



**REYKJAVÍK UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF LAW**

SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

3 FEBRUARY 2010

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1. Mission and principal features of Reykjavík University

Mission and objectives of Reykjavík University

Reykjavík University (RU) came into being in its present form on 1 June 2005 with the merger of the Technical University of Iceland and the existing Reykjavík University.¹ The merger was motivated by a desire to create a dynamic institute of higher education offering a broad range of programmes and with the potential to become a leading player in research and international relations. The Regulations of Reykjavík University from 7 June 2007 (see Appendix 1) define the University's mission as follows:

Reykjavík University (RU) is a university institution dedicated to higher education, research and related activities. The mission of Reykjavík University is to create and disseminate knowledge in order to increase competitiveness and improve quality of life.

Reykjavík University is operated by a private limited company in the ownership of the Iceland Chamber of Commerce Non-Profit-Making Organisation for Business Education (Sjálfseignastofnun Viðskiptaráðs Íslands um viðskiptamenntun, SVÍV), the Federation of Icelandic Industries (Samtök iðnaðarins, SÍ), the Confederation of Icelandic Employers (Samtök atvinnulífsins, SA) and other members of the Icelandic business community. This background is reflected in the policy and interests of the University. Thus competitiveness has been a recurrent theme in the University's policymaking since 1998, with the primary emphasis on the so-called applied disciplines. Law is an applied science in this sense, of major and undisputed importance to business and industry and to society at large.

Reykjavík University currently has five Schools:

- School of Health and Education (Kennslufræði- og lýðheilsudeild)
- School of Law (Lagadeild)
- School of Science and Engineering (Tækni- og verkfræðideild)
- School of Computer Science (Tölvunarfræðideild)
- School of Business (Viðskiptadeild).

¹ The origins of Reykjavík University lie in Computer School of the Commercial College of Iceland (Tölvuskóli Verzlunarskóla Íslands), founded in January 1998. On the establishment of the Reykjavík School of Business (Viðskiptaháskólinn í Reykjavík) in Autumn 1998, the Commercial College of Iceland Computer School became one of two Schools of the new institution. In January 2000 the name was changed to Reykjavík University (Háskólinn í Reykjavík).

Vision for the future

Reykjavík University sets itself the aim of taking its place as a high-powered institute of higher education with an international vision and a strong influence on the development of Icelandic society. It seeks to become the university of choice for ambitious students in Iceland and act as a model for other forward-looking institutes of higher education. Its values are high standards, flexibility, enterprise and integrity.

International and interdisciplinary outlook

The officers of Reykjavík University believe that personal, corporate and national competitiveness in the 21st century will to a large extent be determined by the ability to utilise knowledge in the interests of progress and participation in the international community. Emphasis is therefore placed on the acquisition of skills relevant to international contexts. Reykjavík University provides an international working environment to which people from outside Iceland are welcome as students and members of staff. In addition, the University attaches considerable importance to international co-operation in research.

The boundaries between academic disciplines are becoming ever more blurred, creating an increasing need for syncretic approaches to learning. Reykjavík University seeks to produce graduates equipped with the highest levels of specialist knowledge available but also possessed of strong interdisciplinary capabilities. The School of Law operates along with other Schools of the University a wide-ranging interdisciplinary course for first-year students in which they work under expert guidance on topics related to innovation and company formation.

University of choice for staff and students

Reykjavík University places its emphasis on quality rather than numbers of students and study programmes. The University aims to graduate exceptional individuals capable of making their mark in both business and scholarship. For this, the University needs to attract able students and offer them the best available in tuition and training in the application of their learning. Reykjavík University sets itself the goal of becoming the university of first choice for students in Iceland wishing to undertake higher studies in the disciplines offered by the University.

A university is first and foremost the people who work in it and the policy objectives of Reykjavík University make great demands of its staff. For this reason the University also seeks to become the institution of choice for those wishing to work in a university environment in Iceland. This aim is fostered by a strong human resources policy (see Appendix 2). The University wishes its staff and students to view their time there as a rewarding and fulfilling experience.

Reykjavík University policy on teaching

Reykjavík University places great importance on quality of teaching and personal contact between students and staff. In so far as possible, the University strives to limit class sizes and encourage students to participate actively in the teaching. A variety of study assessment methods are employed and students generally find members of staff easily approachable. Opinion surveys, e.g. an Icelandic National Audit Office survey carried out in 2007, indicate that RU students are generally well satisfied with the quality of teaching and access to teaching staff. Teaching staff at the University meet once a year to discuss advances in teaching methods and at other times can turn for advice to a full-time teaching mentor as required.

Research

The policy of Reykjavík University is to create knowledge through research and innovation of relevance to the academic community and to business. The RU Research Policy was reviewed in 2009 (see Appendix 3). Research forms an integral part of university life and the intention is to build up the University's research interests systematically over the coming years. Reykjavík University's academic standing is evaluated internally with regard to three main factors and the aim is to make advances in all three areas over the medium term. These factors are: (a) proportion of teaching staff holding doctoral degrees; (b) number of publications in peer-reviewed journals; and (c) raising of research grants from competitive funds in Iceland and abroad.

RU administrative system

The RU Board of Trustees is appointed at the annual general meeting of the University's owners. The board comprises eight members. The Rector of the University also sits on meetings of the board with the right to express opinions and make proposals unless the Board of Trustees decides otherwise. The president of the RU Student Organisation can also attend board meetings but without the right to vote. The Board of Trustees is responsible for formulating University policy, considering proposals for the establishment of new Schools, and laying down the main structures of the University's operations. It also decides on tuition fees. It is the duty of the Board of Trustees to oversee the running of the University at all times and to ensure correct procedures in its accounting practices and handling of its finances, including funds belonging to the University. The Board of Trustees approves the operating and investment plan for the University and signs off its annual accounts. It also appoints the Rector of the University and determines his/her salary and other terms of employment.

The Rector represents the University to the outside world, handles its day-to-day management and is answerable to the Board of Trustees for its workings. Day-to-day management does not extend to measures that might be considered extraordinary or of major importance. The Rector can take such measures only with the special authorisation of the Board of Trustees unless University operations

stand to be seriously compromised by any delay in obtaining the Board's decision; in such cases the Rector shall notify the Board of Trustees immediately of the measure taken. The Rector submits the University's annual budget to the Board of Trustees for approval. He/she appoints Deans of Schools and other members of University staff who are answerable directly to him/her. He/she is responsible for issuing a report on University operations at the end of each academic year.

Deans have charge of the professional management of their Schools and are operationally and financially answerable to the Rector. They are responsible for initiating policy measures within their School and for the appointment of its teaching staff and other staff. The Dean draws up a budget for his/her particular School for submission to the University's Executive Committee for processing as part of the University's overall budget. The Dean has final say in matters concerning the rights and duties of students. He/she shall ensure that the management structure of his/her School is in line with University policy and that academic members of staff are represented in its administration. On notification to the Executive Committee and after consultation with the Rector, Deans may establish research centres or institutes that operate within their Schools or through collaboration with one or more other Schools. The Executive Committee of Reykjavík University shall consist of the Rector, who acts as its chair, Deans and other key members of staff as decided by the Rector.

Reykjavík University comprises five core academic Schools plus the Open University, the University's internal centre for continuing education. The Open University includes a Department of Preliminary Studies. The individual Schools are financially independent within the parameters set by the University's income and expenditure plan. In 2008 two academic councils were established within the University, the Curriculum Council (*Námsráð*) and the Research Council (*Rannsóknaráð*), with the function of ensuring input from academic staff in the University's administration. Each council has representatives from the University's academic Schools plus a chairman appointed by the Rector.

An organisational chart of the management structure of Reykjavík University is given in Appendix 4.

Quality assurance system

The quality assurance system of Reykjavík University comprises four parts: study and teaching, research, academic staff and support services. The system was reviewed and documented in its current form in 2009. See Appendix 5.

Quality assurance in study and teaching: The quality assurance system for study and teaching covers the content and teaching of all programmes of study at the University, and is thus intended to ensure the quality of education provided by the University through regular assessment, appraisal and monitoring. Emphasis is placed on innovation in teaching, diversity of teaching methods, and assessment of teacher and student performance (see Appendix 6, Teaching Quality Handbook). Key

processes in the quality assurance system for teaching are the systems for the approval of new study programmes, regular teaching appraisal of all courses taught within the University (twice a semester) accompanied by follow-up support, teacher training and courses for teaching staff, and the compilation of various statistics and metrics relating to studies and teaching.

Quality assurance in research: The quality assurance system for research builds on the University's annual research evaluation of academic staff. The purpose of the research evaluation is to motivate members of staff to set their sights as high as possible and thereby strengthen the University's reputation at home and abroad, to stimulate teaching through the introduction of new ideas, and to act as a conduit for new knowledge in business and industry and society at large. Quality assurance in research covers two key processes. Firstly, all academic staff undergo an annual individual research evaluation. This evaluation has been conducted in the University three times, starting in 2007, and is based on research reports submitted by all members of academic staff. The evaluation is carried out by a five-member committee of specialists from outside Iceland engaged specifically for this task and provides the basis for the distribution of research funding among the Schools of the University. Secondly, it is planned to carry out regular audits of the research and research policies of the different Schools of the University (School evaluation) to be used in policy-making within the Schools and in the implementation of research plans. This evaluation will be based on a self-evaluation exercise and external peer review by specialists brought in from abroad. See Appendix 7 (Terms of Reference).

Quality assurance for academic staff: The quality assurance system for academic staff covers the processes that relate to staff recruitment and selection, career development, and promotion within the University's academic career structure. The aim of the system is to ensure that academic members of staff are able to put into practice the policies of the University as they relate to academic strength, innovation in teaching, close ties with business, industry and the community, and development of the University's international profile. Among the key processes in the quality assurance system for academic staff are the rules on recruitment for academic posts (see Appendix 8), the processes for evaluation for promotion and the granting of academic titles (see Appendix 9), the processes for annual staff interviews of academic staff, the rules on sabbaticals (see Appendix 10), and the rules on continuing education and surveys of staff opinion.

Quality assurance in support services: The quality assurance system for support services covers the processes and evaluative procedures that relate to support services for staff and students, including annual opinion surveys on services conducted among staff and students. The most recent surveys indicate that staff and students are generally well satisfied with the services provided.

RU Dashboard: Statistical data on various factors relating to the University's quality assurance system and compliance with University policy are collated at the end of each year on the RU Dashboard to provide performance indicators for each School individually and for the University as a whole. See Appendix 11.

University information system

Reykjavík University uses a range of information systems but most of its core activities are linked through its MySchool system. MySchool comprises an integrated learning management system incorporating a registration, applications and student-records database which minimises data keying and so error frequency. The system also includes databases covering exchange students and teaching evaluations. The system provides a central reference point for all the main statistical data that the University has to provide to the authorities on quality issues and other matters. The user interface is in both English and Icelandic, thus making the system accessible to foreign staff and students. Surveys show that staff and students are happy with the University's information system and the intention is to extend it further to cover other aspects of the University's management. A new financial information system was introduced in 2008 which has permitted better control of various projects in which the University is involved and their financial aspects. The next step now is to develop an information system for research activity and research grants.

Sources of information on study programmes

Since 2008 a systematic effort has been made to reduce the printing of prospectuses and promotional material on the University and concentrate more on using the University's website. This has been done in response to surveys which have indicated that applicants to higher education are turning increasingly to the web for information, as well as being in line with the University's environmental concerns. Every effort is made to ensure that the information provided on the web is full and accurate in both Icelandic (www.hr.is) and English (www.ru.is). The websites also provide public access to statistical information about the University, including material generated by the RU Dashboard.

2. Policy and objectives of the Reykjavík University School of Law

As described in section 1, the School of Law is one of five academic Schools within Reykjavík University. Its Dean sits on the University Executive Committee. The first students were admitted to the School in autumn 2002.

The mission of the Reykjavík University School of Law is to create and propagate knowledge in an academic environment that encourages initiative, critical thought and scientific working methods, thereby improving the quality of life and competitive position of Icelandic society.

The studies offered by the School of Law must be deemed to comply well with the University's focus on the working economy and research, and its emphasis on "practical" areas of learning.

The School has developed a number of cross-curricular points of contact between law and business studies, and law and important areas of science and technology, all serving to reinforce the interdisciplinary outlook of both the University and the School. The emergence of the School of Law in autumn 2002 played a significant part in building up the University's ties with and importance to business and society in general.

Policy on the weighting of individual course components

From the outset the School of Law has sought to offer a wide range of study components at both undergraduate level (since 2002) and master's level (since 2005). The School places a strong emphasis on its students achieving a sound grounding in the traditional areas of legal studies. In Iceland as elsewhere, law as an academic discipline develops hand in hand with society in general. New industries, new technologies and new business practices call for new laws and regulations, so extending existing areas of law or requiring new ones. The scope and relative importance of individual subdisciplines within law therefore need to be constantly reassessed to reflect changes going on in society at large. The Reykjavík University School of Law was set up in part to respond to changes that had taken place in society and legal practice and since its inception the School has sought constantly to adapt to these changes, though without abandoning traditional core areas of study. This outlook within the School of Law is to some extent reflected in the areas making up the undergraduate programme, and, to a more significant extent, in the courses and options on offer at master's level.

The relative weight given to individual areas of study within the School of Law also takes account of the mission, policy and special status of Reykjavík University with its parallel emphases on teaching, research and links with business.

As one might expect, the scheme of studies and the weighting of individual course components is more firmly prescribed at undergraduate level than at master's level. Undergraduate studies leading to a BA from the School of Law are made up of six semesters, in five of which compulsory subjects are taught. As well as the traditional core subjects, the programme includes courses on subjects that the School identifies as new core areas of law, such as European law, company law, intellectual property rights, competition law, tax law, securities market law and international law. Core studies also take in two cross-curricular modules, viz. Accountancy and Analysis and Auditing of Company Accounts, and Innovation and Company Formation. As a consequence of the compulsory courses in new core areas there is reduced emphasis on some of the traditional core areas of law such as criminal law and

family law. For students wishing to develop their knowledge and skills in the traditional core areas, one or more modules are offered in all such areas at master's level. As described more fully below, in their sixth and final semesters at undergraduate level, students can choose to take some of the options offered by the School or by other Schools of the University or attend courses at other institutes of higher education, at home or abroad.

Since students take three to four years to complete their undergraduate studies, it is difficult and even undesirable to make frequent changes to the way the programme is arranged. The Dean and teaching staff within the School of Law are, however, constantly on the alert for potential improvements to the structure of the undergraduate degree programme and the balance between its individual components. A programme of significant changes to the design of the undergraduate programme was initiated in autumn 2008, notably as regards the weighting of various modules, the structure of courses in the field of private law and rearranging modules between study years. These changes will be discussed in greater detail in other sections of this report.

The design of the undergraduate programme aims to provide students with a very broad academic base in law and the tools to tackle a wide range of real-life legal tasks. As a result of the breadth of the field covered and the strong emphasis placed on methodology and project work, the foundations laid by the undergraduate programme are fully sufficient to equip its graduates for general legal work, not least in the area of the working economy. A further purpose of the undergraduate programme is to lay the foundations for higher studies and specialisation within the field of law.

The objective of the master's degree programme is twofold. Firstly, to train its students in analytical and critical legal thinking and rigorous working practices, and secondly to expand students' basic knowledge of law and take it deeper in specific areas through individually tailored study programmes. Each of these increases students' ability to tackle a wide range of working tasks. The master's degree has a strong research component (see below), allowing students to opt for a considerable degree of specialisation. In line with the policy of the School and the University as a whole, it is designed to foster the competitiveness of the Icelandic economy and encourage its students to realise their full personal potential.

The specifications for the design of the master's degree programme are laid down in special regulations (see Appendix 12). The Academic Affairs Council in co-operation with School staff make proposals on the provision of core study areas and seminars for two years at a time. On the basis of these proposals, the Dean then canvasses the views of a School meeting and decides on the core areas and seminars to be offered during the period. In formulating its proposals the Academic Affairs Council shall work on the basis that the total number of core courses and seminars offered in each semester shall not be less than 10. In reality, the number of elective modules offered each semester has on occasions exceeded 20. Particular attention shall be paid to ensuring that students are offered a

good selection of courses in the priority areas of law specified in Article 16 of the regulations for the master's degree.

In its proposals for the selection of courses offered the Academic Affairs Council follows the guidelines laid down in the regulations for the master's degree, as well as setting out other general criteria on the provision of option modules. In this, the Council is motivated by the following considerations:

- That the course complies with the provisions of Article 7 of the regulations for the master's degree, which specify that during their period of studies students shall be offered an adequate selection of varied courses on as many areas of law as possible, in both conventional and new fields.
- That the selection of courses offered takes account of Article 16 of the regulations for the master's degree, which lays down that special priority shall be given to the provision of courses in the areas of international law and international trade and commerce, the courts and advocacy, and financial law.
- That teaching staff shall be canvassed for new ideas for courses and changes to older courses.
- That, in deciding on the provision of new modules or the dropping of modules that have previously been taught, the School shall take account of anticipated changes of emphasis in society and business.
- That attendance figures and the performance of teaching staff shall be taken into account when formulating proposals on whether the course in question shall be offered more or less often than previously or dropped entirely.

In any final decision on the selection of modules offered at master's degree level it is inevitably necessary to take full account of the financial framework in which the School operates, which is in turn determined partly by student numbers.

Individual courses in the School of Law are under constant review to reflect changes in legislation, legal practice and society itself. Teaching staff within the School are encouraged to develop and improve their teaching methods, course material and methods of assessment and the School displays a wide variety of approaches in these areas. A large part of the School's uniqueness lies in giving its students extensive training in the application of legal principles to the resolution of authentic work assignments with the aim of deepening their understanding of the course material and enhancing their skills base.

It is difficult to make any firm assertions about the importance of coursework in individual courses as compared to traditional book learning and other elements of study. Some indication of the weighting of practical coursework is perhaps given by an analysis of its part in course-final grading: according to the figures given in Appendix 13, coursework accounts for 30-100% of the grades in

different courses. In general, the importance ascribed to coursework is greater at master's level than at undergraduate level, reflecting a deliberate policy on the part of the School.

Policy on student vocational training

In many courses at both undergraduate and master's levels a conscious attempt is made to get students to apply legal principles to a variety of work projects and through this to obtain training for future outside employment. This is done both by introducing elements of project work into book learning and through special assignment-based courses. As an example of a module that includes elements of practical training, undergraduate students taking the course in Private Law V:– Project-Based Course are expected to draw up contracts in the field of private law, are given basic training in advocacy, and have to draft summonses and statements that are subsequently presented orally before a court with students acting the parts of judge and attorneys. At master's level, in the elective module Taking of Evidence and Litigation in Civil Cases, students receive training in instituting legal proceedings and the oral presentation of civil cases. Of two cases that students have to take on, in one the students build up the materials themselves from the summons to the delivery of the verdict on the basis of facts presented by the teacher, and in the other they are expected to present a case orally using the case papers from an actual court case. Students at master's level are also invited to take part in two annual international moot-court competitions (the Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot and the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition), participation in which demands considerable preparation under the guidance of a tutor and counts for credits towards the master's degree. Also worth special mention is the course in Practical Contract Law, in which students receive practical training in the drafting of large-scale international commercial contracts.

Since the introduction of the master's degree, students in the School of Law have been able to opt to include internship in their study programme. Internship is dealt with under Article 13 of the regulations for the master's degree and the School has also established working procedures covering its implementation (see Appendix 14 and Section 6). The importance of organised internship consists of the following contributions to students' learning experience:

1. The internship bridges the gap between the practical training students receive at the School of Law in the form of varied assignments in all subjects and the working tasks they will have to face on completion of their studies.
2. The internship provides students with an invaluable opportunity to observe law in operation in places of employment and work alongside practising lawyers and increase their familiarity with aspects of law that take their interest. The internship thus helps students in their choice of career on the completion of studies and has in many cases led to students being offered employment at the place where they have done their internship.

3. Internship is instrumental in building up and maintaining valuable links between the School of Law and key institutions and companies in the field of law and creating the necessary degree of confidence in a young School of law and the students it graduates.

Internship has enjoyed great popularity among students and has established itself as an important component of the master's degree course, and has in many cases opened up possibilities of future employment to students after graduation. On the internship system, see also Section 6.

Research policy and objectives as regards members of staff

Legal research has been an integral part of the School's operations since its establishment in 2002. The School of Law policy on research (see Appendix 15) is formulated by School's Research Council. According to this policy, the School is expected to carry out legal research for the benefit of legal education and society as a whole. The aim is to create within the School of Law a vibrant and highly regarded centre of research acknowledged for the quality of its work both domestically and abroad. All permanent faculty are expected to engage in research as part of their terms of employment and the School aims to provide its scholars with unrestricted freedom of research and first-class research facilities in an open and creative environment. Every care is taken to arrange teaching duties so as to allow room for individual research. In addition the University's support services provide assistance in raising research funds and supporting research work in various other ways. Members of staff are encouraged to take an active part in the domestic and international scholarly community and to have the results of their work published in a recognised peer-reviewed forum. Since the School was founded, research reports of teaching staff have been posted annually on the School website. As discussed below, the School has now been granted the right to offer a doctoral programme.

Policy on linkage between research/scholarship and teaching

As a matter of general policy, faculty in the School of Law provide teaching within their own individual specialist areas. The objective is to ensure that, on the one hand, students gain from their teachers' own particular expertise and, on the other, that teaching staff have the opportunity to present and develop their research and benefit from discussing it with their students. Teaching staff are expected constantly to review and adapt their teaching material in the light of the findings of their own research. Staff are also expected to adopt an approach to teaching that allows students to build up an insight into the importance of research in the field of law and jurisprudence. This approach is of particular significance in the master's degree programme which, as noted earlier, is to a large extent research-based.

Policy on equality

An important part of the Reykjavík University policy on human resources which has been in force since 2007 is that all matters relating to staff management shall be determined by performance and aptitude and that there shall be no discrimination against individuals on the grounds of gender, age, race or other extraneous factors. The School operates a policy of equal pay and has twice conducted equal-pay audits that have revealed a negligible difference in the average pay of men and women performing comparable jobs. Further on the RU Human Resources Policy, see Appendix 2.

3. Internal quality assurance

General

The internal quality assurance system of the School of Law is based on the quality assurance system of the University as a whole. See Section 1.

As regards programmes, quality assurance consists of adherence to specific procedures if and when programmes of study are introduced; holding teaching evaluations twice a semester; providing teaching staff with training and guidance, including through the use of teaching mentors; and monitoring significant statistical data, e.g. in grade distribution between courses. In the area of research, the School follows the University's general research-quality procedures, most importantly an annual individual assessment of research quality and results in which each member of staff is graded by an external specialist committee. Finally, the School follows general procedures established within the University to ensure the competence of academic staff, most importantly rules on the recruitment process and promotions process and the granting of academic titles, as well as conducting annual staff interviews and ensuring that the rules on sabbaticals and continuing education are clear. In the last few years, following the appraisal and assessment by foreign specialist committees, the School has received accreditation from the Ministry of Education for the teaching of law and the right to offer doctoral programmes (see Appendix 19). Each of these rights was granted pursuant to the Higher Education Institutions Act, no. 63/2006.

Performance indicators

The School also participates in the processing of the performance indicators used by the University as a whole that are compiled on the RU Dashboard at the end of each year. The data generated include statistics for each School and for the University as a whole in the following areas, broken down into various of the University's areas of emphasis:

- Academic strength: number of peer-reviewed published items; self-generated research funds; proportion of teaching staff with doctorates.

- Programmes and teaching: percentage of applicants offered places; percentage of these accepting places; percentage of intake who have graduated from high school (matriculation/*stúdentspróf*); student satisfaction as per teaching evaluation; and number of students per number of full-time equivalent (FTE) academic staff. Details are also recorded of the proportion of students to have completed innovation training and the number of interdisciplinary courses and degrees in unconventional formats.
- Links with the working economy: percentage of permanent faculty active in business; percentage of teaching staff whose main occupation is in business; number of active collaborative agreements with commercial companies and public institutions.
- International university: percentage of foreign members of staff; number of exchange students; number of foreign students; number of courses in foreign languages; number of international projects. See Appendix 11.

There are three academic councils operating within the School of Law whose roles include quality assurance of programmes, teaching and research. Each council is made up of three members of the School staff appointed by a School meeting for a year at a time, with one acting as chair. On the roles and objectives of the councils, see Appendix 15.

Academic Affairs Council (*Námspróunarráð*)

The main functions of the Academic Affairs Council are:

- a) To contribute to the development and enhancement of existing undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the School.
- b) To promote the development and expansion of new study programmes and/or study routes in the School.
- c) To review on a regular basis the School's rules on promotion and examinations.
- d) To contribute to the development of teaching evaluation procedures.

The Academic Affairs Council also performs an important executive and decision-making role with respect to the master's degree programme: see the School regulations for the master's degree.

Teaching Development Council (*Kennsluþróunarráð*)

The main function of the Teaching Development Council is to submit proposals on:

- a) Criteria for the organisation of courses in the School
- b) Criteria for good teaching practice
- c) Continuing education and teacher-training for members of staff
- d) Issues affecting curriculum
- e) Issues affecting study assessment

Research Council (*Rannsóknaráð*)

The chief functions of the Research Council are:

- a) To formulate policy on research within the School. Policymaking is carried out in collaboration with School teaching staff and, where relevant, other members of staff. Policy is introduced for two years at a time. The Research Council presents the draft policy at a School meeting once a year at which the results from the previous year are also analysed.
- b) In collaboration with teaching staff in the relevant academic fields, to initiate and foster co-operative research projects with domestic and foreign parties.
- c) To develop an evaluation system for quantitative analysis and self-evaluation of research activity within the School.
- d) To formulate policy on collaborative research between teaching staff and students in the School.
- e) To monitor the progress and status of research projects within the School.
- f) To assist in the organisation of seminars and conferences held at the School of Law.

Student input into the monitoring of programme quality takes place first and foremost through the School's system of teaching evaluations, which, as stated earlier, are carried out twice a semester. In addition, students have representation at School meetings through the chair of Lögrétta (the RU Law Students' Organisation), who has freedom to express views, make proposals and vote on issues discussed. Internal quality issues feature regularly on the agenda for School meetings. Every year students from each class in the School elect one of their members to act as a representative. Among the functions of these representatives is to act as conduits for comments and complaints over teaching or other matters related to studies in the School. The student representatives bring such complaints to the notice of either the Dean or Administrative Director or the board of Lögrétta. The Dean meets with the board of Lögrétta every semester, or more often if so requested. It should be pointed out that students in the School of Law have very easy access to the administration and faculty, either face-to-face or by telephone or email. Under the regulations of the University and School, officers and teaching staff are obliged to respond to communications from students within 48 hours of receipt.

4. Programme structure and content

Organisation of study programmes (undergraduate, master's, doctoral programmes)

The way degree programmes in the School of Law at Reykjavík University are set up is in part determined by the fact that a master's degree from the School provides a general qualification recognised under law for many professional positions and appointments such as judges, and eligibility to be admitted to the bar. The School of Law has decided that for the students it graduates to be

considered qualified to serve in the legal profession (within the judiciary and advocacy) they need to have completed at least 240 ECTS credits in areas of law, or the equivalent of four study years out of five. This requirement provides a clear framework for the structure of the programme and the course components that students can actually take as part of their studies.

Undergraduate studies leading to a BA degree (180 ECTS credits: see Learning Outcome BA in Appendix 17) comprise six semesters covering three years of study. During this time, students take a total of 25 course subjects. The first five semesters are taken up entirely by compulsory subjects. In addition to the traditional core areas of legal studies, the compulsory element includes subjects that the School has defined as the new core areas of law, viz. European law, company law, intellectual property law, competition law, tax law, securities market law and international law. Core studies also include two interdisciplinary courses: Accountancy and Analysis of Company Accounts and Innovation and Company Formation. In their sixth and final semester students have the chance to increase their specialisation within the field of law by choosing one of a number of elective courses offered within the School, or, in line with the University's interdisciplinary outlook, to take courses from other subjects or even courses taught by other university faculties in Iceland or abroad. In the second and fourth semesters of the degree, three courses are taught concurrently for the first 12 weeks of the semester, followed by final examinations. The examinations are followed by a spring semester which lasts a little over three weeks. In the first, third, fifth and sixth semesters all modules are taught concurrently.

There are significant structural differences between the undergraduate law programmes in the different law faculties at Icelandic universities. This applies both to the subjects covered and the breadth of teaching in individual subjects. This diversity has certain advantages: students are offered a choice between a variety of paths through their studies, and the different faculties produce lawyers who presumably possess a more varied and at the same time more specialised education than would otherwise be the case.

The undergraduate degree at the RU School of Law is designed, as noted previously, so as to lay the broadest possible academic foundation to its students' knowledge of the subject and to train them in identifying solutions to 'real-world' legal assignments.

Master's studies. Students aiming for a degree of Master of Law (ML) from the School of Law at Reykjavík University must accumulate a total of 120 ECTS credits (see Learning Outcome ML, Appendix 18). The master's programme is organised as a two-year research-linked programme of studies completed with a 30 ECTS-credit master's thesis (or optionally a 60 ECTS-credit thesis).¹

¹ A 30 ECTS-credit thesis shall be at least 25,000 words and at most 30,000 words. A 60 ECTS-credit thesis shall be between 50,000 and 75,000 words.

Students are in all cases permitted to take three years to complete the programme. In exceptional cases a student may take four years to complete the programme on the approval of a School meeting. The master's programme has no compulsory elements, except that students starting the programme without having previously gained an undergraduate degree in law must take a module in methodology. This course does not carry credits towards the final degree.

Under Article 6, paragraph 1 of the regulations for the master's degree, students can gain credits towards their degree from the following course components:

- Elective subjects: see Article 10
- Seminars: see Article 11
- Study abroad, including through student exchange programmes with which the School is affiliated: see Article 12
- Internship: see Article 13
- Courses taken in subjects other than law: see Article 14
- Master's thesis: see Article 15

The central part of the master's programme consists of the elective subjects. In recent years the faculty has offered around 20 electives and seminars each semester. These give students the chance to deepen their knowledge in the core areas of law and/or broaden their knowledge by choosing from a number of courses in most specialist areas of law. The wide selection of elective courses offered gives students great possibilities for significant specialisation in their studies according to interest and their individual future plans.

In line with Reykjavík University's stated aim of encouraging interdisciplinary studies, the School has adopted, for the first time in Iceland, a policy of opening up the master's programme in law to students who have not completed an undergraduate degree in law but hold degrees in other subjects. On completion, these students are not granted a master's degree that allows them to work within the judiciary or advocacy. However, they bring to the student body a breadth of background and experience, meaning that the teaching environment and group discussions are wider and more cross-curricular than would otherwise be the case.

Special attention is drawn to the fact that, of the designated five-year study programme leading to undergraduate and master's degrees in law from the School of Law at Reykjavík University, 2½ years or in total five semesters are made up of elective courses.

On 14 September 2009 the School of Law of Reykjavík University was granted the authority of the Icelandic Ministry of Education to offer doctoral studies (see Appendix 19). At the time of writing, preparation for the programme is under way and it is assumed that it will start later this year. The doctoral programme is aimed at educating students for research and teaching posts and other positions that demand high academic levels of knowledge and training. The programme is intended to deepen

students' scholarly and methodological understanding with a view to qualifying them to work independently with a firm grasp of law as an academic discipline.

To fulfil the requirements for the award of a doctorate from the Reykjavík University School of Law, a student shall under guidance have undertaken and completed a piece of academic research that constitutes an independent contribution to knowledge within the field of law. A doctorate shall thus be awarded only to students who have produced independent research that has sufficient originality, scholarly value and breadth to merit the degree.

By the completion of their doctoral studies students shall have achieved the following levels of knowledge and competence:

- A wide general familiarity with and overview of legal systems and all the central areas of law.
- Specialist knowledge of the area or areas of law under investigation.
- Familiarity with the methodology of legal research and proficiency in the application of scholarly working methods.
- Ability to formulate, organise and carry out independent scholarly research in the field of law.
- The ability to make an independent and original contribution to the creation of knowledge in the field of law.
- Critical analysis and evaluation of legal issues.
- Clear exposition of research results and their preparation for publication through peer-reviewed channels.
- The ability to carry out academic and practical tasks that demand the application of scholarly working practices.
- Ability to contribute to innovatory and entrepreneurial challenges in the chosen academic field or area of work.

For further details of the specifications for doctoral studies at the School of Law at Reykjavík University (Learning Outcome PhD), see Appendix 20.

Course content in the light of course objectives

Among the objectives of Reykjavík University is the creation and dissemination of knowledge in order to contribute to improved competitiveness and quality of life (see section 1). The University further attaches great importance to offering an international and interdisciplinary education. Its position is individualised by:

- Dynamic teaching methods and active student participation;
- Strong links with the working economy;
- Collaboration with international scholars and visiting lecturers;

- Adaptation of teaching methods and access to our services to reflect the needs of modern society.

The RU School of Law operates in accordance with the objectives set out above and has adapted them to the nature of legal studies with the aim of ensuring that students who graduate with undergraduate and master's degrees from the School possess the knowledge and skills that make them eligible by employers here and abroad and qualify them for further studies at the best Schools of law around the world. It is one thing to offer an ambitious programme of studies, something different to ensure that students acquire, in so far as this is possible, the knowledge and skills aimed at. Reykjavík University has since its inception placed a strong emphasis on teaching. Teaching staff have made good use of the well equipped classrooms to deliver the syllabus in a living and interactive manner. Students' active participation in classes is strongly encouraged. Work on small and large 'real-life' projects constitutes an important part of the programme and study assessment. A major element in the master's programme consists of research projects undertaken by the students and this demands considerable time and effort on the part of teaching staff. The large number of students in many courses and limited number of permanent faculty impose certain restrictions on the scope of this kind of research-based study. The master's programme also offers a number of seminar groups for which student numbers are limited, making it easier to organise and foster research-based further study. A large proportion of the courses offered at master's level are handled by permanent faculty. This is supplemented, however, by input from a large number of legal professionals acting as external and visiting lecturers. Every effort has been made to appoint external lecturers with wide knowledge and experience of the relevant fields as well as teaching experience. Though it is not in all respects desirable, for instance as regards research, to rely too heavily on input from external lecturers, their working contribution is instrumental in creating valuable links with society and working life outside the School that open doors for both the faculty and its students. The contribution of external lecturers also ensures that students have access not only to fundamental academic learning and current research but also to legal practice in many fields.

Since its inception the School has recruited teaching staff and scholars from outside Iceland to handle courses entirely or in part or to deliver one-off lectures at the School. The School has also enlisted the support as external lecturers of large numbers of Icelandic lawyers working abroad, extending the School's range of experience and expertise outside the bounds of Iceland (see Appendix 21, sections 7 and 8). The new Reykjavík University premises at Nauthólsvík with their first-class, cutting-edge teaching facilities, including a new courtroom, are a spur to the School to develop its pedagogic side still further, encourage active participation on the part of its students and find new ways of fostering the School's interdisciplinary approach to learning.

Relationship between curriculum and approaches to teaching

By definition there will always be a close relationship between curriculum and teaching, and each in turn will be closely bound up with study assessment. Since there is no simple formula for good teaching practice, it is pointless to try to set out a precise policy on how best to relate teaching to curriculum. In some modules the teaching centres on excellent up-to-date textbooks, well presented and sufficiently comprehensive that there is hardly need for students to look beyond them for a more exhaustive familiarity with the subject. In such cases, so long as students can assimilate the fundamental parts of the curriculum by reading the textbook, the teacher can concentrate almost all his/her efforts on court rulings, ways of dealing with authentic cases and students' research. Most students, however, welcome a teacher's conspectus of the course material and explanations of its more complex aspects. In other modules there is some use of textbooks, but this is supplemented by academic articles, court rulings and other judicial process. In a few modules there are no serviceable textbooks available and so all the more need for teaching staff to guide the students through the curriculum, pull together disparate material and fill in the gaps. In all cases, however, the School attempts to ensure a strong element of practical training and the active participation of students.

Balance between Icelandic and foreign-language study materials

The relative importance of Icelandic and foreign study materials is determined above all by the nature of the individual course in question. Developments within the Icelandic legal environment in recent years have been such that nearly all legislation in this country can be traced in one way or another to legislation from abroad. In the traditional core areas of Icelandic law at undergraduate level there are generally basic study materials available in Icelandic, either textbooks or articles by Icelandic authors.

Teaching staff in the School have put in a great deal of time and effort producing textbook material (see Appendix 22), most notably in the new core areas of study. School staff have also been active in writing academic articles in their particular fields. In all cases where the basic reading material is in Icelandic, supplementary reading is provided in English or the Scandinavian languages, e.g. books and articles by foreign academics and the rulings of international courts or courts in Scandinavia.

In many modules all the basic reading material is in English, in particular in courses that are taught entirely in English. Each semester at least five modules of the master's programme are offered in English (see Appendix 21, section 6). In a few subjects the principal reading material is in one of the Scandinavian languages, as is a considerable amount of the background reading in all courses. It is difficult to set a precise figure on the weight of foreign study materials but in individual courses it probably ranges from 10% up to 100%, with the average over the whole being perhaps around a half.

Viewed overall, it is probably fair to say that there is a strong focus on national law in the undergraduate programme and an appreciable one in the master's programme. The School of Law

offers students at master's level the chance to complete their degrees by a formal concentration on international studies. For this, a student needs to have gained at least 42 ECTS credits in core subjects and seminar groups designated by the School as counting towards the International Programme and to have written his/her master's thesis on the International Programme.

Balance between breadth and depth, i.e. between general and specialist course elements

As noted previously, law as an academic discipline has increased in scope in recent years in line with the increasing complexity of business and society, advances in science and technology, globalisation and a constantly more far-reaching regulatory framework reflecting rapid changes in society. Iceland's membership of the European Economic Area since 1995 has played a major part in these matters. The School of Law has treated it as a matter of priority to reflect these changes in society in the design of its undergraduate programme with its revised selection of core subjects, through a wider range of courses on offer at master's level, and by broadening the contents of individual courses. Since the number of courses cannot be increased indefinitely nor the range of the overall curriculum increased appreciably it has proved necessary to downgrade the importance of certain traditional areas of legal studies. In so doing, the School has been guided by the objectives and priorities of Reykjavík University and by general attitudes on the significance of the subject in question and its continuing status within the curriculum.

The School of Law has always placed strong emphasis on its students achieving a thorough grounding in the fundamental skills and knowledge essential to most practising lawyers, as well as a secure command of the new core subjects that are now providing the most significant growth areas in law. The School takes the view that students need to acquire a depth of knowledge in the basic areas of law in order later to be able to come to grips with more specialised parts of the programme. In the master's programme, students are enabled both to deepen their knowledge of the core areas of law still further and to broaden their learning by choosing from a large number of modules on various specialist areas of law. Because of the wide range of options offered, students have excellent opportunities for significant specialisation in their studies, depending on their individual interests and future plans. This, the School believes, makes it possible to achieve a proper balance between breadth and depth in legal studies. Students can to some extent tailor the programme to their own personal desires, with the result that they leave the School with highly varied combinations of legal expertise, providing a range of specialisation designed to meet the future needs of society.

Similar comments apply to breadth and depth within individual study subjects. From the outset the School has had certain concerns that the large load of project work expected of students presented a potential problem of their failing to assimilate the course material as a whole sufficiently well. Final examinations are intended to ensure that students are forced to take on board the entire curriculum and

the assessment regulations state that a student has to pass the final examination for grades for project work to count towards the final degree grade. This system has proved successful.

Since the establishment of the School, students on the master's programme have been expected to take five elective subjects per semester. Working on the basis that a student devotes 60 work hours a week to studies, a student will thus spend 12 hours a week for around 15 weeks attending lectures, reading up, working on assignments and taking examinations. Teaching staff in the School have long had certain concerns that this large number of courses each semester is too constricting on the teaching and students' private study and make it impossible to do proper justice to all subjects studied. Teaching staff have also been concerned that students are not given the opportunity to assimilate the course material sufficiently well. A large number of complaints from students seems to back this up. The School has recently discussed the possibility of making changes to the regulations for the master's programme to the effect of increasing the weighting of each elective module from 6 to 7.5 ECTS credits. This change would mean that students would need to choose a minimum of four modules a semester rather than the current five. The School expects that if these changes go ahead students will be able to build up a deeper knowledge and greater command of the material taught in each module. The idea has, however, encountered some opposition from the law students' association Lögrétta and its outcome remains undecided at the time of writing.

In the view of the School of Law, the undergraduate programme, taken overall, incorporates a reasonable level of progression. The progression is not however as marked as that generally found in legal studies in Iceland hitherto, in part because of the absence of a dedicated introductory course in the first semesters of the programme. It therefore seems that perhaps the most challenging semester of the undergraduate degree is the first, in which many of the basic areas of legal studies are tackled head on. The experience has been, however, that this approach is likely to yield results as students move further on in their studies, although it of course makes great demands on their dedication and comprehension at the initial stages.

5. Teaching and teaching methods

School of Law policy on teaching

The Reykjavík University School of Law seeks to establish itself among the foremost centres in the field of legal education, acknowledged for the excellence of its pedagogical approach. It aims to build a body of highly qualified teaching staff, working with enthusiasm and high aspirations to create within the School an environment that provides its students with a solid academic grounding and that trains and encourages them to be critical and analytical in their thinking and to adopt rigorous working practices that meet the most stringent domestic and foreign demands in the teaching and study of law. See the School of Law policy on teaching matters in Appendix 23.

The School of Law has set itself the following objectives in its teaching:

- To ensure that its students achieve a solid academic grounding in law and legal practice
- To train its students in rigorous working practices and methodology
- To train its students in research methods and the resolution of practical legal assignments
- To provide the training necessary for employment in the field of law
- To encourage its students to take responsibility for their own studies, among other things through thorough preparation and active participation in all classes
- To foster links with the working economy, e.g. through visits by professionals in the field of law, visits to companies and public institutions, practical case studies and assignments linked to the working economy.

In accordance with the above, teaching practice within the School of Law places an emphasis on:

- ensuring that courses and curriculum are organised to reflect the learning outcomes required of degrees and programmes
- its teaching staff being familiar with a variety of teaching methods and adopting those that best apply in any given situation
- accurate and varied assessment techniques taking account of the required learning outcomes
- pedagogical guidance and other support for teaching staff.

Teaching practice within the School of Law is guided by a special Teaching Development Council (see section 3).

Teaching methods

The Reykjavík University semester generally consists of 13-15 instruction weeks plus a two-week examination period. Teaching takes place in one to three 45-minute units, with an additional one or two discussion or practical example periods as appropriate. Evaluation of teaching and teaching methods occurs on several levels: evaluation by students, self-evaluation by teaching staff, peer review (see Appendix 24) and specialist evaluation with the assistance of teaching mentors. Checklists for teaching staff for peer review and self-evaluation are published on the website of the Teaching Development Council.

Groups are largest in the first year, with the School taking in on average 75-80 new students each autumn. Groups are thus generally of moderate size, making the programme more personal for students and facilitating discussions and interaction with teaching staff in class. In the second and third years there are around 60 students. Students have easy access to teaching staff outside classes: most teaching staff have regular consultation times or arrange meetings by appointment. Teaching staff seek to incorporate live discussion and practical problem solving into their lessons. Before each semester

the staff involved in the teaching of each year meet independently and organise and co-ordinate the coming semester as regards mid-term tests and project assignments in order to avoid clashes. Course details (see Appendix 25) are published well before the start of each semester to make it easier for students to organise their studies.

Training courses for teaching staff and other support for quality teaching

Support for teaching quality is provided through teacher training courses which all teaching staff, both permanent and external, are obliged to attend. The courses are held both through the University as a whole and through the School of Law individually (see timetables in Appendix 26). The School is responsible for ensuring that its teaching staff attend these courses and their participation is reviewed as part of the annual staff interviews. The University's Teaching Affairs and Registry Division employs a full-time teaching mentor and the university courses form part of his/her responsibilities. The teaching mentor also provides teaching staff with assistance in the conduct and development of their teaching and ensures that they have access to materials and information on different teaching methods and innovations in this area. At the start of each academic year there are a number of teaching support days conducted by specialists in teaching practice at which teaching staff have the opportunity to discuss particular issues relating to the teaching (see Appendices 5 and 6: Quality Assurance System and Teaching Quality Handbook). Teaching staff are encouraged to use the University's electronic learning management system, MySchool, as a central work base for project work and communications; the site includes a separate website for each course offering a number of options. Teaching Affairs and Registry may examine the activity of individual teaching staff in courses as well as student activity.

Student support

The School of Law provides special support for students in their first year of studies by organising study groups under the leadership of students who are further advanced (see the working rules for study group leaders in Appendix 27). Evaluation of the operations of study groups is conducted through teaching mentors. On many undergraduate courses there are discussion sessions in smaller groups in addition to lectures. As stated earlier, students have easy channels of access to teaching staff in the School of Law and are encouraged to turn to them in the case of problems that may arise in connection with their studies. Students can also approach the office staff of the School of Law for assistance as appropriate.

Reykjavík University Student Services provides study, work and careers guidance. The office is open for consultation most days and offers a number of different courses in areas such as study and examination techniques and various interdisciplinary skills of use to students during their time at

university. The RU Careers Services office acts as a go-between between students and employers and assists students in writing CVs and other preparation for entry to the labour market.

6. Internship

Length and timing of internship during the course of studies

Under the School of Law regulations for the master's programme a student is permitted to complete up to 6 ECTS credits towards a master's degree through approved internship. 6 ECTS credits is deemed to equate to 120 hours' attendance at a place of work at which the student is employed on legal tasks that can be shown to be conducive to enhancing his/her knowledge of law and ability to tackle legal issues. The internship forms an integral part of the master's programme and is done in either the fourth or final year of study concurrently with other studies in any semester. The student draws up a schedule of the days and hours he/she will be able to put in on his/her internship during the semester and submits this to a supervisor at the workplace for his/her approval. See also section 2.

Student preparation for internship

Students who have completed their undergraduate studies in law at the School are generally well prepared for internship, particularly as a result of the large amount of project work and some research they have already undertaken, cf. the details given above regarding breadth of undergraduate studies. Before the internship commences a teaching supervisor meets with the relevant student and the student's supervisor at the workplace where the internship has been arranged to discuss arrangements.

Students' tasks during internships

On their internship students are expected to work on legal assignments that can be shown to be conducive to enhancing their knowledge of law and ability to contribute to the resolution of legal issues. Students profit from the guidance of experienced members of staff of the institution or company involved. The School also expects students to be given an overall view of the work that goes on at the establishment and kinds of the legal assignments undertaken there. In other respects the tasks expected of students reflect the legal projects actually being worked on.

The University's role in internship: organisation, supervision and responsibilities

The School shall attempt to ensure that students requesting to complete course credits through internship are found placements with a suitable institution or company. There is no obligation on the School to comply with a student's request to this effect, the provision of internships being dependant on the needs and wishes of the School's partners in business. If the demand for internship from

students wishing to earn credits through internship exceeds the supply of suitable places, the Academic Affairs Council decides which students will be offered internships and where (see the procedural rules on internship in Appendix 14). The School has concluded formal partnership agreements for internship (see Appendix 28) with four courts of law, three government ministries, a large number of other public institutions, and some large legal practices, banks and other financial institutions. Altogether partnership agreements have been made with more than twenty companies and institutions: for a list of internship partners, see Appendix 28. So far the School has been able to find sufficient numbers of internships for all interested students. The School makes it a condition of internship that the student has not previously carried out legal tasks at the place of work in question. The Academic Affairs Council initiates the negotiation of partnership agreements and is responsible for supervising their implementation.

The School of Law assigns one of the School's permanent members of staff to supervise all students doing internship at a particular company or institution; this person provides the link between the School and the workplace and also represents students' interests in any dealings with the employer. The supervising member of staff is also responsible for the grading of the internship.

On-site tutoring, guidance and advice for students on internship

All companies and institutions acting as internship partners of the School of Law nominate for their part an experienced legal practitioner to have charge of professional aspects of the student's performance during placement. The supervisor organises the student's internship and provides him/her with working duties or delegates this task to others. This supervisor certifies the student's working records and provides a reference of performance used in the study assessment process.

Assessment of internship

It is assumed that in most cases a student will complete his/her internship by submitting a working record or essay recording details of the internship. At the end of the internship, the workplace supervisor will certify the working record and provide a reference on the student's performance. On the basis of the certified working record and the supervisor's reference, the supervising member of staff assesses whether the student's performance has met the requirements for the intended course credits. The student's course result for the internship shall be recorded in his/her academic records as 'passed' or 'failed'. No numerical grade is given and thus internship plays no part in the make-up of the student's final overall grade.

Special research projects during internship

In line with the research-based orientation of the master's programme, the Academic Affairs Committee may count a student's work on a special research project produced under the guidance of a tutor as being equivalent to internship as set out above.

7. Assessment

Assessment of student performance is discussed in section 4 of the *School of Law policy on teaching: Reference points for teaching methods* (see Appendix 23), where there is a list of various approved methods of assessment.¹ The School operates a policy of mixed study assessment. Teaching staff decide on the form the assessment will take, the frequency of tests and examinations and the weighting of the assessment. Assessment shall in all cases reflect the required learning outcomes of the course. Teaching staff are responsible for the examination content and expectations. Rules for the format and procedures of examinations can be found in the Reykjavík University Teaching Quality Handbook (see Appendix 6): these apply to the School of Law just as to other Schools of the University. According to the Teaching Quality Handbook, teaching staff shall have examination papers read over and endorsed by fellow members of staff. Assistance on the setting of examinations is also available from Teaching Affairs and Registry. Teaching staff are also responsible for examination requirements at master's level but external examiners are employed for oral examinations and to assess the ML thesis.

The Reykjavík University General Rules on Study and Examinations (see Appendix 29²) lay down standards required of students to complete a course/courses. Articles 4.1 and 4.2 specify procedures for the aggregation of grades and minimum pass marks: to quote:

Aggregation of grades

A single final grade is given for each course in which a student is registered. The final grade is calculated based on the marks given for one or more of the following components:

- Performance in a final examination.
- Performance on course-unit examinations.
- Student performance and participation in class.
- Projects and reports submitted by students during the course.

¹ <http://www2.ru.is/lisalib/getfile.aspx?itemid=7235>

² Also available on www2.ru.is/lisalib/getfile.aspx?itemid=9000

Minimum pass grade - undergraduate

Grades are awarded in whole and half numbers on a scale from 0 to 10. A final grade of lower than 5 counts as failed and the student is awarded no credits for the course. To pass a course a student must receive the grade of 5.0 or above on the final examination (except in the course Methodology , the grade of 6.0 is minimum) . If the grade for the final examination counts for 20% or less of the final grade for the course, the instructor has discretion to waive the condition stated above. A School may determine a higher minimum pass mark for individual courses (see the Regulations of the School of Law). A School may decide to assess performance on individual courses as ‘pass’ or ‘fail’ instead of awarding a numerical grade.¹

To be awarded a master’s degree in law a student must achieve a final grade of at least 6 on all courses and projects: see Article 8 of the regulations for the master’s programme. The RU Teaching Quality Handbook (see Appendix 6) stresses the importance of varied study assessment. The consequence of this is that no courses are graded entirely on the basis of a final examination. Study assessment must in all cases reflect the learning outcomes required for the individual course; as a result, assessment can take in a variety of methods, including, for example, project work (individual or group work), essays, unprepared tests, mid-term tests, final examinations, oral presentations, etc. To ensure quality, teaching staff must have test and examination papers read over by fellow members of staff before they are administered. Additionally, teaching staff can turn to a teaching mentor for advice on setting examinations. Appendix 13 provides a summary of the assessment methods used in particular parts of the undergraduate and master’s programmes, i.e. the weighting balance between final examinations and project work as components in final grades.

Student access to information on assessment procedures

It is an inviolable rule that information on study assessment shall be made available not later than two weeks before the start of a course. In fact, such information is generally available much earlier, or on the publication of the course and lecture list. Teaching staff giving grades for individual parts of a course do so through the University learning management system. Comments, grades and statistics are posted on the course website and are available as soon as the instructor has entered a grade on the system. At the end of a course, the final grade is posted on the student’s electronic academic record. Teaching staff generally have seven working days to issue grades for projects and examinations.

¹ The School of Law has determined that the minimum pass mark for the course on Methodology taught in the first term of the undergraduate course shall be 6.

8. Students

Entrance requirements

Entrance requirements and selection procedures for undergraduate programmes

On student admissions, the Regulations of Reykjavík University (Article 4.4) state as follows:

The rules on entrance requirements are as per Article 19 of the Higher Education Institutions Act, no. 63/2006. A School is permitted to set special additional conditions, including holding entrance examinations or aptitude tests. A School is also permitted to waive the requirement for high school matriculation or equivalent examination if in the judgement of the School a student possesses equivalent knowledge or maturity.

A School can decide that studies undertaken by a student outside the School, including at other domestic or foreign universities, may be assessed for credits in accordance with rules specified by the School. Reykjavík University shall exercise consistency and equality of treatment in the processing of applications.

Applicants are encouraged to apply online through the University's website. 97-8% of applications are made online. Reykjavík University reserves the right to refuse an application if the stipulated supporting documents have not been received within a week of the closing date for applications. The opening date for applications is in February and the closing date at the end of May. The University endeavours to reply to students as soon as the supporting documents have been received and in all cases not later than in the first days of June. New applicants are answered by letter and also by email. Students are requested to confirm acceptance of being admitted. In the selection of new entrants, consideration is given to the applicant's high school graduation grade [matriculation/*stúdentspróf*], in particular the grades achieved in English, Danish, mathematics and Icelandic. Other factors are also taken into account, e.g. participation in social activities, sports, musical studies and anything else that is felt might be of value in further studies. Applicants are encouraged to detail anything they consider might support their application in a special statement to be included with their application. They are also given the opportunity to come for interview with officers of the School if they so request. Appendix 30 gives details of the School of Law criteria and procedures for the processing of applications.

Entrance requirements for study at master's level

Applicants for studies at master's level must have completed a first university degree. In most cases a first grade or higher is required. This condition, however, may be waived in exceptional cases. As stated previously, the master's programme at the School of Law is not restricted to students who have

completed an undergraduate degree in law and is open to holders of university degrees in other subjects. In the selection of such applicants, consideration is given to degree grades and the applicant's reasons for wishing to enrol on the programme, given in a written statement. Entrance requirements must be seen to be generally commensurate with the demands made by the programme and priority is given to factors that are felt most likely to provide indications of performance on the programme. See the analysis in Appendix 32 of the correlation between specific entrance criteria and study performance.

Statistics: student numbers, new enrolments, number of graduates, place of residence, gender and age

See tables and interpretation of statistical data in Appendix 31.

Drop-out rates

See Appendix 31.

Guidance and counselling for students at start of study programmes and during studies

See section 5.

General remarks on progress of study in the BA programme

As noted previously, the BA programme in law comprises a total of 180 ECTS credits, split up over three years (first, second and third study years). It is generally assumed that in the normal course of events a full-time student will complete 30 ECTS credits a semester or 60 a year. A student is permitted to register in the second year of the School of Law if he/she has completed at least 48 ECTS credits of first-year studies with an average grade of 6 or higher. To start studies in the third year, a student must have completed at least 96 ECTS credits from first- and second-year studies with an average grade of 6 or higher. A student must have completed at least 90 ECTS credits at the latest two years after last enrolment in the first study year. A student must have completed at least 126 ECTS credits three years after last enrolment in the first study year. A student must have completed a BA degree at the latest four years after last enrolment in the first study year. See the regulations on progress of study in Appendix 33.

According to the regulations for the master's programme, studies shall cover a minimum of two years and a student shall complete the master's programme not later than three years after starting unless he/she has been granted study leave by a meeting of the School. A School meeting can also in exceptional circumstances grant an additional extension for the completion of studies.

Monitoring of students' progress

A student who fails to fulfil the requirements of the School of Law on study progress can apply for re-registration. Such requests are generally refused unless the student can demonstrate conclusive evidence of progress in his/her studies and clear indications that with better application he/she will be able to meet the demands made by the course.

The University intranet (MySchool) provides various ways of accessing individual students' grades and credits. If it is anticipated that a student will encounter problems due to lack of credits and/or unsatisfactory grades, the School writes to the student concerned, setting out the situation and urging him/her to apply him/herself better to his/her studies. Students who need to request re-registration are also written to with details of the possibilities of re-registration and the conditions generally attached to it. Requests for re-registration are considered by the Dean and administrative director of the School. Students whose request for re-registration is agreed forfeit all grades below 6 on registration.

The office of the School of Law makes every effort to monitor students' progress and speak personally to students who are experiencing difficulties in their studies.

It is common for students whose progress gives cause for concern to discuss their situation with the University student counsellor and seek advice and professional assistance.

Student attitudes to the School

Students' attitudes to the School in which they are studying and to the University as a whole are monitored by means of annual focus group meetings. Additionally, student surveys are conducted at one- to two-year intervals in which students are asked their general attitudes towards the University, their course of study and the services they receive during their studies.

Students' right of appeal

Deans have final the say in matters concerning students' rights and obligations: see Article 2.4 of the Regulations of Reykjavík University (Appendix 1). Article 5 deals with the rights and obligations of students. Here it is again stated that Deans have the final say in matters concerning students' rights and obligations. If an exception arises in the case of the final grading of examinations, an appeal can be made to an external examiner under the terms of the General Rules on Study and Examinations (see Appendix 29).

Under Article 7.2 of the General Rules on Study and Examinations, a student who fails a final examination can lodge an appeal with the examinations officer who, under the terms of Article 5, shall appoint an independent external examiner, cf. Article 5.6 (see Appendix 29). Students can refer other

matters relating to teaching and examinations to the Director of Teaching Affairs and Registry, though in such cases Deans have the final say.

Deans decide on penalties for breaches of the General Rules on Study and Examinations, other RU rules and rules and regulations pertaining to the operations of the University. Breaches can incur a zero grade (0) for a component of a particular course, exclusion from the course or expulsion from the University. In place of the two last-named measures, a Dean can decide to reprimand a student, with or without other sanctions. A student cannot, however, receive a reprimand more than once for the same offence during his/her time of study.

According to Article 5.2 of the University's regulations, Deans are responsible for ensuring that the administrative structure of their School is in line with University policy (see Appendix 34) and that academic staff have an active part in its management.

According to the School of Law rules on the constitution and management of the School of Law discussion and decisions on professional matters relating to the School shall take place at a School meeting, including content and organisation of courses, general course development, assessment, teaching methods and teaching policy, research and quality issues. The rules contain no specific provisions regarding the rights and obligations of students. However, the School rules on the assessment of results from previous studies for the purposes of the undergraduate programme state that appeal against the findings of a study assessment panel may be made to a School meeting. In such cases the Dean of the School of Law has delegated the final decision to a School meeting.

If a student has exhausted the School's internal appeals channels, he/she can take his/her case to the Higher Education Students Complaints Appeal Board under Article 20 of the Higher Education Institutions Act, no. 63/2006.

Reykjavík University operates a Code of Ethics (see Appendix 35). The Code of Ethics is intended to promote standards of conduct among those working within the University that meet the highest ethical demands applicable to institutes of higher education. An Ethics Committee appointed by the Rector discusses cases pertaining to breaches of the Code of Ethics raised by students or staff. The committee takes a stance, supported by reasons, on whether an offence has been committed and communicates its findings to the parties concerned, the Rector and the relevant Dean. The rulings of the Ethics Committee are final. Actions taken in the event of a breach of the Code of Ethics are determined by the Dean, the managing director or the Rector as applicable.

Student attainment after graduation

Since 2007 the RU Careers Service has conducted an annual survey of what students go on to do after graduation through questionnaires issued to all final-year students two weeks before graduation. Questions include whether the respondents have found work, how many job offers they have received, and through whom they obtained any offers of employment. They are also asked about monthly

salaries. Up to the present students from the School have proved to be strongly placed on entering the employment market.

Students' responsibility for their own studies

The study criteria of the School of Law state specifically that students are in main respects responsible for their own studies. However, since its inception in 2002 the School has operated the basic policy that teaching staff and other members of staff shall make every effort to assist students in so far as time and study objectives allow. In this regard, as mentioned earlier, staff/student relations are generally open and informal and students make considerable use of their easy access to teaching staff.

Tutorial guidance

Students receive personal guidance from teaching staff or other members of staff in the writing of their BA and ML dissertations/theses. The School also provides instructions on essay composition (see Appendix 45). Early in their time in the School students receive special guidance in tackling practical work assignments and this guidance is updated and augmented as they move further on in their studies.

Right of students to influence their own studies

The opinions of student representatives are canvassed on all major changes to the structure and content of courses and the School seeks to encourage close co-operation and mutual understanding between staff and students in such matters.

Does the School attract students from any particular social grouping?

Based on a breakdown of students attending or applying to the School since its inception in 2002, the School's courses appear to appeal to a broad group of applicants from a wide range of backgrounds. However, it needs to be borne in mind that Reykjavík University is a fee-paying institution, in contrast to the University of Iceland, whose faculty of law is the RU School of Law's main competitor for students (and teaching staff).

Does the School attract the students it would ideally prefer?

Each year the School receives a large number of applications from individuals who have achieved good results in previous studies and/or in the areas on which the School places most weight when processing applications. In an ideal world the School might wish to attract more students who have achieved Class I or Distinction at high-school graduation (matriculation/*stúdentspróf*) than is actually the case. However, experience in this regard shows that there is no hard correlation between high

school grades and good results in legal studies or in employment after university. The search for infallible predictors and criteria in such matters continues.

Assessment of students' workload

Student workload is assessed on the basis of ECTS criteria, according to which two ECTS credits are supposed to equate to around 50-60 hours' work on the part of students, all included, i.e. class attendance, preparation, tests and examinations, etc. Every effort is made to ensure that the number of lectures and amount of project work and study material in each course is consonant with the number of credits behind the course.

Number of students in courses

Current student numbers at both undergraduate and master's levels appear in most respects appropriate in respect of the School's pedagogical objectives and the number of students needed to sustain the range of courses offered.

9. Staff and human resources management

Permanent academic staff: education and experience

Appendix 36 contains a list of the School's permanent members of staff¹ with details of their education, job titles, FTE, and breakdown of duties between teaching, research and administration. The list reveals that the School currently employs four professors, five associate professors (docents), two assistant professors (lecturers), five specialists and one adjunct in permanent academic positions, plus three members of administrative staff. Appendix 37 contains CVs of permanent members of staff. Proportionally the Reykjavík University School of Law has more professors, associate professors and assistant professors holding doctorates than any other law faculty in Iceland, in total five (40%). The School's research output has increased steadily in recent years, as emerges clearly from the University's annual research evaluation. When assessing the research productivity of School of Law staff it should be borne in mind that in the early years of the School the majority of the time of teaching staff went into building up and teaching new courses. Among the challenges ahead is to increase the number of permanent academic staff and so strengthen teaching and research in various key areas.

¹ A permanent faculty member is defined as a teaching member of the faculty on an open-ended contract of employment with three to six months' notice of termination on either part.

External lecturers

The School employs a total of around 69 part-time external lecturers from a wide variety of backgrounds, including from the working economy in Iceland and from abroad. These teaching staff play an important role in forging connections between study and what goes on in the professional practice of law and in strengthening links between students and working lawyers outside the University. External lecturers are taken on to teach either entire courses or parts of courses, often working alongside and under the supervision of permanent faculty. Many external lecturers have been with the School since its inception and have proved of great value to it. However, it is the view of the School that the number of external staff is at present too high in proportion to the number of permanent faculty.

The School of Law makes every effort to ensure that external lecturers are aware of the School's mission and vision for the future and the educational criteria and objectives that the School has set itself, e.g. through effective channelling of information.

Terms of employment and division of responsibilities among permanent academic staff

Terms of employment of permanent staff, including academic staff, are determined by the contract of employment between the School and the member of staff in question. Reykjavík University does not offer life tenure; this was a conscious decision on the part of the officers of the University on its establishment, designed to ensure flexibility in employment matters at a new and rapidly expanding institute of education. Contracts stipulate notice periods of termination of contract, generally three or six months, applying on both sides. Academic staff within the School enjoy full freedom of research: this right is stated explicitly in the Research Policy of both University and School and the University's Code of Ethics. Contracts of employment with academic staff usually stipulate that their duties include research, teaching and administration (or services outside and/or inside the University) and there is generally some flexibility in such matters. Thus, for example, the research proportion can vary between semesters and years and can be discussed, *inter alia*, at annual staff interviews and when planning work schedules. Permanent faculty commonly teach two or three courses a year, depending on the scope of the courses; this counts as equivalent to 40-60% of a full-time post. Flexibility is important in such matters so as to enable the Dean to allocate responsibilities in line with the needs of the School and the specialisms and aptitudes of individual members of staff.

Appointment procedures for academic posts

In appointments to academic posts, i.e. positions based on an academic competence evaluation, clear procedural criteria apply. A standardised process for this task was agreed by the Executive Committee of the University in June 2009, but the same approach has in fact been in use for some years. The process begins with the Dean appointing a selection committee for the post. Except in exceptional

circumstances, the post is then advertised and interviews held. Applicants who have reached the later rounds of the selection process are invited to present a lecture at the college. The selection committee then submits a proposal to the Dean, who has final say on the appointment.

Teacher evaluation procedures: staff interviews

Staff interviews are an important part of the career development process of all permanent RU members of staff and also constitute a forum for performance appraisal by officers of the University and feedback to the member of staff in question. Staff interviews of academic staff are conducted by the Dean and take place annually. The interviews are based on a School Contribution Record which is completed by the member of staff, detailing all the relevant person's working activities, teaching, research and other assignments, both within and outside the University (see Appendix 38). A review of this process and the documentation used in it has been carried out over the winter of 2009-2010 with the aim of harmonising the main procedures and types of documentation used in the annual research evaluations, annual staff interviews and staff competence evaluations for promotions.

The role of teaching evaluations in personnel management

As described earlier, teaching evaluations (see Appendix 39) are conducted twice a semester, around or before the middle of the semester and at the end. The purpose in having an evaluation in the middle of the semester is to give teaching staff the opportunity to rectify deficiencies while the course is still in progress. Beside the teacher him/herself, access to the teaching evaluation is restricted to the Dean, the programme or department director (as applicable), plus the officers of the Teaching Affairs and Registry and Human Resources and Quality Assurance. The teaching evaluation is given on the scale 1-5. In the interpretation of a teaching evaluation a score of over 4.0 is viewed as a clear indication of high course quality and high satisfaction levels among students. A score in the range 3.5-4.0 constitutes a good or satisfactory result. A score in the range 3.0-3.5 calls for attention and a score of under 3.0 demands serious attention and rectification. Common measures taken in the case of a poor teaching evaluation include intervention from a teaching mentor or in the most serious cases dismissal of the member of staff. Overall results (School averages) for teaching evaluations from the various Schools of the University are published regularly on its website. Since its foundation the School of Law has achieved good results in its teaching evaluations, with very often the highest average in the University.

The teaching evaluation is an important element in performance appraisal and is discussed at all staff interviews. The allocation of teaching tasks and promotion are based among other things on teaching performance, in the assessment of which the teaching evaluation plays a major part.

Appraisal for promotion to academic posts

Competence appraisal of staff for promotion within the academic careers structure of the School and University takes place after an appointment has been decided on the basis of the Higher Education Institutions Act and the provisions laid down in the University's regulations. Procedural rules on promotion were agreed in their final form in June 2009 (see Appendix 9). The decision to institute the appraisal process is taken jointly by the member of staff and the Dean, with the Dean having the final say. Following on from this, an evaluation committee is appointed made up of three members whose names are vetted by the University Research Council and Curriculum Council and the RU Executive Committee. The evaluation committee is provided with all the documentation relating to the career of the relevant member of staff and produces its statement of opinion according to a letter of commission from the Dean in the light of the rules on appraisal stated above. The final decision on the granting of academic titles lies with the Dean.

By tradition, permanent members of academic staff in the School of Law are termed 'specialists' for an indeterminate period after appointment. At the time of writing this report, this title is used by five members of academic staff of the School.

Staff attitudes

Staff attitudes to the School and University are surveyed at two-year intervals by questionnaires sent to all members of staff. The last such survey took place in November 2009 and indicated that staff are generally satisfied in their work: the average overall satisfaction rating came out at 4.18 out of 5. The survey of opinions gives staff the opportunity to express their views on University policy, various innovations that have been introduced and the working environment as well as the priorities and performance of their immediate manager.

Teacher training

The School places a strong emphasis on continuing education in matters of teaching practice and innovation (see section 5).

Sabbaticals

The regulations of Reykjavík University on sabbaticals (see Appendix 10) stipulate that permanent members of academic staff earn the right to apply for a sabbatical term by being actively engaged in research for three years. Applications for sabbaticals must be submitted with adequate notice and include a statement of the research proposed during the sabbatical. Permission to take a sabbatical is granted by the Dean if circumstances in the School so permit. Staff on sabbatical receive financial

support in the form of a bursary to cover travel and accommodation costs if their research requires them to spend all or part of their sabbatical outside Iceland.

Support for continuing education

The RU policy on human resources states that employment with the University shall constitute a constant challenge and strengthen the individual professionally and personally. The rules of the University allow staff to take part in all continuing education programmes within the University free of charge. Support is generally granted for other continuing education outside the University and there are other rules in force covering sabbaticals: these are, however, generally unpaid.

10. Staff and student facilities

Student reading and working facilities

Reykjavík University attaches great importance to providing its students with a first-class working environment. Students of the University have access to University premises on all sites (Ofanleiti and Nauthólsvík) 24 hours a day, most days of the year, by use of special access cards issued on registration.

The University provides working facilities for students in the form of reading rooms and a group-work centre with capacity for 800. The new building currently under construction at Nauthólsvík will have workplaces for up to 1,200 students. There are special group-work rooms at several places in the University buildings that students can use for co-operative work and other assignments relating to their studies. Lecture and seminars rooms are free for students to use when not being used for teaching. Students working on course-final assignments are given workspace and access to working facilities within the School according to need. Master's students involved in research are whenever possible found working facilities close to the member of teaching staff who supervises their studies.

Working facilities for teaching staff

Staff at the School of Law will move into the University's new premises at Nauthólsvík in August 2010. Once the new building is up and running Reykjavík University will be operating entirely under one roof for the first time since 2005. Teaching staff moving to the new site at Nauthólsvík will find excellent working conditions. A state-of-the-art computer system has been installed to control lighting, ventilation and other important functions in all teaching rooms.

Staff working space in the new building at Nauthólsvík is mainly in the form of open-plan spaces and two- to four-person offices. At the time of writing, the layout of the School of Law has still to be finalised. Facilities will remain as described for the first years until it becomes possible to extend the

building. Various measures have been introduced to minimise disturbance in working spaces, e.g. through the installation of acoustic resin in ceilings. Staff working in the open space will have access to closed offices for research and writing, as well as access to meeting rooms adjacent to the working spaces. External lecturers will be provided with facilities in the open working space.

Teaching facilities

The University has just short of 60 teaching rooms, holding from 10 up to 150 students and ranging in size from 50m² to 240m². All are equipped with projectors, computers and whiteboards. Many of the classrooms contain ‘Smart Screens’, where teaching staff write on a small panel which is projected electronically onto a wall screen. Lecture halls and teaching rooms are equipped with sound and recording systems for use by teaching staff in the many distance-learning courses offered to students of the University. The IT suites have space for 28-40 and are open to students 24 hours a day. Of particular interest to the School of Law is the ‘Courtroom’, a special teaching room set up with facilities for moot court training.

Support services for staff and students

RU umbrella support services:

Teaching Affairs and Registry (*Kennslusvið*): Acts as the central registry for information on applications, teaching evaluations and student records and is responsible for issuing various certificates. Teaching Affairs and Registry is responsible for statistical data and reports on students and teaching that the University is required to supply to Statistics Iceland and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. It also assists teaching staff in the use of the University’s electronic learning management system and provides advice on teaching, the drafting of course descriptions, development of learning outcomes and setting of examinations. Operating within the division there is a teaching mentor to whom all teaching staff can turn for advice on teaching-related issues.

Research Services (*Rannsóknáþjónusta*): Assists in raising research grants, organises the annual research evaluation, and collates and promotes the University’s research results. The director acts as secretary of the University Research Council.

Library and Information Services (*Bókasafn og upplýsingaþjónusta*): Provides training to students in information gathering, with an emphasis on the use of electronic databases. Acts for staff and students in the acquisition of essential material unavailable in the University library.

Central Services (*Þjónustudeild*): Attends to day-to-day interface with students at all the University’s reception areas. Assists staff with co-ordinating events such as meetings and conference. Responsible for travel arrangements, procurement, premises maintenance, etc.

IT Services (*Upplýsingatæknideild*): Provides staff and students with computing and software user services and manages the University's IT network. The division also holds courses for teaching staff on the use of IT applications in the teaching environment.

Finance department (*Fjármáladeild*): Handles the University's finances and keeps its accounts. Handles collection of tuition fees and communication with students arising from this. Assists researchers in collating information on research grants.

Marketing, Public Relations and Student Relations (*Markaðsmál, nemendatengsl og almannatengsl*): Organises all matters relating to the general marketing of the University and its courses. Assists in promoting conferences and other events.

Student Services and Careers Services (*Stúdentþjónusta og atvinnuþjónusta*): Assists students in developing the skills and competence necessary to succeed in work and study through both courses and one-to-one consultation.

International Affairs (*Alþjóðaskrifstofa*): Assists students in finding exchange programmes and receives exchange students coming from abroad. Helps staff identify worthwhile exchange programmes abroad and establishes co-operative working relations with university faculties outside Iceland.

Human Resources and Quality (*Skrifstofa mannaúðs- og gæðamála*): Supports University staff and officers in various matters relating to terms and conditions of employment, career development, salaries, fringe benefits and working environment.

Cafeteria (*Matstofa*): The cafeteria is shared by RU staff and students and used by all Schools and divisions of the University.

In addition to sharing the RU services listed above, the School of Law employs two full-time office staff, viz. an administrative director and a project manager, who handle all day-to-day contact with students and are available to assist staff in various matters pertaining to the preparation and conduct of teaching and research. The administrative director is 'right-hand man' to the Dean in the administration of the School and the project manager is primarily responsible for project work relating to the School's master's programme. The administrative director sits on several boards and committees connected to University Central Services.

School funding

Reykjavík University is financed from three principal sources, and this applies to all of its Schools. Firstly, the University holds a service agreement with the Icelandic government which accounts for around 43% of the School's budget (2009). This is calculated on the basis of a special mathematical model according to which the School receives an educational subsidy from the state based on estimated course costs. The University also receives a general subsidy for research funding which it

then allocates between Schools in line with the results of its research assessment of academic staff (see above). In 2009 12% of the School of Law's income derived from the research subsidy. Secondly, there are student fees, which in 2009 accounted for 41% of the School's income. Thirdly, the School generates income from research grants and various service agreements with outside commercial interests. This accounted for 4% of the School's budget for 2009.

It is generally acknowledged that the state subsidy for legal education, which, as mentioned, is calculated according to a special model, is less than might be considered normal, among other reasons due to changes in recent years in how law is taught, notably the greatly increased element of individual-based instruction and study. The defect in the mathematical model is recognised by the educational and financial authorities but it has not been possible to rectify it owing to, among other things, cuts in funding for higher education. An increase in the state subsidy to education in law is one of the most pressing issues facing the RU School of Law, especially since the state educational subsidy is divided within the University on the basis of the mathematical model.

11. Administration

Students' right of appeal

Students who fail examinations have the right to take the result to appeal. Teaching Affairs and Registry appoints an independent external examiner to go over the paper. His/her decision is final. (See Appendix 29 and Article 5.6 of the RU General Rules on Study and Examinations.)

The Dean decides on penalties for breaches of the General Rules on Study and Examinations and other University rules. Breaches can incur a zero grade (0) for a component of a particular course, exclusion from the course or expulsion from the University. In place of the two last-named measures, the Dean can decide to reprimand a student, with or without further sanctions. A student cannot, however, receive a reprimand more than once for the same offence during his/her time of study. If a student has exhausted the School's internal appeals channels, he/she can take his/her case to the Higher Education Students Complaints Appeal Board as per Article 20 of the Higher Education Institutions Act, no. 63/2006. Reykjavík University operates a Code of Ethics. On the Code of Ethics and the handling of cases arising from it, see Article 35.

Administrative structure and organisation

The administrative structure of the School of Law (see Appendix 34) is intended to ensure that all the School's operations are transparent and efficient, as well as provide students and staff with proper access to its management. In addition to its formal structure, the School places great emphasis on information flow between officers, teaching staff and students. Students have easy access to teaching staff and the informal exchange of views between students and staff is deliberately encouraged.

As noted earlier, every semester the Dean holds a consultation meeting with the board of the RU law students' organisation Lögrétta and, on request, with student representatives. The students in each year of study appoint a special representative at the start of each academic year whose function it is to bring students' views and requests to the attention of School officers.

School meetings

In addition to the Dean, who acts as chair, all professors, associate professors (docents), assistant professors (lecturers), specialists and adjuncts in the School, included the research institutes attached to the School, have the right to sit at School meetings. A student representative chosen by Lögrétta also has the right to attend. The School meeting is the forum for discussion and decision-making on academic issues affecting the School, i.e. the School's mission and future objectives, content and organisation of courses and course development in general, assessment, teaching policy and methods, research and quality assurance. The School meeting also decides on appointments to panels and committees and the management boards of the School's research institutes.

School meetings are generally held once a month in every semester and more often if required. Meetings are convened by email with at least two days' notice. The agenda shall be specified in the call to the meeting. Minutes are kept, and submitted to the next School meeting for approval. The School meeting is deemed to be quorate if attended by no fewer than half of the professors, associate professors, assistant professors, specialists and adjuncts of the School plus the Dean. Decisions are taken by a simple majority of votes cast. In the case of a tie, the Dean has the casting vote.

12. Research

Connections between staff research and study objectives

In appointments to academic posts, the School of Law gives particular weight to applicants' research records; the successful applicant will be actively engaged in research and have demonstrated undisputed ability in this area. Teaching staff are expected to make use of their research in their teaching, not only in their own courses but also through collaboration with other academic staff of the School.

Research perspectives in teaching and student work assignments

A significant element in all studies at the School of Law is that students are made aware of the importance of research in the field of law and that they acquire the knowledge and skills to carry out research. Students are provided with the academic foundation needed to conduct research, and research work under the guidance of teaching staff plays a major part in the master's programme.

Students in the School of Law produce a peer-reviewed law journal, *Tímarit Lögréttu*, which has become a respected forum for the publication of academic papers.

School research institutes

Three research institutes operate within the School of Law: the European Law Institute (*Evrópuréttarstofnun*), the Research Institute on Natural Resource Law (*Auðlindaréttarstofnun*) and the Institute for Financial Services Law (*Fjármálaréttarstofnun*). The School also has close links with the RU European Documentation Centre (*Miðstöð Evrópuupplýsinga*). These institutes are led by permanent faculty of the School and students have had the opportunity of contributing to some of their research projects. However, the activities of these institutes have been restricted by lack of funding and their organisation and operations are currently under review.

Staff research activity: status of legal research within the University

All members of academic staff in the School of Law are actively engaged in research. With regard to permanent academic staff, over the years 2007-9 output per core faculty member was on average 1.9 papers (or equivalent) a year, a considerable proportion of which was published for an international readership (e.g. in 2009, 46% of all publications were in foreign journals). This is clearly a good result, especially bearing in mind that during the same period the School was built up from scratch. As the figures bear witness, School of Law staff play an active part in the international scholarly community: see, for instance, Appendix 21, detailing School participation in international projects in 2008-9. Among the international projects to which the School has contributed is the DOMAC research project, through which the School of Law is in formal research collaboration with the faculty of law at the University of Amsterdam, the Centre for International Courts and Tribunals at University College London, and the law faculty at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Research profile

Research carried out within the School of Law covers a wide range of fields, including national and international law, public and civil law. The School itself does not attempt to influence the areas chosen directly, though there is of course indirect influence through the appointment of staff.

Dissemination of staff research results

The School of Law expects staff to publish their research in a forum with a reputation for quality in Iceland or abroad. In research evaluation particular consideration is given to publications in peer-reviewed academic journals. Of special importance recently has been the publication of a number of teaching books researched and written by members of staff which have satisfied a pressing need for

teaching materials in the relevant fields (see Appendix 22). Teaching staff from the School have also applied their specialist knowledge to inform public debate and the drafting of legislation on issues within their areas of expertise. The School of Law publishes an annual synopsis of research by teaching staff on the School's website (see Appendix 41).

Principal sources of research funding

School research is financed primarily by grants from the Icelandic Research Fund (*Rannsóknasjóður*), NordForsk and other competitive funds in Iceland and abroad, plus its share of the public research subsidy to the University as a whole. Research in specific fields has also been funded by companies and other institutions.

13. External relations

Links with public authorities and institutions, professional bodies and the economy

In accordance with the aims and priorities of Reykjavík University, the School encourages a wide range of links with government agencies, public institutions, professional bodies and the economy, notably:

1. The School has established valuable connections and working relations with over twenty key public institutions and commercial companies in the field of law through joint agreements on internship (see section 2).
2. Links to public institutions, legal practices and other larger companies have been strengthened by recruiting experienced staff as external lecturers and guest speakers.
3. A fixed element of many modules taught within the School consists of visits to courts, the office of the public prosecutor, prisons, embassies and other public institutions, legal practices and commercial companies to find out about the operations of places of work where important legal work is carried out.
4. Members of School staff have acted in a specialist capacity on many panels and committees set up by parliament, government ministries, the courts and other public bodies.
5. Members of staff have sat many times on courts of arbitration in matters of industrial dispute and produced expert statements of opinion on behalf of commercial companies.
6. School staff participate in the teaching of courses for candidates for bar examinations, hold lectures on behalf of the Icelandic Bar Association (*Lögmannafélag Íslands*) and the Association of Icelandic Lawyers (*Lögfræðingafélag Íslands*), and have, for example, taken an active part in 'Law Day', a joint project supported by all the law faculties in Iceland and various professional legal associations.

7. The School's research institutes such as the Research Institute on Natural Resource Law, the European Law Institute and the Institute for Financial Services Law have established close working relations with public bodies and commercial companies, e.g. in applications for funding, and such bodies are represented on the boards of these School institutes.
8. School staff have informed public debate on various social issues through participation in media discussions in their specialist fields.

Links with comparable institutions of higher education at home and abroad

The School has only limited contacts with other law faculties in Iceland. Various moves have been made to rectify this situation, e.g. in connection with foreign exchange students, who have been given the opportunity of attending courses at both Reykjavík University and the University of Iceland. The School of Law has accepted more than ten applicants for its master's programme who hold BSc degrees in commercial law from Bifröst University or BAs in law from the University of Akureyri. School staff have also delivered occasional lectures at other universities in Iceland and some external lecturers also do some teaching for other faculties of law, though this is not common.

International contacts and collaborative agreements with outside parties

The School and staff have been parties to a number of international research projects, on occasions as project leaders. A notable example is the previously mentioned DOMAC project on the impact of international court procedures on domestic courts in the trial of perpetrators of mass atrocities, which is led by one of the teaching staff of the School and was funded by a generous grant from the European Union in 2008. The project is still in full swing, with contributions from scholars from four universities in four different countries.

Staff from the School are active members of several international learned societies and associations in various areas of law and take part in conferences and meetings organised by these parties. However, such collaboration is seriously compromised by the distance from mainland Europe, increased travel and subsistence costs and cuts in funding to higher education. The School and staff will continue to explore all means at their disposal to maintain such scholarly contact since it provides a valuable source of and conduit for new ideas and learning in the field of law. See Appendix 21.

Links with other Schools of the University

Reykjavík University is a comparatively small university, at least by international standards. The walls between Schools are not high. From the outset it has been the policy of the University to encourage interdisciplinary working practices and close co-operation between Schools. The School of Law has links with other Schools of the University of various kinds:

1. All RU students in their second semester take part in an interdisciplinary module called Innovation and Company Formation. Students from the Schools of Law, Business and Science and Engineering come together in groups made up of students from across all the Schools to tackle interdisciplinary projects in the area of innovation and company management.
2. Students in their sixth semester of undergraduate studies can select options from any of the other Schools of the University. Students on the master's programme can opt to take master's courses from other Schools of the University. However, as noted earlier, students who wish to matriculate with a master's degree equivalent to a professional qualification in law must complete at least 240 of 300 ECTS credits in areas of law. Similarly, students from other Schools can opt to take courses taught by the School of Law.
3. Permanent staff from the School of Law have taught courses for other Schools of the University, particularly Business, and for the Open University. The School has worked closely with the Open University on a number of projects and taken part in organising courses for it in the field of law.
4. Staff from the School sit alongside staff from other Schools on the University's Curriculum Council and Science Council and on various University committees, permitting a valuable exchange of views on University operations.
5. The School takes part in various other consultative and collaborative exercises as well as having innumerable social links with other parts of the University.

Membership of international student-exchange programmes

Reykjavík University is an active participant in the Erasmus programme (part of the EU Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP)) and holds a so-called 'extended charter', enabling it to send students abroad and receive students from abroad, and for students of the University to apply for study places outside Iceland. RU is also the only university in Iceland affiliated to Conahec, a joint working network of around a hundred universities in the USA, Canada and Mexico, which includes exchange programme for teaching staff and students.

The School of Law is in partnership with many foreign universities in Japan, Austria, Holland, Ireland, South Africa, Russia, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Canada and Scandinavia. These contacts give students, on the approval of the School of Law, the chance to complete part of their studies (up to 30 ECTS credits at undergraduate level and up to 60 ECTS credits at master's level) at universities outside Iceland on student exchange programmes or other through other channels.

In 2003 the School of Law joined the Nordplus student exchange programme, allowing many of its master's students to take part of their studies at universities in Scandinavia. The School has also welcomed visiting lecturers from universities outside Iceland, and staff from the School have taught courses or held guest lectures at universities in many parts of the world. The School's teaching staff

have sat on selection committees for a number of professorial posts at foreign universities. A list of universities and colleges in partnership with the School of Law is given in Appendix 42.

Foreign models and correspondences

The structure of study programme at RU – 3-year undergraduate programme, 2-year master's programme and 3-year doctoral programme – is grounded in the Bologna Process. In other respects, courses are to some extent based on the Scandinavian model with its tradition for compulsory subjects at undergraduate level and wider options at master's level. Work is under way to 'benchmark' the courses.

14. Course development and vision for the future

No substantial changes are envisaged to the structure and content of the undergraduate and master's programmes, at least in the near future. Ideas have been mooted for improving the organisation of practical project work on both courses with an eye to ensuring from the outset that student skills in these areas be built up cumulatively and more systematically than at present. Work is under way to better harmonise the objectives of individual courses with the overall objectives of the degree programmes. The School sees it as a priority that courses be kept under constant review and develop in line with changes that are taking place in the economy and society. It is anticipated that the introduction of a doctoral programme will prove a powerful contribution to research within the School and help to consolidate the status of its courses in the international academic community. Also, research undertaken by master's students will require research funding from outside sources.

The Reykjavik University School of Law aspires to a position of eminence among Scandinavian law schools for its programme of progressive studies, making it the first choice for students planning a career in law in Iceland. At the same time, the School of Law sets itself the goal of serving as an international centre of rigorous and innovative research and exerting a strong and positive influence on the future development of Icelandic society.

Work has been in progress since 2007 on interim objectives in accordance with the vision set out above, cf. the School action plan for 2007-10. The action plan for the coming years will be drawn up by the end of the present year and a mission statement up to the year 2020 is currently in preparation.

15. Summary

The high proportion of external lecturers in the School is both a strength and a weakness and increasing the number of permanent faculty is viewed as a priority. Teaching needs to be strengthened in the School's key areas and research needs to be built up through significant new appointments. The

University library requires expansion, especially the law library. Measures need to be put in place to ensure that, in so far as possible, all courses taught solely by external lectures are supervised for quality by permanent faculty.

In line with the future vision of the University, the School needs to increase the volume of material published outside Iceland so as to build on the excellent results already achieved in this area. Collaborative research projects need to be encouraged both at home and abroad. We need to be vigilant in maintaining and nurturing the successes already achieved in a short time and make better use of the great technological possibilities that the School has to offer, e.g. through the use of electronic media, computer-based learning and virtual reality, to bring our courses more fully into line with all that is happening in the modern world.