise beyond the master's degree and developed the ability to work independently with new theoretical and practical knowledge. The thesis exceeds in its professional level the standard required for theses in the given field of study.'
4. The MU staff opponent is obliged to upload the report to the MU IS; the report of the external opponent is uploaded to the MU IS by the Department for Doctoral Studies and Rigorous Proceedings.
5. The candidate has the right to be informed of the text of the reports at least 7 working days before the defence.

Article 8

Commission for the State Rigorous Examination

1. The rules for the composition and constitution of the Commission, quorum and decision-making are laid down in the Regulations.
2. The opponents of the rigorosum thesis, if they are not members of the State Rigorosum Examination Board, may participate in its meetings, including the non-public part, with an advisory vote.

Article 9

Preparation and course of the state rigorosum examination

1. The rules for determining the date, course, evaluation and the possibility of repeating the state rigorosum examination are laid down in the Regulations. The date of the rigorosum examination shall be set by the Dean no later than the end of the semester for which the application has been submitted.
2. The date of the rigorosum examination must be notified to the candidate at least 30 days before the examination. With the written consent of the candidate, placed on file, this period may be shortened.
3. In the oral part of the examination, the candidate must demonstrate the fulfilment of the requirements of Article 2(3) of this Directive in the chosen subject area, including in-depth theoretical knowledge, an overview of application practice in the subject area and relevant professional publications. A more detailed definition of the examination topics and the required knowledge and skills may be published on the faculty's website for each subject area.

Article 10
Evaluation of the State Rigorous Examination

1. If the candidate has not defended his/her rigorous thesis, the Dean of the Faculty may, at his/her request and after the opinion of the rigorous examination board, allow him/her to rework the rigorous thesis within a time limit set by the proposal of the state rigorous examination board, but no later than the end of the next semester after the date of the unsuccessful rigorous examination. The candidate may use this option only once.
2. If in the opinion of the opponent or if a member of the committee raises doubts during the defence that the submitted rigorous thesis is plagiarised (i.e. that the candidate passes off another's work as his/her own, in particular by using parts of another's work in his/her own thesis without proper referencing or by using parts of another's work verbatim without obvious citation, for example by quotation marks), the committee will give the candidate the opportunity to comment on this fact separately during the defence. If the committee decides that the thesis is plagiarised, the candidate will be graded 'fail'.

Article 11
Final and transitional provisions

1. The Directive applies to rigorosum proceedings initiated after its entry into force.
2. The interpretation of individual provisions of this Directive is entrusted to the Vice-Dean for Doctoral Studies and Rigorosum Proceedings.
3. The Vice-Dean for Doctoral Studies and Rigorosum Proceedings is responsible for monitoring compliance with this Directive.
4. Directive of the Faculty of Law of Masaryk University No. 1/2021 of 17 February 2021 is hereby repealed.
5. This Directive shall enter into force on 1 September 2024.

In Brno, 12 August 2024

Martin Škop
Dean
signed electronically

Translated with DeepL-Translator