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Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies

Faculty of Economics and Social Development



# **GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AND DEFENDING A MASTER'S THESIS**

**A methodological material for master students  
of the academic master study programme**

## **AGRI-FOOD BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

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## 1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Guidelines is to familiarise students of the academic master study programme “Agri-Food Business Management” implemented jointly by Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBTU), Faculty of Economics and Social Development, Estonia University of Life Sciences (EMU), Institute of Economics and Social Sciences and Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), Faculty of Bioeconomy Development, with the requirements of developing master’s thesis and its presentation for pre-defence and final defence.

A **master’s thesis** is a research study done by a student, which confirms the theoretical knowledge acquired and methodological and organisational skills built up by the student in the relevant branch or sub-branch of science (branch, inter-branch, joint-branch or profession) to the extent prescribed by the study programme as well as the skills to perform a research study having novelty or practical application elements and to independently draw conclusions.

The learning outcomes of a master’s thesis are as follows:

**knowledge** – in-depth knowledge in business management branch and/or agri-food business inter-branches, structured and analytical knowledge of management, organization and planning processes in the agricultural and /or food business;

**skills** – to integrate agri-food business management knowledge in line with the set goals applying creative and innovative approach and/or addressing specific challenges related with agri-food business management;

**competences** – ability to critically assess the potential impact of research results on the agri-food and business environment, business (organization) and society.

The originality of the master’s thesis shall be confirmed by the **Author’s Statement** (an example is given in Annex 2).

The best master’s theses shall be submitted to appropriate research work contests and recommended for practical application by the Master’s Examination Commission (hereinafter the MEC) if a student agrees with that.

The original of master's thesis (in a printed form) after the defense, together with reviews, is stored in the LBTU ESAF Study and Science Information Centre. The mandatory shelf life of the work is 10 years. The defended master's theses are available in an electronic version using the bibliographic database “LBTU master's theses” created by the LBTU Fundamental Library [\\_https://kopkatalogs.lv/F/?func=find-b-0&local\\_base=fba03](https://kopkatalogs.lv/F/?func=find-b-0&local_base=fba03), if the author has given permission for the publication of the master's thesis. Access is possible for LBTU faculty and students using LBTU IS system access passwords.

## 2. WRITING AND SUPERVISING A MASTER'S THESIS

### 2.1. Choosing a topic for the master's thesis

The student shall choose a topic for his/her master's thesis based on his/her scientific and professional interests, the level of theoretical preparedness and the availability of information needed for the thesis. The topic of the master's thesis is selected and agreed with the supervisor of the master's thesis by filling in the form (the form will be sent by the programme director) within the deadlines set by the ESAF.

The topic of the master's thesis shall be chosen according to the specifics and goals of the academic master study programme Agri-Food Business Management:

- topic shall be associated with the fields of agri-food entrepreneurship and management that could include problems in agricultural, food industry and other fields of economic activity that are related with agriculture, processing industry, retail/wholesale or other businesses and their infrastructure companies, business consulting organisations, agricultural businesses supporting financial institutions and agencies etc.;
- empirical part shall involve the extended research on a range of problems that have been analysed in bachelor theses, reports, study projects, scientific publications etc., thus demonstrating a purposeful continuation and in-depth investigation of these problems;
- experience of an agriculture and food industry enterprise and industry;
- research findings of the master's thesis shall be justified and supported with reasoned arguments as well as based on the application of research methods;
- the chosen topic of the thesis can be specified to comply with defined the research object and research subject.

Changing or clarifying the topic, that has been previously agreed with the supervisor of the thesis, is allowed until the pre-defense of the master's thesis. **After the pre-defense of the master's thesis, the topic can no longer be changed!**

### 2.2. Functions of the supervisor of the master student

A master student shall be supervised only by a teaching staff member holding a doctor's degree or, exceptionally, with a master's degree. The duties of the supervisor involve advising the student on research-related matters:

- drawing up a work plan;
- making the structure the master's thesis;
- planning the progress and pace of the research; choice of appropriate research methods;
- selecting appropriate master-level bibliographical sources and other sources of information.

The duty of the supervisor shall be to review individual parts of the master's thesis and the whole paper and indicate what changes have to be made or what additional contribution is necessary; yet, the supervisor shall not directly influence the content,

form and defence of the research to the extent that objectively hinders evaluating the student's knowledge, skills and his/her contribution to the research.

### 2.3. General structure and composition of the master's thesis

The **structure** of a master's thesis shall be as follows:

- title page (see Annex 1 of this document);
- annotation in English language;
- annotation in Latvian ;
- contents;
- explanations of abbreviations, acronyms and symbols arranged in alphabetical order;
- introduction;
- main part of the master's thesis divided into chapters and subchapters;
- conclusions;
- proposals (if necessary and are logically derived from the specifics of the master's thesis);
- list of references in alphabetical order;
- annexes;
- author's statement (see Annex 2 of this document);
- decision of the Master thesis examination commission (see Annex 3 of this document);
- agreement on participation in the interview (if necessary) (see Annex 4 of this document).

The **main part (body)** of the master's thesis shall be computer typeset and **50-70 pages in length** (excluding the annotations, contents, lists of tables and figures, explanations of abbreviations and acronyms, list of references and annexes).

A recommended **structure** of the master's thesis shall be as follows (as a percentage of the total size of it):

- introduction 3-5%;
- main part 90-94%;
- conclusions and proposals 3-5%.

#### 2.3.1. Title

The title page is the first page of the master's thesis. It indicates the name of the university, the name and surname of the author, the topic, the name and surname, scientific or academic degree and academic position of the supervisor as well as the place and time of elaboration of the master's thesis (Annex 1).

Latin abbreviations of scientific and academic degrees are used, which are supplemented with an abbreviation of the particular science. The doctor's and master's degrees are abbreviated as *Dr*, *PhD* or *Mg*, for example, *Dr.sc.soc*, *Dr.oec.*, *Dr.paed.*, *Dr.phil*, *Dr.hist.*, *Mg.sc.soc.*, *Mg.paed.* The abbreviations shall be in italics.

The academic title of the supervisor shall be abbreviated as follows:

- professor – prof.;
- associated professor – assoc. prof.;

- assistant professor – assist. prof.;
- lecturer – lect.;
- teacher – teach.

### 2.3.2. Annotations

An annotation is a brief summary that presents the research aim and tasks, research questions and/or a hypothesis, research methods and describes the key chapter and the findings and conclusions of the master's thesis in the form of an overview. The annotation should be considered as a visit card of the master's thesis; therefore, it is important to focus both on its content and on its style. It is important for the annotation to be accurately and correctly translated into Latvian. The length of the annotation **shall not exceed two pages**.

#### The annotation shall specify:

- author's name, surname and the title of the master's thesis;
- total number of pages, tables, figures, bibliographical sources, annexes;
- research aim and tasks;
- research questions and/or a hypothesis;
- research methods employed;
- structure of the master's thesis and give brief insight into the contents of the chapters;
- author's contribution to examining the research problem and solving it (novelty);
- main findings and conclusions.

The annotation shall be written in a way, so that it may be used separately from the master's thesis. In the annotation, it is advised to begin sentences with such words as *the author of the master's thesis developed, examined, identified, found, concluded* etc.

The master's thesis **requires two annotations**: one in a host university language (i.e. in Latvian) and one in English language. The supervisor and the reviewers *shall evaluate the consistency of the annotation with the contents and title of the master's thesis as an important element in the overall evaluation*.

The annotations' pages **shall not be numbered but shall be included** in the total number of the pages.

### 2.3.3. Contents

The contents of the master's thesis shall indicate all the components of it up to the annexes (See ESAF Guidelines for Writing and Formatting Papers: <https://www.esaf.lbtu.lv/sites/esaf/files/2024-11/Guidelines%20for%20writing%20and%20formatting%20student%20papers.pdf>).

The titles of chapters and subchapters in the contents and in the text shall be identical. The title page and the contents page **shall not be numbered but shall be included** in the total number of the pages. The numbering of the master's thesis pages shall be started with the next page after the Contents. The section break icon shall be used to do it.

#### 2.3.4. Introduction

The Introduction shall make a potential reader interested in, giving insight into the content and findings of the master's thesis. The Introduction shall briefly review what other authors have examined in the field of the chosen topic describing related problems and topical issues as well as the scope of their examinations. It shall also specify the period and scope of the master student's own research.

*The Introduction shall specify:*

- description of the problem situation and the research problem;
- urgency of the topic and the topic choice motivation, research novelty;
- research limitations (if necessary);
- research object and subject and the research limitations set;
- hypothesis;
- research aim;
- specific research tasks to achieve the aim;
- research design – the kind of research, the methods and ways of data acquisition and processing;
- theses to be presented for defence;
- short description of information sources used.

**The definition of a research problem and topicality of the problem** is the starting position of any research study. It shall be based on theoretical findings, practical recommendations and challenges to social development.

The identification of a research problem is associated with the choice of a research object and subject. The research object and subject are those really representing the research problem or the contradiction, a solution to which has to be identified during the research process. For this reason, one can say that the research object represents the research problem, while the research subject represents the causes of the research problem.

**The research object** could be a thing, phenomenon, organisation, industry, process that functions and manifests itself through various characteristics or properties.

**The research subject** is something more specific than the research object, as it is an essential component or property of the research object or a set of properties that helps identify the causes of the research problem and why the problem arose.

If it is not possible to examine all the aspects related to the problem in detail, then **limitations** shall be set for the research, which also include an analysis **period**. The analysis period shall be long enough to draw constructive conclusions on trends in what is researched and justify the need for the implementation of particular activities. The minimum **analysis period shall be at least from three to five years**.

A **hypothesis** is a concisely defined projection or assumption that will be proved in the research. It is possible that the hypothesis put forward will not prove to be true or will prove to be partly true.

Based on the topicality of the research problem, a **research aim** shall be defined for the master's thesis – a set or expected research outcome. There is a single research aim for the master's thesis, which shall be defined as short and concise as possible.

The **specific research tasks** reveal the way the aim is going to be achieved. The tasks are particular methodological activities that are subordinated to the aim and reflect the course of achieving the aim. The tasks reflect the content of the master's thesis and usually a chapter of the master's thesis is dedicated to every particular task.

Research **methods** are instruments, by means of which the research tasks are performed in the master's thesis.

**Theses to be defended** represent a concise assessment of the key research problem and the pace of the research, which are defined as successive quintessential statements.

Fundamental scientific research studies, laws of the Republic of Latvia and other states, decisions of the government, specific and general literature, research papers in international indexed publications and periodicals, databases, official statistical data, unpublished materials of ministries and businesspersons serve as **information sources** for the master's thesis. In addition, the author of the master's thesis may acquire primary data through conducting surveys, interviews, observations and experiments.

### **2.3.5. Main part of the master's thesis**

The main part (body) of the master's thesis deals with a **theoretical and analytical or empirical** solution to the problem defined in the introduction.

The main part is divided into chapters. It is useful to divide large chapters (in terms of length) into subchapters. The number of chapters and subchapters is not restricted – it depends on the length and content of the master's thesis. It is advised to structure the master's thesis into 3-5 chapters. A chapter shall not have only one subchapter. To avoid the fragmentation of the master's thesis, a subchapter shall not be shorter than two pages.

The first chapter comprises a **theoretical discussion**, in which the author summarises facts and compares theories developed by various scientists; on this basis, an analysis of the problem is performed giving comprehensive insight into the theoretical and practical examination of the problem and reflecting the findings of the latest published research investigations and discussions.

An analysis of legal aspects of the topic is included into a separate chapter or subchapter or is spread over the body of the master's thesis. It is advised to refer also to international experience in tackling the problem chosen by the author, stressing the positive aspects or drawbacks. In elaborating the theoretical part, a great role is played by a critical examination of the literature and information sources and, if the author's ideas considerably differ from the findings available in the specific literature, a convincing justification of the author's idea shall be provided – which particular scientist's (discussion participant's) conclusions the author disagrees with and why.



The theoretical chapters shall not represent a summary of findings only of other authors; the opinion and judgements of the author him/herself shall be given as well. The theoretical chapter shall not be written in the form of annotation or reproduction about the materials read.

The **empirical part** is the most essential part of the master's thesis, in which the author performs a practical assessment of the research problem and develops potential alternative solutions to the problem, as far as possible providing an implementation strategy and necessary activities. The empirical part is formed based on the information approved in the theoretical part, and it shows thus the author's skill to do the research by employing the knowledge learnt, information sources and data. Empirical data are processed using quantitative and qualitative research methods employed in social science. The processed data are presented in tables and figures, obligatorily giving an analytic assessment of the data and trends and causal relationships identified. If an interview or focus group discussion is used in the development of the master's thesis, then the author of the thesis must conclude an agreement with the interviewee or the participant of the focus group (see Annex 4).

### **2.3.6. Conclusions and proposals**

Conclusions and proposals are the final part of the master's thesis, which plays the most important role in the defence of the master's thesis. Conclusions and proposals have to be written in the form of theses and numbered with Arabic numerals. In conclusions, the author shall demonstrate that the aim has been achieved, the tasks have been performed as well as whether the hypothesis proved to be true, partly true or it did not prove to be true. Conclusions may not contain quotations from works by other authors.

**Conclusions** shall:

- be directly associated with the research aim and tasks;
- reflect the most important findings derived from the content of the master's thesis;
- reflect the novelties identified in the research and the practical importance of the research, showing the author's own contribution to researching the particular problem.

It is advised to draw up 1-2 conclusions from each chapter.

**Proposals** stress the recommendations developed in the master's thesis that are aimed at solving the problem, eliminating drawbacks or using positive experience as well as show the author's contribution to problem solutions.

**Proposals** shall:

- be based on the analyses made in the master's thesis;
- be justified, concrete, addressed to a certain entity and feasible in practice;
- be not contradictory to one another;
- show the author's skill to make decisions.

Proposals shall not be defined in an imprecise and general way, for example, “to make amendments to the legislation”, “to create a favourable environment for entrepreneurship” or “to enhance the tax system”; the author shall specify – who has to do what, when and why.

### **2.3.7. List of references**

A list of references represents all the bibliographical sources – books, research papers, texts and other informant sources – **referred to** in the master’s thesis and used during the work on it, giving bibliographical details in the language in which the information is available (the original language). The necessary number of bibliographical sources, laws and other legal documents depends on the topic of the master’s thesis. Sources that are not referenced in the work should not be placed in the reading list. If artificial intelligence tools have been used in the development of the master's thesis (for example, for translating audio recordings of interviews into text, image generation and editing tools, note-taking and knowledge management tools, reference managers, scientific literature finders etc.), it is mandatory to indicate this and refer to them in the text.

**!!!** The master’s thesis **shall not refer to Wikipedia and unpublished lecture materials; the use of textbooks is not appropriate** for the level of master’s thesis.

**!!!** It is **compulsory** for the master’s thesis to **use** fundamental research findings as well as research papers in international indexed publications.

**!!! The minimum number of bibliographical sources used shall be 35. It is obligatory to use the results of scientific research as well as publications in scientific articles and databases (at least five sources)** in the development of the master’s thesis.

## 3. FORMATTING THE MASTER'S THESIS

### 3.1. General requirements

The text shall be written in the English language, taking into consideration the following requirements:

- formulation of the text shall be accurate, clear, logical and concrete;
- new idea shall be started in a new paragraph;
- new chapter shall be started on a new page, while a new subchapter – on the same page;
- every chapter shall be numbered (with Arabic numerals) and have a heading;
- subchapters shall be numbered and have a headings.

The student is the author of the thesis. The pronoun “I” and any verb with the first person pronoun shall not be used – information may be given in the passive voice, indicating no particular performer of an action, for example, “*according to the research results, one can conclude that...*” However, it is even less appropriate to replace the pronoun “I” with the pronoun “we” because the research done by the author shall be **original and performed independently by him/herself**. It is advised to use the phrases: “*the author believes...*”, “*in the opinion of the author*”. The passive voice may be employed, for example, “*it was examined, revealed in the chapter*”.

### 3.2. Formal requirements for formatting the text

**The master's thesis shall be written and formatted according to the “GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AND FORMATTING STUDENT PAPERS”**, which is available online: <https://www.esaf.lbtu.lv/sites/esaf/files/2024-11/Guidelines%20for%20writing%20and%20formatting%20student%20papers.pdf>), which are intended for LBTU ESAF students and faculty members to write and present student papers (reports, course papers, study projects, placement reports, graduation theses (bachelor or master theses) etc.). The guidelines cover only formal requirements for student papers and not issues related to the content of student papers.

### 3.3. Annexes

Annexes represent documents and data if they are too detailed and large in size for being placed in the body text. Documents included in annexes (except for a sample of a survey questionnaire) shall be filled in. Annexes contain documents that were used as a research instrument (e.g. a survey questionnaire), extensive calculations, large tables that contain data employed in the master's paper's calculations, instructions, statutes, technical data and other materials. If figures and tables are only referred to and not analysed in detail, the figures and tables shall be included in an annex.

Annexes shall be separated by a page, in the centre of which the heading ANNEXES is placed (it shall be formatted as Heading 1 and not numbered); the page shall be included in the total number of pages and shown in the Contents. Annexes shall not be included in the total length of the master's thesis, their pages shall not be numbered; however, the page of any new annex shall indicate a number in the top right corner (e.g. *Annex I*).

## **4. PRE-DEFENCE, SUBMISSION AND DEFENCE OF THE MASTER'S THESIS**

### **4.1. Presentation of the master's thesis for pre-defence**

Pre-defense of the master's thesis, submission of the master's thesis and final defense takes place in accordance with the LBTU "Regulations on final examinations of studies". The pre-defence of the master's thesis shall take place at a meeting organized by EKFI Institute. The master's thesis developed for pre-defense is uploaded within the deadlines set by the Institute in LBTU e-studies at the study course *Master's thesis*.

The commission for the pre-defence of master's thesis is approved by the director of the EKFI Institute. The Commission shall consist of at least three members of teaching staff, of which one shall be the supervisor of the master's student.

The **draft version** of the master's thesis must be submitted to the supervisor according to the schedule set by the appropriate institute, but **not later than one week before** the scheduled meeting of the pre-defense commission date.

**!!! By pre-defense, students must have settled all their academic debts and financial obligations.**

The student shall prepare a presentation (up to 10 minutes long) for the pre-defence of the master's thesis, in which he/she justifies the urgency of the topic and existing problems, defines the research aim and tasks and specifies the research object and subject as well as the research questions and/or hypothesis. In the pre-defence report, the student mainly presents the research findings and identified problems, stressing the most important conclusions and solutions proposed.

If the pre-defence has been successful, the student shall improve and enhance the master's thesis, taking into account the proposals and directions made at the pre-defence meeting, and submits it to the EKFI Institute within a term set by the Faculty. In case the pre-defence has been unsuccessful, the Commission shall make a decision on the improvement of the master's thesis and a repeated pre-defence according to a schedule set by the director of the EKFI Institute. If the student fails in the repeated pre-defence again, the master's thesis shall not be submitted for defence at a MEC meeting.

### **4.2. Submission of the master's thesis**

Successfully pre-defended and fully formalized, with the signature of the supervisor, the approved work must be submitted to the profiling institute at least 10 working days before the MEC meeting.

The master's thesis shall be bound in a **hard cover** of a certain kind.

The author **glues an envelope** inside the front cover (A5 format), into which the MEC secretary (after the master's thesis has been reviewed) puts the reviews of the master's thesis.

The **procedure of submitting the master's thesis** is as follows:

- the master's thesis being successfully pre-defended, completely formatted and bound in a hard cover shall be approved by a signature of the supervisor;
- the applicant for a master's degree shall submit one exemplar (original) of the master's thesis to the Faculty's Dean's Office at least 10 days before the MEC meeting.

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**!!! Before submitting the master's thesis to the Institute, the student uploads his/her master's thesis in the LBTU IS using his/her user account and password, complying with the following requirements:**

- *all the parts of the master's thesis shall be available in a single computer file;*
- *file format: **PDF, up to 50 Mb in size;***
- *files to be converted into PDF files shall not have watermarks and advertising texts;*
- *file shall not represent a scanned text figure;*
- *file shall not be password-protected (locked);*
- *additionally, a **short** annotation of the master's thesis in Latvian and in English shall be copied into or typed in the entry fields in the LBTU IS (**maximum 850 characters in size**). The annotation shall include: the author's name and the title of the master's thesis; the research aim; the most important research results and findings;*
- *Latin alphabet letters shall be used in the name of the file, no diacritical marks are allowed;*
- *name of the file shall consist of the student's surname, name and the matriculation number, e.g. **Liepina\_Ilze\_EF12345.pdf**.*

A master's thesis that has passed plagiarism control can be defended by the Master's Examinations Commission (MEC), this thesis is evaluated by two reviewers appointed by the ESAF.

#### **4.3. Status, duty and responsibility of the reviewer for the master's thesis**

A **reviewer** shall be an official competent person that participates in an expert evaluation of a particular master's thesis. The reviewers of master's thesis shall be appointed by the EKFI director in cooperation with the study programme's director and approved by a decree of the dean. A master's thesis shall be reviewed by two reviewers.

The *duty of a reviewer* shall be to examine the content of the master's thesis and perform an unbiased evaluation on whether:

- the thesis complies with the ESAF methodological Guidelines for writing and formatting master's thesis;

- applicant for the master's degree is able to analyse, critically review and use works by other authors (including scientific publications);
- applicant has the ability to define conclusions and proposals based on his/her research done;
- applicant's practical recommendations (proposals) are logical and real.

The key values and main deficiencies of the master's thesis shall be identified by reviewer.

Reviewers shall submit a written review with a conclusion on whether the master's thesis fulfils the requirements for the degree to be awarded and give an overall mark for it, as well as make their remarks and raise questions. A review form is available LBTU ESAF website (see section "Related information about the final thesis of studies in master's studies", <https://www.esaf.lbtu.lv/lv/studiju-un-reglamentejosie-dokumenti>). The author of the master's thesis shall have the right to get familiarised with the review **not later than one working day before** the defence of his/her master's thesis.

#### **4.4. Presentation of the master's thesis for defence**

The **defence of the master's** thesis takes place at an **open meeting** of the Master's Examination Commission (MEC) and its purpose is to evaluate the knowledge, professional preparedness and creative skills, acquired and developed during the period of studies, of the student who has completed the study programme and to make a decision on awarding a degree corresponding to the study direction.

A MEC consisting of seven persons shall be formed from among leading scientists of the related speciality/branch of science, members of the teaching staff of LBTU, EMU, VMU and other universities of the Republic of Latvia and employees of research institutes.

**Proposals** for the composition of a MEC shall be **prepared by the study programme director** and submitted for consideration to a meeting of the Faculty's Council.

The composition of a MEC shall be **approved for one academic year** by the rector's decree, which is prepared by the Centre of Studies of LBTU based on a transcript of the meeting of the Faculty's Council.

The defence of the master's thesis shall begin with the author's report (up to 15 minutes long), in which the student specifies the topicality of the research topic, a problem researched, the research aim and tasks for achieving the aim, gives a theoretical justification, states a hypothesis put forward and/or raises research questions and familiarises the MEC with research methods employed, research results, main conclusions as well as proposals, if any. The presentation shall have illustrative research results (figures, tables and the most important quotations of interviews).

The **presentation shall be followed by a discussion** (questions asked by the MEC). The report by the author of the master's thesis shall be followed by questions asked by the MEC and present persons, on which the author has to give short, accurate and comprehensive answers. If the reviewers of the master's thesis do not participate at

the MEC meeting, a member of the MEC familiarises the meeting participants with their written reviews. The author shall give prudent answers to the questions raised by the reviewers as well.

The course of defending the master's thesis exposes the level of knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the student during the process of studies. A good presentation, the full knowledge of the content of the master's thesis, convincing answers to the questions of the MEC members and reviewers and a prudent demonstration of visual aids serve as evidence that the student had elaborated his/her master's thesis independently.

In the academic master study programme, the **master's thesis shall be evaluated on a 10-point scale**. The lowest pass mark shall be 4 (almost average). When deciding on the final mark for the master's thesis, the MEC shall take into consideration the mark given by the reviewers, which are reported in writing to the MEC secretary and MEC members.

The main **criteria** that are taken into account in evaluating the master's thesis are:

**1) quality of the master's thesis:**

- topicality of the research topic, the skill to accurately define the research problem;
- structure of the master's thesis and the theoretical framework for it;
- appropriateness of the research methodology;
- quality of the practical (empirical) research;
- quality of conclusions and proposals;
- accuracy of citations and the compliance of the master's thesis with the formatting requirements set in the Guidelines.

**2) presentation of the master's thesis:**

- content and form of the presentation report;
- skill to publicly discuss and prudently defend one's own opinion.

The decision on the mark for the master's thesis as well as on awarding a degree shall be made at a closed MEC meeting by a simple majority of votes in an open vote. In case the numbers of votes for and against are equal, the vote of the MEC chairperson (deputy chairperson) shall be decisive.

The mark of the master's thesis shall be recorded in a MEC protocol book. If the mark for the defence of the master's thesis is "fail", the MEC shall decide whether the student has the right to repeatedly defend the same master's thesis that has been revised or another topic shall be chosen and a new master's thesis shall be produced. The master student shall repeatedly submit a revised master's thesis not earlier than six months after the decision was made. The right to submit it shall be retained for three years.

In case the mark of the master's thesis is lower than four on a 10-point scale, the student shall be expelled for not executing the plan of studies. Upon applying for a repeated defence of the master's thesis, the student shall pay a fee set by LBTU for the number of credit points for the last semester in the plan of studies.

## **ANNEXES**



**LATVIA UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES AND  
TECHNOLOGIES**  
**FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**  
INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND FINANCE

**Bruno Leja**

*(Name, Surname)*

**NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF  
AGRI-FOOD COMPANY “MILKMAN”**

*(Title)*

**Master’s thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the academic master of Agri-food  
Business Management**

Author

**Bruno Leja**, matr. No. ....

*(signature)*

*(name, surname, matr. No.)*

Supervisor

prof. Dr. oec. **Kate Krauze**

*(signature)*

*(position, scientific degree, name, surname)*

Jelgava 20\_\_

*(year)*

## AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

Jelgava

20\_\_ . \_\_ . \_\_\_\_\_

Hereby I confirm that the master's thesis

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(title of the work)

(hereinafter the work) has been developed legally and in good faith. That is:

1. the work has been developed independently: data and definitions taken from foreign sources, including those created by generative artificial intelligence tools, are presented in the work, as well as the work has not been published and is submitted for the first time for defense to the master's exam commission;
2. the development of the work respects the rights of third parties with regard to trade secrets, *know-how*, use of trademarks, use of patented or patentable inventions;
3. the right of third parties to the relationship of security and confidentiality of personal data is respected in the development of the work;
4. no state secrets were disclosed in the development of the work;
5. no other restricted information has been used in the development of the work;
6. the electronic version of the work LBTU IS corresponds to the original.

If the above information has been used in the work, I have received and attached to the work the written consent or permission of the persons or institutions concerned.

If this is not true, I am aware that my work may be rejected and I assume all civil, administrative and criminal liability associated with it.

If these facts come to light after receiving my diploma, I am aware that my diploma may be cancelled.

**I agree/disagree** (delete as appropriate) that LBTU will use my master thesis in study and scientific work, including other students' study and final papers.

**I agree/ disagree** (delete as appropriate) that the master thesis will be publicly available in the LBTU database of final study papers or in the ESAF Study and Science Information Centre.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name, Surname)

(student's signature)

**MASTER'S EXAMINATION COMMISSION DECISION**

THE MASTER'S THESIS WAS DEFENDED AT  
MASTER'S EXAMINATION COMMISSION MEETING ON

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WITH EVALUATION

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PROTOCOL NO. \_\_\_\_\_

MEC SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_

Agreement on participation in the interview

**AGREEMENT**

About participation in the interview

“ “

*Title of the interview*

**The person responsible for the study shall:**

Researcher: name, surname , the 1st or 2nd year student of the academic master's study programme "Agri-food Business Management" of the Faculty of Economics and Social Development of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies

Contact information: e-mail: , phone:

Supervisor / responsible teacher:

name, surname

Contact information:

**Purpose of the interview:**

**Interview methods:**

*(interview, focus group discussion, observation, etc.)*

**Participant's role:** By confirming your participation in the study, you agree to participate in an interview where various issues related to the topic will be discussed.

**Audio recording:** With your permission, the interview will be recorded on a dictaphone or other recording device. You won't be asked to give your name on the record. The recording of the interview will only be used by the interviewer and/or other researchers for research purposes only. If you have any objections to the recording, you can at any time ask to turn off the dictaphone or stop making the recording.

**Confidentiality:** Your responses and comments to the interview are confidential and will not be disclosed in association with your name and other identifying features. For the purpose of information analysis, you will be given a code. Anyone who helps in transferring your answers from a sound recording into computer script will know you only by this code. Your answers and comments will only be available for further analysis to the researchers involved in the study.

**Participation in and opt-out:** Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw from your participation by informing the researcher without further explanation of the reasons for the refusal. During the interview, you can refuse to answer your unwanted questions, while continuing to participate in the study.

**Research results:** The information and opinions provided by you and other participants will be used in an aggregated form in the analysis part of the study, which will be distributed to a wider audience in the form of an academic work. It may use quotes from what you have said, but without revealing your name or other information referring to you.

**You are welcome to ask questions or express your concerns about the content of the study or the methods used in it at any time.**

_____	_____	_____
Name of the participant	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of the interviewer	Signature	Date

*One copy of the document remains with the study participant, the other - with the researcher*