



VILNIUS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE
FOR THE PREPARATION, DEFENCE,
ASSESSMENT AND STORAGE OF
STUDENTS' WRITTEN ACADEMIC PAPERS**

Document approved by the Council of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Vilnius University, on July 1 2020 in the electronic meeting, protocol No. 210000-TP-5.

The corrections were approved by the Council of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Vilnius University, on April 13 2021 in the remote meeting, protocol No. 210000-TP-6.

The corrections were approved by the Council of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Vilnius University, on June 14 2022 at the meeting, protocol No. 210000-TP-9.

The corrections were approved by the Council of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Vilnius University, on October 11 2022 at the meeting, protocol No. 210000-TP-12.

The corrections were approved by the Council of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Vilnius University, on June 13 2023 at the meeting, protocol No. (1.2 E) 210000-TP-5.

The corrections were approved by the Council of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Vilnius University, on August 29 2023 at the online meeting, protocol No. (1.2. E) 210000-TP-6.

Vilnius, 2023

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Description of the Procedure for the Preparation, Defence, Assessment and Storage of Students' Written Academic Papers of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of Vilnius University (hereinafter – VU FEBA) (hereinafter – the Description) establishes the procedures for the preparation, defence, assessment and storage of course papers (research papers), final Bachelor and Master theses that apply to students of all VU FEBA study programmes.
2. The Description has been prepared in accordance with the “Study Regulations of Vilnius University”, approved by Resolution No SK-2012-12-8 of the Senate Commission of Vilnius University of 21 June 2012, version of Resolution No S-2018-5-2 of Vilnius University Senate of 22 May 2018; “Regulation of the Study Programmes of Vilnius University”, approved by Resolution No SK-2012-12-4 of the Senate Commission of Vilnius University of 21 June 2012, version of Resolution No SK-2013-2-3 of the VU Senate Commission of 31 January 2013, version of Resolution No SK-2013-12-14 of the VU Senate Commission of 24 October 2013; “Regulations for the Preparation, Defence and Storage of Written Academic Papers of Vilnius University Students”, approved by Resolution No S-2017-12-11 of the VU Senate of 19 December 2017; “Description of the Procedure for the Administration of Students' Written Academic Papers in the Study Information System of Vilnius University”, approved by Order No R-512 of the VU Vice-Rector for Studies of 22 November 2017; “Procedure for the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes of Vilnius University”, approved by Resolution No SK-2012-20-6 of VU Senate Commission of 13 December 2012, version of Resolution No SPN-1 of VU Senate of 22 January 2019.
3. The terms used in the text and their abbreviations: Study programme committee – SPC, Vilnius University Study Information System – VUSIS, Vilnius University Virtual Learning Environment – VLE, Electronic Plagiarism Recognition System – EPAS, Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library – eLaba. Defence of the paper by contact – when the defence takes place in the auditorium of the university. Remote defence – when the defence is organized with the help of information and communication technologies and all defence participants work remotely. Defence of the paper in the hybrid way – when the defence is organized with the help of information and communication technologies, but one or more participants of the defence participate in the defence in the auditorium of the university, while others participate remotely.

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURE FOR THE PREPARATION, DEFENCE, ASSESSMENT AND STORAGE OF COURSE PAPERS

- 4. Selection and Approval of Topics for Course Papers**
- 4.1. The course paper shall be written in the study semester specified in the plan of a study programme. The topics of the course papers are offered by the faculty's academic staff and/or researchers working in the field of the study programme. Lecturers and/or researchers propose only as many topics as the number of theses they will undertake to supervise. The topics of the course papers shall be made available to students in VUSIS no later than the first week of the semester in which the course paper is prepared. The topic of the course paper may be further specified if necessary.
- 4.2. The student may also suggest his/her preferred topic for the course paper. In this case, the student must submit a reasoned application including the consent of the potential supervisor to the SPC during the first week of the semester in which the course paper is written. If the topic proposed by the student is not approved, the student must choose a topic from the topics offered by the SPC that has not yet been selected by other students.
- 4.3. No later than during the first 2 weeks of the semester in which the course paper is written, students (including those who participate in an exchange programme in that particular semester) choose the topics of the course paper in the VUSIS system and supervisors are assigned to them accordingly.

5. Preparation of Course Papers

- 5.1. Course papers shall be prepared in accordance with this Description and the Methodological Requirements for the Preparation of Course Papers and Bachelor Theses set forth by VU FEBA. These documents are published on the VU FEBA website www.evaf.vu.lt and <https://www.evaf.vu.lt/en/>.
- 5.2. Seminars may be organized to facilitate the preparation of course papers, while methodological material is placed in the VLE.
- 5.3. Students shall write course papers individually.
- 5.4. Course papers shall be written in the standard Lithuanian language, except in cases when the study programme is conducted in English or the supervisor is a foreign lecturer. In terms of the possibility to prepare a course paper in English when the study programme is conducted in Lithuanian, the student must apply to the relevant SPC with a motivated request. The request must be approved by the supervisor assigned to the student. The student will be notified about the decision of the SPC at their university e-mail address within 5 working days from the receipt of the application.
- 5.5. The student shall consult the course paper supervisor on a regular basis according to a mutually agreed schedule. Consultations can also take place remotely using remote means of communication. The student shall report on each of the stages of course paper preparation in accordance with the procedure established by the supervisor.

6. Submission of Course Papers for Evaluation and Defence

- 6.1. The final version of the course paper shall be submitted to the supervisor for evaluation at least 6 working days before the last scheduled day of submission of course papers. After the supervisor approves the final version, the student must upload their course paper (a *pdf* version) to VUSIS no later than 3 working days before the defence date. The course paper uploaded to VUSIS cannot be edited.
- 6.2. Before deciding whether or not to allow the defence of the course paper, the supervisor of the course paper must consult the computer plagiarism check report in EPAS or another plagiarism checking system. If the course paper meets the requirements, the course paper can be defended.
- 6.3. If the student fails to submit the course paper within the stipulated time or submits the paper that does not meet the methodological requirements, the supervisor of the course paper has the right to refuse to evaluate the work. In this case, the student shall not be allowed to defend the course paper, and the supervisor enters "Not allowed to defend" in VUSIS. The student can defend the course paper in the first two weeks of the new semester.
- 6.4. If plagiarism of the course paper is detected, the student is not allowed to defend the course paper, and the supervisor enters "Not allowed to defend" in VUSIS. The supervisor informs the Dean of VU FEBA in writing or by e-mail, submitting both the summary and the spreadsheet from the EPAS system and/or other information substantiating plagiarism. The Dean of VU FEBA imposes a penalty on the student provided for in the "Study Regulations of Vilnius University"¹. The student can defend the course paper in the first two weeks of a new semester, but on another topic.

7. Assessment and Defence of Course Papers

- 7.1. The course paper shall be defended at a time mutually agreed between the student and the supervisor, but no later than on the last day of the semester in which the course paper is written.
- 7.2. The attendance of defence by the student who wrote the course paper is compulsory, unless they are unable to attend due to illness or other important reasons. The course paper can also be defended using remote communication tools.
- 7.3. When evaluating the course paper, the supervisor follows this Description (see **Annex 4**, Assessment Scale and Criteria for Course Papers and Bachelor theses), the relevant course unit description of the study programme and the criteria set forth in "VU FEBA Methodological Requirements for the Preparation of Course Papers and Bachelor Theses", and "Study Regulations of Vilnius University"².

¹ https://www.vu.lt/site_files/Studies/Study_regulations/Study_regulations_of_VU.pdf

² https://www.vu.lt/site_files/Studies/Study_regulations/Study_regulations_of_VU.pdf

8. Recording of the Defence and Storage of Course Papers

- 8.1. Evaluation (grading) of course papers are entered into the VUSIS by the supervisors of course papers no later than within 5 working days after the defence.
- 8.2. The storage of written academic papers in VUSIS is regulated by the "Description of the Procedure for the Administration of Written Academic Papers in the Study Information System of Vilnius University". The electronic version of the course paper uploaded to VUSIS is stored in accordance with the deadlines for storing the activity documents provided by VU; the printed version of the course paper shall be stored for 1 year.

CHAPTER III PROCEDURE FOR THE PREPARATION, DEFENCE, EVALUATION AND STORAGE OF BACHELOR THESES

9. Selection and Approval of Topics for Bachelor Theses

- 9.1. Bachelor thesis shall be written in the last semester of the study programme.
- 9.2. If the course paper required in the study programme is part of the bachelor thesis, the student further develops the topic of the course paper. The student's bachelor thesis is assigned to be supervised by the same lecturer who supervised the student's course paper. No later than the first two weeks of the semester in which the bachelor thesis is written, the student may, due to important reasons, request the SPC to change the supervisor of the bachelor thesis. In case of such a change, the academic workload of the supervisors shall be taken into account.
- 9.3. If the study programme does not require a course paper or the course paper is not part of the bachelor thesis, no later than within the first two weeks of the semester in which the bachelor thesis is written, the student chooses a topic of bachelor thesis in the VUSIS system from the topics offered by SPC and the academic staff and/or researchers. Lecturers and/or researchers propose only as many topics as the number of theses they will undertake to supervise. The topic of the bachelor thesis may be further specified if necessary.
- 9.4. The student can also suggest a preferred topic for the bachelor thesis. In this case, the student must submit a reasoned application including the consent of the potential supervisor to the SPC during the first week of the semester in which the bachelor thesis is written. If the topic proposed by the student is not accepted, the student must choose a topic from the topics submitted by the SPC and not yet selected by other students.
- 9.5. No later than one month before the date of bachelor thesis registration, students shall submit to the SPC (branch) administrator the final titles of bachelor theses, which together with the list of supervisors shall be entered into VUSIS and approved by the order of the Dean of VU FEBA.

10. Bachelor Thesis Preparation

- 10.1. Bachelor theses are prepared in accordance with this Description and the "Methodological Requirements for the Preparation of Course papers and Bachelor Theses at VU FEBA". These documents are published on the VU FEBA website www.evaf.vu.lt and <https://www.evaf.vu.lt/en/>.
- 10.2. Seminars can be organized to assist the preparation of bachelor theses, and methodological material is placed in the VLE.
- 10.3. Bachelor theses shall be written individually.
- 10.4. Bachelor theses shall be written in the standard Lithuanian language unless the study programme is conducted in English or the supervisor is a foreign lecturer. For the possibility to prepare bachelor thesis in English, when the study programme is conducted in Lithuanian, the student must apply to the relevant SPC with a motivated application, certified by the signature of the assigned supervisor. The student will be informed about the decision of the SPC by e-mail at the student's VU email address within 5 working days of receipt of the application.

10.5. The student shall periodically consult the supervisor according to a mutually agreed schedule. Consultations can also take place remotely using remote communication tools. The student shall report on each of the stages of the bachelor thesis preparation in accordance with the procedure established by the supervisor. A draft version of the bachelor thesis must be submitted to the supervisor no later than 4 weeks before the date of registration of the bachelor thesis.

11. Submission of Bachelor Theses for Evaluation and Defence.

11.1. Students to be allowed to participate in the final stage of studies, must have:

11.1.1. Completed the entire study programme and have no outstanding debts and/or academic debts;

11.1.2. Fulfilled all financial obligations to the university;

11.1.3. Submitted the bachelor thesis by the deadlines.

11.2. The final version of the bachelor thesis shall be submitted to the supervisor for assessment at least 15 working days before the date of the defence. After the supervisor confirms that the work is properly prepared and meets the "Methodological Requirements for the Preparation of Course Papers and Bachelor Theses at VU FEBA", the student must upload the bachelor thesis and its metadata (summaries in Lithuanian and English) to VUSIS no later than 10 working days before the defence of the bachelor thesis. The bachelor thesis not uploaded to VUSIS cannot be registered, defended and evaluated. The bachelor thesis uploaded to VUSIS cannot be edited.

11.3. Before making a decision to allow or not to defend the thesis, the supervisor shall check the thesis in EPAS or another plagiarism system, shall get acquainted with the report of the computerized check of the thesis, and shall mark their decision in VUSIS. In case of the supervisor's departure or their illness, the decision on the thesis shall be noted by the chairman of the SPC upon receiving of all information related to the eligibility of the bachelor thesis sent by the supervisor.

11.4. If the supervisor decides that the bachelor thesis is improperly prepared and/or prepared without the supervisor's guidance, and therefore cannot be defended, in VUSIS the supervisor marks it as "Not allowed to defend" and submits their feedback and arguments why the student's work is not defensible. In this case, the student has the right to apply to the Defence Commission for the permission to defend the bachelor thesis without the permission of the supervisor. The application and their bachelor thesis must be submitted by the student to the Defence Commission no later than 2 working days from the supervisor's decision not to allow the defence of the bachelor thesis. After considering the student's motives, the Defence Commission, no later than 3 working days after the receipt of the student's application, shall decide whether to allow the student to defend the bachelor thesis. The student will receive an e-mail from the University about the decision of the Defence Commission to the student's university e-mail address within 1 working day from the receipt of the decision of the Commission.

11.5. The Chairman of the SPC and/or the Chairman of the Defence Commission shall provide for reviewers and opponents of the bachelor thesis. Employees of other departments or other institutions and representatives of social partners may be invited to review the bachelor thesis. No later than 7 working days before the defence date, the SPC (branch) administrator sends the students' works to the reviewers and opponents who shall carry out the evaluation of bachelor theses. The reviewer submits their review to the SPC (branch) administrator no later than 2 working days before the defence date (see **Annex 2**). The bachelor thesis review shall be written in the language the study programme is delivered.

11.6. The bachelor thesis review without the evaluation proposed by the reviewer and questions for the defence shall be sent by the SPC (or branch) administrator to the student's e-mail provided by the university no later than 1 working day before the meeting of the Defence Commission at which the bachelor thesis will be defended.

11.7. If a case of plagiarism is identified by the supervisor, reviewer or the Defence Commission, the bachelor thesis may not be defended, assessed and made public, and the student will be given a grade "Not allowed to defend". The person who detected the plagiarism in writing or by e-mail informs the Dean of VU FEBA accordingly by submitting a summary and a statement from the EPAS and/or other plagiarism

substantiating information system. The student is subject to the penalty provided for in the Study Regulations of Vilnius University³.

12. Defence and Evaluation of Bachelor Theses

- 12.1. The Chairman of the SPC and/or the research departments of the faculty supervising the branches of the study programme at least one month prior to the date of submission of the bachelor thesis set the dates for the defence of the bachelor thesis and form the Defence Commission, coordinate with it and determine the dates of the bachelor thesis defence. The Defence Commission includes lecturers and/or faculty researchers of the respective field of study, as well as a representative of an external institution/organisation. The dates of the defence and the composition of the commission are approved by the Rector on the basis of the order of the Dean of VU FEBA. Students, reviewers and opponents are informed about the bachelor thesis defence dates and bachelor thesis submission deadlines by the SPC (branch) administrators. Dates for the defence of bachelor theses are also provided in the timetable of VU FEBA, at least one month before the date of the bachelor thesis defence.
- 12.2. The defence of the bachelor thesis is public (except closed bachelor thesis defences) and takes place at the meeting of the Defence Commission in accordance with the procedure established in this Description.
- 12.3. At the request of the supervisor or the Chairman of the SPC or the institution where the work was prepared, the bachelor thesis may be defended in a closed meeting of the Defence Commission unless the bachelor thesis results are to be made public. An institution requesting a closed defence shall apply in writing to the Dean of VU FEBA no later than one month before the date of the bachelor thesis defence provided for in the respective study programme. The Commission then shall announce part of the meeting as close.
- 12.4. Preparation of presentation for the bachelor thesis defence:
 - 12.4.1. For the bachelor thesis defence, the student must prepare a presentation (e.g. on *MS PowerPoint*). The official University slide template is recommended which can be found here: <https://www.vu.lt/apiemus/vu-atributika> or <https://www.vu.lt/en/about-vu/vu-brand-style-guidelines>. The student must briefly present his/her work: state the problem, aim, objectives, discuss the applied methods and their reliability, reveal the results of empirical research, introduce the conclusions, provide and justify recommendations.
 - 12.4.2. It is recommended to prepare about 10-12 slides (text, tables, figures – only what is presented in the bachelor thesis), for example: topic, author, supervisor of the bachelor thesis (slide 1); relevance and problem of the bachelor thesis (slide 2); aim and objectives of the bachelor thesis (slide 3); literature analysis (slides 4-5); aim, objectives, methods of the research (slide 6); justification of the research sample (slide 7); research results (slides 8-10); conclusions and suggestions (slides 11-12). The slides delivering a presentation do not have to contain a lot of text, it is not advisable to choose a small font, it is better not to put several figures, tables, etc. in one slide.
- 12.5. Defence of the bachelor thesis:
 - 12.5.1. The Chairman of the Defence Commission opens the defence meeting and presents the defence procedure. The chairman of the defence commission ensures the quorum, i.e. participation of more than 50% of commission members.
 - 12.5.2. During the defence hearing, the Chairman of the Defence Commission invites students to defend their bachelor theses by introducing the name of the bachelor thesis being defended. The topic of the work that has already been approved cannot be questioned during the defence.
 - 12.5.3. The defence of the bachelor thesis takes place in the language of the study programme in which the student is studying. The bachelor thesis presentation delivered by the student should not exceed 10 min. If a student exceeds the time assigned for the bachelor thesis presentation, the Chairman of the Defence Commission has the right to terminate the presentation of the work after giving a warning remark.
 - 12.5.4. After the student's presentation, the reviewer provides their opinion on the student's bachelor thesis. If the reviewer is not involved in the defence, their review is read by the bachelor thesis opponent. After the student answers the comments and questions raised in the review, a discussion with the student shall be held and questions raised by the bachelor thesis opponent. After the student answers the opponent's questions, the members of the Defence Commission or other persons participating in the defence may ask questions related to the published information.

³ https://www.vu.lt/site_files/Studies/Study_regulations/Study_regulations_of_VU.pdf

- 12.5.5. An online or hybrid bachelor thesis defence must be recorded and the video and/or audio recordings must be kept in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University – for a period of 6 months from the date of the publication of the final evaluation of the learning outcome. During the public defence of the bachelor thesis, the recording of the student's defence speech may be carried out by recording devices, after the persons involved in the defence had been informed accordingly. Students and/or other persons participating in the defence who wish to make or receive a record of the defence of the bachelor theses must obtain the permission of the Defence Commission. The Chairperson of the Defence Board may impose additional requirements for the identification of students. The protection and use of personal data shall be regulated by the description of the procedure for the processing of personal data at Vilnius University.
- 12.6. Assessment of the bachelor thesis:
- 12.6.1. Bachelor theses are evaluated in a closed meeting of the Defence Commission after completing the defence of all the bachelor theses of that day (or in cases where several defence streams are scheduled on the same day, after completing the defence of all the bachelor theses during a separate meeting).
- 12.6.2. The Defence Commission, when assessing the defence of students' bachelor theses, follows this Description (see **Annex 4**, the scale and criteria for the evaluation of course papers and bachelor theses), as well as the course unit description of the relevant study programme, the criteria specified in the evaluation procedure included in the "Methodological Requirements for the Preparation of Course Papers and Bachelor Thesis set forth by VU FEBA" and the "Study Regulations of Vilnius University"⁴.
- 12.6.3. The Defence Commission, when assessing the student's bachelor thesis, takes into account the assessment of the bachelor thesis proposed by the reviewer and the defence of the bachelor thesis, i. e. the student's answers to the questions of the reviewer, opponent, members of the commission and other persons who participated in the public defence of the bachelor thesis.
- 12.6.4. The decision on the assessment of the bachelor thesis is made by the Defence Commission collegially. A member of the commission who did not take part in the defence of a particular bachelor thesis does not evaluate that work. In the absence of consensus, the decision on the final assessment of the bachelor thesis shall be taken by the Defence Commission by voting. The decision shall be taken by simple majority. If the opinions of the members of the Defence Commission regarding the assessment of the bachelor thesis are evenly distributed, the assessment of the bachelor thesis shall be determined by the assessment proposed by the Chairman of the Defence Commission.
- 12.6.5. If the supervisor is a member of the Defence Commission, he or she shall not vote in deciding on the final assessment of the bachelor thesis of the student under their supervision. In cases where the Chairman of the Defence Commission is unable to vote because the bachelor thesis of the student under their supervision is being evaluated and the opinions of the members of the Defence Commission on the bachelor thesis evaluation are evenly distributed, the evaluation is determined by the evaluation proposed by the Vice-Chairman of the Commission elected by voting. If the reviewer is also a member of the Defence Commission, their proposed evaluation of the bachelor thesis is included in the final evaluation only once and can be proposed after the defense.
- 12.6.6. After the meeting of the Defence Commission, the Chairman of the Commission or the SPC (or branch) administrator writes the evaluations in VUSIS. The report and a bachelor thesis defence protocol are placed in the document management system "Avilys" and shall be signed by all members of the Commission.
- 12.6.7. Student assessments are not made public, information on the assessment of each bachelor thesis is provided by the Chairman of the Defence Commission to each student individually and/or students have access to the bachelor thesis assessment in the VUSIS system where the assessment is entered no later than the day of the defence.
- 12.7. The Commission's decision on the assessment of the bachelor thesis is final and not subject to appeal. For procedural violations of the bachelor thesis defence that may have affected their assessment, the student has the right to apply to the VU FEBA Dispute Committee and submit an appeal in accordance with the VU FEBA Dispute Committee regulations no later than the next working day after the defence takes place. The

⁴ https://www.vu.lt/site_files/Studies/Study_regulations/Study_regulations_of_VU.pdf

appeal must identify the specific breach of the bachelor thesis defence procedure and the circumstances confirming the existence of the breach.

- 12.8. A student who has not defended the bachelor thesis within the allocated time or failed to defend their bachelor thesis shall be expelled from the University for failure. The second defence of the bachelor thesis is allowed only after the student resumes studies, no earlier than in the next academic year. If the bachelor thesis prepared on the same topic is not defended for the second time, the work is prepared on another topic. A student who resumes their studies after they had been removed from the student lists due to a detected plagiarism must write the bachelor thesis on a new topic.

13. Storage and Publicity of Bachelor Theses

- 13.1. The storage of written academic papers in VUSIS is regulated by the "Description of the Procedure for the Administration of Written Academic Papers in the Study Information System of Vilnius University". Electronic documents are permanently stored in VUSIS, and the bachelor theses uploaded from VUSIS to eLABa are stored according to the procedure and deadlines set in eLABa regulations.
- 13.2. All the defended bachelor theses must be made public in eLABa, unless the Defence Commission decides not to publish the bachelor thesis in eLABa. A decision not to publish a bachelor thesis in eLABa can be made if:
- 13.2.1. The bachelor thesis uses confidential information as defined in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Lithuania.
- 13.2.2. Uploading and/or making public the bachelor thesis would infringe the rights of the student, eLABa manager (s) or those of other copyright holders.
- 13.2.3. Uploading and/or publishing the bachelor thesis would violate the data subjects' right to privacy.
- 13.2.4. The student requests to establish an Embargo period in the Guarantee.

CHAPTER IV

PROCEDURE FOR PREPARATION, DEFENCE, EVALUATION AND STORAGE OF MASTER THESES

14. Selection and Approval of Topics for Master Theses

- 14.1. The Final Master thesis is usually awarded 30 credits from the total volume of master degree programmes and is divided proportionally into three academic papers: Scientific research project 1, Scientific research project 2 and Master thesis. They are written during the semesters specified in the plan of the study programme.
- 14.2. Topics for the master theses are offered to SPC by the lecturers and/or researchers working in the field of the study programme. Lecturers and/or researchers propose only as many topics as the number of theses they will undertake to supervise. The topic of the master thesis may be revised and specified if necessary. The SPC administrator provides the master students with an approved list of master theses topics. Master students may also offer the preferred topics for writing master theses. In this case, no later than during the first week of the semester in which the Master thesis is written, the master student shall submit a motivated request to the SPC Chairman in the VUSIS system. The SPC Chairman or the SPC member designated by them reviews and approves the topic's suitability. If the topic proposed by the master student is not approved, the student shall choose a topic from the topics presented by SPC and not yet chosen by other master students.
- 14.3. No later than the first 2 weeks of the semester in which the master thesis is written, master students shall choose topics for the master theses and the supervisors shall be assigned to them. For important reasons, during the writing of the master thesis, a student may ask the SPC to change the supervisor, but such a change takes into account the academic workload of the master thesis supervisors.
- 14.4. No later than 1 month before the master thesis submission date, the master students shall send by email to the SPC administrator the final titles of the master theses, which together with the list of the supervisors shall be entered into VUSIS and approved by the order of the Dean of VU FEBA.

15. Preparation of Master Theses

- 15.1. Scientific research project 1, Scientific research project 2 and Master thesis shall be prepared in accordance with this "Description and the Methodological Requirements for Master Thesis of the VU FEBA". These documents are published on the VU FEBA website www.evaf.vu.lt and <https://www.evaf.vu.lt/en/>. The procedure for submission, defence and evaluation of Scientific research project 1, Scientific research project 2 and Master thesis is also defined in the subject description of the specific study programme.
- 15.2. Seminars can be organized to facilitate the preparation of Scientific research project 1, Scientific research project 2 and Master thesis, and methodological material is placed in the VLE.
- 15.3. Master students shall write the master thesis individually.
- 15.4. Master theses shall be written in the standard Lithuanian language, unless the study programme is conducted in English or the supervisor is a foreign lecturer. In terms of the possibility to prepare the master thesis in English, when the study programme is conducted in Lithuanian, the master student must apply to the relevant SPC with a motivated application, approved by the signature of the appointed supervisor. The master student will be notified about the decision of the SPC by an e-mail at the student's university email address within 5 working days of the receipt of the request.
- 15.5. Master students consult the master thesis supervisor on a regular basis according to a mutually agreed schedule. Consultations can also take place remotely using means of remote communication. The master student shall report on each of the stages of the thesis preparation in accordance with the procedure established by the supervisor.

16. Submission of Master Theses for Evaluation and Defence

- 16.1. Scientific research project 1 and Scientific research project 2 must be finalized and submitted by email no later than 5 days before the defence according to the procedure established by the SPC. The master thesis review form (see Appendix 3) can be used to prepare reviews of Scientific research project 1 and Scientific research project 2, in which only the criteria relevant to the specific thesis project are evaluated. Reviews of Scientific research project 1 and Scientific research project 2 are submitted at the discretion of SPCs.
- 16.2. Access to the final stage of studies is allowed to those master students who:
 - 16.2.1. Have completed the entire study programme and have no debts and/or academic debts.
 - 16.2.2. Have fulfilled all financial obligations to the university.
 - 16.2.3. Submitted their master theses by the deadline.
- 16.3. The final version of the master thesis shall be submitted to the supervisor for assessment at least 15 working days before the date of the defence. After the supervisor confirms that the master thesis has been prepared properly and meets the "Methodological requirements of the Master Thesis of VU FEBA", the master student must upload the master thesis and its metadata (summaries in Lithuanian and English) to VUSIS no later than 6 working days before the defence. The master theses not uploaded to VUSIS cannot be registered, defended or evaluated. The work uploaded to VUSIS cannot be edited.
- 16.4. Before deciding on the suitability of the master thesis for defence, the supervisor checks it in the EPAS or other plagiarism checking system and in VUSIS shall indicate their decision to allow or not to defend master thesis. In the absence of the supervisor or in case of their illness, the decision on the master thesis shall be indicated by the Chairman of the SPC upon the receipt of all information in line with the compliance of master thesis to the requirements from the supervisor.
- 16.5. If the supervisor decides that the master thesis has not been prepared properly and/or has been prepared without the supervisor's guidance and cannot be defended, the supervisor in VUSIS marks "Not allowed to defend" and writes their arguments why the master thesis cannot be defended. The master student has the right to apply to the Defence Commission with a request to allow the defence of the master thesis without the permission of the supervisor. The master student must submit the application and the master thesis to the Defence Commission no later than 2 working days from the date of the supervisor's decision not to allow the defence of the master thesis. After considering the motives of the master student, the Defence Commission shall decide no later than 3 working days from the receipt of the master student's application whether to allow the master student to defend the master thesis. Within 1 working day of the receipt of the Commission's decision, the master student shall be notified at their university e-mail address about the decision of the Defence Commission.

- 16.6. The Chairman of the SPC and/or the Chairman of the Defence Commission assigns the reviewers and opponents of the master thesis. No later than 7 working days before the date of the defence, the SPC administrator sends the master theses to the reviewers and opponents for evaluation. The reviewer submits their review to the SPC administrator no later than 2 working days before the defence date (see **Annex 3**). The master thesis review shall be written in the language of the study programme. No later than 1 working day before the meeting of the Defence Commission, where the master thesis will be defended, the SPC administrator shall send a review of the master thesis (without the evaluation proposed by the reviewer and questions for the defence) to the master student at their university e-mail address.
- 16.7. If the supervisor, reviewer or the Defence Commission identifies a case of plagiarism, the master thesis can not be defended, assessed and made public, then the student will be given a grade "Not allowed to defend". The person who detected the plagiarism in writing or by e-mail informs the Dean of VU FEBA, submitting both the summary and the spreadsheet from the EPAS or other plagiarism substantiating system. The student is subject to the penalty provided for in the Study Regulations of Vilnius University⁵.

17. Defence and Evaluation of Master Theses

- 17.1. The Chairman of the SPC, at least one month before the date of submission of the master thesis, shall set the dates for the defence of the master thesis, form the Defence Commission, coordinates with it and sets the dates for the defence of the master thesis. The Defence Commission shall include lecturers and/or researchers of the faculty working in the field of the respective study programme, as well as a representative of an external institution/organisation. The Defence Commission shall be approved by the Rector on the basis of the Order of the Dean of VU FEBA. The master students, reviewers and opponents shall be informed about the master theses defence dates by the SPC administrator. The dates for the submission and defence of master theses are provided in the VU FEBA schedule at least one month before the date of submission of the Master thesis.
- 17.2. The defence of the master thesis shall be public (except the closed mode of master thesis defence) and takes place at the meeting of the Defence Commission in accordance with the procedure established in this Description in contact, remote or hybrid mode.
- 17.3. In the case of a remote or hybrid defence, it must be recorded and the video and/or audio recordings must be kept in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for a period of 6 months from the date of the publication of the final evaluation of the study results. During the public defence of the master thesis, the speech of the master student during the master thesis defence procedure may be recorded by means of recording, after the persons participating in the defence had been informed accordingly. Students and/or other persons participating in the defence who wish to make or receive a record of the defence of works must obtain the permission of the Defence Commission. The protection and use of personal data is determined by "The description of the procedure for handling personal data at Vilnius University".
- 17.4. At the request of the supervisor of the master thesis, the Chairman of the SPC or the institution where the thesis was prepared, the master thesis may be defended in a closed meeting of the Defence Commission, provided that the results of the thesis are not made public. The institution requesting a closed defence shall apply in writing to the Dean of the VU FEBA at least one month before the date of the defence of the Master thesis scheduled for the relevant study programme. The Commission shall then declare part of the hearing closed.
- 17.5. The Chairman of the Defence Commission shall open the defence meeting and present the defence procedure. During the defense meeting, the Chairman of the Defense Commission ensures a quorum, i.e. more than 50 percent participation of commission members. At the defence meeting, the Chairman of the Defence Commission shall invite the master students to defend their master theses by presenting the title of the master thesis to be defended. During the defence, the already approved topic of the work cannot be discussed.
- 17.6. The master thesis defence takes place in the language of the study programme in which the student is studying. It is up to the SPC to decide in which language the English-language master thesis should be defended when a master's student is studying in a Lithuanian-language study programme. During the defence, the master student shall briefly present the master thesis, by indicating the research problem, goal, and objectives, briefly describing the object, the results obtained, the methods used, introducing the

⁵ https://www.vu.lt/site_files/VU_studiju_nuostatai_suvestin%C4%97_redakcija_nuo_2018-09-25.pdf;
https://www.vu.lt/site_files/Studies/Study_regulations/Study_regulations_of_VU.pdf

conclusions and justifying them, providing recommendations. The delivery of the master thesis should not exceed 12 minutes. If the master student exceeds the time assigned for the master thesis presentation, the Chairman of the Defence Commission has the right to terminate the presentation of the master thesis after giving a warning remark.

- 17.7. After the master student delivers their presentation, the reviewer gives their opinion on the student's master thesis. If the reviewer is not involved in the defence, their review is read by the master thesis opponent. After the master student answers the comments and questions raised in the review, the discussion with the student is led and the questions are raised by the opponent of the master thesis. After the master student answers the opponent's questions, the members of the Defence Commission or other persons participating in the defence may ask questions related to the information presented during the defence.
- 17.8. Master theses shall be evaluated in a closed meeting of the Defence Commission at the end of the defence of all the master theses of that day (or at the end of the defence of all the master theses of a separate meeting when several defence streams are scheduled on the same day).
- 17.9. When assessing the defence of master theses, the Defence Commission follows this Description (see Assessment Scale and Criteria for Master Theses in **Annex 5**), as well as the relevant course unit description of the study programme, based on the criteria established in "Methodological Requirements for Master Thesis at VU FEBA" and the "Study Regulations of Vilnius University"⁶.
- 17.10. When evaluating the master student's theses, the Defence Commission takes into account the thesis evaluation proposed by the reviewer and the defence of the thesis, i. e. the answers of the master student to the questions of the reviewer, opponent, members of the Defence Commission and other persons involved in the public defence of the master thesis.
- 17.11. The decision on the evaluation of the master thesis shall be made by the Defence Commission collegially. A member of the Defence Commission who did not participate in the defence of a particular master thesis does not evaluate that master thesis. In the absence of consensus, the decision on the final assessment of the master thesis shall be taken by the Defence Commission by voting. The decision shall be taken by a simple majority. If the opinions of the members of the Defence Commission regarding the evaluation of the master thesis are evenly distributed, the evaluation of the master thesis shall be determined by the evaluation proposed by the Chairman of the Defence Commission.
- 17.12. If the supervisor of the master thesis is a member of the Defence Commission, they shall not vote to make a decision on the final assessment of the master thesis of the master student under their supervision. In cases where the Chairman of the Defence Commission is unable to vote because the evaluation concerns the master thesis of the master student who is under their supervision, or their and the opinions of members of the Defence Commission on the evaluation of master thesis are evenly distributed, the evaluation is determined by the evaluation proposed by the Vice-Chairman of the Commission elected by the members of the Defence Commission. If the reviewer is also a member of the Defence Commission, their proposed evaluation of the master thesis is included in the final evaluation only once and can be proposed after the defense.
- 17.13. After the meeting of the Defence Commission, the Chairman of the Commission or the SPC administrator writes the evaluations in VUSIS. The report and a master thesis defence protocol are placed in the document management system "Avily's" and shall be signed by all members of the Commission.
- 17.14. The evaluations of master students shall not be made public, information about the evaluation of each master thesis is provided by the Chairman of the Defence Commission to each master student separately and/or master students can get familiar with the master thesis evaluation in VUSIS system, where the evaluation shall be entered no later than the day of the defence.
- 17.15. The Commission's decision on the assessment of the master thesis is final and not subject to appeal. Regarding procedural violations of the master thesis defence, which may have affected the assessment of master thesis, the master student has the right to apply to the VU FEBA Dispute Committee and submit an appeal in accordance with the VU FEBA Dispute Committee regulations no later than the next working day after the defence. The appeal must identify the specific violation of the master thesis defence procedure and the circumstances confirming the fact of the violation.

⁶ https://www.vu.lt/site_files/Studies/Study_regulations/Study_regulations_of_VU.pdf

17.16. A master student who has not defended the master thesis within the assigned time or failed to defend the master thesis will be expelled from the University for failure. Master students shall be allowed to defend the master thesis for the second time only after the resumption of studies, no earlier than in the next academic year. By the decision of the SPC, the Defense Commission can be formed and the master thesis is allowed to defend the next semester of study. If the master thesis prepared on the same topic is not defended for the second time, the master thesis shall be prepared on another topic. A master student who has been removed from the student lists as a result of detected plagiarism, after resuming their studies, must write the master thesis on a new topic.

18. Storage and Publicity of Master Theses

18.1. The storage of the written academic papers in VUSIS is regulated by the "Description of the Procedure for the Administration of the Written Academic Papers in the Study Information System of Vilnius University". Electronic documents are permanently stored in VUSIS, and the master theses uploaded from VUSIS to eLABa are stored according to the procedure and deadlines set in eLABa regulations.

18.2. All the defended master theses must be made public in eLABa, unless the Defence Commission decides not to publish master theses in eLABa. A decision not to publish a master thesis in eLABa can be made if:

18.2.1. The master thesis uses confidential information as defined in accordance with the procedure provided for in the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania.

18.2.2. Uploading the master thesis and/or making it public would infringe the rights of the student, eLABa manager (s) or other copyright holders.

18.2.3. Uploading the storage of the master thesis and/or making it public would violate the rights of data subjects to privacy.

18.2.4. The student requests an Embargo period in the Guarantee.

Vilniaus universiteto studijuojančiojo,
teikiančio baigiamąjį darbą,
GARANTIJA

WARRANTY
for Vilnius University Student Thesis

Vardas, pavardė:

Name, Surname:

Padalinys:

Academic unit:

Studijų programa:

Study programme:

Darbo pavadinimas:

Topic of the Thesis:

Darbo tipas:

Type of the Thesis:

Garantuojau, kad mano baigiamasis darbas yra parengtas sąžiningai ir savarankiškai, kitų asmenų indėlio į parengtą darbą nėra. Jokių neteisėtų mokėjimų už šį darbą niekam nesu mokėjęs.

I guarantee that my Thesis is prepared in good faith and independently, there is no contribution to this academic Thesis from other individuals. I have not made any illegal payments related to this Thesis.

Šiame darbe tiesiogiai ar netiesiogiai panaudotos kitų šaltinių citatos yra pažymėtos literatūros nuorodose.

Quotes from other sources directly or indirectly used in this Thesis, are indicated in literature references.

Aš, [Vardas Pavardė], patvirtinu (pažymėti)

I, [Name Surname], confirm (check)

Patvirtinu, kad baigiamasis darbas yra pateiktas į Vilniaus universiteto studijų informacinę sistemą.

I declare that this Thesis is submitted to the Vilnius University Study Information System.

(vardas, pavardė / name,
surname)

(parašas / signature)

(data / date)

Embargo laikotarpis / Embargo period

Prašau nustatyti šiam baigiamajam darbui toliau nurodytos trukmės embargo laikotarpį:

I am requesting an embargo of this Thesis for the period indicated below:

_____ mėnesių / months [embargo laikotarpis negali viršyti 60 mėn. / an embargo period shall not exceed 60 months].

Embargo laikotarpis nereikalingas / no embargo requested.

Embargo laikotarpio nustatymo priežastis / a reason for an embargo period:

.....

(vardas, pavardė / name,
surname)

(parašas / signature)

(data / date)

Kamieninio akademinio padalinio (šakinio akademinio padalinio) patvirtinimas, kad atspausdintas baigiamasis darbas buvo pateiktas ir užregistruotas: / Confirmed by the main academic unit (branch academic unit) that the printed thesis has been submitted and registered:

(vardas, pavardė/name, surname)

(parašas/signature)

(data/date)

BACHELOR THESIS REVIEW* *

Author of the Bachelor Thesis: _____

Title of the Bachelor Thesis: _____

Point-rated evaluation of criteria*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Formulation and achievement of the aim and objectives of the Thesis										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
2. Compliance of the Thesis content and structure to the topic										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
3. Logical consistency of the Thesis										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
4. Explicitness of literature analysis										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
5. Level of research methodology										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
6. Level of the analysis of research data										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
7. Validity of conclusions and recommendations										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
8. Language and style, technical design employed in the Thesis										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										

* evaluated criteria are of varying importance, therefore, the average does not necessarily correspond to the grade suggested by the reviewer

Final conclusion and evaluation provided by the reviewer

Questions to be raised during the defence (2-3 questions):

Reviewer's name, surname _____

Signature _____

Date _____

** Recommended review form that might be modified by SPC in accordance with the programme specifics

MASTER THESIS REVIEW*

Author of the Master Thesis: _____

Title of the Master Thesis: _____

Point-rated evaluation of criteria*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Formulation and achievement of the aim and objectives of the Thesis										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
2. Compliance of the Thesis content and structure to the topic										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
3. Logical consistency of the thesis										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
4. Explicitness of literature analysis										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
5. Level of research methods										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
6. Level of the analysis of research data										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
7. The value of the author's "product", the theoretical and / or applied benefits of the Thesis										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
8. Validity of conclusions and recommendations										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										
9. Language and style, technical design used in the Thesis										
<i>If you rate the criterion less than 9 points, please provide your arguments</i>										

* Evaluated criteria are of varying importance, therefore, their average does not necessarily correspond to the grade suggested by the reviewer

Final conclusion and evaluation provided by the reviewer

Questions to be raised during the defence (2-3 questions):

Reviewer's name, surname _____

Signature _____

Date _____

** Recommended review form that might be modified by SPC in accordance with the programme specifics

Annex 4. Recommended Assessment Scale and Criteria for Course Papers and Bachelor Theses

Pass/Fail system	Assessment in points	Assessment criteria
Pass	Excellent (10) Rounding 9.5–10	Excellent, outstanding knowledge and skills. The topic has been examined in detail. The work is original, impeccable in discipline-related, methodological and technical terms. Significant research results have been achieved. High level of defence, demonstration of deep knowledge of the field.
	Very good (9) Rounding 8.5–9.4	Strong, good knowledge and skills. The topic has been examined in detail. The work is original, but has insignificant discipline-related, methodological and/or technical shortcomings and inaccuracies. Significant research results have been achieved. The defence demonstrates very good knowledge of the field, but there are insignificant shortcomings in the defence.
	Good (8) Rounding 7.5–8.4	Knowledge and skills are above the average. The topic has been examined well and qualitatively, but not deeply enough, there is a noticeable lack of the latest theoretical and practical approaches. The work has discipline-related, methodological and/or technical shortcomings. The defence has demonstrated good knowledge of the field, but no comprehensive answers are received to the questions given.
	Highly satisfactory (7) Rounding 6.5–7.4	Average knowledge and skills, there are significant errors. The topic has been examined, theoretical analysis and adequate research have been performed, but there is a lack of methodological justification, integrity of the work, relevance of the topic. Not all the objectives are sufficiently developed, the results lack completeness. The work has discipline-related, methodological and/or technical shortcomings. Mid-level knowledge in the field has been demonstrated in the defence.
	Satisfactory (6) Rounding 5.5–6.4	Knowledge and abilities (skills) are worse than average, there are mistakes. The topic has been examined, but the work is incomplete, there is a lack of analysis and there are elements of descriptive work. The work lacks integrity, the relationship between the theoretical and research parts. The research has not been formulated correctly enough, there are methodological shortcomings, research methods are not properly applied. The objectives of the work are not sufficiently developed, not all the results of the work correspond to the aim and the problem of the work. The work has significant discipline-related, methodological and/or technical shortcomings. The defence demonstrates a significant lack of knowledge in the field.
	Sufficient (5) Rounding 5–5.4	Knowledge and abilities (skills) meet the minimum requirements. The problem selected is scientific/applied, but it has received minimal analysis. The work is dominated by descriptive text. The work has significant methodological shortcomings, the aim and problem of the work are not formulated correctly, there is no adequate theoretical analysis, research methods are not properly applied. The objectives of the work are insufficiently developed, the results of the work do not sufficiently correspond to the aim and problem of the work. There are significant discipline-related, methodological and/or technical shortcomings. The defence demonstrates weak knowledge of the field.
	Fail	Insufficient (1, 2, 3, 4) Rounding 1–4.9

Annex 5. Recommended Assessment Scale and Criteria for Master Theses

Pass/Fail system	Assessment in points	Assessment criteria
Pass	Excellent (10) Rounding 9.5–10	Excellent, outstanding knowledge and skills. The original scientific/applied research, the problem under analysis is new, unexplored, the findings are original and relevant from the point of view of theory and/or practice. The topic has been examined in detail; innovativeness, creativity, excellent knowledge, appropriate theoretical models and research methods are applied. The work is impeccable in discipline-related, methodological and technical terms. High level of defence, demonstration of deep knowledge of the field. The work can be recommended for publication in a scientific journal.
	Very good (9) Rounding 8.5–9.4	Strong, good knowledge and skills. The original scientific/applied research, the problem under analysis is new, unexplored, the findings are original and relevant from the point of view of theory and/or practice. The topic has been examined in detail, innovativeness, creativity, very good knowledge, appropriate theoretical models and research methods are applied. The work has insignificant discipline-related, methodological and/or technical shortcomings and inaccuracies. The defence demonstrates very good knowledge of the field, but there are insignificant shortcomings in the defence.
	Good (8) Rounding 7.5–8.4	Knowledge and skills are above the average. A comprehensive scientific/ applied research, the problem under analysis is acute, the outcomes meet the aims and objectives. The topic has been examined well and qualitatively, but not deeply enough; there is a noticeable lack of the latest theoretical and practical approaches. Appropriate theoretical models and research methods are applied; the work has discipline-related, methodological and/or technical shortcomings. The defence has demonstrated good knowledge of the field, but no comprehensive answers are received to the questions given.
	Highly satisfactory (7) Rounding 6.5–7.4	Average knowledge and skills, there are significant errors. The topic has been examined, theoretical analysis and adequate research have been performed, but there is a lack of methodological justification, integrity of the work, relevance of the topic. Not all the objectives are sufficiently developed, the results lack completeness. The work has discipline-related, methodological and/or technical shortcomings. Mid-level knowledge in the field has been demonstrated in the defence.
	Satisfactory (6) Rounding 5.5–6.4	Knowledge and abilities (skills) are worse than average, there are mistakes. The topic has been examined, but the work is incomplete, has no scientific value, there is a lack of analysis and there are elements of descriptive work. The work lacks integrity, the relationship between the theoretical and research parts. The research has not been formulated correctly enough, there are methodological shortcomings, research methods are not properly applied. The objectives of the work are not sufficiently developed, not all the results of the work correspond to the aim and the problem of the work. The work has significant discipline-related, methodological and/or technical shortcomings. The defence demonstrates a significant lack of knowledge in the field.
	Sufficient (5) Rounding 5–5.4	Knowledge and abilities (skills) meet the minimum requirements. The work is dominated by descriptive text. The work has significant methodological shortcomings, the aim and problem of the work are not formulated correctly, there is no adequate theoretical analysis, research methods are not properly applied. The objectives of the work are insufficiently developed, the results of the work do not sufficiently correspond to the aim and problem of the work. There are significant discipline-related, methodological and/or technical shortcomings. The defence demonstrates weak knowledge of the field.
Fail	Insufficient	Minimum requirements not met.

	(1, 2, 3, 4) Rounding 1-4.9	The work does not clearly state the problem and/or aim of the work. The content of the work does not correspond to the title and/or aim of the work. Compilational elements of plagiarism are visible in the work. There are many significant errors, factual, methodological and/or technical shortcomings. During the defence, the questions are not answered; a fundamental lack of knowledge in the field is demonstrated.
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