

APPROVED

at a meeting of the Board of the LBTU Faculty of Economics
and Social Development on 19 February 2025

Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies

Faculty of Economics and Social Development

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AND DEFENDING STUDY PROJECTS

Instructional material for students from the academic bachelor programme **Economics**

Institute of Business and Management Science
prof. *Dr.oec. Aina Dobele*

Jelgava 2025

CONTENTS

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW	3
2. WRITING, SUBMITTING AND DEFENDING A STUDY PROJECT	3
2.1. Choosing a topic for the study project and the supervision	3
2.2. General structure and composition of the study project	3
2.2.1. Title page	4
2.2.2. Contents	4
2.2.3. Introduction.....	4
2.2.4. Main part of the study project.....	5
2.2.5. Conclusions and proposals.....	6
2.2.6. List of references	6
2.2.7. Annexes	7
2.3. Submission and assessment of the study project and the presentation for defence	7
ANNEXES	8

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Guidelines is to familiarise students of the LBTU Faculty of Economics and Social Development from the academic bachelor programme Economics with the requirements for writing, formatting and defending study projects. The requirements are specified in the Guidelines (available on the ESAF website under Student Papers and Forms (*Studiju dokumenti un veidlapas*)).

A **study project** represents a piece of independent work (research) done by a student outside the courses as a part of an independent study plan, which, according to the goal, involves the use of knowledge acquired in several courses to build up solid skills for the integration of knowledge acquired in various courses. A study project is 6 CP. The defence committee assesses the theoretical and methodological preparedness of the student built up during the learning period (LBTU Regulation of Studies).

The **aim of a study project** is to test and assess the student's abilities to integrate and practically apply the theoretical knowledge acquired during the courses through describing, assessing and analysing the topic, identifying potential problems and finding solutions thereto.

The best study projects can be nominated for research contests.

The study project is kept at the respective institute after the defence. The mandatory period of keeping the study project is 5 years. The appeal procedure is governed by the LBTU Regulation of Studies.

2. WRITING, SUBMITTING AND DEFENDING A STUDY PROJECT

2.1. Choosing a topic for the study project and the supervision

The main areas of topics for study projects are developed and announced by the responsible faculty member of the institute. The director of the respective institute shall designate a supervisor for a study project.

In agreement with the supervisor, the student chooses a specific topic for the study project, considering his/her knowledge, skills and professional interests, the availability of data and literature, as well as the interests of a particular industry, company or institution. The topic must be relevant to the study project programme.

The student must produce the study project independently and according to the topic. The structure and research tasks of the study project must be designed by the student together with the supervisor, based on the main components of the project. The supervisor must advise the student during the development of the study project, yet the study project must be corrected and assessed only after it has been submitted (to the supervisor and uploaded into the e-learning platform).

2.2. General structure and composition of the study project

The structure of a study project shall be as follows:

- title page;
- contents;
- introduction;
- main part of the study project divided into chapters and subchapters;
- conclusions;
- proposals;

- list of references (information sources, laws and legal documents);
- annexes (if necessary).

The **length** of the study project must be **30-35 pages (up to the list of references)**.

2.2.1. Title page

The title page is the first page of the study project. 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, the place and the year (see Annex 1).

In Latvia, Latin abbreviations of scientific and academic degrees are used – Mg. for a Master’s degree and Bc. for a bachelor’s degree, which are supplemented with an abbreviation of the particular science. The doctor’s degrees are abbreviated as *Dr.*, for example, *Dr.oec.*, *Ph.D.*, *Dr.habil.oec.*, *Dr.paed.*, *Mg.oec.*, *Mg.paed.*, *Bc.oec.* 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.

2.2.2. Contents

The contents of the study project shall indicate all the components of it up to the annexes. The titles of chapters and subchapters in the contents and in the text shall be identical.

The title page and the contents page shall be included in the total number of the pages but shall not be numbered. The numbering of the study project pages shall be started with the next page after the Contents. The section break icon shall be used to do it.

It is recommended to make a table of contents by employing a tool for making such a table automatically (instructions are available: <https://support.microsoft.com/lv-lv/office/satura-r%C4%81d%C4%ABt%C4%81ja-ievieto%C5%A1ana-882e8564-0edb-435e-84b5-1d8552ccf0c0>).

If the newly created table of contents also includes **some text that does not have to appear in the Contents**, Clear formatting or the Normal style shall to be applied to the text in the body text defined as Heading 1, 2 or 3 (not in the table of contents), and the text shall to be reformatted following the Guidelines. After performing the operation, the table of contents shall be updated.

2.2.3. Introduction

The Introduction shall represent a visit card of the study project and make a potential reader interested in, giving insight into the content and findings of it. The Introduction shall briefly describe what other authors have examined in the field of the chosen topic and related problems, topical issues and the scope of their examinations. It shall also specify the period and scope of the author’s research.

The Introduction shall specify:

- problematic situation and the research problem;
- relevance of the topic and the motivation behind the choice of the topic, as well as the research novelties;
- general topic and the subtopic;
- research period or other research limitations;

- research aim;
- specific research tasks for achieving the aim;
- methodology – the research design and approach, data acquisition and analysis methods;
- brief description of the information sources used.

The definition of a research problem and the relevance of the research is the starting position of any research study. It shall be based on the latest practical and theoretical findings, considering factors in social development: economic, policy, legislative, cultural etc.

The identification of a research problem is associated with the choice of a general topic and a subtopic (also called the research object and subject). The research object and subject are those really involving the research problem or the contradiction, a solution to which should be identified during the research process. The research object involves the problem, while the research subject entails the causes of the research problem. The *research object* could be a thing, phenomenon, organisation, industry or 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 to identify the causes of the research problem and why the problem arose.

The *research period* must be long enough to allow valid conclusions to be drawn on trends in performance and to justify the need for measures to be taken. In the case of a study project, this is usually **3 years**.

Based on the relevance of the topic, a *research aim* shall be defined for the study project – a mentally expected research result. There is a single research aim for the study project, which shall be defined as short and specific as possible.

The specific research tasks reveal the way the aim is going to be achieved. The tasks are particular methodological activities that are subordinate to the aim and show the course of achieving the aim. The tasks reflect the content of the study project (often, a chapter of the study project is dedicated to every task).

Research *methods* are instruments for performing the specific research tasks.

If an interview or focus group discussion is employed, the author of the study project must conclude an agreement with the interviewee or focus group participant (see Annex 2). The author of the study project is obliged to keep the signed agreement with him/her for one year.

The *sources of information* for the study project are specialist and general literature, laws of the Republic of Latvia and laws of other countries, government decisions, periodicals, statistical data, unpublished materials from institutions, organisations and companies. It is also recommended to use the findings of fundamental scientific research, as well as international journal papers. In addition, the author may obtain primary data for an in-depth examination of the research problem through surveys, interviews, observations or experiments.

2.2.4. Main part of the study project

The main part of the study project includes a *theoretical and analytical or empirical* solution to the problem defined in the introduction.

The study project's main part is subdivided into chapters. It is useful to divide large chapters into subchapters. The number of chapters and subchapters is not restricted – it depends on the length and content of the study project. *It is recommended to structure the study project into 3-4 chapters*. A chapter shall not have only one subchapter. To avoid the fragmentation of the study project, a subchapter shall not be shorter than two pages.

The *first chapter* is usually shaped as a theoretical discussion, summarising a comparison of the theories and facts put forward by various authors, based on which the problem is analysed, thus giving a comprehensive insight into the theoretical and practical research that has been conducted on the problem to date and including the latest published research findings and discussion results.

The most essential part of the study project is the *analytical and empirical part*, with the author performing a practical assessment of the research problem and designing potential solutions to the problem, as well as justifying, as far as possible, the implementation strategy and the necessary measures. The analytical and empirical part is based on the information discussed in the theoretical part, thus demonstrating the author's ability to conduct the research using the acquired knowledge, information materials and data. Quantitative and qualitative social research methods can be used to process the empirical and analytical data. The data obtained shall be presented in tables and figures, with a compulsory assessment of the information contained therein and of the trends and causal relationships identified.

2.2.5. Conclusions and proposals

Conclusions and proposals are the final part of the study project, which plays the most important role in the defence of the study project. Conclusions and proposals shall be written in the *form of theses* and *numbered with Arabic numerals*. In the conclusions, the author shall demonstrate that the research aim has been achieved, the specific research tasks have been performed.

Conclusions shall:

- be directly associated with the research aim and tasks;
- include the most important findings derived from the study project's content;
- be supported with the most important data and facts presented in the study project.

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

Proposals shall be:

- based on the data analyses, surveys and conclusions made in the study project;
 - reasoned, specific, addressed to a particular entity and feasible in practice.
- They must not contradict each other.

Proposals shall stress the recommendations aimed at solving the problem, avoiding drawbacks or using positive experience.

Proposals shall not be defined in an undetailed and general way, for example, “*to make amendments to the legislation*”, “*to create a favourable environment for an organisation*”, “*improve the tax system*”; the author shall specify – **What to do? Who has to do? When to do? Why to do?**

2.2.6. List of references

A list of references represents all the bibliographical sources – books, research papers, texts and other informant sources – **referred to** in the study project and used during the work on it, giving bibliographical details in the language in which the information is available (the original language).

The list of references shall not include sources that are not referred to in the study project. If artificial intelligence tools (image generation and editing tools, note-taking and knowledge management tools, reference managers, scientific literature search engines, etc.) have been used in the study project, this shall be indicated and referred to in the text.

The minimum number of bibliographical sources used shall be 15. The study project **must use** research findings from journal papers available in databases (at least 3 papers).

References to unpublished materials (e.g. lecture materials) are not allowed in the study project.

2.2.7. Annexes

Annexes represent documents and data if they are too detailed and large in size for being placed in the main text.

Annexes shall not be included in the total length of the study project. They shall be separated by a page, placing the heading ANNEXES in the centre (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. The other pages of annexes shall not be numbered, yet each new annex shall be given a serial number in the top right-hand corner of the page, e.g. Annex 1.

2.3. Submission and assessment of the study project and the presentation for defence

The study project is submitted to the supervisor within the time specified by the institute and **uploaded into the e-learning system** for the respective study project (Economics, Business Analysis, Business Process Management, Accounting and Finance, Sustainable Territorial Development). The deadline for the submission of the study project is set by the responsible faculty member, and students are informed about it at the beginning of the semester.

The **defence of the study project** is held at the responsible institute and the assessment is done by a committee approved by a decision by the institute director. The committee shall consist of at least three faculty members, one of whom shall be the supervisor of the study project. The time and place of the defence shall be set by the responsible faculty member, while the students shall be informed about it at least 5 days in advance.

For the defence of his/her study project, the student shall prepare a presentation (up to 10 minutes) and present the specific research tasks performed during the development of the study project, the problems identified, highlighting the most important findings and proposed solutions.

The **study project shall be assessed** on a 10-point scale. The lowest passing mark shall be 4 (almost average). In case a failing mark is awarded, the committee shall decide on the improvement in and re-defence of the study project according to the timetable set by the institute.

The student has the right to use his/her own study project results during his/her university studies, yet no self-plagiarism is allowed.

ANNEXES

LATVIA UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGIES
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE OF
(ECONOMICS AND FINANCE / BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCE)

John Smith

E-SERVICES IN A MUNICIPALITY: THE CASE OF
ZEMGALE PLANNING REGION

Study project.....

Economics

Business Analysis

Sustainable Territorial Development

Business Process Management

Author

John Smith, matr. No.

Supervisor

assist.prof. *Dr.oec.* **Ieva Liepa**

Jelgava 20__

AGREEMENT

to participate in an interview for the study
 “Title of the study”

Person responsible for the study:

Researcher: First name Surname, ...-year student from the bachelor programme Economics from the Faculty of Economics and Social Development, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies

Contact information: e-mail.....phone.....

Supervisor/responsible faculty member: First name Surname

Contact information:.....

Goal of the study:.....

Research methods used:.....

Role of the participant: by confirming your participation in the study, you agree to take part in an interview (focus group discussion) where various issues related to[topic]..... will be discussed.

Audio recording: with your permission, the interview will be recorded. You will not be asked to give your name in the recording. 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 ask to stop the recording at any time.

Confidentiality: your answers and comments in the interview are confidential and will not be disclosed, indicating your name or other characteristics. You will be assigned a code for the purpose of analysing the information. Anyone who assists in translating your answers from the audio recording into a computer will only know you by this code. Your answers and comments will only be available for further analysis by the researchers involved in the study.

Participation and the refusal to participate: your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop your participation by informing the researcher without further explanation of the reasons. During the interview, you may refuse to answer questions that you do not wish to answer, while continuing your participation in the study.

Results of the study: the information and opinions given by you and other participants will be summarised in the analytical part of the study, which will be disseminated to a wider audience in the form of an academic paper. The paper may use quotes from what you have said, but without revealing your name or other information about you.

You are welcome to ask questions or raise concerns about the content of the study or the methods used at any time.

Participant's name, surname

Signature

Date

Interviewer's name, surname

Signature

Date

One copy of the document remains with the research participant, the other with the researcher.