

These rules complement the VUB's "Onderwijs- en Examenreglement" at the level of the Educational Programme. The VUB level rules have precedence over these PILC rules in case the two are incompatible.

LL.M. in International and European Law (PILC)

REGULATIONS ON EXAMINATIONS

v. 1.5 10 December 2018

1. Purpose of the exams

The purpose of the exams is to test the knowledge of the students after the completion of the courses. The exams are individual and they concern each course separately.

2. Conditions for participation in the exams

The conditions for participation in the exams are as follows:

- the student must be regularly enrolled in the Programme and at the VUB
- the student must have submitted a recent passport photo to the PILC-Secretariat before 15 October

3. Organisation of the exams

The exams are organised in two exam periods which take place respectively in weeks 18-20 and in weeks 38-41 of the academic year. The first exam period consists of two exam sessions. During the first exam period, exams are organised for the courses taught in the first semester of the academic year; during the second exam period, exams are organised for the courses taught in the second semester of the academic year, for the Master Thesis, and for the courses taught during the whole academic year. During week 21 of the academic year, the students receive, by e-mail, the marks for the exams organised during the first period of the first exam session. The first exam session is concluded by a deliberation and a public proclamation.

The second exam session consists of one exam period (weeks 48-51 of the academic year). During this exam session, students who were referred to the second exam session may retake the exams for the courses (and Master Thesis if applicable) which they did not succeed in. Students must confirm their participation in the second exam session by e-mail. The second exam session is concluded by a deliberation and a public proclamation.

The time-table of the exams is sent to the students by e-mail and is published on Canvas, at least four weeks before the beginning of the two exam sessions of the first exam period, and at least two weeks before the beginning of the second exam period.

Any change to the time-table of the exams will immediately be notified to the students by e-mail. Such a change may not lead to an earlier date of the exam(s) concerned.

Students and examiners must respect the examination timetable. Each case of force majeure on the part of a student must be notified to the PILC Secretariat within three days after the force majeure came to an end. Force majeure must be substantiated. When, according to the PILC Director, force majeure is present, the PILC Director will take the necessary arrangements after consulting the student and the examiner(s). In case force majeure takes place in the first session of the first exam period and the exam(s) concerned can no longer take place within this period, the PILC Director can decide to extend the exam period or refer the exam(s) to the second session of the first exam period.

4. Identity of participants to Exams; ability to consult completed exams

Exams are public. When the students present themselves for an exam, they must present a photo ID such as their student card, identity card or passport. Exams are written or oral as indicated in the Studiedeelfiches of the respective courses. Students may consult their written exam papers during a period of five days, following the proclamation.

5. Order during the exams

During the exams, students shall comply with the instructions given by the examiners and supervisors.

6a. Fraud

Fraud in the context of the Programme means an action where the student had the intent to gain an unauthorised advantage or to use unauthorised aid in terms of his/her studies, or when the student should reasonably have known the action would result in such an advantage. Each case of fraud is assessed case by case, using the intent, severity, scope and occurrences of the action (or lack thereof) as criteria. The sanctions vary in gravity as follows:

- a notification (the four criteria are present, on average, at a minor level)
- disqualification from the study activity (the criteria are present, on average, at a moderate level)
- exclusion from the semester or Programme (the criteria are present, on average, at more than moderate to considerable level, respectively)

Non-exhaustive list of instances of fraud:

- cheating in an exam
- copying an assignment
- falsifying information or results
- re-using one’s earlier approved and credited output without the prior permission of the teaching staff
- participation in an assignment, exam or the like on behalf of another person
- plagiarism
 - o Plagiarism as a form of academic fraud entails the presentation another person’s work as one’s own without referencing it in accordance with the usual academic conventions.

For the assessment of fraud (plagiarism) in the Master’s thesis, the Programme uses the policy as in force at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences (ES). The assessment can be summarised as follows:

	Occasional	Regular	Constant
Copies paragraphs of other authors with a reference, but without the use of appropriate quotation marks when needed			
Writes paragraphs / sentences with text and references found in secondary sources			
Copies paragraphs of other authors, whether literally or not, without any sources			
Copies paragraphs / sentences of other authors, whether with a source or not, with only minimal or misleading adaptations			
Other			
Level of intent	Low	Medium	High

6b. Procedure in cases of fraud

When a student has committed fraud during a written exam, influencing the evaluation of his/her knowledge, the examiner or supervisor will immediately notify the PILC Director. The latter will immediately inform the Academic Director or the President of the IES. Within five days, all parties concerned will be heard by the Academic Director or President, who will, without delay, decide on an appropriate sanction in accordance with the rules of the Law and Criminology Faculty. As the ultimate sanction, the student risks to be debarred from further participation in the programme. The student and the Chairman of the examination committee will be informed, in writing, of the sanction decided upon by the Academic Director or President. The sanction can be appealed within five days. The sanction is suspended during the appeal. The appeal must be submitted to the Chairman of the examination committee. For the examination committee to be able to take a decision, at least half of the members of the examination committee must be present. The student may be represented by a person of his/her choice. The written decision of the examination committee will be forwarded to the student concerned within fifteen days following the decision. The Academic Director or the President will inform the Rector and the Ombudsperson of the decision. The decision of the examination committee can be appealed before the "Raad voor examenbetwistingen". The same rules apply to the Master Thesis and other evaluations (e.g. the "Case studies").

7. Grading

For each course, marks are awarded on a scale of 20 points. The final decision on all marks is confirmed by the examination committee.

8. Calculation of results

- To complete the Programme with the mark *satisfecit* (satisfactory), the student must obtain a mark of at least 10/20 for every exam, including the Master Thesis.
- To complete the Programme *cum laude* (distinction), the student must obtain an average of at least 68%.
- To complete the Programme *magna cum laude* (great distinction), the student must obtain an average of at least 78%.
- To complete the Programme *summa cum laude* (greatest distinction), the student must obtain an average of at least 85%.

The examination committee can deviate from these rules by a reasoned decision.

9. Weighting of the courses

Each course is weighted pro rata to the number of contact hours:

- course of 26 hours: x 1
- course of more than 26 and not more than 52 hours: x 2
- Master Thesis: x 3

10. Deliberation

During the deliberation, the final results of each student are voted upon by the examination committee. Each examiner has one vote. In case of an equal number of votes, the result that is more favourable to the student will be chosen.

11. Proclamation

The overall mark of the exams are announced by the PILC Director to the students during the proclamation, which follows the deliberation.

During the proclamation after the first and second exam session, the PILC Director mentions the following outcomes of the deliberation:

- no participation in the exams

- incomplete participation in the exams
- postponed to the second exam session
- satisfactory
- cum laude
- magna cum laude
- summa cum laude

Immediately after the proclamation, the students will receive notice of their final results.

12. Failure

The student who fails the first exam session has the right to participate in the second exam session. All marks of 10/20 and more, obtained during the first exam session, will stand for the second exam session. In other words, it is not possible to later raise the marks of passed exams. This rule also applies for the transfer of marks to the next academic year.

If the student fails the Master Thesis in the first exam session, a new thesis on the same topic may be submitted for the second exam session before 15 August of the same academic year. The students are, in accordance with the VUB rules, entitled to re-enrol in the Programme only once. Re-enrolling students who fail an exam or the thesis also in the second academic year are not eligible to graduate from the Programme.

13. Examination committee

The IES Examination Committee and Programme Board acts as the examination committee of the Programme. It is composed of six members, including the PILC Programme (Co-)Director(s). The IES Academic Director is the Chairman of the examination committee. It acts upon the advice of the PILC Board.

14. Master thesis

The regulations governing the writing and evaluation of the Master Thesis are laid down in a separate protocol.

15. Calendar academic year

Week 1	No courses this week
Weeks 2-14	Teaching weeks
Week 15-16	Winter holiday
Week 17	Week of study
Weeks 18-20	First exam period of the first exam session
Week 21	Free, no courses this week
Weeks 22-36	Teaching weeks, including two weeks Easter holiday
Weeks 37-38	Two weeks of study
Weeks 39-42	Second exam period of the first exam session, including the deliberation - closure of first exam session
Weeks 43-48	Summer holiday
Weeks 49-52	Second exam session, including the deliberation - closure of second exam session

Wherever PILC rules, in particular these General Regulations on Examinations or the Rules Governing the LLM Thesis, specify a date (e.g. to submit the thesis), and that date falls on a day when the PILC secretariat is not open, the date in question is considered to be the latest preceding working day of the secretariat.

REGULATIONS ON THE LLM MASTER THESIS

Article 1

Every student is expected to do research in an independent manner and on an advanced level, and draft on an individual basis and in the English language, a thesis on a legal subject concerning international or European law, that must preferably be selected from among the topics dealt within the courses of the Program.

The thesis must be 20,000 words, plus or minus 10% (so 18,000 – 22,000 words). The benchmark for the thesis is that of a leading law review article. For the referencing and layout, the IES Working Paper guidelines must be followed as applicable. The guidelines are available at the IES. This means for example that the body of text must be typed on A4 paper. Footnotes should be single-spaced. Footnotes are continuously numbered and placed at the bottom of the relevant page. Footnotes must cite the correct references for legal principles and facts stated in the paper and are used primarily to cite authority. Quotations from authorities must be limited to relevant parts of their contribution in a specific analysis and must be duly authenticated and shall follow the referencing style indicated in the IES Working Paper guidelines. All Master Theses are subject to an electronic verification to detect possible plagiarism.

Plagiarism will be sanctioned. A signed declaration, accepting that copying or plagiarism will result in failing the entire course, has to be submitted to the PILC-secretariat by mid November. Plagiarists further risk to be debarred from further participation in the Programme.

Article 2

Before submitting the topic of the thesis for approval to the PILC Board, the student must ascertain that the Faculty member teaching the course covering the topic of the thesis, is willing to be the Promoter of the thesis.

Article 3

The student must submit a first research outline, consisting at least of the title of the thesis, a table of contents, a summary outline of the proposed research and a draft bibliography, to the PILC Secretariat by 15 November of the academic year. A special form will be distributed by the PILC Secretariat for this purpose. The acceptance of the promoter is required on the matter.

Article 4

The PILC Board will discuss and approve the thesis topics before the winter holiday.

Article 5

A progress report of the Master Thesis must be transmitted to the promoter and the PILC Secretariat in electronic form by mid December. It should as much as possible be framed in the form of the final paper and it should give the promoter (and if promoter so desires, also the readers) a detailed idea of the objective of the research and the structure. It should therefore contain: a title page with the title of the thesis and the names of the promoter/readers; a detailed outline (including headings and sub-headings); a first draft of chapter one which describes the issues and problems, that are subject of the research as well as an indication of what will be done in the next chapters. In annex a first list of literature and materials that are being consulted (including websites) should be included.

Article 6

The Promoter must assist the student in his/her research. The student must regularly inform the Promoter about progress made. Students and/or Promoters should inform the PILC Director in case any difficulties arise in the collaboration between them.

Article 7

Before 1 February of the academic year, the PILC Board will appoint at minimum one reader from amongst members of the academic staff of the University or from among experts in the area of the research.

Article 8

The thesis must be submitted to the PILC Secretariat in an electronic form before 29 April of the academic year (first exam session) or before 15 August of the academic year (second exam session). Students that fail the thesis in the first exam session may submit an amended version of the work in the second exam session. The student will, within 5 days of submission in an electronic form, and after verification with the Promoter, submit four paper copies of the thesis including a summary of the thesis (maximum two pages). The thesis must be printed on DIN A4-form and printed recto verso. After submission, no amendments or modifications can be made to the paper. The PILC Secretariat will transmit to the student an official receipt upon submission of the thesis and the summary. The electronic copy will have to be submitted through an anti-plagiarism server as indicated by the Secretariat.

Article 9

The evaluation reports of the Promoter and the two readers will be transmitted by the PILC-Secretariat to the student at least two days before the planned oral defence of the thesis. The indicative marks will not be transmitted to the student before the oral defence. The reports will also be transmitted to the other members of the reading committee.

Article 10

The oral defence of the thesis is public. During the oral defence, which will take around 20-30 minutes, the student will present a summary of his/her thesis (max. 5 minutes). He/she will then answer questions on the content and form of the thesis, raised by the members of the reading committee. Other persons, attending the oral defence, will have the opportunity to raise questions on the content of the paper when so invited by the Chair of the Committee.

Article 11

Immediately after the oral defence, the reading committee will deliberate on the thesis and the defence, and will call the student back in to explain its findings and answer any questions that the student may have in that respect. The committee will propose a final grade to the examination committee. The evaluation criteria to be considered by the reading committee include those noted below. The first four bear similar weight, and are used by the reading committee in a balanced manner for an overall assessment of the thesis. An oral defence that is above the quality of the written thesis may augment the grade initially given for the written work by 1, and in exceptional cases by 2 points. An oral defence below the quality of the written thesis may decrease the grade initially given for the written work by 1, and in exceptional cases by 2 points.

- Research design and methodology (clearly formulated plan, research questions and/or thesis; original, feasible?)
- Structure and language (including length (20k words +/- 10%), citations, bibliography)
- Legal substance and sources (correct, up-to-date, versatile?)
- Analysis, findings and conclusions (originality, clarity, contribution to scientific progress?)
- The oral presentation and defence

Article 12

The examination committee will examine the outcome of the reading committees and make adjustments where requested and/or appropriate. A minimum grade of 10/20 for the paper is required to successfully complete the LL.M Programme. The paper is weighted with a coefficient of 3.

Article 13

When the student fails the thesis in the first exam session, a new thesis on the same topic must be submitted before 15 August of the same academic year. When the student fails the thesis in the second exam session and re-enrols in the Programme, he/she may choose a new topic and will make the necessary arrangements as to the supervision.

Article 14

The student must take notice of these rules governing the thesis which will be transmitted to him/her by the PILC Secretariat in the beginning of the academic year.