

**Union of Free Evangelical and Baptist Churches of Estonia  
Tartu Theological Seminary**

# **Study Regulations**

**Tallinn 2023**

# Contents

1. General provisions.....	57
2. Learners .....	59
3. Teaching staff .....	59
4. Learning activities .....	59
5. Assessment .....	60
6. RPL.....	61
7. Mentorship.....	61
8. Tuition fee.....	62
9. Discontinuing the studies and graduation.....	62
10. Quality assurance.....	63

## 1. General provisions

- These Study Regulations (hereinafter “regulations”) constitute the main document of the Estonian Free Church Theological Seminary of the Union of Free Evangelical and Baptist Churches of Estonia (hereinafter “seminary”), which regulates the formal education and adult education studies and the study-related relationships.
- The regulations are based on the Private Schools Act, the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act, the Adult Education Act, the Statutes of the Seminary and several other education-related pieces of legislation.
- The regulations are adopted by the council of the seminary and established by the rector with a directive. The study regulations are amended and renewed in accordance with the same procedures.
- The rector of the seminary has the right to enact additional legal documents.
- For the purposes of these regulations, the following definitions shall apply:

**Formal education (university-level program)** – studies that take place according to the curriculum that has been accredited by the state. In the seminary, the curriculum of the formal education is on the professional higher education and master’s studies level. Upon the end of studies, the formal education student is given a diploma.

**Adult Education (continuing education)** – every kind of studies that have been planned and carried through by the school that neither require a curriculum accredited by the state nor a connection with a certain level of education. Most of the adult education curricula are available at the website. The student who has demonstrated the learning outcomes outlined in the adult education curriculum is given a certificate at the end of the training; otherwise the learner is given a document confirming participation.

**Curriculum** – the basic document of studies that determines the outlined learning outcomes, content of the studies, study load, specialisations, the conditions of beginning and finishing the studies.

**Key topic** – a content structuring unit that derives from the educational conception of the Union of Free Evangelical and Baptist Churches of Estonia that also forms a basis for structuring the curriculum.

**Course** – a smaller substantive unit that treats a particular discipline or a practical activity.

**Course syllabus** – document that describes the goals, i.e. learning outcomes, methodology, contents and assessment of a course.

**Training syllabus** – document that underlies adult education and describes the goals, i.e. learning outcomes, methodology, contents, and assessment of adult education training.

**Practical training** – supervised and targeted studying in the working environment (usually congregation). The practical training is preferably supervised by supervisor who gives feedback on the work done. The report of the practical training is assessed by the faculty from the school.

**Learning outcomes** – the knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired as a result of the studies that have been described at the basic level necessary for completing the module, course or training. The achievement of the learning outcomes is checked by assessment.

**Assessment method** – activity or a result of an activity through which a student demonstrates the achievement of the learning outcomes. The assessment methods are described by the teaching staff or the educator in the course or training syllabus.

**Assessment criteria** – claims that characterise the student's activities or the results of the activities and that form a basis for determining whether the learning outcomes have been achieved. In the case of differentiated assessment, the assessment criteria are described separately for each grade.

**Credit point (ECTS)** – the unit of the workload of studies. One credit point corresponds to 26 academic hours (1 hour – 45 minutes) of the student's work.

**Academic year** – the academic year of the formal education of the seminary lasts August 20th – August 19th.

**Matriculation** – the entry of a person in the list of students.

**Deletion from the matriculation register** – the removal of the student from the list of students.

**Standard period of study** – time provided in the curriculum for completion of the curriculum.

**Full-time study** – the student completes at least 75% of the standard cumulative workload of the curriculum by the end of each study year.

**Part-time study** – the student completes at least 15%–75% of the standard cumulative workload of the curriculum by the end of each study year.

**External studies** – the student's individual learning activities during which the student has a possibility to use under a contract the study services of the formal education provided in the seminary in the volume ordered by the student. Applications for entering the external studies are accepted in the seminary throughout the year, or, with the agreement of the student, by a student with very low progress (less than 15 ECTS per year). Exceptions are made for students on academic leave.

**External student** – person who has the right to complete the curriculum by passing

exams and pass/fail evaluations and/or defending the graduation thesis. The external student shall not be matriculated. The activities of an external student shall be covered by the contract entered into by the student and the seminary.

**Moodle** – a learning environment where lecturers build online support, post syllabuses and study materials, and where work is submitted and assessed. Instead of sending work by e-mail, it should always be submitted to Moodle, where it will be assessed.

**Tahvel** – a common study information system for the universities of applied sciences. In order to obtain a result, learners must register there by subject. Lecturers record the final results of registered learners' subjects in a protocol. The student can access the results in Tahvel and see his/her progress.

## 2. Learners

- A learner shall be matriculated into a formal education curriculum by the rector's directive and a learning agreement shall be concluded with them.
- A learner is considered adult education learner, once they have registered and paid the training fee, unless otherwise agreed. The status of a student is determined by passing the curriculum. The status of the student reflects their progress in the learning activities.
- The student who has not fulfilled cumulatively 15 ECTS by the end of each study year shall be deleted from the matriculation register or transferred to the external studies, if he/she has not applied for academic leave, his/her application for academic leave has not been satisfied or he/she has not started to make up for insufficient academic progress in coordination with the teaching staff.

## 3. Teaching staff

- The rights and duties of teaching staff have been laid down in the **job description for teaching staff** and the contract of employment concluded with the members of teaching staff.

## 4. Learning activities

- Accounting the studies is done by subjects in credit points.
- There is a syllabus for each course. Likewise, there is a training syllabus for each adult education training. These shall include the name of the member of the teaching staff responsible for the course, learning outcomes, volume of the workload of the learner by main forms of study (contact-based study, practical training, independent work) and topics, assessment methods, assessment criteria and the principles of final grading and, if necessary, the reading list. The course syllabus shall be made available for the students in the Moodle environment and on the website prior to the course. The training syllabus shall be sent to the training participants or posted in the Moodle environment and on the website prior to the training. The syllabus for formal education are usually available on the website by the end of June before the new academic year.
- In order to attend a formal education course or adult education training, one has to register to it. The registration has to be done in the learning environment Moodle and the study information system Tahvel.
- In the formal education of the seminary, the studies generally take place by

academic years. In exceptional circumstances, a student may also study by an individual study plan. At the seminary, the academic year is not divided into semesters.

- Whenever a student wants to participate in courses (other than optional courses) taught in other institutions of higher education, a prior agreement with the director of studies of the seminary is necessary.
- For the arrangement of studies, the academic year of the formal education is determined by the academic calendar. The academic calendar for the next academic year shall be approved by the directive of the rector by 1 April at the latest.
- The timetable of the formal education of seminary shall be made available at the beginning of summer before the new academic year and is also made available at the website of the seminary. The seminary reserves the right to make changes to the timetable whenever necessary and undertakes to notify the students of the changes.
- The full volume and division of practical training shall be described in the curriculum and specified in the respective course syllabus, i.e. the practice guide. The practical trainings have a recommended order.
- The practical trainings involve preferably a supervisor who gives feedback about the practitioner and the work done. In exceptional circumstances, one practical training may involve more than one supervisor; however, at least one of those supervisors has to give an assessment about the practitioner. The report on practical training is assessed by faculty from the school.
- The supervisors of the traineeship institutions shall not be remunerated but are offered a possibility to participate in trainings and seminars. Likewise, the work of the practitioner is not remunerated, unless otherwise decided in the traineeship institution.
- In addition to learning outcomes, the practice guide also describes the mandatory activities and the way they have to be reflected in the practical training report.
- The student is entitled to choose the traineeship institution and the time of the practical training, while taking into account the practical training guide.
- Twice a year, practical training seminars shall be held, wherein the students who have submitted their practical training reports shall present what they have learned from the professional experience. A defence is not compulsory, but highly recommended.
- The practical training is assessed by non-differentiated assessment and the assessment given by the supervisor of the practical training institution, the practical training report and its defence during the practical training seminar are taken into account.

## 5. Assessment

- The arrangement of assessment and the scales for assessment are described in the **assessment system** of seminary (as last amended in 2016).
- The methods of assessment and the assessment criteria and the principles of final grading shall be described in the course syllabus which the student can examine before the beginning of the course at the latest.
- The teaching staff will mark the results of the assessment in the Tahvel environment, where a record of the passers will be kept. The records will be kept in the record of learning outcomes file, in addition to the Tahvel environment.

- After the study period of the course has expired, members of the teaching staff shall not be obliged to accept papers from the students. The students who by the end of the course have not demonstrated achievement of the learning outcomes that correspond to the assessment criteria described in the assessment methods and do not have a valid reason for that or an agreement with the member of the teaching staff have to take the course again and pay tuition fee for it individually by credit points.
- The teaching staff may, exceptionally, extend the deadline for assignments in compelling circumstances. Such a request, together with the reasons for the request, must be submitted to the teaching staff before the deadline for the assignment.
- A student is entitled to complete courses and practical trainings during academic leave.
- Using the work of other authors without citing is considered to be plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious breach and can entail a negative grade, in extreme cases deletion from the matriculation register.
- A student not satisfied with their result can once complete each assessment method again. The last performance shall be in effect.
- The member of the teaching staff responsible for the subject enters the results of the completed course in the Tahvel environment no later than one month after the deadline for the last assignment. Learners will be able to find out their result in Moodle and the Tahvel environment.
- The student has the right to appeal their result within one month after receiving the grade of the course by submitting a challenge to the director of studies. In the case of a dispute the performance of the student shall be compared to the assessment methods and criteria as described in the course syllabus.
- The adult education training shall also be assessed based on the training syllabus. When a learner does not perform assessment to a positive result, they can obtain a document confirming participation upon request. The assessment of an adult education training shall not be performed again. The adult education training shall be assessed by non-differentiated assessment.

## 6. RPL

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is conducted by a comparison of the learner's competences and the parts of the curriculum. The competences of the learner may have been obtained by formal studies, adult education, professional experience or life experience.
- The RPL application are accepted 2–4 times a year. The submitted applications are assessed by the RPL committee.
- The RPL application should be submitted on the relevant application forms, together with evidence of previously acquired competences. The evidence can be direct (examples of works, the analysis of what has been learnt from the experience) or indirect (the opinion or feedback of someone else). Upon applying, the relevant forms shall be filled in.
- In the case the evidence submitted is insufficient, the RPL committee is entitled to request additional materials or ask the student to perform the assessment methods.

- The smallest unit that can be recognised by RPL is a course or a practical training, however, larger wholes can also be applied for to be recognised as a set. The graduation thesis cannot be recognised by RPL. A compulsory course or practical training that has been performed shall be recognised in the volume of credit points set forth in the curriculum.
- Specific rules for RPL are set forth in the **assessment system** of the seminary.
- The student is entitled to RPL consultations offered by the rector, director of studies and the members of teaching staff of key topics.

## 7. Mentorship

- Each student shall find a mentor for themselves in two months after starting the studies. As a rule, a mentor has theological education and an experience in church ministry. Ideally, the mentor is of the same gender as the student.
- Appointments with the mentor shall take place 3–4 times a year. Initiative for the mentoring appointment shall always be taken by the student, i.e. the mentee. The primary topics for discussion shall be studies, calling, spiritual growth, personal growth. Other topics essential for the student can also be touched upon. The mentoring relationship ideally lasts a year after graduation to help the student find a field of ministry or a job that is in line with their calling.
- Data about one's mentor has to be notified to the coordinator of the mentorship network.
- The coordinator of the mentorship network comes into contact with the mentor once a year to get an overview of the progress of the student and the appointments had.
- A mentor carries out their task for free. Remuneration of other possible expenses shall be made under agreement. Ideally, the mentor shall not bear additional costs.
- All students are also grouped in mentoring groups. These meet 2–4 times a year and are initiated by the mentor. The mentoring groups are set up by the mentoring network coordinator. If necessary, and in consultation with the coordinator, learners can also change mentor groups.
- Adult education learners can also have mentors, especially in the case of a year-long training.
- The seminary coordinates the mentoring in the Union of Free Evangelical and Baptist Churches of Estonia according to the procedures established by the board of elders.

## 8. Tuition fee

- The student shall be notified of the tuition fee prior to enrolment in studies. After matriculation, a student is entitled to apply for a scholarship in accordance with the statute of scholarship of the school.
- The amount of the yearly tuition fee of the formal education shall be approved by the council of the seminary by April at the latest and is made public at the website under "**levels of tuition fees**". In the case the tuition fee is amended, an annex to the learning agreement shall be concluded with the student.
- An external student and a learner taking formal studies courses in the form of adult education shall pay tuition fee by credit points on the same basis as the matriculated students.

- In the case of an RPL application, a student shall pay the fee by credit points. In the case of large-scale applications, a special fee is possible.
- Students who pay tuition fees per academic year have the possibility to take up to two subjects from a second level curriculum (bachelor's students from master's students and vice versa) during their studies, without any additional charge. Courses must be taken in their entirety and for credit. If you study more than two subjects at another level and pay the tuition fees for your own level on a credit point basis, you must pay for the second level subjects according to the credit point rate set there.
- The fee for participation for each adult education training shall be announced individually. Registration for the training shall take effect after payment of the participation fee. Upon announcement of withdrawal at least 7 days prior the training, the learner can request refund of the registration fee.
- For courses taken after the end of the nominal period (4 years for bachelor's and 3 years for master's), the student pays on a per-credit basis, but not more than one academic year's tuition fees. The course fees are calculated on the basis of the subjects passed.

## **9. Discontinuing the studies and graduation**

- Academic leave is a period during which the student is released from the obligation to study.
- Generally, academic leave is granted up to one year. The exceptions are child care leave, time service or long-term health problems.
- Going on and returning from an academic leave is based on a written application of the student (in the case of an electronic version, it has to be digitally signed).
- During academic leave, the student is not transferred to the next study year. The end date of the study period of the student is postponed by the duration of the academic leave.
- In accordance with the applicable legislation, during the academic leave the student is not entitled to education allowance, a student loan, survivor's pension, or travel allowance and their sickness insurance is interrupted.
- Removal of the student from the matriculation register can take effect on the following basis: at the request of the student, on the initiative of the seminary, on circumstances independent of the parties, in the case of full completion of the curriculum (graduation). Deletion from the matriculation register takes effect by the directive of the rector.
- Deletion from the matriculation register on the initiative of the seminary takes place in the case the student has not cumulatively fulfilled 15 ECTS by the end of each study year and has not applied for academic leave, in the case of long-term failure to pay the tuition fee past due, in the case of academic fraud (including plagiarism). The alternative to deletion from the matriculation is a transfer to external studies.
- The circumstances that are independent of the parties are primarily onset of the student's incapacity or death.
- Deletion from the matriculation register in the case of full completion of the curriculum (graduation) takes place after the full completion of the curriculum.
- The studies shall be closed with the defence of the graduation thesis. The student is allowed to participate in the defence of the graduation thesis, if they have completed the subjects set forth in the curriculum and paid the tuition fee in full.



- The graduation thesis is written under the supervision of a supervisor chosen by the student. The author is responsible for the thesis. The student shall submit information about the topic and supervisor of the graduation thesis to the director of studies at least four months prior to the defence.
- The reviewer shall be approved by the council in a week following the due date of submitting the theses.
- A thesis defence committee shall be set up by the directive of the rector of the seminary. The thesis defence committee shall have 5–7 members. The thesis defence committee shall be qualified to make assessment decisions in the case at least half of its component members are present.
- A written review of the thesis and the opinion of the supervisor are necessary for the defence of the thesis. The graduation thesis is assessed at the public defence.
- The thesis defence committee draws up minutes of the defence.
- The results of the defence are announced on the day of the defence directly after the minutes of the defence have been signed.
- If a student does not agree with the grade received at the defence of the graduation thesis, the student has the right to submit a written appeal to the rector of the seminary within two working days.
- If the result of the thesis defence is negative, the student is entitled to a second defence at the end of the academic year after supplementing the existing work or writing a new thesis.
- A cum laude diploma (with distinction) is given in accordance with the procedure described in the **assessment system**.

## 10. Quality assurance

- In order to assure the quality of the learning activities, feedback surveys are conducted every academic year concerning every course.
- The results of the feedback surveys are confidential, and they are passed on to the teaching staff by the rector. In the case of large-scale negative feedback, the rector shall discuss the possibilities to remedy the situation with the respective member of the teaching staff and the leading member of teaching staff of the respective key topic. If after several negative feedback, the quality of learning activities does not improve, the member of the teaching staff shall be replaced.
- Feedback is also gathered for the adult education trainings and shall be passed on to the educator. Further use of the educator shall be decided based on the feedback.
- The other quality risks arising out of feedback are dealt with by the director of studies.
- In the case of complaints of a confidential nature, students, trainees or staff may submit them to the School Council through the member representing them. The complainant shall be guaranteed anonymity unless he or she wishes otherwise. If there is a member of the council to whom the complaint relates, he or she shall not take part in the discussion. In the case of a complaint relating to the Rector, the President of the Union and at least one member of the Board of Elders shall be responsible for its resolution. In the event of an urgent and serious complaint, an extraordinary meeting of the School Council shall be convened.

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