

Programme File

Research master Legal Research

2025/26

This programme file provides you with the argumentation regarding the relation between the learning outcomes of the Research Master Legal Research and the programme, including assessment. To this extent, you will find the following information in succession:

- the learning outcomes of the programme as they are stated in the Teaching and Examination Regulations for the Research Master Legal Research 2025/26;
- a narrative summary per learning outcome as to how this learning outcome is covered within the programme;
- an overview to indicate which courses add to which learning outcome(s);
- a detailed overview of the connection between the courses and the learning outcomes;
- an overview holding the links to the assessment archive of the Faculty of Law of the courses concerned.

In the detailed overview of courses, the following information is available:

- in which block within an academic year a course is scheduled (block);
- the number of ECTS that is awarded to a course (ECTS);
- the educational format used for each course and the number of hours scheduled per week;
- the assessment form (assessment);
- which (part of a) learning outcome is covered by the course (learning outcome);
- the learning outcome description of the courses as it is registered in the electronic study guide Ocasys 2025/26.

The learning outcome mentioned per course in the course description, the educational format and the assessment form is taken into consideration when linking the course to a learning outcome of the programme. Such a link has been made if a course substantially contributes to a programme learning outcome. This does not necessarily mean that the full programme learning outcome is covered by this specific course.

Faculty of Law Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) Master's degree programme Legal Research for the academic year 2025/26
Appendix 1 Aim and learning outcomes of the degree programme Legal Research

A. Knowledge and understanding

Graduates of the Research Master's degree programme Legal Research must:

- A1. have specialist knowledge and a thorough understanding of a specific field of law by building up on their knowledge acquired during the Bachelor's degree programme. Depending on the chosen research domain, this will be specialist knowledge and a thorough understanding of (international) private law, (international) criminal law, constitutional and administrative law, business law, labour law, IT law, tax law, notarial law, technology law, European law, energy and climate law, health and technology law, human rights law and/or public international law.
- A2. have a thorough understanding of the connections between different areas of law and of the differences and similarities between various legal systems.
- A3. have knowledge of different theories concerning the functioning of at least one part of the law.
- A4. be able to critically analyse the function of law and the role of legal actors in it.
- A5. have a thorough understanding of the assumptions and specific problems of legal studies compared to other academic disciplines.
- A6. have a thorough understanding of the possibilities and pitfalls of the different legal and non-legal research methods.

B. Knowledge, formation of judgment and communication skills

Graduates of the Research Master's degree programme Legal Research must:

- B1. be able to apply different legal and empirical methods and techniques, understand the consequences of the methods (their strong and weak points) and make a substantiated choice that fits the research question as formulated.
- B2. be able to independently formulate a research question and understand the consequences of that research question.
- B3. be able to present the results of their research both in written and in oral form in Dutch and English, provide feedback on the written and oral presentations of others and partake in academic debate in this way.
For the English-taught track: be able to present the results of their research both in written and in oral form in English, provide feedback on the written and oral presentations of others and partake in academic debate in this way.
- B4. be able to take part in a research group in order to work on an academic project.
- B5. be able to recognise dilemmas and issues related to conducting research with integrity.

C. Learning skills

Graduates of the Research Master's degree programme Legal Research must:

- C1. be able to generate original and creative research questions related to the domain of law in which the student is interested.
- C2. be able to work independently and plan, organise and conduct their research work.

Narrative summary connection programme to learning outcomes

The table below provides a short explanation with regard to the learning outcomes and how they are covered in the programme.

	Argumentation
A1.	Through domain courses selected from existing LLM programmes, students gain in-depth knowledge in a specialized area of law. This knowledge is extended by exploring the boundaries of different legal fields, with students writing a domain portfolio to analyze connections between courses. The thesis focuses on cross-jurisdictional and/or legal-empirical questions.
A2.	The knowledge acquired in A1, is extended within the research master's programme by requiring students to explore the boundaries of a field of law (i.e., not only focusing on either human rights law or energy law). The students write a domain portfolio on the chosen domain courses in which they discuss the cross-links, differences and similarities between the chosen domain courses. The same issues are also highlighted from different areas of law in the Research Seminars. In this way, the interconnections between fields of law are addressed. The thesis must also answer a cross-jurisdictional and/or a legal-empirical research question.
A3.	This learning outcome is achieved through the courses studying research methods (Introduction to Empirical Legal Research, Comparative Law). After all, these courses are about how a legal figure or system works.
A4.	This learning outcome overlaps with the first learning outcome in that understanding the structure of a field of law already requires analysis. In the research master's programme, students are nevertheless required to be able to see through the functionality of law as such.
A5.	This learning outcome focuses on the science-theoretical reflection that can be required of any research master's student. The significance of law in relation to other disciplines provides the student with the opportunity to reflect critically on the value of statements made on the basis of different types of research.
A6.	The research master's provides an understanding of various methods and techniques, including empirical methods and methods of legal analysis.
B1.	Students learn to gather and assess relevant legal materials through interactive elements in every course, culminating in research papers and presentations that strengthen their legal research capabilities.
B2.	The programme supports students in conducting independent academic research, addressing cross-border legal issues, and contributing to societal discussions. Students gain hands-on experience through group work, independent assignments, and their thesis.
B3.	Oral and written presentation is provided in all research master's courses that are open only to research master's students. All courses are assessed with a paper which often (also) has to be presented orally. Students refine their ability to engage in academic discussions through interactive seminars, group exercises, and peer feedback. Guest lectures and collaborative research projects also offer opportunities for professional exchange.
B4.	This skill is practised in the student assistantship because students are then part of an academic community (namely: the department in which they are working). Moreover, research seminars and the Empirical Legal Research Lab provide the opportunity for students to collaborate on a research project.
B5.	Integrity is addressed throughout, but specifically has a place in the course Introduction to Empirical Legal Research.
C1.	This ability is practised at various times throughout the study and culminates in a research proposal submitted with the thesis.

C2.	A number of courses culminate in an independent paper that must be handed in within a specified deadline. In addition, the thesis is also an independent project that the student must plan and organise themselves.
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Learning outcomes versus courses Research Master Legal Research

Learning outcomes: A. knowledge and insight B. application, formulation judgements and communication C. learning skills Research Master Legal Research		A						B					C	
		Knowledge and understanding of a specific field of law, depending on the chosen research domain	Understanding of the connection between different areas of law and differences and similarities between legal systems	Knowledge of different theories concerning the functioning of at least one part of the law	Be able to critically analyse the function of law and the role of legal actors in it	Understanding the assumptions and specific problems of legal studies compared to other academic disciplines	Understanding the possibilities and pitfalls of the different legal and non-legal research methods	Apply different legal and empirical methods and techniques, the consequences of the methods and make a substantiated choice to fit the formulated research question	Independently formulate a research question and understand the consequences of that research question	Present the results of research, both written and orally in English, provide feedback and partake in academic debate	Take part in a research group in order to work on an academic project	Recognise dilemmas and issues related to conducting research with integrity	Generate original and creative research questions	Work independently and plan, organise and conduct research work
ECTS	Course name	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	C1	C2
6	Domain Module (6x)	x	x		x									
6	Fundamental Legal Concepts				x	x				x			x	x
6	English Language (Research Master)									x				
6	Comparative Legal Research		x	x				x			x		x	
6	Introduction to Empirical Legal Research			x			x	x	x			x	x	
6	Empirical Legal Research Lab			x			x	x	x		x		x	x
6	Law as a Research Area				x	x	x	x	x			x	x	
6	Research Internship (master) (2x)	x*		x*	x*	x*	x*	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6	Research Seminar EU Regulatory Pr. Law	x	x		x			x	x	x	x		x	x
6	Legal traditions of the world		x								x		x	
18	Master's thesis (research master)	x	x*	x*	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
6	Research seminar Digital Society	x		x		x		x	x	x		x	x	x

* depending on the topic chosen

The learning outcomes for the Research master Legal Research compared to the learning outcomes of the courses within the programme

Year 1

Course name	Block	ECTS	Format	Assessment	Learning outcome	Learning outcome course (Ocasys description 2024/2025)
Domain courses (6x)	Y1:1,3,4 Y2:1,3,4	6	Depends on the chosen specialization	Depends on the chosen specialization	A1, A2, A4	DESCRIPTION: Domain modules go into a specific aspect of law, such as tax law, notary law, Dutch law, law and government, law & IT, law in europe and international and European law. Students can (but are not obliged to) choose to follow positive law Master's degree modules that dovetail with the equivalent Bachelor's degree programme on positive law. Students can follow these modules at the RUG Law Faculty, at another Law Faculty in the Netherlands or at a university abroad.
Fundamental Legal Concepts	1	6	Lecture	Paper	A4, A5 B3 C1, C2	The aim of the course is to scrutinise fundamental legal concepts with help of advanced legal philosophy and insights from legal practice. The skills which comprise the course's learning outcomes are: • To contrast and evaluate the descriptive, constitutive, and discursive role of legal concepts; • To relate different meanings and functions of legal concepts to their use in practice and legal research; • To (de)construct the content of fundamental legal concepts; • To model the relationships between legal concepts.
English Language (Research Master)	1	6	Seminar 2 2-hour classes	Presentation Paper	B3	After successful completion of this course, you will be able to give an academic presentation on your research in English and write an academic paper on your research in English, both at a CEFR C1 level.
Comparative Legal Research	2	6	Seminar, Lecture 7 2-hours lectures/seminars	Paper Presentation presentation (1/4 presentation, 3/4 paper)	A2, A3 B1, B4 C1	This course has the objective to introduce the students to comparative legal research through an outline of its theoretical fundaments, the different methods that are used and an illustration of its relevance in legal research with societal impact. It aims to show that comparative law is an essential part of a solid understanding of national legal systems, as well as a valuable tool to extend a researcher's horizon to legal remedies and instruments outside one's national system. In doing so, the course will explain the interaction between different legal systems from the perspective of public and private law, and provide an understanding of the pitfalls of comparative legal research. The course aims at the following learning outcomes: - the student possesses comprehensive knowledge of and insight into the main concepts and methods of comparative legal research; - the student is able to contextualize national, European and international rules in the field of expertise and has an understanding of the interaction between these different sources of law; - the student is able to independently report in writing and through presentation on a legal comparative study in his/her own field of expertise. To this end, the student is able to design, justify and apply the chosen comparative research method.

Introduction to Empirical Legal Research	2	6	Tutorial	Paper	A3, A6 B1, B2, B5 C1	After this course, the student knows the possibilities and impossibilities of empirical research methods in a legal context. The student is able to apply methods and techniques in empirical research and can formulate an empirical research question and describe a matching methodology and reflect on these choices. The student recognizes the possible integrity problems that occur in empirical research and is aware of the internal procedures and rules regarding data management and the treatment of respondents.
Empirical Legal Research Lab	3+4	6	Tutorial 7 2-hour working group.	Presentation Paper	A3, A6 B1, B2, B4, C1, C2	After completing this course, the student will have mastered a number of empirical research methods, such as case study research, conducting interviews or applying a survey. The student can reflect on the choices made and can report on the results of the empirical research. In addition, the student knows the risks regarding honest research and has applied the procedures regarding data management.
Law as a Research Area	3	6	Lecture 7 - 2 hours interactive classes that combine elements of lecture and group work in block 1	Paper	A4, A5, A6 B1, B2 C1	The aim of the course is to acquaint students with advanced legal methodology and to train them to apply methods, techniques, and styles of legal research, to law in general, as well as to particular legal activities. The skills which comprise the course's learning outcomes are: • To design doctrinal, cross-disciplinary, and critical types of legal research; • To creatively apply legal methodology in different domains of legal practice; • To critically reflect on how legal practices and activities invite and inform different perspectives and methodologies; • To integrate methodological insights into the analysis of legal practices.
Research Internship (master) (2x)	Y1:4 Y2:1+2	6	Practical	Internship report Portfolio See the internship regulations	A1*, A3*, A4*, A5*, A6* B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 C1, C2	After the master internship, the student can: - Describe the field in which the internship was completed - Describe conducting scientific research - Reflect on the internship in the context of his professional orientation - Reflect on the quality of the work delivered, the legal research skills and the oral and writing skills - Reflecting on other skills developed during the internship

Year 2

Course name	Block	ECTS	Format	Assessment	Learning outcome	Learning outcome course (Ocasys description 2024/2025)
Research Seminar EU Regulatory Private Law	1	6	Seminar 7 2-hour seminar. Attendance compulsory.	Assignment Presentation Paper	A1, A2, A4 B1, B2, B3, B4 C1, C2	In the research seminar European Regulatory Private Law students will learn how to conduct research at the crossroads of European and national law, on the one hand, and public and private law, on the other. The seminar aims to enable students to independently define important issues in European regulatory private law, critically analyse them from a legal-comparative perspective, and have an academic discussion on them. Students are expected to formulate an original research question and address it in a research paper. In doing so, they also develop the ability to independently plan and conduct their research.
Legal traditions of the world	2	6	Lecture 7 2-hour lectures. Room for discussion and questions	Exam, Written, Essay questions Paper	A2 B4 C1	Once you have successfully completed this course you will have thorough knowledge of the general features of the major legal traditions of the world (Common law, Civil law, Sharia, Asian law, African law) so you're able to look at our own legal system from a different perspective.
Master's thesis (research master)	3+4	18		Thesis	A1, A2*, A3*, A4 A6 B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 C1, C2	The Master's thesis constitutes the final test in order to show the possession of legal and academic research skills. After successfully completing the Master's thesis, a student will have demonstrated possession of legal and academic research skills and will have shown, using the knowledge and insights gained during the studies and in an independent manner, the ability: - to identify a problem and, on this basis, to formulate an academic, legal question in the field of studies of their programme, and break it down into sub-questions; - to set up research according to a legal method and to account for and justify the method chosen; - to identify, search for, assemble, assess and evaluate the relevant primary and secondary sources of importance to the legal research to be conducted; - to make proper use of the relevant sources within the thesis and to provide accurate and correct reference to such sources in accordance with good academic and legal practice; - to describe, analyse, apply and critically evaluate information derived from sources relevant to the legal research conducted and to arrive at an answer to the research question(s); - to weigh up facts and opinions from the material found and arrive at a reasoned, justifiable answer to the research question(s) and if applicable, to establish relevant facts in an objective manner. - to reflect upon, insofar as relevant, legal theories and concepts pertinent to the topic under discussion, and to address issues of interpretation and application of the law relevant to this topic; - to draw relevant conclusions, with force of argument, on the basis of the research conducted, and to formulate, insofar as relevant, defensible solutions to the societal problem identified; - to orally defend the research conducted in writing to the supervisor and to be able to process feedback received by the supervisor; - to present the research conducted, as well as the answer to the research question(s) and solutions, coherently, in a clear and structured manner, in writing and at an academic level, within the stated limited timeframe.

Research seminar Digital Society	3+4	6	Seminar 7 2-hour seminars in block 3 and 4.	Paper Individually, Presentation	A1, A4, A6 B1, B2, B3, B5 C1, C2	Students will be able to: a. Build a cognitive map of the different legal disciplines interacting in issues of digital transformation of society b. Determine different legal (and non-legal) strategies to address new challenges brought about by the digital transformation of society c. Determine gaps in knowledge and design appropriate research questions d. Develop approaches to address the different research questions on the role of law in the digital transformation of society Students will formulate a research question and answer this question using a research method of their preference.
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Narrative summary of assessment and feedback Research master Legal Research

As described in the Faculty's didactic concept, assessment in higher years usually takes the form of essay exams with more complex cases that assess students' knowledge and understanding as well as their ability to apply these. Assessment thus takes place at a high cognitive level, and the idea is to make assessment situations increasingly resemble actual legal practice in the course of the degree programme. This also implies increasing numbers of open-book examinations towards the end of the degree programme. Furthermore, this involves the assessment of the student independently being able to analyse and apply European law knowledge with a critical point of view; mastering specialised knowledge; and assessing complex cases. Skills-wise the assessment mainly revolves around independent legal academic reporting, both orally and in written form.

In the courses which predominantly aim at knowledge and insight acquisition, the assessment is mainly done through written examinations, combining essay and problem questions cases, designed to test students' knowledge, insight, ability to use case-law and legislation as appropriate, and understanding of the academic literature in the field. This allows for assessment at a high cognitive level which aims at a setting which is very similar to a work situation for a lawyer/legal expert. The Faculty allows open book examinations at master level which places emphasis on understanding instead of on rote learning. This will allow for assessment in a way which resembles the expectations of employers when hiring a lawyer/legal expert: to be able to apply the concepts dealt with to a case while using legal sources. Legal texts, mostly case law, treaties and legislation, can be checked during the examination. The content of the examination will then be one in which all doctrines examined are linked to one another in the cases asked, as the aim is for the student to demonstrate that they are able to apply the correct doctrines to the case. This can only be assessed after all materials have been studied. In the master's degree programme students will usually have one or two examinations in the examination period of each block.

The main responsibility for ensuring the validity of the examinations lies with the (group of) lecturers. They are the experts in their specific legal fields and determine which doctrines should be mastered by the students and at which level. For this reason, the Faculty has not created an assessment committee since the expertise with regard to the specialist legal knowledge mainly lies with the professors and lecturers themselves.

Assessment and feedback table Research master Legal Research

Course name	ECTS	Assessment	Learning outcome	Explanatory note (from Ocasys)
Domain Module (6x)	6	Depends on the chosen specialization	A1, A2, A4	
Fundamental Legal Concepts	6	Paper	A4, A5 B3 C1, C2	
English Language (Research Master)	6	Presentation Paper	B3	Academic written and oral Legal English skills. Doing legal research in an international context requires written and oral Legal English skills enabling you to communicate about your work at an academic level. However, just having good language skills is not sufficient; you also need good presentation skills, the ability to structure a spoken or written text properly, and a good knowledge of the conventions of your research discipline. This course trains participants in all these skills. Intermediate test, Take home exam & 4 written assignments + 1 oral presentation
Comparative Legal Research	6	Paper Presentation presentation (1/4 presentation, 3/4 paper)	A2, A3 B1, B4 C1	
Introduction to Empirical Legal Research	6	Paper	A3, A6 B1, B2, B5 C1	This course focuses on empirical research methods, such as case study research, interview techniques and surveys. These methods are explored in a legal context. The use of variables, operationalization, the possibilities and limitations of empirical research methods are discussed. The student learns to think critically about empirical research methods and learns to write a research proposal. This proposal is presented and discussed in lectures. The course is tested with the research proposal and a review on an empirical study.

Empirical Legal Research Lab	6	Presentation Paper	A3, A6 B1, B2, B4, C1, C2	The student conducts an empirical research on his own or with a group of students. The research is based on the research proposal that is developed in the previous course (Introduction empirical legal research). The students will be supported by experienced staff members. The research project results in a report that will be presented for and discussed with the other students.
Law as a Research Area	6	Paper	A4, A5, A6 B1, B2 C1	
Research Internship (master) (2x)	6	Internship report Portfolio See the internship regulations	A1*, A3*, A4*, A5*, A6* B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 C1, C2	
Research Seminar EU Regulatory Private Law	6	Assignment Presentation Paper	A1, A2, A4 B1, B2, B3, B4 C1, C2	The course will conclude with a meeting in which participants will present and discuss their draft papers. After this meeting, participants will be given the possibility to revise their paper and submit a final version. The individual paper, the individual presentation and the participation in group discussions will be evaluated separately in the proportion 60/30/10.
Legal traditions of the world	6	Exam, Written, Essay questions Paper	A2 B4 C1	The paper gives you the right to a small bonus point for the exam
Master's thesis (research master)	18	Thesis	A1, A2*, A3*, A4 A6 B1, B2, B3, B4, B5	

			C1, C2	
Research seminar Digital Society	6	Paper Individually, Presentation participation in discussion	A1, A4, A6 B1, B2, B3, B5 C1, C2	Next to the participation in classes where the developments in these areas will be discussed, the participants in the course are expected: - to independently conduct research; - to write a paper based on it; - to present the paper; - to actively participate in group discussions. The individual paper, the individual presentation and the participation in group discussions will be evaluated separately in the proportion 60/30/10.

Courses LLM Legal Research

Course name	Assessment	All assessments	Evaluation
Fundamental Legal Concepts	Paper	Individual assessment	All evaluations
English Language (Research Master)	Presentation Paper	All assessments	All evaluations
Comparative Legal Research	Paper Presentation presentation (1/4 presentation, 3/4 paper)	All assessments	All evaluations
Introduction to Empirical Legal Research	Paper	All assessments	All evaluations
Empirical Legal Research Lab	Presentation Paper	All assessments	All evaluations
Law as a Research Area	Paper	All assessments	All evaluations
Research Internship (master) (2x)	Internship report Portfolio See the internship regulations		
Research Seminar EU Regulatory Private Law	Assignment Presentation Paper		
Legal traditions of the world	Exam, Written, Essay questions Paper	All assessments	All evaluations
Master's thesis (research master)	Thesis		
Research seminar Digital Society	Paper Individually, Presentation participation in discussion	All assessments	