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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 from the professional master programme **HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT**

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1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Guidelines is to familiarise students from the professional master's programme Human Resource Management delivered by the LBTU Faculty of Economics and Social Development with the requirements for writing and formatting a master's thesis and the procedure for pre-defence and defence thereof. 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 an independent 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 human resource management 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.

Upon completing the programme and defending a master's thesis, the master student is awarded a professional Master's degree in human resource management and a career counsellor qualification.

The learning outcomes of a master's thesis.

Knowledge of:

- how to critically assess theoretical sources in the field of career guidance in human resource management and link them to the topic of the master's thesis.
- In-depth, structured and analytical knowledge (at the level of understanding and use) of career guidance and counselling in human resource management, in accordance with the selected research problem and its specifics.

Skills to:

- independently select and apply social research methods to produce the master's thesis.
- Integrate theoretical findings into the empirical part of the master's thesis.
- Interpret the research results in depth and develop reasoned conclusions and practically applicable proposals; test the research results in providing career guidance in human resource management.
- Apply analysis and synthesis skills in assessing human resource management situations when providing career guidance.
- Independently plan and organize the production of the master's thesis, cooperate with the supervisor.
- Present the results derived from the master's thesis in an argumentative and convincing manner, justify personal opinions, and discuss them with industry specialists.

Competence to:

- integrate knowledge from various fields for effective career guidance in human resource management in accordance with the objectives set, applying a creative and innovative approach and/or solving problems in career counselling and guidance.
- Critically assess a potential relationship between the research results and human resource management for individuals, companies (organizations) and society, as well as identify possibilities and priorities for reducing the negative impacts.
- Present and defend the research results in an argumentative and convincing manner, which demonstrates the master student's academic, analytical and instrumental competencies, including the independent, creative and innovative contributions to the analysis and assessment of complex and dynamic career development guidance

processes in human resource management.

The master's thesis must be practical in nature, with a relevant topic addressing human resource management issues in the field of career counselling and guidance. When producing the master's thesis, the author may propose an innovative model or solution to a problem, but it must be theoretically and practically substantiated.

As part of the master's thesis, the author conducts research on a topical theoretical or practical problem in the field of human resource management concerning career counselling and guidance. The empirical part and conclusions of the master's thesis must give both theoretical findings and practically implementable recommendations.

The master's thesis is worth 30 credit points (30 CP).

The originality of the master's thesis shall be confirmed by the author's *Guarantee* (an example is given in Annex 4). The best master's theses shall be submitted by the State Examination Committee (hereinafter the SEC) to research work contests and recommended for publication or practical application by stakeholders if the author agrees.

A copy of the master's thesis in printed format – 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

Master students produce their master's theses in accordance with the study plan and the course programme, meeting the deadlines. In case of any uncertainty, the master student can ask questions to the programme director or the supervisor.

2.1. Choosing and approving a topic for the master's thesis

The first stage of producing the master's thesis involves determining the basic concept of the master's thesis, with the master student selecting the field of research, specifies the topic, develops the research design: identifies the general topic and subtopic (object and subject of the research), the research aim, research questions, makes a list of literature and other informative sources, selects research methods, develops a work plan and objectives, and agrees it with the supervisor.

At the second stage, the master student summarizes the theoretical and practical knowledge gained during the research.

During the first semester, the master student shall choose an approximate topic for his/her master's thesis and inform the programme director, while the director of the relevant institute, i.e. the Institute of Business and Management Science (UZVA), in cooperation with the programme director, assigns a supervisor, depending on the topic and the teaching personnel's workloads.

The master student, in cooperation with the supervisor, develops the terms of reference for the master's thesis (https://www.esaf.lbtu.lv/sites/esaf/files/2024-11/Magistra_darba_temas_pieteikums_0.docx) and fills in a form to be submitted to UZVA.

After being approved, the master student submits one copy of the terms of reference to UZVA, the second one to the supervisor, and keeps the third one. The terms of

reference shall be computer typeset, produced in three copies using a form that is available on the website of the LBTU Faculty of Economics and Social Development (<https://www.esaf.lbtu.lv/lv/studiju-un-reglamentejosie-dokumenti>). To promote a systematic approach to researching the topic and the gradual production of the master's thesis, the terms of reference must be approved in the 1st semester.

The supervisor and the topic are approved by a dean's decision. 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 doctoral degree or a master's degree. The responsibilities of the supervisor involve advising the student on research-related matters:

- drawing up a work plan;
- creating a research design and structure;
- planning the course of the research;
- selecting the most appropriate research methods and to achieve the research aim;
- selecting the most appropriate and proper literature and other information sources for the level 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 SEC from evaluating the master student's knowledge, skills and his/her contribution to the research. If the master student, together with the supervisor, believes that an adviser has to be involved, it may be done. The advisor is documented and puts his/her signature on the title page of the master's thesis.

The ideas of other authors do not have to be put in quotation marks, yet they must be unbiased. Rewriting text from books is not allowed, as well as the author may not present an idea without giving a citation to the source. If such a violation is detected, action is taken in accordance with the requirements of the LBTU Academic Integrity Regulation (2023) (Senate Decision No. 12-22 of 11/12/2024).

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

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 4);
- annexes;
- decision by the SEC (see Annex 7).

The length master's thesis shall be computer typeset, and the recommended length of the main part of the master's thesis is **60-70 pages** (up to the list of references).

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

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

2.3.1. 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 as well as the place and time of development 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.habil.oec.*, *Dr.paed.*, *Ph.D.*, *Mg.oec.*, *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.

2.3.2. Abstract

An abstract is a brief summary that presents the research aim and specific research tasks (objectives), research problems and/or a hypothesis and research methods used, gives a concise description of the chapters as well as presents the master's thesis's findings and conclusions.

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.

Abstract design. Each abstract is placed on a separate page. The length of the abstract shall not exceed two pages. Abstracts written in both languages must be identical. The abstract pages shall not be numbered but shall be included in the total number of the 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 (objectives);
- 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 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. An abstract template in Latvian and English is given in Annex 2.

2.3.3. Table of contents

The table of contents shall indicate all the components of the master's thesis up to the annexes (see Annex 3). The headings of chapters and subchapters in the table of contents and in the body text shall be identical. The title page and the table of contents page **shall not be numbered but shall be included** in the total number of pages.

Numbering the master's thesis's pages shall start with the next page after the table of contents, which requires inserting a section break.

2.3.4. Introduction

The introduction shall make a potential reader interested in, giving insight into the content and findings of the master's thesis. The introduction shall briefly 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 describes the research problem and justifies its relevance and the theoretical and practical contributions of the research.

The introduction shall specify:

- problematic situation and the research problem;
- urgency of the research, the choice of the topic and the novelty of the research;
- object and subject of the research (general topic and subtopic);
- research limitations (if necessary);
- hypothesis or research questions;
- aim of the research;
- objectives (specific research tasks) to achieve the aim;
- research methodology – the research approach, data acquisition and analysis methods;
- these to be defended;
- short description of the bibliographical sources used.

The definition of a research problem and the urgency 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 social sciences, a problem is a contradiction in a situation that could be theoretically identified or empirically observed and has to be examined and solved employing an appropriate theory. The object and subject of research are those that actually contain the research problem or contradiction, the solution to which must be found during the research process.

The **object of research** (general topic) is an objectively existing part of reality (objects, processes, methods, etc.) or an area from which the researcher subjectively selects a specific, smaller part or fragment (the subject of research) for a detailed examination. The object of research is broader and more general than the subject of

research. The object of research can be a thing, phenomenon, organization, industry, or process that functions and manifests itself through various characteristics or qualities.

The **subject of research** (subtopic) is much more specific than the object of research, as it is an essential component or characteristic of the object of research, or a set thereof, which helps to identify the causes and formation of the research problem. The subject of research is a part of the object of research, subjectively selected by the researcher, which is intended to be researched both theoretically and experimentally. The object of research includes the subject of research.

Based on the urgency of the problem, a **research aim** shall be defined – an imagined or expected research result (what should be achieved by means of the research: what should be researched? what should be discovered? and what should be developed?). There is a single research aim for the master's thesis, which shall be defined as short and specific as possible. The research aim describes the situation to be achieved by the entire research. The research aim is a vision of the result that the research activity is aimed at. It is a scientific or practical result that can be achieved within the research when the research is completed and the master's thesis is prepared for submission. It is recommended to formulate the research aim as a desired result.

Specific research tasks (objectives) 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 reveal 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 (objectives are achieved). The research approach (quantitative, qualitative or combined) applied and the methods of information acquisition and data analysis shall be specified in the master's thesis. The quantitative approach tests a hypothesis, while the qualitative approach puts forward a hypothesis.

A **hypothesis** is a provable assumption about the existence of some causal association or relationship in scientific theory (it reveals the probability of causes and causal associations of the phenomenon researched). It is a concisely formulated projection or assumption that will be achieved and proven as a result of the research. There are also cases where the hypothesis put forward is not confirmed or is only partially confirmed. If the particular research idea has not been proved in theory or in previous research studies, a **research question** shall be raised instead of the hypothesis.

The **theses to be defended** represent brief assessments of the main problems identified by the master's thesis and the course of the research - sequential statements expressed concisely.

Fundamental scientific research studies, applied research studies as well as research papers in international indexed publications, original written works by theoreticians in social and management sciences, monographs, encyclopaedias of the relevant science and explanatory dictionaries and the scientific literature serve as **information sources** for the master's thesis. The master's thesis may use laws of Latvia and other countries, government decisions, government policy documents, statistical data, periodicals, unpublished materials from 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. research papers, surveys) may also serve as information sources.

2.3.5. 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 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 present the theoretical framework and findings regarding the research problem in accordance with the conception of the master's thesis.

It is also advised to refer to national (local) and international experience in tackling the research problem, 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 only a compilation of other authors' findings; it is imperative that the author's own opinions and judgements are also presented, thus demonstrating the author's ability to analyse and compare other authors' findings and draw conclusions or assumptions. The theoretical chapters shall not be written in the form of an abstract or a compilation based on the written 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 should 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 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 empirical part shall present a research methodology, an analysis of data and the research results. The **research methodology** involves:

- demonstrating an understanding of the research design;
- justifying the research approach applied, data acquisition and analysis methods;
- justifying and describing research instruments employed to acquire the data (*e.g., a survey questionnaire, guidelines for interviews, observation maps, code matrices of content analysis etc.*);
- justifying 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*);
- justifying and describing a survey sample calculated according to the data acquisition method/methods selected (*number of respondents, experts, secondary data sets, selected texts for discourse analysis etc.*);
- describing field work (*where, when and how the data were acquired, how the process of data acquisition occurred*);
- outlining how the acquired data are going to be analysed (*analysis details*,

methods used);

- describing in detail the ethical aspects of the survey (*informed consent, the anonymity of the respondents, the principles of data acquisition and processing, etc.*).

The **analysis of acquired 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 a research investigation 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 etc.), discourse analysis and other scientific methods. The data processing and analysis methods shall be selected in line with the selected 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. To demonstrate an understanding of the research conducted, it is necessary 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 that is aligned with the theoretical framework of the master's thesis.

The content of the empirical part of the master's thesis. The analytical or empirical part begins with an introduction, the **components** of which are as follows:

- aim of the empirical study (only for the empirical part, not for the whole master's thesis)
- empirical study questions or hypothesis (only for the empirical part, not for the whole master's thesis)
- tasks (objectives) of the empirical study
- data acquisition methods
- data processing methods
- empirical study base: study site (name), survey respondents (number).
- stages of the study: a brief description thereof: where, when, for how long (see an example below).

The scientific and empirical contribution must be at least partially tested and processed by inferential statistical methods. It is necessary to implement not only the detective but also the formative experiment (e.g. ex post factum experiment, quasi-experiment, case study, etc.).

The introduction to the empirical part shall be very concise (*1...2 pages*), structured and easy to review. The introduction is followed by an extended, detailed description of the structure of the empirical part:

- characteristics of the study site (*1... 2 pages*);
- development of an empirical study methodology;
- background to the empirical study (*observations, author's experience, etc., which the particular study is based on*);
- justification for the selection of a study design and assessment of research rigour (see an example on page 11);
- selection of a tested empirical methodology or development of a new methodology;
- analysis of the results of the empirical study (*specific name*);

- sample (*sample size, respondents, experts, etc.*);
- course of conducting the empirical study;
- results of the study (*data validity check, data processing, interpretation and analysis*);
- conclusions of the empirical study.

Assessment of the research rigour of the empirical study design. To identify the validity of the experiment plan¹, it is recommended to use factors affecting validity, developed either by D.Campbell (1996) or B.Hencké (2009) or A. Bryman (2021).

Internal validity:

- 1. Background effect.** Control is done under the same conditions; therefore, the background effect on both groups is similar. Members of both the experimental and control groups are selected from students in the same year who have studied together so far, under the same conditions. The selection of members of the experimental group is randomized. Therefore, there is a high probability that the background effect on the experimental and control groups is comparable.
- 2. Experiment duration effect.** The number of questions asked is small (20), and the planned control duration is 30 min. Therefore, the probability of the effect of fatigue is small.
- 3. Testing effect.** Control (testing) in this experiment is done only once in both groups (experimental and control). Therefore, it could be considered that the effect of testing does not directly affect validity.
- 4. Effects of instrumentation errors or instability.** In the experiment, the measuring instrument represents control questions, which are exactly the same for both groups. Simultaneous control of both groups by means of the same questions eliminates the effect of the measuring instrument on validity.
- 5. Statistical regression** does not affect validity, as it involves all students with varying levels of attainment.
- 6. The effect of the selection** of participants on validity could be minimised by the randomised selection of group participants. To further assess the probability of this effect, the average level of attainment is determined for each group in the previous phase of learning and the significance of the difference (whether the null hypothesis is valid) is identified.
- 7. Drop-out during the experiment** (*experimental mortality*) - how it affects the validity of the experiment.
- 8. Interaction between participant selection and natural development** cannot affect the validity of the experiment, since it is conducted temporarily.

External validity:

The example considered is a case study, which is not intended to be attributed to the target population, i.e. all students. Therefore, factors affecting external validity are assessed.

- 1. Reactive effect.** Experience gained in the past by participating in experiments (testing) indirectly could affect validity. The results cannot be attributed to individuals who do not have such experience.
- 2. Interaction between participant selection and experimental effects.**
- 3. The effect of experimental conditions** that do not allow the results to be attributed to individuals under natural conditions.

¹ Valid (*Fr. valide, Lat. validus* 'strong') - appropriate. Validity is a criterion of research quality, which indicates the degree of compliance of the research with the nature of the research process and the aim of the research.

- 4. Experimental interference.** The effect of interference in previous experiments on the current experiment is usually observed if experiments are repeated in the same group.

2.3.6 Conclusions and proposals

Conclusions and proposals are the final part of the master's thesis, which plays the most important role in the defence of the master's thesis. Conclusions and proposals have to be written in the form of theses and numbered with Arabic numerals. Proposals may be an important outcome of the research conducted in the master's thesis. The need for proposals is determined by the research aim and specific research tasks (objectives). In conclusions, the author shall demonstrate that:

- the aim has been achieved, the tasks have been performed;
- and **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 (objectives);
- 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*.

2.3.7. List of references

A list of references represents all the bibliographical sources – books, research papers, texts and other information 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 and applied research findings, monographs, handbooks, original research works, as well as research papers from 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, and the minimum number of research papers shall be 5.**

The most significant qualitative indicator for **the list of references** is the use of the latest findings (from sources published in the last five to ten years) (in Latvia, Europe and the world) on the topic. When making the list of references, it is desirable to consider whether:

- the sources listed:

- are from scientific or academic publications, not popular science magazines, newspapers etc. (if they are not the research focus),
- pertain to the topic;

- the sources represent:

- works by internationally renowned authors,
- original works or translations thereof, not reflections thereof,
- works published in different periods,
- works by national authors;

- the sources are diverse:

- represent:

- encyclopaedias,
- monographs,
- scientific research papers and conference proceedings,
- doctoral theses,
- legal acts (laws, regulations, government decisions, standards, etc.),
- works available in electronic format (Internet, CDs), etc.;

- the sources have been identified and used:

- about the general topic and subtopic (object and subject of research):
 - from the perspective of philosophy,
 - from a general scientific perspective,
 - on the sector and industry examined;
- about the research methodology:
 - research methods for the particular research,
 - statistical analysis,
 - computer equipment and software,
 - guidelines for a master's thesis.

Quantitative indicators include:

- total number of sources identified and used,
- number of languages in which sources have been identified and used,
- number of sources used in foreign languages.

Quantitative indicators can vary, depending on the topic.

2.3.8. Annexes

Annexes represent documents and data if they are too detailed and large in size to be 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 1*).

Annexes shall include:

- example(s) of the instrument(s) for acquiring primary data;
- examples of interview transcripts;

- observation maps, 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.

2.4. 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 UZVA Institute not later than three weeks before the final copy is submitted for defence to a meeting of the SEC. A committee is established for the pre-defence of master's theses based on a decision by the director of UZVA. The committee shall consist of at least three teaching personnel members.

By the time of pre-defence, the master student must have met all outstanding course requirements and financial obligations.

The master's thesis is submitted for pre-defence in electronic format and uploaded into the LBTU e-learning platform under the course Master's Thesis (VadZM004) within the deadline set by the programme director, but no later than one week before the date of the pre-defence committee meeting.

For pre-defence, the master's thesis shall be 90% completed (the main part must be completed; there may be partially completed: the abstracts, list of references and annexes). For pre-defence, the master student shall prepare a presentation (up to 10 minutes), where s/he justifies the relevance and urgency of the research and current research problems, states the research aim and objectives (specific research tasks), the general topic and subtopic (object and subject of research), as well as the research questions and/or hypothesis. In the pre-defence presentation, the master student shall mainly show the results of his or her contribution and the problems identified, emphasizing the most significant conclusions and solutions to the problems. It is also necessary to show the degree of readiness of the master's thesis and what still needs to be done. After successful pre-defence, considering the suggestions and remarks expressed at the meeting, the master student improves the master's thesis. In case of unsuccessful pre-defence, the committee decides on the improvement and repeated pre-defence of the master's thesis on a date set by the director of the UZVA Institute. If the rating is negative again in the repeated pre-defence, the master's thesis may not be submitted for defence at a meeting of the State Examination Committee.

For the final defence, the master's thesis (one copy) shall be **bound in a hardcover** 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 UZVA Institute at least 10 working days before a SEC 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 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, and 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_EF12345.pdf**.

A master's thesis that has passed plagiarism control may be defended at a meeting of the State Examination Committee (SEC); 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. The reviewer gives the master's thesis a mark on a 10-point scale. The mark is available to the SEC. The reviewer's responsibility is to perform an in-depth and unbiased evaluation of the content of the master's thesis and to determine whether:

- it complies with the *ESAF Guidelines for Writing and Defending a Master's Thesis* for the master programme Human Resource Management, as well as the *ESAF Guidelines for Writing and Formatting Student Papers*;
- the applicant for the master's degree can analyse, critically review and use research works by other authors (incl. research papers);
- the applicant has the ability to draw up 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 SEC meeting.

The **final defence of master's theses** occurs at an **open meeting** of the SEC, 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 appeal procedure for final examinations is governed by the LBTU Regulation of Studies.

ANNEXES

Example of the title page

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

John Smith
(Name, Surname)

**Career Guidance to Hire and Retain Employees at a
Company**
(Title)

**Master's thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the professional Master's
degree in *human resource management***

Author

(signature)

John Smith, matr. No.
(name, surname, matr. No.)

Supervisor

(signature)

assist.prof. **Dr.sc.soc. Ieva Egle**
(position, scien. degree, name, surname)

Jelgava 20__
(year)

Example of the abstract

ANOTĀCIJA

Smith J. (2019). *Maģistra darba nosaukums*. Maģistra darbs. Jelgava: Latvijas Biozinātņu un tehnoloģiju universitāte.
 Maģistra darbs ir uzrakstīts uz lappusēm, ieskaitot attēlus, tabulas, bibliogrāfiskos nosaukumus,, valodā.
 Darbs sastāv no ievada, nodaļām, secinājumiem un pielikumiem.
 Darbā risināta problēma
 Darba mērķis ir
 Pirmajā darba nodaļā
 Otrajā darba nodaļā
 Trešajā darba nodaļā
 Nozīmīgākie secinājumi
 Zinātniskais un praktiskais devums
 Pētījuma adresāti

ABSTRACT

Smith J. (2019). *Title of the Master's Thesis*. Master's Thesis. Jelgava: Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies.
 The master's thesis is pages long, including figures, tables and bibliography sources in,, languages.
 The master's thesis consists of an introduction, chapters, conclusions and annexes.
 The problem ofhas been solved by the research.
 The aim of the research is.....
are in the first chapter of the master's thesis.
are in the second chapter of the master's thesis.
are in the third chapter of the master's thesis.
 The most important conclusions are the following.....
 Scientific and practical contributions
 The target group

Example of the Table of Contents

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	(page No.)
1. CHAPTER HEADING	(page No.)
1.1. SUBCHAPTER HEADING	(page No.)
1.2. SUBCHAPTER HEADING	(page No.)
2. CHAPTER HEADING	(page No.)
2.1. SUBCHAPTER HEADING	(page No.)
2.1.1. SUB-SUBCHAPTER HEADING	(page No.)
2.1.2. SUB-SUBCHAPTER HEADING	(page No.)
2.2. SUBCHAPTER HEADING	(page No.)
2.3. SUBCHAPTER HEADING	(page No.)
3. CHAPTER HEADING	(page No.)
3.1. SUBCHAPTER HEADING	(page No.)
3.2. SUBCHAPTER HEADING	(page No.)
CONCLUSIONS	(page No.)
PROPOSALS	(page No.)
LIST OF REFERENCES	(page No.)
ANNEXES	(page No.)

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 State 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 as 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 as 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)

LATVIA UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGIES
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Master's programme Human Resource Management

**MASTER PAPER'S
REVIEW**

for acquiring a Master's degree in human resource management and a career
counsellor qualification
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	☐	☐	☐	☐
	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	☐	☐	☐	☐
Introduction	Justification for the relevance and novelty of the research and for the research problem	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Formulation of the object of research (general topic)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Formulation of the subject of research (subtopic)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Justification for research limitations, incl. the research period	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Formulation of a research hypothesis and/or research questions and their subordination to the topic	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Formulation of the research aim and its subordination to the topic	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Formulation of the specific research tasks (objectives) and their subordination to the research aim	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Description of the research methodology	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Formulation of the theses to be defended	☐	☐	☐	☐
Theoretical part	Clear and logical structure of the theoretical part	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Theoretical discussion used theories put forward by various authors and facts and was aligned with the topic	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Use of literature and other sources of information is sufficient	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Scientific research results and findings, as well as research papers were used	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Legal aspects of the topic were presented logically and sufficiently justified	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Opinions of the author are clear, understandable and reasoned	☐	☐	☐	☐
Empirical	Clear and logical structure of the empirical part	☐	☐	☐	☐

part	The empirical part is based on the information tested in the theoretical part	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Performance of a practical assessment of the research problem	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Various solutions to the problem have been developed	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Correct and sufficient application of research methods	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Logical and clear interpretation and assessment of the research results	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conclusions and proposals	Conclusions relate to the research aim and specific research tasks (objectives)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Conclusions reflect the most important findings resulting from the research conducted in the master's thesis	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Conclusions are based on the most important data and facts used in the master's thesis	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Proposals are derived from the analysis, research and conclusions made	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Proposals are justified, specific, addressed to a particular entity and could be implemented in practice	☐	☐	☐	☐

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	☐	☐	☐	☐
	References to literature and data sources are sufficient	☐	☐	☐	☐
	The master's thesis meets the methodological requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐
Research quality	Clear description of the content of the master's thesis and its relevance to the topic	☐	☐	☐	☐
	The master's thesis has achieved the research aim and performed the specific research tasks (objectives)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Information sources used are sufficient and relevant to the research aim and specific research tasks (objectives)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Research methods have been selected and correctly applied based on the research aim	☐	☐	☐	☐
Visual and literary quality	Text and research results are presented in a visually easy-to-understand manner (in tables, figures)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Correct use of terminology, correct academic language	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Grammatically and stylistically correct text	☐	☐	☐	☐

Key values of the master's thesis (if any):

Deficiencies and imperfections of the master's thesis (if any):

Questions to the author:

Overall evaluation of the master's thesis:

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

be awarded a **professional Master's degree in human resource management and a career counsellor qualification.**

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)

STATE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE DECISION

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

WITH A MARK _____

PROTOCOL NO. _____

SEC SECRETARY _____