

Approved

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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 aid for master students of the academic master programme delivered by
the LBTU Faculty of Economics and Social Development

Sociology of Organisations and Public Administration

Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities
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1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Guidelines is to familiarise students from the academic master's programme "Sociology of Organisations and Public Administration" (hereinafter SOPA) delivered by the Faculty of Economics and Social Development (ESAF), Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBTU), with the requirements for writing and formatting a master's thesis and the presentation procedure for pre-defence and defence of the master's thesis. The requirements for a master's thesis are set in the Guidelines for Writing and Defending a Master's Thesis (available on the ESAF website under the section Student Papers and Forms (*Studiju dokumenti un veidlapas*)).

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 field of social sciences to the extent prescribed by the programme. Writing a master's thesis confirms the student's ability to independently conduct reasoned research with elements of novelty or practical application and to independently draw conclusions and proposals. The master's thesis employs appropriate sociological research methods and includes an overview of the methods, an analysis of collected and processed data and conclusions and proposals.

The learning outcomes of a master's thesis

Knowledge

- 1) In-depth knowledge of how to examine the topic of a master's thesis and the prospective areas in the field of organizations and public administration.
- 2) In-depth and structured knowledge of how to organise and practically implement sociological research in examining social structure, organizations and social processes.
- 3) Understanding of the basic principles of developing a theoretical framework for research work and the use of appropriate sociological concepts and sources.
- 4) Knowledge of the ways of data acquisition and of analysis methods and an understanding of the requirements for selecting the methods to achieve the research aim of the master's thesis.

Skills

- 1) To analytically, critically and qualitatively examine the theoretical literature and other sources of information, thereby ensuring the achievement of the research aim.
- 2) Create an appropriate research design, select and use the most proper data collection and analysis methods, and adhere to the principles of research ethics.
- 3) Ensure a convincing connection between the theoretical framework of the research and the empirical results by independently using appropriate theoretical findings for an in-depth analysis of the research results.
- 4) Discuss in an argumentative manner the theoretical findings and empirical research results relevant to the topic of the master's thesis.
- 5) Draw reasoned conclusions and realistic proposals for solving the problems identified.
- 6) Publicly present and discuss the research results.

Competence

- 1) Independently identify and critically analyse complex problems in the sociology of organizations and public administration and draw reasoned conclusions and proposals relevant to the research topic.
- 2) Integrate knowledge from different fields and contribute to the creation of new knowledge and the enhancement of research methods.
- 3) Critically assess the potential impacts of the research results on society.

The originality of the master's thesis shall be confirmed by the author's **Guarantee** (an example is given in Annex 3). The best master's theses shall be submitted by the Master Examination Committee (hereinafter the MEC) to research work contests and recommended for publication or practical application by stakeholders.

A copy of the master's thesis (in printed and electronic formats) – after its presentation for defence, together with the review – shall be stored at the Information Centre for Studies and Science at ESAF, LBTU. The obligatory storage period shall be 10 years. The defended master's theses are available in electronic format through the bibliographic database LBTU Master's Theses (https://kopkatalogs.lv/F/?func=find-b-0&local_base=fba03) created by the LBTU Fundamental Library (<https://lbtufb.lbtu.lv/lv>) if the author has given permission for the master's thesis to be published. LBTU faculty members and students can access the database using their 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, which shall be accepted by the scientific supervisor appointed by the director of the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities (hereinafter the ISSH). The topic shall be consistent with the scope of the master's programme, focusing on the following research areas: organisational and public administration or topical social processes in Latvia's regions and rural areas or in other countries if the master student conducts comparative research. Choosing a topic for the master's thesis, the student is advised to continue researching the range of problems that were examined in previous research works, for example, bachelor's theses, reports, study projects etc., thereby expanding or deepening the examination of the problems. The topic for the master's thesis is selected and agreed with the supervisor by filling in a form within the deadline set by ESAF (available on the ESAF website under the section *Studies*).

In case the topic chosen by the master student is not topical or if complications could arise when working on the master's thesis, the director of the ISSH may reject the chosen topic and the master student shall choose another topic in coordination with the supervisor. **Changing or modifying the topic** for the master's thesis, after prior agreement with the supervisor, is permitted only until the pre-defence of the master's thesis. **After the pre-defence, the topic may no longer be changed or modified!**

2.2. Functions of the supervisor of the master student

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

- drawing up a work plan;
- making the structure and theoretical part of the master's thesis;
- selecting bibliographical sources and other sources of information;
- choosing research methods;
- adherence to academic integrity and research ethics;
- and other matters related to the development and defence of the master's thesis.

The responsibilities of the supervisor shall be to review individual parts of the master's thesis and the whole thesis and indicate any necessary changes and additions; however, the supervisor shall not directly influence the content, form and defence of the research to the extent that objectively hinders the MEC from evaluating the master student's knowledge, skills and his/her contribution to the research. If the master student, together with the supervisor, believe that an *adviser* has to be involved for the purpose of the research, it may be done. The advisor is documented and puts his/her signature on the title page of the master's thesis.

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

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

- title page;
- abstract in English;
- abstract in Latvian;
- table of contents;
- explanations of abbreviations, acronyms and symbols arranged in alphabetical order

- (if necessary);
- 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;
- author's guarantee (see Annex 3);
- annexes;
- decision by the MEC (see Annex 4).

The master's thesis shall be computer typeset and 60-70 pages in length from the title page (inclusive) to the last page of conclusions/proposals (inclusive) (excluding the list of references and annexes). A recommended **structure** of the master's thesis shall be as follows (as a percentage of the total length): an introduction 3-5%, the main part 90-94%, and conclusions and proposals 3-5%.

2.4. Structure of the master's thesis

2.4.1. Title page

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 and of the director of the related institute as well as the place and time of elaboration of the master's thesis (see Annex 1). In Latvia, 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 *Ph.D.*; *Dr.* or *Mg.* (e.g., *Dr.oec.*, *Dr.sc.soc.*, *Dr.paed.*, *Ph.D.*, *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.

2.4.2. Abstract

An abstract is a brief summary that presents the research aim and specific research tasks, research problems and/or a hypothesis and research methods used as well as gives a general description of the chapters and the master's thesis's findings and conclusions in the form of an overview. The abstract is also some kind of the master's thesis's visit card; therefore, it is important to focus both on its content and on its style. It is important for the abstract to be accurately and correctly translated into Latvian. The length of the abstract **shall not exceed two pages. The abstract shall specify:**

- author's name and surname and the master's thesis's title;
- total number of pages, tables, figures and bibliographical sources and annexes;
- research aim and specific research tasks;
- research questions and/or a hypothesis;
- research methods employed;
- master's thesis's structure and a 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 abstract shall be written in a way so that it may be used separately from the

master's thesis. In the abstract, it is advised to begin sentences with such words as the master's thesis developed, examined, identified, found, concluded, etc. The master's thesis **requires two abstracts**: in English and Latvian. The supervisor and the reviewer *shall evaluate the consistency of the abstract with the master's thesis's contents and title as an important element in the overall evaluation*. The abstract pages **shall not be numbered but shall be included** in the total number of the pages.

2.4.3. Table of contents

The table of contents shall indicate all the components of the master's thesis up to the annexes (see Annex 2). The titles of chapters and subchapters in the table of contents and in the body 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's pages shall be started with the next page after the table of contents. The table of contents is made by employing a tool for making such a table automatically.

2.4.4. 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 describe what other authors have examined in the field of the chosen topic as well as related problems and 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 urgency of the topic;
- research problem and the scientific significance of it;
- research limitations (if necessary);
- brief insight into how extensively the problem has been researched (in Latvia and in the world);
- research novelty (the author's contribution to researching the problem within the scope of the master's thesis);
- elements of the master's thesis's programmatic part:
 - research aim;
 - specific research tasks to achieve the aim;
 - hypothesis put forward and/or research questions raised;
- research approach, data acquisition and analysis methods;
- theoretical and practical significance of the master's thesis;
- theoretical framework of the master's thesis (short description of the bibliographical sources used);
- presentation of the findings in scientific and/or practical conferences.

The definition of a research problem and topicality of the problem is the starting position of any research study. It shall be based on the latest practical and theoretical findings. The research problem is a situation that is identified as a complex theoretical and practical issue or task to be examined. In sociology, a problem is a contradiction in a situation that has to be examined and solved employing an appropriate theory. If the master's thesis cannot examine all the aspects of the problem in sufficient depth or scope, research limitations are set.

Based on the topicality of the problem, a research aim shall be defined for the master's thesis – an ideal and expected research result (what I want to achieve by means of my research: what I want to discover and what I want to develop?). There is a single research aim for the master's thesis, 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 reflect the course of achieving the aim. The tasks reflect the content of the master's thesis (often, a chapter of the master's thesis is dedicated to every task).

Research *methods* are instruments, by means of which the specific research tasks are performed in the master's thesis. The research approach (quantitative, qualitative or mixed method) applied and the methods of information collection and data analysis shall be specified in the master's thesis. The quantitative approach tests a hypothesis, while the qualitative approach creates the hypothesis.

A *hypothesis* is a provable assumption about the existence of some association or causal relationship in scientific theory (it reveals the probability regarding the causes and associations of the phenomenon researched). If the particular research idea has not been proved in theory or in previous research investigations, a *research question* shall be raised instead of the hypothesis.

Fundamental scientific research studies as well as research papers in international indexed publications, original works by theoreticians in sociology, monographs, encyclopaedias of the relevant science and explanatory dictionaries and the scientific literature serve as *information sources* for the master's thesis. The research may use laws of Latvia and other states, government decisions, government policy documents, statistical data, periodicals, unpublished materials of enterprises and organisations, researcher handbooks, press materials, previously conducted and published research studies, unpublished research studies and reports, Internet materials etc. The author's previous research studies (e.g., the bachelor's thesis, surveys) may also serve as the information sources.

2.4.5. Main part of the master's thesis

The main part of the master's thesis deals with a **theoretical and analytical or empirical** solution to the problem defined in the introduction. The master's thesis's main part, theoretically, consists of a theoretical and an empirical part, which are 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 master's thesis (usually there are 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.

First chapters are usually shaped as **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 identifying the findings of the latest published research investigations and discussions. The theoretical chapters give explanations of the concepts pertaining to the topic and set out the theoretical framework and findings regarding the research problem according to the conception of the master's thesis.

It is advised to refer to also international experience in tackling the problem chosen by the author, stressing the positive aspects or drawbacks. In working on 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 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 of only other authors; the opinion and judgements of the author him/herself shall be given as well. The theoretical chapters shall not be written in the form of an abstract or reproduction about the works read. All the chapters have to be logically interrelated and end with logical transitions to the next chapter/subchapter. At the beginning of a chapter, a few paragraphs of general binding

information may be added, which explain the issues dealt with in the chapter and bind the particular chapter to the rest of the body text.

In the **analytical or empirical part** of the master's thesis, the author shall demonstrate the skill to independently perform an examination and an analysis of empirical data. The master's thesis's theoretical chapters create a conceptual framework for empirical research; therefore, the theoretical and empirical parts shall be closely and logically interrelated, as the theoretical findings are tested empirically. The master's thesis's empirical part shall present a research methodology, an analysis of acquired data and research results. The **research methodology** involves:

- justification of the research approach applied, data gathering and data analysis methods;
- justification and description of research instruments employed to acquire the data (e.g., a survey questionnaire, guidelines for interviews, observation protocol, code matrixes of content analysis, etc.);
- justification of how theoretical findings will be verified empirically (how the research aim is going to be achieved, the hypothesis proved or answers given to the research questions);
- justification and description of a survey sample calculated according to the data collection method/methods chosen (number of respondents, experts, secondary data sets, chosen texts for discourse analysis etc.);
- description of field work (where, when and how the data were collected, how the process of data acquisition occurred);
- outline of how the collected data is going to be analysed (analysis details, methods used);
- detailed description of the ethical aspects of the research (informed consent (see Annex 6), the anonymity of the respondents, the principles of data collection and processing, etc.); the obligation of the author of the master's thesis to keep the signed informed consent agreement with him/her.

The **analysis of collected data** shall be done based on the information tested in the theoretical part, which shows the skill of the author of the master's thesis to perform research by using the knowledge, informative materials and data acquired. Qualitative and quantitative data processing and analysis methods and software shall be employed in the processing of empirical data, e.g., statistical analysis, standard programs (e.g., SPSS, NVivo, etc.), discourse analysis and other scientific methods. The data processing and analysis methods shall be selected in line with the chosen research approach. A special focus shall be placed on the analysis and interpretation of acquired data. If necessary, the acquired data are presented in tables and figures, and an analytic assessment of the information presented and the trends and relationships identified is obligatory.

As part of the analysis of empirical data, the author of the master's thesis shall reveal a connection between the empirical data and theoretical findings. Answers shall be certainly given to the research questions, indicating what proves (or rejects) the hypothesis put forward in the introduction. If it is logically derived from the research conducted, it is advised to make a discussion on and proposals for further research on the problem examined in the master's thesis, specifying the author's own contribution to the examination of the particular topic.

2.4.6. 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*. Proposals might be an important result of the research done in the master's thesis; however, not in any case the development of the proposals is logical and necessary in sociological research, as the student

may choose a topic for the master's thesis that does not focus on a practical solution to the research problem. The need for proposals is determined by the research aim and specific research tasks. In conclusions, the author shall demonstrate that the aim has been achieved, the tasks have been performed as well as whether and how the hypothesis has been proved and give answers to the research questions. In conclusions, the author may specify his/her ideas about future research. **Conclusions** shall:

- be directly associated with the research aim and specific research tasks;
- indicate the most important findings derived from the master's thesis's content;
- be supported with the most important data and facts presented in the master's thesis.

It is advised to draw up 1-2 conclusions from every chapter of the master's thesis, and more conclusions shall be derived from the empirical part. They shall not contradict each other. **Proposals** shall be:

- based on the data analyses, surveys and conclusions made in the master's thesis;
- justified, concrete, addressed to a certain entity and feasible in practice.

Proposals shall stress the recommendations given in the master's thesis and 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"*; the author shall specify – who has to do what, when and why.

2.4.7. 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 list of references shall not include sources that are not referred to in the master's thesis. If artificial intelligence tools were used to produce the master's thesis (e.g., for transcribing audio recordings of interviews into text), this must be indicated and referred to in the text.

It is **obligatory** for the master's thesis to use fundamental research findings, monographs, original research works, as well as research papers in international indexed publications. The master's thesis shall not refer to Wikipedia and unpublished lecture materials, as well as the use of textbooks is not appropriate for the level of master's theses. The minimum number of bibliographical sources used shall be 50.

2.4.8. Annexes

Annexes represent documents and data if they are too detailed and large in size for being placed in the body text. They 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 table of contents. Annexes **shall not be included** in the total length of the master's thesis, their pages shall not be numbered; yet, the page of any new annex shall indicate a number in the top right corner (e.g. *Annex I*).

Annexes shall have:

- example(s) of the instrument(s) for acquiring primary data;
- example of a filled-in questionnaire for every surveyed group*;
- examples of interview transcripts* (all expert interviews + at least three interviews from the surveyed group(s);
- observation maps*, the content analysis matrix(es)*;
- worksheet tables that were used for calculations but not included in the body text;

- filled-in forms of documents, instructions, statutes etc. may also be included.
- * Other transcripts and/or filled-in questionnaires shall be included in a separate folder that is brought by the student for defending the master's thesis. The MEC and the reviewer have the right to require presenting the materials related to primary data processing.

2.5. Pre-defence, submission and defence of the master's thesis

The pre-defence, submission and final defence of the master's thesis are done in accordance with the LBTU Regulation regarding Final Examinations.

The pre-defence of the master's thesis shall occur at a meeting of the ISSH **not later than three weeks before** the final copy is submitted for defence to a meeting of the MEC. The master's thesis prepared for pre-defence is uploaded into the LBTU e-learning platform Moodle within the deadline set by the institute under the subject course *Master's Thesis*.

For final defence, the master's thesis (one copy) shall be **bound in a hard cover** of a certain kind. The master's thesis being successfully pre-defended, completely formatted and approved by a signature of the supervisor shall be submitted to the ISSH at least 10 working days before a MEC meeting. The author shall **glue an envelope** inside the front cover (A5 format), into which the reviews of the master's thesis are put. The master's thesis shall be uploaded into the LBTU IS for plagiarism control in accordance with the decision by the LBTU Vice-Rector for Studies Procedure for Submitting Electronic Copies of Graduation Theses and their Verification in the Plagiarism Control System. When uploading the master's thesis, the following requirements shall be met:

- 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 abstract of the master's thesis in English and Latvian shall be copied into or uploaded into the entry fields in the LBTU IS (**maximum 850 characters in size**). The abstract 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., **Smith_John_SZF12345.pdf**.

A master's thesis that has passed plagiarism control may be defended at a meeting of the Master Examination Committee (MEC); the master's thesis shall be evaluated by two reviewers appointed by ESAF. The **reviewers** submit their reviews with a conclusion on the compliance of the master's thesis with meeting the requirements for a degree to be awarded, as well as their comments and questions (Annex 5). The review is available to the student and the MEC. The reviewer gives the master's thesis a mark on a 10-point scale (Annex 5). The mark is available to the MEC. The reviewer's responsibility is to perform an in-depth and unbiased evaluation of the content of the master's thesis and on whether:

- it complies with the ESAF Guidelines for writing and formatting master's theses;
- the applicant for the master's degree is able to analyse, critically review and use research works by other authors (incl. research papers);
- the applicant has the ability to define conclusions and proposals based on the research conducted and calculations performed, as well as the logic and feasibility of the proposals;
- and identify the key values and main deficiencies.

A master's degree applicant shall have the right to be familiarised with the reviews of the master's thesis no later than **one working day** before the MEC meeting.

The **final defence of master's theses** occurs at an **open meeting** of the MEC, which assesses the master students' academic knowledge, professional preparedness, creative skills acquired and built up, as well as decides on awarding them a degree corresponding to the field of study. The **defence of a master's thesis begins with the author's report** (up to 15 minutes), with the master student presenting the relevance of the topic, indicating the research problem, aim, specific tasks for achieving the aim, a theoretical justification, a hypothesis and/or research questions, the research methods employed, the results and findings, main conclusions and, if any, also proposals. The presentation is illustrated with visible research results (figures, tables, the most important interview quotes).

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.

In the academic master programme, the **master's thesis shall be evaluated on a 10-point scale**. The lowest passing 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.

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

1) quality of the master's thesis:

- topicality of the topic, the skill to accurately define the research problem;
- mutual coherence among the key elements of the programmatic part of the master's thesis; the quality of formulations;
- structure of the master's thesis and the theoretical framework for it;
- application of particular sociological theories in the master's thesis;
- appropriateness of the research methodology and the description of it, the selection of research methods;
- adherence to the principles of academic integrity and research ethics;
- quality of the practical (empirical) research;
- degree of having the tasks performed and the aim achieved;
- key values of the master's thesis (innovative research approaches, significance, practical usefulness); novelties in the master's thesis;
- quality of conclusions and proposals;
- accuracy of citations and the compliance of the master's thesis with the formatting requirements set in the Guidelines;
- efforts made in producing the master's thesis (number and reachability of respondents/informants, the level of analysis).

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;
- participation in scientific conferences held earlier in connection with the master's thesis; research papers published.

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 after a year.

Upon identifying plagiarism in the master's thesis, the MEC shall make a decision on the student's suspension from the final examinations and shall propose expelling the student for unfair activities. A repeated defence of the master's thesis shall be allowed not earlier than after one year, and another topic shall be chosen for the master's thesis. The appeal procedure for final examinations is governed by the LBTU Regulation of Studies.

ANNEXES

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

John Smith
(Name, Surname)

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

(Title)

**Master's thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the master's degree in sociology
and public administration**

Author	(signature)	John Smith , matr. No. (name, surname, matr. No.)
Supervisor	(signature)	assist.prof. <i>Dr.sc.soc.</i> Ieva Barga (position, scien. degree, name, surname)
Institute director	(signature)	assoc.prof. <i>Dr.hist.</i> Andris Puce (position, scien. degree, name, surname)

Jelgava 20__
(year)

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GUARANTEE

in Jelgava

(date, month, year)

I, _____ (*name, surname*), hereby guarantee that the master's thesis has been produced legally and with integrity. This means that:

- 1) the master's thesis has been produced independently: data and definitions taken from external sources, including those created by generative artificial intelligence tools, have been presented in the master's thesis, and the master's thesis has not been published and will be submitted for defence to the Master Examination Committee for the first time;
- 2) the master's thesis has been produced in compliance with the rights of third parties regarding commercial secrets, know-how, use of trademarks, use of patented or patentable inventions;
- 3) the master's thesis has been produced in compliance with the rights of third parties regarding the security and confidentiality of personal data;
- 4) no national secrets have been disclosed in the master's thesis;
- 5) no other restricted information has been disclosed in the master's thesis;
- 6) the electronic version of the master's paper available in the LBTU IS matches the original version.

If the above-mentioned information has been disclosed in the master's thesis, I have received and attached to the master's thesis the written consent or permission of the relevant persons or institutions.

If the above is not true, I am aware that my master's thesis may be rejected and I assume all related civil, administrative and criminal responsibility.

If the above facts are identified after receiving the diploma, I am aware that my diploma may be revoked.

I agree/disagree (*delete what is not appropriate*) that LBTU will use my master's thesis in teaching and research activities, including in learning and graduate theses by other students.

I agree/disagree (*delete what is not appropriate*) that the master's thesis will be publicly available in the LBTU graduate thesis database or at the ESAF Information Centre for Studies and Science.

(signature)

(name, surname)

MASTER EXAMINATION COMMISSION DECISION

THE MASTER'S THESIS WAS DEFENDED AT A MASTER EXAMINATION COMMITTEE
MEETING ON

WITH A MARK _____

PROTOCOL NO. _____

MEC SECRETARY _____

LATVIA UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGIES
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
 Academic Master's study programme
 "Sociology of Organisations and Public Administration"

**MASTER'S THESIS
 REVIEW**

for acquiring the Master's degree in sociology of organisations and public administration
 in Jelgava

Author of the master's thesis:

Title of the master's thesis:

Level of meeting the requirements: insufficient (N) medium(V) high (A) very high (E)

Structure	Evaluation criteria	N	V	A	E
Abstract	The structure of the abstract meets the methodological requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The contribution of the author of the master's thesis to the evaluation of and a solution to the research problem stated in the abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduction	Justification for the relevance and novelty of the research and for the research problem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Formulation of the research aim and its alignment with the topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Formulation of the specific research tasks and their alignment to the research aim	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Formulation of a research hypothesis and/or research questions and their alignment with the topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Theoretical part	Clear and logical structure of the chapters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Alignment of the definitions and explanations of the main concepts with the topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Analysis of the results and findings of previously conducted research (national and/or international) relevant to the topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Alignment of the literature and other sources of information used with the topic (results of fundamental scientific research and research papers published in international journals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Application of specific theories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Clear, understandable and reasoned opinions of the author and a description of the theories discussed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Empirical part	A clear and logical description of the structure of the empirical part	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	An appropriate and correct description of the research methodology (selection of methods, course of the research, principles of sample selection, characteristics of respondents, research ethics, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The research instrument(s) is/are based on the information aggregated in the theoretical part	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Correct application of proper data processing methods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A logical and clear description of the analysis and interpretation of research results	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A description of the connection of the empirical part with theory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conclusions and	Conclusions relate to the research aim and specific research tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

proposals	Conclusions reflect the most important findings resulting from the research conducted in the master's thesis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Conclusions are based on the most important data and facts used in the master's thesis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Answers given to the research questions and/or the hypothesis(es) tested	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Proposals are justified, specific, addressed to a particular entity and could be implemented in practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall conclusion on whether the master's thesis meets the requirements

Requirements	Evaluation criteria	N	V	A	E
Technical quality	The list of references meets the methodological requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	References to literature and data sources are sufficient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The master's thesis meets the methodological requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research quality	A clear description of the content of the master's thesis and the relevance to the topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The master's thesis has achieved the research aim and performed the specific research tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Information sources used are sufficient and relevant to the research aim and specific tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Research methods have been selected and correctly applied based on the research aim	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visual and literary quality	The text and research results are presented in a visually easy-to-understand manner (in tables, figures)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Correct use of terminology, correct academic language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Grammatically and stylistically correct text	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Key values of the master's thesis

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Deficiencies and imperfections of the master's thesis

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Questions to the author

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Overall evaluation of the master's thesis

The master's thesis _____ the requirements set and the author _____ be awarded a
(meets / does not meet) (may / may not)

Master's degree of sociology of organisations and public administration.

Master's thesis reviewer:
(scientific or academic degree, name, surname, organisation, position)

_____ 202 _____

(signature)

LATVIA UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGIES

FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Reviewer's evaluation of the master's thesis

Author:

(name, surname)

Title:

.....
.....

Mark (on a 10-point scale):

(numeral and in words, e.g. 8 (very good))

Reviewer:

(scientific or academic degree, name, surname)

.....

(organisation, position)

_____ **202** _____

(signature)

AGREEMENT

to participate in a study for the master's thesis
"Title of the master's thesis"

Person responsible for the master's thesis:

Researcher: *First name, Surname*, ...-year student from the academic master's study programme "Sociology of Organisations and Public Administration" 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 – indicate the method] where various issues related to[topic]..... will be discussed.

Audio recording: with your permission, the interview will be recorded on a voice recorder [specify if otherwise]. 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 turn off the voice recorder or stop the recording at any time.

Confidentiality: your answers and comments in the interview [focus group discussion or other method – specify the method] 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.