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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 professional master study
programme implemented by the LBTU Faculty of Economics and Social
Development

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

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1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Guidelines is to familiarise students of the professional master study programme “Business Management” implemented by the Faculty of Economics and Social Development (ESAF), Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBTU), with the requirements of writing and formatting 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 skill 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 – an in-depth, structured and analytic knowledge in entrepreneurship management, organisation and planning;

skills – to summarise, systemise and critically review bibliographical sources and to choose and employ appropriate management theories for tackling problems in enterprises (organisations) and their functional systems; to apply analysis and synthesis skills in assessing situations in entrepreneurship management; to present the results convincingly and in a well-argued way, stressing their effects on sustainable social development;

competences – to plan and project the effective operation of an enterprise (organisation) according to the set goals, the economic environment and the labour market situation, applying a creative and innovative approach.

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 State Examination Commission (hereinafter the SEC).

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, 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 shall be accepted by the scientific supervisor who shall be appointed by the director of the Institute of Business and Management (hereinafter the IBM).

The topic of the master’s thesis shall be chosen according to the specifics and goals of the professional master study programme Business Management:

- topic shall be associated with the fields of entrepreneurship and management

- that could include problems of industries, agriculture in particular, and regional governance;
- empirical part shall involve the experience of and problem solutions for an enterprise (organisation);
 - 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;
 - chosen topic may be made more accurate according to the definitions of the research object and subject;
 - 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;
 - 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.

In case the topic chosen by the student is not topical or if complications could arise during the process of elaboration the master's thesis, the director of the Institute may reject the chosen topic and the student shall choose another topic in coordination with the supervisor.

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. Accepting the topic of the master's thesis

The terms of reference of the master's thesis shall be **computer typeset, produced in four copies using a form** that is available on the website of the LBTU Faculty of Economics and Social Development in the section "Methodological Materials" and submitted for approval to the IBM after being accepted by the master student's supervisor. The terms of reference of the master's thesis shall be approved in the 2nd semester.

After being approved, the student shall submit one copy of the terms of reference of the master's thesis to the IBM, the second one to the supervisor, and the third copy shall be kept by the student him/herself.

The supervisor for the student and the topic chosen by the student shall be approved by the dean's decree within the term set by the dean's office of the Faculty. Any change or correction of the topic of the master's thesis may be done only until the pre-defence of the master's thesis after being accepted by the supervisor.

2.3. 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 in the respective science. 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;
- 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 the SEC

from evaluating the student's knowledge, skills and his/her contribution to the research. If the student, together with the supervisor, believes 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.

The supervisor shall not accept a master's thesis for defence if it represents a compilation of the works of other authors and copied texts from previously published works (even if there are references to the works) or if the paper contains indications of plagiarism.

If the supervisor believes that the student's research, in terms of its content and form, complies with the methodological requirements set by the Faculty, he/she signs the master's thesis and it shall be submitted to the related institute and accepted for defence.

2.4. 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 State 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 **60-70 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%.

2.4.1. 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 and of the director of the related institute as well as the place and time of elaboration of the master's thesis (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 *Dr* 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.;
- teaching assistant – assist.

2.4.2. 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 foreign languages. 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 and bibliographical sources, including in foreign languages, and of 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.

2.4.3. 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.

2.4.4. 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 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.

2.4.5. 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 approbated 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).

2.4.6. 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. 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.

2.4.7. 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).

!!! It is **compulsory** for the master's thesis to **use** fundamental research findings 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 thesis.

The necessary number of bibliographical sources, laws and other legal documents depends on the topic of the master's thesis.

!!! The minimum number of bibliographical sources used shall be 50, and at least 20 of the sources shall be in foreign languages.

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. 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 1*). If an annex is several pages in length, every next page shall indicate "continued", e.g. *Annex 1 continued*.

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. 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.

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

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

The pre-defence of the master's thesis shall take place at a meeting of the IBM **not later than three weeks before** its defence at a meeting of the State Examination Commission (SEC).

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

A **printed draft version** of the master's thesis shall be submitted to the secretary of the Institute according to the schedule set by the IBM **not later than a week before** the date set for a pre-defence meeting of the SEC.

!!! The main part of the master's thesis shall be completely elaborated and printed for the pre-defence meeting.

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 IBM 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 IBM. If the student fails in the repeated pre-defence again, the master's thesis shall not be submitted for defence at a SEC meeting.

4.2. Submission of the master's thesis

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 SEC 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 and of the IBM director;
- the applicant for a master's degree shall submit the following to the Faculty's Dean's Office at least 15 days before the SEC meeting:
 - **one hard copy of the master's thesis;**

!!! 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 (or the final work of studies (FWS)) 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 FWS 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**.*

The master's thesis shall not be submitted for defence at a SEC meeting if:

- *its length is inadequate;*
- *research approach chosen has been wrong;*
- *it has not been formatted in accordance with the ESAF methodological Guidelines;*
- *signature of the supervisor and/or the director of the Institute is lacked.*

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 IBM 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 those in foreign languages);*
- *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.

If during the defence of the master's thesis it is revealed that a reviewer had evaluated a master's thesis negligently and carelessly, he/she shall be excluded from the list of reviewers based on a SEC decision, making a record in the SEC protocol.

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 "Study documents and forms; <https://www.esaf.lbtu.lv/lv/study-documents-and-forms>). 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 State Examination Commission (SEC) 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 SEC 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 and other universities of the Republic of Latvia and employees of research institutes

The defence of the master's thesis shall begin with the author's report (**up to 10 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 SEC 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 SEC). The report by the author of the master's thesis shall be followed by questions asked by the SEC 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 SEC meeting, a member of the SEC 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 SEC 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 SEC shall take into consideration the mark given by the reviewers, which are reported in writing to the SEC secretary.

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

1) quality of the master's thesis:

- topicality of the research topic, the skill to accurately define the research problem;
- mutual coherence among the key elements of the programmatic part of the master's thesis and the quality of formulations;
- structure of the master's thesis and the theoretical framework for it;
- application of particular management theories in the master's thesis;
- appropriateness of the research methodology and the description of it, the choice of research methods;
- 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 the elaboration of the master's thesis (the number and

approachability 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;

The decision on the mark for the master's thesis as well as on awarding a degree shall be made at a closed SEC 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 SEC chairperson (deputy chairperson) shall be decisive.

The mark of the master's thesis shall be recorded in a SEC protocol book and in a checklist. If the mark for the defence of the master's thesis is "fail", the SEC 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.

Upon identifying plagiarism in the master's thesis, the SEC 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.

ANNEXES

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

Modra Saulite
(Name, Surname)

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

(Title)

**Master's thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the professional master in
business management**

Author

.....

(signature)

Modra Saulite, matr. No.

(name, surname, matr. No.)

Supervisor

(signature)

assist.prof. *Dr.sc.soc.* **Ieva Barga**

(position, scien. degree, name, surname)

Jelgava 20__
(year)

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

Jelgava

20____.____._____

Hereby I confirm that the master's thesis

—
(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)

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

WITH A MARK _____

PROTOCOL NO. _____

CEC 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 master study programme "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